

Health Care

Everyone needs affordable, quality health care. How we pay for it is the question. First, how do we compare to the rest of the world regarding this issue.

The US World Health Organization has two interesting stats, both published in 2016.

- Ranking of world healthcare systems: US ranks 37th (number 36 is Costa Rica).
- Life expectancy: US ranks 31st (and Costa Rica again outranks us at #30).

Spending per capita: According to the OECD's (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) 2016 report, we spend an average of \$9024.00 per person on health care. France (who has the #1 healthcare system in this report, spends \$3601 per capita). Germany, Canada, UK and Japan are all spending less than half what we spend – and all have much better results in terms of life expectancy.

Federal law requires all hospitals to treat anyone that walks through the door. If you are poor and without insurance, that is where you go for a sore throat or a minor cut. Cost: About \$2500. The hospital then increases the rates to insurers and individuals to cover this expense. One way or another, we are paying for this.

An option, allow walk-in clinics to treat minor medical issues for anyone without medical insurance, and if the condition is serious, refer them to a hospital. Cost: About \$150. Walk-in clinics, paid for through legislation, will save money for Coloradans!

What if all the money that is paid into health insurance companies by businesses, local, state and federal governments and individuals was instead paid into a general medical insurance fund? The probable result would be lower costs, better care and longer life. But this is health care for all – a tough sell in our legislature, even though it is less expensive and offers a better outcome.

Can this be done at the state level? Mitt Romney did this in Massachusetts - and it worked! On the federal level, Obama Care was hated, but the Affordable Care

Act is loved (obviously, a marketing issue). A massive legislative bill is unlikely to happen. Small solutions **can be done, one bill at a time**. Increasing the use of walk-in clinics and advertising the options that are available to low income Coloradans, is achievable in the Colorado legislature.

Cost of prescription drugs: The Federal Government does not allow States to negotiating drug costs for Medicare or Medicaid. The VA negotiates their prescription drug prices, paying much less than Medicare, Medicaid or individuals for the same drugs. Why should we pay more just to enrich pharmaceutical companies?

We must offer everyone in Colorado the option to join PARACare, the insurance plan that Colorado State employees and our teachers use. Additionally, we can legislate that PARACare negotiate drug prices.

Healthcare is a critical issue for Coloradans. There are solutions that can be implemented in our next Legislative Session. All we need are the right Representatives to be voted into office on November 6th.



Kent has been awarded the designation of “Champion” by the Colorado Foundation For Universal Health Care.