



## Tea Party boss rips Obama and Kasich on healthcare plans

By Gary Abernathy March 19, 2013

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Barb Cole on Monday launched into an attack on both the state and national health care system, and neither Democrats nor Republicans were spared from a long list of criticisms.

Cole, the new president of the Highland County Tea Party, used visual aids in her presentation at the Hi-Tec Center in Hillsboro, including videos produced by conservative and libertarian organizations like the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute that criticized President Obama's Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, as well as Ohio Gov. John Kasich's plans for the expansion of Medicaid.

Also in the crosshairs at Monday night's Tea Party meeting were John Boehner, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and, locally, Highland District Hospital.

In comments prior to the start of the meeting, Cole said she planned to announce support for a new substitute plan for Medicaid, a program based on a plan supported by the New Jersey state chapter of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS).

The alternative plan is the brainchild of Dr. Alieta Eck, co-founder of the Zarephath Health Center and former president of the AAPS. In an interview found at The New American website, the doctor said, "At our clinic, all with donated services - the physicians and nurses donating their time, and all the support services are donated - it's only \$13 per patient visit, paid for by private donations with no taxpayer money." The doctor said that her clinic operates efficiently and does not cost the public a dime.

As described in the article, the solution, Eck said, "is expanding the number of free clinics set up and run by volunteers, not the government, all across the state, and eventually, the nation. Churches, civic groups, and others could all help to make that vision a reality."

The videos played during Monday's Tea Party meeting, which also included productions from About.com and Bloomberg News, described the purpose and function of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. Cole also played what appeared to be a television ad ripping Kasich and his Medicaid plan, produced by a group called Ohio Rising. Kasich also came under fire for his health care exchange and what Cole called "KasichCare."

Cole cited statistics reflecting that 40 percent of all births in the U.S. are now paid for by Medicaid. Noting that the low reimbursement rate of Medicaid is causing doctors to lose money, Cole also presented information that claimed that under the Affordable Care Act, Medicare reimbursements would, in the future, dip below Medicaid levels.

The last couple of Tea Party meetings have attracted 50 to 60 people, and the crowd at Monday night's get-together seemed about the same. The audience was primarily made up of older individuals, something Cole herself acknowledged when she began one discussion by saying, "Now let's take a look at the impact for what most of us are - seniors."

Cole said she recently met with the chief financial officer of Highland District Hospital, which, she said, now employs most of the physicians in the county. She described the makeup of the hospital's board of governors, and named each of the board members, who are appointed by the townships.

Cole said there are only a handful of doctors actually in private practice; the others work for HDH, she said, criticizing that development because "it's pulling doctors away from patients."

Cole criticized Jim Baer, the hospital's CEO, for urging support of Kasich's plan to expand Medicaid, as well as a letter she said the hospital sent to area doctors designed for them to express their support for the Kasich plan to their statehouse representatives.

Cole praised local physician Jeff Beery, who was in attendance, for his approach to practicing medicine, saying she has his cell phone number, and recently called him with a medical question. Cole said since

they were shopping in close vicinity to each other, Beery told her to meet him at the store where he happened to be browsing, and he "checked out the problem."

"Where in the world can you get healthcare like that?" asked Cole, praising "small towns" and "common sense and big hearts."

Early in the meeting, Cole criticized House Speaker John Boehner, quoting his comments in an interview for saying he trusts President Obama, and that he agrees with the president that there is no "immediate crisis" in regard to the national debt, which was greeted by groans from the audience.