

OBAMACARE OR RON(PAUL)CARE?

What's best for America?

Lately, I hardly ever watch or read or try to listen to the mainstream "non-news" outlets. From Fox to PBS, from the New York Times editorial page to the Rush Limbaugh "Hour for Dittoheads," taking in what passes for news these days stimulates my Hurl-Chunks Reflex. If I could afford to see my doctor, I know he would recommend avoiding the unctuous patter of Charles, or Katy, or Brian—and certainly the menagerie of buffoons on FOX News—and the rest of 'em. Indeed, Dr. Burch would probably advocate total disconnect from the modern-media mind-control machinery as a first giant step toward ideal health... certainly mental health.

Obamacare Basics

So that's my caveat-intro to the current BIG ISSUE of "what shall we do in America to take care of ourselves medically." I'm only marginally informed about what the President and his Democratic majorities in Congress are up to. Let's see: I have heard that there is a bill, in fact a bill of some 1,000+ pages, making its way through the Byzantine channels of Capitol Hill. Further, this bill—official title, "America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009"—straightaway proposes a government takeover of the health care industry:

Title 1, Subtitle A, Section 101, First Paragraph—The purpose of this title is to establish standards to ensure that new health insurance coverage and employment-based health plans that are offered meet standards guaranteeing access to affordable coverage, essential benefits, and other consumer protections.

I don't have to read the rest of the bill to know it's a clunker: Remember when Obama was on the campaign trail and said nobody would be forced to give up the insurance or the health care plan they had now? Well, "Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah!" No way the government is going to let you have meaningful alternatives to its one-size-fits-none system. No way, Jose! "Big Daddy O and his Legions of Uncaged Democrats" have come up with the plan for you, and if you don't like it... tough bippy.

The government decides who will be a "qualified" health care provider and who won't be. That's much more ominous than the government's universal child-internment system (aka public schools), because with the schools, you can have your educational alternatives—home-schooling, private, church—as long as you pay the taxes for the government system. Obamacare, unlike forced schooling, is an unabashed exclusive monopoly. If your plans don't get "qualified"—satisfy or lube up some next-generation Nancy-Pelosi medical-board automaton—guess what? You're out o' biz.

Who was it that said, never examine a folly, simply disobey it! [Apparently the quote is from the fictional Ellsworth Toohey, the altruist-collectivist extraordinaire, in Ayn Rand's The Fountainhead. Actually, the exact quote is: "Never bother to examine a folly; only ask what it accomplishes."]

The quote partially expresses my whole approach to the United States government these days. I recall some recent bill that gave the FDA some unbelievable prohibitionist and compulsionist powers. After it was passed, (by an overwhelming bipartisan number—like 90%—of both houses of Congress) I said to myself: "You know what. I'm not obeying that law. I'm certainly not paying for it. And I'm recommending to anyone

affected in the supplements or pharmaceutical industries that they 'Just say no.' Constitutionally, they're on firm ground. If they go to jail, well, they won't be there long. Because the Restoration of the Republic is imminent."

My mind has grown increasingly calm since I've understood that legally I'm not a taxpayer—neither are most of you reading this text, please ref. Pete Hendrickson's liberating book, *Cracking the Code: The fascinating truth about taxation in America*—and morally I'm not one either. [From a purely moral perspective, how can any American voluntarily—because legally they don't have to—continue to write checks to the U.S. Treasury? The moral crimes of the US government are beyond obvious. Why aren't you pulling the plug, taking this band of thieves and killers off your donation list?]

Anyway, sorry for the aside into the tax question. But it's essential to the relevance or validity of any other coercive laws coming down the pike from Washington or from your state capitals. In the topical matter of Obamacare (or whatever milder monstrosity replaces it), whether the robbers and murderers in Congress pass it should be moot. Not goin' doit. [Or at least we radical types aren't; the overwhelming majority will find various ways to avoid it until our entire political system is restored to a voluntary, market-based system. Two years? Three? Sooner?]

Next question, what about another way. Available right now. No major tear-ups. Just insert a lively mixture of political and economic freedom into the current system and stand back. I'm going to propose the Dr. Ron Paul Health Care Improvement System of 2009 (RonCare)

RonCare

The essence of RonCare is conveyed in this article from a few years ago that I found reposted in the Michigan Libertarian Newsletter. It's "A Four-Step Health-Care Solution," by Hans-Hermann Hoppe, from *The Free Market*, April 1993, Volume 11, Number 4:

It's true that the U.S. health care system is a mess, but this demonstrates not market but government failure. To cure the problem requires not different or more government regulations and bureaucracies, as self-serving politicians want us to believe, but the elimination of all existing government controls. It's time to get serious about health care reform. Tax credits, vouchers, and privatization will go a long way toward decentralizing the system and removing unnecessary burdens from business. But four additional steps must also be taken:

- 1) Eliminate all licensing requirements for medical schools, hospitals, pharmacies, and medical doctors and other health care personnel. (Private accreditation systems are much more effective.)
- 2) Eliminate all government restrictions on the production and sale of pharmaceutical products and medical devices. (This means no more Food and Drug Administration, which presently hinders innovation and increases costs, effectively killing millions.)
- 3) Deregulate the health insurance industry.
- 4) (To deregulate the industry means to restore it to unrestricted freedom of contract. A corresponding freedom would be to remove all vestiges of corporate privilege in the health care market, especially enabling coop solutions.

