

Hello!

"I am from Saint Paul, Oregon, a small farming community in the North Willamette Valley. I am writing to say how very much I appreciate the members of the Task Force on Universal Health Care volunteering to do this essential and historic work to increase access to health care for Oregonians. The timing of your quest is perfect but I think your objectives (below) need some thought, particularly 5 and 6.

- (1) Improving the health status of individuals, families, and communities;
- (2) Defending against threats to the health of the residents of this state;
- (3) Protecting individuals from the financial consequences of ill health;
- (4) Providing equitable access to person-centered care;
- (5) Removing cost as a barrier to accessing health care;
- (6) Removing any financial incentive for a health care practitioner to provide care to one patient rather than another;
- (7) Making it possible for individuals to participate in decisions affecting their health and the health system;
- (8) Establishing measurable health care goals and guidelines that align with other state and federal health standards; and
- (9) Promoting continuous quality improvement and fostering inter-organizational collaboration.

I don't believe most Oregonians will be willing to pay for "free" unlimited health care for all. No other country I am aware of has been able to offer unlimited "free" care. All have rationed care in some way, whether by explicitly limiting access (Britain), by extended wait times (Canada) or by some other method. If you follow the siren song of unlimited "free" care, your quest is doomed to failure and the progress we have made so far will be at risk. That does not mean, however, we cannot provide humane care to all. In my opinion the best way to continue to expand access to health care and protect the community is a modification of the Medicare approach. Instead of nationalizing providers as in Britain, contract with them to provide a specific list of services that are cost effective, humane and of benefit to the community at large. Fully fund preventative care including prenatal, dental, vision and treatment of accidental injuries, treatment of communicable diseases, mental health treatment and hospice care. It will still be a hard sell but we should be able to convince enough Oregonians of the benefits of limited but universally accessible and publicly affordable care while preserving the right of rich folk to pursue (and pay for) the limited benefit, expensive treatments such as for advanced cancer, COPD, organ transplants and etc.

Dan Keeley
St. Paul, OR