

Coalition for Democracy of Central New York
Health Care System Organizing Committee
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Our healthcare system organizing committee in Delaware and Otsego Counties in New York State liked your interim recommendations as far as they went but thought they were rather vague.

We are in the process of studying models of socialized healthcare like the Veterans Health Administration and the UK's system, and we are also looking at models of "single-payer" national health insurance like Medicare or Canada's system.

One principle which your recommendations don't include, is that the system should be SIMPLE to use. When people are impaired by sickness or injury they shouldn't have to even deal with payment issues and financial bureaucracies.

We are impressed with the UK's National Health Service's principles that a healthcare system should:

- Meet the needs of everyone;
- Be free at the point of need; and
- Be based on a patient's clinical need -- not their ability to pay.

We are also impressed with the Canadian system's principles that the health-care system should have:

1. Public administration:

The government pays for services out of taxes, but does not provide care. The program is publicly administered on a non-profit basis by a public authority accountable to the provincial government.

2. Comprehensiveness:

All necessary services, as determined by one's physician, including drugs dispensed in hospital, are covered.

3. Universality:

The plan must entitle 100 percent of the insured population (eligible residents) to services on uniform terms and conditions.

4. Portability:

You take it with you, from job to job, province to province. Workers don't lose their health insurance when they change jobs or move to another province.

5. Accessibility:

No economic or geographic limitations; rich and poor choose the same doctors and hospitals. No discrimination based on income, age, health status, etc.

Both of these sets of principles seem simpler, broader, clearer, and more friendly to what we Americans need than what is articulated in your interim proposals.

We are also very concerned about the working people in the current private system who might be displaced by the institution of a universal publicly-run system. Some kind of just transition must be included in any plan so that these workers can be retrained or retired with full compensation.

We suggest that you look closely at the Just Health Care plan articulated by the Labor Party (with offices in Washington, DC) which has a well thought out plan for financing a single-payer option for the United States.

Sincerely,

--Michael Kaufman

Facilitator for the Health System Organizing Committee of The Coalition for Democracy of Central New York