

THE TRUTH ABOUT HEALTH CARE REFORM

By Bette Holland

When we should be engaging in informative conversation about the proposals for health care reform, instead senators and representatives are being insulted and shouted down by their constituents so they are not able to discuss the issues. People are bringing guns—even assault rifles—to these meetings to intimidate those who are there who favor health care reforms. These people are mad because of misinformation being fed to them by 1) health care industry lobbyists who don't want reform to pass because their profits may fall. 2) conservative media including Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity and others who want President Obama to fail and have wanted it since the day Obama was elected.

You can read the proposed bill at the Library of Congress website, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>. You can read the plan from the administration at www.whitehouse.gov or <http://www.whitehouse.gov/realitycheck/>. If you think those websites lie to you because you don't trust government, then you can read the facts at www.snopes.com or www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter, which are non-partisan groups that try to separate fact from fiction. Remember, anyone can write anything on a website or a blog—be careful and check the credentials of the author!

Following is a list of the top 5 myths about health reform and the truth about the myths!

Myth #1: President Obama wants to euthanize your grandma!!!

The truth: These accusations—of "death panels" and forced euthanasia—are, of course, flatly untrue. As an article from the Associated Press puts it: "No 'death panel' in health care bill." What's the real deal? Reform legislation includes a provision, supported by the AARP, to offer senior citizens access to a professional medical counselor who will provide them with information on preparing a living will and other issues facing older Americans.

Myth #2: Democrats are going to outlaw private insurance and force you into a government plan!!!

The truth: With reform, choices will increase, not decrease. Obama's reform plans will create a health insurance exchange, a one-stop shopping marketplace for affordable, high-quality insurance options. Included in the exchange is the public health insurance option—a nationwide plan with a broad network of providers—that will operate alongside private insurance companies, injecting competition into the market to drive quality up and costs down.

If you're happy with your coverage and doctors, you can keep them. But the new public plan will expand choices to millions of businesses or individuals who choose to opt into it, including many who simply can't afford health care now.

Myth #3: President Obama wants to implement Soviet-style rationing!!!

The truth: Health care reform will expand access to high-quality health insurance, and give individuals, families, and businesses more choices for coverage. Right now, big corporations decide whether to give you coverage, what doctors you get to see, and whether a particular procedure or medicine is covered—that is rationed care. And a big part of reform is to stop that.

Health care reform will do away with some of the most nefarious aspects of this rationing: discrimination for pre-existing conditions, insurers that cancel coverage when you get sick, gender discrimination, and lifetime and yearly limits on coverage. And outside of that, as noted above, reform will increase insurance options, not force anyone into a rationed situation.

Myth #4: Obama is secretly plotting to cut senior citizens' Medicare benefits!!!

The truth: Health care reform plans will not reduce Medicare benefits. Reform includes savings from Medicare that are unrelated to patient care—in fact, the savings comes from cutting billions of dollars in overpayments to insurance companies and eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse.

Myth #5: Obama's health care plan will bankrupt America!!!

The truth: We need health care reform now in order to prevent bankruptcy—to control spiraling costs that affect individuals, families, small businesses, and the American economy.

Right now, we spend more than \$2 trillion dollars a year on health care. The average family premium is projected to rise to over \$22,000 in the next decade—and each year, nearly a million people face bankruptcy because of medical expenses. Reform, with an affordable, high-quality public option that can spur competition, is necessary to bring down skyrocketing costs. Also, President Obama's reform plans would be fully paid for over 10 years and not add a penny to the deficit.

Representative Nathan Deal says we have the best health care in the world. The best in the world? When we have the lowest life expectancy of the industrialized nations and are the only country without an affordable health care plan for all citizens! We are ranked 39th by the World Health Care Organization. Rep. Deal does have a great health plan. It is a federally funded plan for all federal employees. It is run by the government and works just fine! He doesn't have a worry in the world about his health care—so why worry about anyone else! There are 47 million Americans out there that cannot afford insurance—but apparently that is not his concern. In fact, Republicans have been in control of the White House and the Congress for 26 of the last 44 years and have never made any attempt to address the health care issue. The Medicare and Medicaid bills were passed during Democratic control of the White House.

Let's take the time to really read about this issue and engage in thoughtful conversation. Take a look at the facts and make an informed decision!