

Nov. 17, 2020

Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE, Room 453  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Sen. James Manning  
Rep. Cedric Hayden  
Rep. Marty Wilde

Dear Chairs, and Task Force Members,

I only recently learned of your existence. Given the noise around the recent presidential, congressional and state elections, that is no surprise.

I was heartened to learn of your existence and mission. I am a retired career journalist, now 70, and a beneficiary of Medicare. My wife is one year away from salvation. For years, I have firmly believed we need a single payer health care system. I have several friends in the medical profession who share these views. They are SICK to death of dealing with insurance companies. Consumers, like me, abhorred dealing with the intermediaries. Lucky for me, I (almost) escaped my private payer insurance term. The year before I qualified for Medicare, I required a colon resection. It cost me \$11,000 as my share of a \$52,000 bill. It saved my life, preventing a large intestinal mass from progressing to cancer. But should it have cost that much?

I doubt that Medicare would answer "yes." I've studied this issue for years. I read the entirety of the Time magazine special issue, "The Bitter Pill." It is a stunning expose of the collusion that forces health care costs up so the insurance industry can slice out its cut and leave providers with an over-inflated reimbursement relative to actual costs.

In short, I would do anything I could with the time I have left in life to help you advance an agenda that lifts Oregonians from the captivity of a busted insurance-driven health care delivery system.

I despair of our federal government ever solving this problem. Innovation can happen at the state level. The Oregon Health Plan is testament.  
Despite his unrelated failings, John Kitzhaber is one of the smartest people around on this issue.

It's a complex issue with a lot of political influence. Short message, Obamacare could have been so much more if it had not capitulated to keeping insurance companies in the mix. A government program is the only answer to keep profiteering out of an essential need.

This is an odd letter. I support you. I would help you. I'm not sure what I can do, but let me know.

Best regards and much needed success,

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Stu Watson