- 5) Eliminate all subsidies to the sick or unhealthy. (Basically, when you lower the costs of being unhealthy, by offering mandatory universal care without distinction for health and lifestyle choices, you promote poorer health.)

Only these four steps, although drastic, will restore a fully free market in medical provision. Until they are adopted, the industry will have serious problems, and so will we, its consumers.

Wow, I know what you're thinking... ol' Hans-Hermann is a harsh old bird, and he'd better not run into any preexisting conditions, or in the free market he'd be placed on a Viking funeral ship, torched, and cast out to sea. Basically, though, he's right.

Government health care would be even more like the government-corporate health care system we have today, a process of wealth redistribution from the well to the sick, but mostly to the politically powerful. And it would be EXPENSIVE and INCOMPETENT.

In other words, health insurance shouldn't do double duty as the Salvation Army and the Red Cross. It isn't a charitable function. The relative few who need help but would not be able to acquire insurance—which because of the improvement in health will be affordable by even the poorest risks—will be handled quite easily and humanely by voluntary systems of charitable giving. Note: in a truly free (de-privileged) society, wealth is widely distributed and there's a lot more of it.

Dr. Paul did propose a bill (The Free Choice in Health Care Bill, HR-2629, May 2009) to let anyone opt out of government health care plans and choose their own providers. And you can see his hand on a number of other bills that restore health care choice and reason to the people, wresting it from the crippling weight of the state. I've called the generic free system RonCare and compare it to Obamacare in the following table:

ObamaCare RonCare Comparison Chart

Characteristic	Obamacare	RonCare
Named after a real medical doctor	No, may have played one on TV in a Hawaiian soap opera.	Yes, Dr. Ron Paul, Texas obstetrician, in private practice at one time.
Choose physician?	Maybe, with approval.	Yes
Choose plan?	Not really, govt. decides on qualified providers.	Yes, with RonCare you choose everything.
Select among many alternative systems?	No, imagine a breadline in the former Soviet Union, only for flu shots.	Yes, especially viable will be community cooperatives, with simple cascading fees.
Hard cases?	Yes, hard cases will be subjected to the same low quality of health care as everyone else.	Yes, though strictly speaking uninsurable will be taken care of through charity systems.
Privileges for corporate interests?	Yes, same as today, except Big Pharma does not get boner-pill royalties. Obamacare favors university types.	No, violating contracts by denying coverage is over. No FDA means cheap effective drugs. AMA: no restraint of trade.

Opportunities for improvement in health?	No, health will become rare, even moreso as healthy people go broke.	Yes, natural incentives to improve health by lowering expense for clean living.
Expense?	Are you kidding? Whatever we spend today, take that and multiply by 10.	Increasingly cheap, as wealth and health, free of state, rises. No corporatism: Big Pharma takes it in the shorts.
How soon do we get the program?	Fortunately, it looks like Obamacare is DOA and then some. Bah Bah.	Immediately, upon extracting the state from everything health care.

All right, so I'm being a little facetious here. But I'm convinced that radical solutions are needed. To a post on my Coffee Coaster blog that saw some advantages to universal government health care, I made the following comments:

I just want to say that I've reviewed Sicko, and agree that the current healthcare system in the US is awful. What makes it awful is a combination of corporate privilege and government waste (compulsion and prohibition). The alternative would produce the sort of system I believe most rational adults desire: a universal coverage system, no (well, few) questions asked. And it would be run as a private cooperative charitable institution... or, more likely, a voluntary association of such local, community-based private cooperative charitable institutions... My estimate of normal costs in a free society, per person: \$100 per year, effective full coverage for everyone....

Subject of another column, no doubt, when I have time to gather the facts and figures. As usual, The Cato Institute has some of the best analyses of modern issues, especially this one.

One Final Point: the Rule of Law

And it's an important one. Please pull out a copy of your US Constitution and read it carefully. [Let's ignore for the moment anarchist arguments against the Constitution from the likes of Lysander Spooner. If we look at the document as it was written, particularly the first 10 amendments, we see its language was intended as an impregnable firewall against government power.]

Okay, so where does the Constitution grant the authority to the federal state, or to any other state, to enter health care?

That's right, the government has no lawful authority to be in the health care market, the social services market, the education market, and so on... any more than it has the authority to own and operate a dry cleaning business. How much more obvious does it need to be? If you believe in the Rule of Law and the Constitution of the United States, then work with us to end the government's destructive intervention in health care. Your life most definitely depends on it.

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