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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

More views on health care

Aug 22, 2009 04:30 AM

You know what will help health care? "Professionals" who actually do their jobs, knowing the service they provide offers them a really good living. But more so, the pride they get from doing their jobs properly and cost effectively. Competition suggests a rivalry (private vs. public) with reward (more money) going to the winner (insurance companies).

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Doctors should stop treating our health care like a cash for clunkers campaign and just do your damn jobs.

Richard Kadziewicz, Scarborough

Public health care scores big in polls as MDs study privatization, Aug. 12

The poll by Nanos Research found that 86.2 per cent of people support or strongly support public solutions to make our public care stronger. Support was strongest in Quebec at 87.6 per cent and lowest in Ontario at 84.1 per cent.

The private sector should stick with what it is good at or allegedly good at – innovation. In this case it should be creating new medical diagnostic equipment or drugs or cures for diseases or illnesses.

John Holstein, Chatham

On Aug. 13 I had a prostatectomy done at Etobicoke General Hospital by Dr. Tsihlias. I had been referred there by my urologist in Bracebridge, who indicated that he was an excellent surgeon. He was absolutely right.

While in hospital, I noticed administration staff working on PCs in the hallway, due to limited space. I also observed team huddles in the hallway – doctors, nurses, attendants and administrative staff working together in limited space, and doing so remarkably. Every nurse or attendant who came into the room always had a smile and a pleasant comment to share.

Upon arriving home three days after surgery, I received a phone call at 10 p.m. (I was in bed) from Dr. Tsihlias to see if I had any questions or had encountered any problems on the way home. A truly dedicated doctor.

All told, from the time of diagnosis (biopsy) through a watchful waiting period, to surgery, it took seven months. You hear so much how Canada's health care system has such long wait times. In my case, I can only say that my every need was met expeditiously, and I was given the very best treatment. It makes me very thankful that I live in Canada.

North America debates health care

Re: Harper and Ignatieff flub their medicare moment, [Opinion Aug. 18](#)

Jim Gould, Bracebridge

Doctoring medicare, Editorial Aug. 16

You observe that "creative solutions" are needed to address the problem of one million citizens who have no family doctors. It is a step in the right direction to find ways to have more front-line medical personnel like physician assistants. However, we have not exhausted our supply of qualified Canadian-standard doctors.

"Anything that can improve the effectiveness of health-care delivery is worth exploring," should include exploring why 1,182 qualified foreign medical doctors (who passed the Canadian medical exams in 2009) were not given the opportunity to practice medicine and now remain unemployed. Is this not an enormous waste of talent that could help so many under-serviced communities?

Faced with Hobson's choice, 39 foreign doctors who ironically scored the highest marks in the Medical Council of Canada exams have opted to become physician assistants in the Ontario health ministry's physician assistant pilot program. They are at least serving the community, albeit in an inferior role than what they were actually trained for.

Dr. Joshua Thambiraj, President, Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

Your editorial stands firmly against a two-tier health-care system by noting there is "compelling evidence that it undermines the public system, hurting us all."

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What evidence? So-called two-tier health care is the norm across most of Europe. Is there any hard evidence this system has hurt the population over there in any way?

Perhaps an honest look at two-tier care by your paper would be an important step in this ongoing debate.

David Maharaj, Mississauga

Obama's health care plan teeters, Aug. 17

Of course the U.S. will never get a reasonable health care plan. Corporate interests make too much money through private health care for them ever to allow it. And the American corporate media, second only to Canada in concentration of ownership, are all too willing to ensure that real discussion never takes place.

Rather than looking at health care systems in use throughout the industrialized nations of the world and discussing what works and what doesn't, they instead set up shibboleths to ensure that the general public never learns that theirs is the only industrialized nation without some form of universal health care.

Of course, Canada faces the same tactics when our health care system is discussed. We're faced with all kinds of corporate propaganda presenting us with the choice between our system and the U.S. system – as if those were the only options. And so we watch our system slide slowly into disrepair through cutbacks as corporate forces unite to convince us to privatize.

Yet other industrialized nations have better systems that cost less than ours. They do this not by greater privatization but by including more services under the public umbrella – pharmacare being one major item.

Gary Dale, West Hill

Newly elected U.S. Democrats caught in health care storm, Aug. 19

It's incredible to hear that, even in a democracy as large as the United States, the most junior and newly elected representatives hold such clout with their party leadership. Not so for Canada, whose government I remember one of my professors telling me is "an elected tyranny." Unfortunately our electorate just does not hold our local representatives to the same standards that Americans do theirs. Most vote for candidates solely on the basis of which party they want to win. I wonder how much fuller our democracy would become if our MPs and MPPs actually concerned themselves with issues in their ridings, rather than pleasing their party bosses.

Chris Evangelista, Toronto

The Obama administration is now preparing to potentially back down on its health care plan. If the Democrats are already losing their first battle, I don't even want to think about how the next few years will play out now that Republican leaders and their loudmouthed townhall counterparts know they are getting the upper hand.

Christian von Donat, Mississauga

The U.S. is not a democracy. It is a plutocracy. It is run, in a way, to benefit the rich and powerful. Hence the medical system in America will be designed to be advantageous and profitable to wealthy entities and not give proper treatment to the vast masses of average citizens. This explains why American medical services cost at least twice as much as other wealthy industrial nations and is certainly not much better. It is only too sad that the American people yield such little effective political power.

Nathan Borenstein, Richmond Hill

I have been watching and reading the debate over "socialized" medicine in the U.S. with great interest and general amusement over the last few weeks. Canada, predictably, has become something of a target in the U.S. with many politicians and citizens saying they don't want what we have.

Rather than being viewed with pity and general disdain by Canadians, this has generated a furor whereby many people on this side of the border feel that our politicians should leap to the defence of Canadian health care. What I can't understand is why anyone needs to.

Whenever my family, friends or I have needed it, OHIP has been there. My experience with universal health care has always been, well, universally positive, which, depending on your camp, either makes me: a) the exception or b) the norm. I would prefer to think the latter.

Our system is not perfect, but it is functional. The facts speak for themselves. The GDP costs for health care, the average life expectancy, all are available for our American friends to research. If some choose not to listen to those facts, if they choose instead ignorance and hyperbole, then that's okay to.

Canadians don't need to defend our system or why we have universal health care. Americans need to defend why they don't.

Giulio Cescato, Richmond Hill

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