

Introduction: retired registered nurse with 30 years experience in the operating room of small, medium, and large Oregon hospitals. Member of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon Commission on Poverty and Homelessness.

Post World War II saw the formation of the United Nations. Part of the process was the enactment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the insistence of the United States State Department and Eleanor Roosevelt it included a provision that healthcare is a human right. To this day the United States stands alone as a non-signatory of that provision.

The United States is also distinguished as the indisputable number one in the cost of its healthcare whether per capita or as a percentage of gross domestic product. It might be worth it if we also had the best healthcare outcomes but we do not. We have lower life expectancy. Our women and infants have higher one year mortality rates. Our diabetics have higher amputation rates. More people die in the United States from treatable causes for lack of access to medical care than in any other industrial country.

In short and as an economist acquaintance observed we spend more for it and get less for it than anybody else.

We deserve better and we can certainly afford better. We can have 1)high quality healthcare for 2)everybody at 3)a price that we can afford. This is not pie in the sky stuff. It is done so many places. You can start by joining the rest of humanity by declaring healthcare as a human right.