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Letter: Quality health care needed for everyone

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EDITOR: Medicare has just passed its 50th anniversary. Just as when Social Security was initiated, we're sure there were many people who spoke harshly against it.

Now we ask you to consider if you have a friend or relative who is enjoying the benefits of these programs.

We wonder if those who are critical of the programs would in good conscience offer to give up the benefits or to take them away from their relatives.

Our country is now debating another monumental program that could bring affordable health care to the vast majority of Americans.

Sixty percent of bankruptcies in this country are due to medical catastrophes. The majority of these people were working and had medical insurance. The problem in most cases was that their insurance maxed out, co-pays and deductibles were insurmountable or they lost their coverage when they lost a job due to extended illness.

Some 47 million Americans are uninsured. Many of the working poor are ineligible for Medicaid because they may make a little over the poverty level or they may not have dependent children.

The cost of medical insurance is skyrocketing. Employers are struggling to provide medical care for their employees but the medical insurance rates are crippling. Often they must either terminate employees or discontinue providing medical care.

Single-payer health insurance would cover everyone. It is essentially Medicare for all.

Hundreds of for-profit insurance companies maximize their income by denying care to the people who need it most. Without the profit initiative, quality care will be provided for those in need. No longer will people be refused coverage or treatment for a pre-existing condition.

People worry about not being able to choose their own physician. That is not true. Choice of physicians is part of the plan. How many people have been forced to change doctors several times during their careers because their employer changed their insurance company, or they changed their employer?

Think carefully about the state of medical care in this country. Look at the statistics that place medical care in United States far lower than the other industrialized nations.

We praise the medical care that is available for the few. Wouldn't we all like to have the medical care available to members of Congress and government employees?

Single-payer medical insurance would not only make medical care available to all but would allow doctors to focus their time on patient care rather than paperwork with insurance companies.

Our country is at another turning point when the quality of life for Americans can be improved by providing health care for all. How can we let this opportunity go by?

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