

The 2008 election cycle is here. The call for socialized medicine is rising. The Democrats are calling for a national single payer system, much like Canada's. In Wisconsin, many demand a universal health insurance system which you will be forced to join.

The biggest problem with both systems is the government's involvement in the free market. Government intervention is a serious issue for government believes it can ignore economic theory to get some desired result. A very important part of economic theory is that people will act in their own best interest.

Forcing people to act against their own interests is a socialist concept. It fails for when doctors hit their income caps, they will likely take time off. Or, they may choose to earn more money by moving to another country or state. Citizens with great medical plans may choose to leave Wisconsin, instead of coughing up the insane premiums. Those who are unemployed in other states may find living in Wisconsin will pay better, when our health care system is considered, and move here. Those scenarios will lead to reduced services and increased premiums.

Businesses live by the same principals. Whenever the government caps the price on a service and it is lower than what can sustain or expand service, we will see a reduction in that service. That explains the long wait times Canadians experience for standard tests. Employers will see a huge payroll tax which they will pay for with higher prices, reduced wages or staffing cuts. These results are all unintended for the state assumes they control the economy and you. The state seldom calculates the true market response to their manipulations.

For anyone eager for universal health care, especially the single payer form, you should understand that you will no longer be the customer. The state will be. You will be just the piece of meat that must be handled to get the money. You will be powerless. In the Canadian system, one client had a provider say to them, "You act like you are a customer!" That is socialized health care in nutshell.

What could the alternatives be?

One option is having the state stop licensing doctors. The AMA is free to certify doctors, but they do not. They use the state to test doctors against the official state sanctioned form of medicine they describe. Non-doctors offering medical advice may be prosecuted, even if their advice was correct. State licensing increases costs for many common issues cannot be handled by a nurse. We waste nursing skills to our detriment in our current system.

State licensing also makes traditional medicine the only legal form of medicine. This legally preferred system is considered by some to be a leading cause of death in America. Mistakes and drug side effects kill over 200,000 people each year. That is from an article in JAMA! The current medical system is an experiment and to declare it the official experiment is not good for anyone. Alternative medicine has risks, but traditional medicine has its share, too.

Another avenue to increase our overall health is finding a way to get nutrition to be an important issue to everyone. Vitamin deficiency has been correlated to heart disease, cancer, arthritis, MS, diabetes and other illnesses. One huge issue is the fact that the mineral content of our produce has been in steep decline. In fact, some suggest that we suffer from hollow food and that leads to obesity. We gorge ourselves on food seeking nutrients which are no longer there. In a way, we may suffer from a new collective form of Pica.

One thing that having insurance has changed is that we no longer haggle on price. Accepting any price for the greatest doctor is one thing, but a standard MRI should be subject to some price comparisons. That must change, if we hope to reduce the cost of health care. You could help make health care affordable for everyone by just keeping it more affordable to you.

Ultimately, your health is directly related to your participation in it. Eat well, exercise and question your doctors. Research your ailments and seek value. You are the customer, never relinquish that!