

CodeBlueNow! Models for Reform

MEDICARE FOR ALL

By Frank Yuse

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is no such thing as absolute freedom in a caring society. Market forces must be tempered with a responsibility for the common good. On the other hand, advocates for universal, comprehensive health care need to be realistic and accept limited coverage for all residents. The moral argument for health care for all rests on basic human rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The pragmatic argument rests on the notion of Society. We do not turn away people who are ill or injured—we accept them into hospital emergency rooms.

This plan starts with the current Medicare model, covering 80% of basic health care costs, and expands it to insure all residents of the US. Medicare for All (MFA) will begin with the lists of benefits outlined in Medicare literature, adjusted to all ages, and it will include prescription drugs. Articles in the *American Journal of Public Health* (AJPH) highlight lessons the US can learn from universal health care in Europe and Canada.

State agencies will be the payers of benefits.

Health boards will manage providers for efficiency and accountability. Medical procedures must be evidenced-based and will be reviewed for their effectiveness at returning patients to optimal health.

Under MFA, the use of emergency rooms by poor and uninsured people will decline. Emergency rooms will be used only for true emergencies. Patients will keep their dignity by not relying on “charity services.”

This plan is not meant to be comprehensive, merely a solid safety net, leaving powerful private insurance companies free to compete for the remaining costs.

A campaign to persuade lawmakers and the public emphasizing American values of “cooperation,” individual choice,” and “public-private partnerships,” can build the widespread support needed to drive this change.

DELIVERY SYSTEM

Starting with the current Medicare model, MFA will cover 80% of basic health care costs, and expands it to insure all residents of the US. Medicaid will be folded into Medicare. Prescription drugs and benefits commonly cited in the medical literature will be covered.

MFA will guarantee that every person in the US has access to health care.

Benefits will be purchased by individuals and thus will be extremely portable and not based on employment.

MFA maintains individual choice of providers.

Hospital costs will be controlled to avoid costly duplication of equipment, high-end services and specialties.

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Our goal in health care must be to keep members of our society healthy and productive. We must emphasize preventive care through education, information, a healthy environment and healthy living. MFA stresses preventive care and wellness programs.