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Obama Suggests Health Care Reform Will Mean Rationing for Some, But Admits He Would Pay Out-of-Pocket for His Own Family

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 By Christopher Neefus

(CNSNews.com) - During ABC's health-care forum Wednesday from the White House, "Prescription for America," President Obama cited his deceased grandmother's hip replacement surgery as an example of rationing care.



(Photo courtesy of ABC News)

During the 90-minute question-and-answer session, which hosts Diane Sawyer and Charlie Gibson said was attended by 164 people "on the front lines of health care in America," epilepsy specialist Dr. Orrin Devinsky asked the president one of a few challenging questions.

Devinsky asked: "If a national health plan was approved and your family participated, and, President Obama, if your wife or your daughter became seriously ill, and things were not going well, and the plan physicians told you they were doing everything that reasonably could be done, and you sought out opinions from some medical leaders and major centers, and they said there's another option that you should -- should pursue, but it was not covered in the plan, would you potentially sacrifice the health of your family for the greater good of insuring millions? Or would you do everything you possibly could as a father and husband to get the best health care and outcome for your family?"

Obama didn't answer directly, saying that "(I)f it's my family member, my wife, if it's my children, if it's my grandmother, I always want them to get the very best care."

But the president questioned whether his now-deceased grandmother should have received her hip replacement while suffering a terminal illness.

Recounting the dilemma, Obama said, "(T)he question was, does she get hip replacement surgery even though she was fragile enough that they weren't sure how long she would last (or) whether she could get through the surgery."

"I think families all across America are going through decisions like that all the time," Obama said.

This was not the first time the president had used his grandmother to illustrate his point on health care. In an April 2008 interview with *The New York Times Magazine*, Obama suggested much of the cost of health care in America comes from the elderly and those with chronic illness.

"That's where you get into some very difficult moral issues," Obama said -- specifically considering whether "in the aggregate, society making those decisions to give my grandmother, or everybody else's aging grandparents or parents, a hip replacement when they're terminally ill is a sustainable

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