



Obamacare not so great for this local senior

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The Wednesday Review-Journal story, “ACA’s impact in Nevada trumpeted,” quotes new data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services finding that “34,285 senior citizens in the state saved \$33 million — an average of \$967 per beneficiary — on prescription drugs last year thanks to a portion of the act that closes a Medicare ‘donut hole’ requiring seniors to pay out-of-pocket for drugs once they reach a set spending limit.”

Would somebody please tell Medicare?

From my Humana 2017 renewal information:

“Stage 3 Coverage Gap. During this stage, you pay 40 percent of the price for brand-name drugs (plus a portion of the dispensing fee) and 51 percent of the price for generic drugs. You stay in this stage until your year-to-date out-of-pocket costs (your payments) reach a total of \$4,950. This amount and rules for counting costs toward this amount have been set by Medicare.”

There is a sleight of hand where the measurement of total drug costs advances you rapidly to the Stage 2 initial coverage threshold of \$3,700, then changes to measurement of out-of-pocket costs, to keep you in the Stage 3 coverage gap (donut hole) for longer.

In addition, another Affordable Health Care gift for seniors in 2017 is a tax increase on medical expenses. The amount eligible for relief is reduced from greater than 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income to greater than 10 percent.

We seniors are just so blessed by that nice Barack Obama’s health care law, aren’t we?

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Nuke fears

With respect to the recent articles on Yucca Mountain, I would like to emphasize that the lack of knowledge about spent nuclear fuel and the use of nuclear energy in general causes fear far beyond the risks associated with this enormously safe process.

In my 45 years teaching chemistry at 11 U.S. universities, I found it necessary to study the use of nuclear energy to produce electricity and used this information for both class lectures in

environmental chemistry, as well as for a radio talk show. To my knowledge, in the 65 years we've used nuclear energy to generate electricity in the United States there were no deaths as a result of radiation exposure.

Nevada and other states, on the other hand, typically record many energy-related work site deaths in one year, none of which is related to the use of nuclear energy.

All processes and safety calculations are estimated by a risk vs. benefit assessment. There are no 100 percent safe processes. I personally would live next to a nuclear energy plant because it emits less radiation than the natural emission from the Rocky Mountains or from the granite used to build Grand Central Station in New York City.

Needless to say, there are plenty of natural and man-made radiation emissions in the state of Nevada, including the radiation received from primary and secondary cigarette smoke and from the soil due to previous nuclear experimentation conducted by the federal government over the years.

Please check with the Cato Institute on the subject of transportation of spent nuclear fuel. The process of checking the safety of the canisters that carry spent nuclear fuel is superior to any other safety procedure for transporting hazardous materials.

The information garnered from "Trashing The Planet" and "Environmental Overkill," books written by Dixie Ray Lee, will allow the people of Nevada to make a decision based on knowledge rather than fear. It is my opinion that the storage of spent nuclear fuel in Yucca Mountain does not place a significant risk on the population in general and recovery of material for reprocessing in the future is a significant factor in choosing Yucca as a repository.

Remember the Earth on which you live is a nuclear reactor.