

Contact Info: openforum@denverpost.com

Link to article: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_29093230/colorado-vote-single-payer-state-health-care-system

Email Subject: Letter to the Editor

Hi,

I'm submitting the following letter on behalf of the CEO of the National Association of Health Underwriters, Janet Trautwein. Is there any chance you might be able to run it?

Best,
Kelly

Kelly Loussedes
National Association of Health Underwriters
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Dear Editor,

Proponents of a single-payer healthcare system for Colorado have a worthy goal -- to deliver universal health coverage ("Colorado to vote on single-payer state health-care system," October 21). Unfortunately, single-payer's track record abroad reveals that substandard care, long waiting lists, and rationing are endemic to such systems.

In Canada, the median patient waits more than four months to receive treatment from a specialist after referral from his primary-care physician.¹ More than 50,000 people left Canada last year to receive medical treatment -- partially because of waiting lists.²

Britain's National Health Service is facing what the government calls its "worst financial position in a generation."³ Forty percent of hospitals are considering rationing care to save money.⁴ Some have already begun restricting access to hearing aids and hip and knee replacements.⁵

Coloradoans should note the experiences of other countries as they weigh a single-payer system for their state.

Sincerely,

Janet Trautwein
Executive Vice President and CEO

¹ <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/studies/canadians-still-waiting-182-weeks-surgery-no-improvement-2013>

² <http://www.fraserinstitute.org/studies/more-52000-canadians-left-country-medical-care-2014>

³ <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/nhs-hospitals-in-england-in-their-worst-financial-position-for-a-generation-say-new-figures-a6688526.html>

⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/healthcare-network/2015/apr/24/rationing-care-fact-of-life-nhs>

⁵ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/nhs/11771294/Hearing-aids-and-vasectomies-rationed-as-NHS-pressures-bite.html>

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“Health-care reform: A proposal insurers fear” discussed how implementing a single-payer healthcare system is in the best interest for Colorado. While universal coverage, or healthcare for all, is an admirable goal that all can rally for - trying to achieve universal coverage through a single-payer system would create major problems.

Virtually all countries with a single-payer model are plagued by perilous problems including substandard care, long waiting lists, and healthcare rationing. In Great Britain, the government dictates which drugs and procedures are available for public consumption – leaving many without access to the lifesaving prescriptions and treatments they need. As a result, over 25,000 people in Britain die annually because they are unable to obtain the latest cancer treatments they require. The problems of the Canadian system are even better known; rampant physician shortages force many to come to the U.S. for the medical care they require

Furthermore, single-payer systems do not save money. Administrative “savings” from government-run care would be quickly eaten up by increased use, bureaucratic inefficiencies would replace free-market systems, and the result would be an over-burdened, under-funded system that is often more cumbersome to navigate than the current free-market structure.

I urge the citizens of Colorado to take another look at how a single-payer system would truly damage healthcare as we know it and explore other solutions that would better fit our needs.