

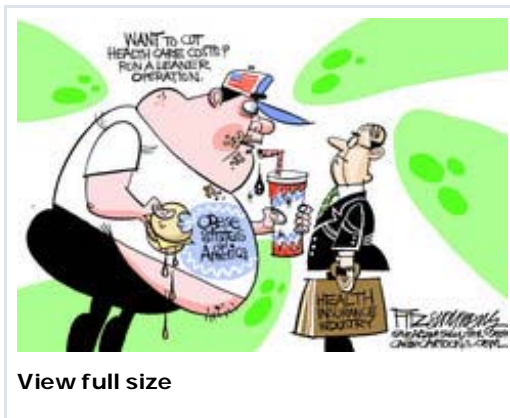


Everything Michigan

Viewpoint: We are all to blame for the present state of our health care system

By Viewpoint

February 24, 2010, 1:17PM



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By Alan Lust

There is a great deal of finger pointing going on in Washington right now as our leaders struggle about what to do with our present medical problems. All of this blaming leads me to ask, who is truly responsible for the present problem? Our leaders accuse insurance companies of being greedy and the party in power purports that they can solve our current problems. The administration and, to be fair, many preceding administrations portray themselves as the lone ranger riding to rescue the American people.

While government is trying to throw us a life raft, it is helpful to remember that they bear some responsibility for the ship sinking in the first place. What the government should be doing is some serious soul searching.

Washington is throwing stones at doctors, lawyers and the past administration just to name a few favorite targets. While it is important to address error, so it can be fixed, our leaders should remember that blame is a tactic used by the immature to absolve themselves of responsibility. The end result of this kind of behavior is paralysis. Because while Washington may try to fix problems caused by others, they are blind to harm they cause. To paraphrase Albert Einstein, the kind of thinking that created the problem will not be enough to solve the problem.

I personally don't want Washington to fix anything until they have fixed themselves. Jesus said it best, How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Blame gets you nowhere, past administrations have been plagued with greed and stupidity and current administration will be no different. Everyone knew there were problems when Obama was elected and it should be remember that he will be judged by his own success and failures not those of preceding administrations.

Obama wants health care reform and so do most people. Yet the Democrats seems intent on stuffing a bill down the throat of the American people that most do not want in its present form.

Yet when Obama was elected he promised that it would not be business as usual but that he would reach out to the Republicans. Well so much for cooperation and reaching across the aisle.

Republicans has been blamed for being obstructionist. They are accused of having no ideas of their own by both the press and president. This is certainly not true.

More finger pointing is done at insurance and pharmaceutical companies, depicting them as the cause of the increasing cost of medical treatment. Yet nothing is said about the financial burden that is added by governmental regulation. According to the Cato Institute, regulation adds at least 25 percent to the existing cost of medical care.

My question: Does all of this regulation truly make us safer or is much of it knee jerk reactions to predicaments which do little to truly solve the problem? Please don't get me wrong, I understand that we need regulation and accountability but does all the paper work make us safer or does it just make work that someone has to pay for?

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If governmental regulation of the health care industry is anything like government oversight of the finance industry then the only thing that is keeping us safe is the skill and integrity of skilled medical personal.

I see blame directed everywhere but where it should be pointed, for instance doctors are complaining about greedy ambulance chasing lawyers. Yet doesn't the medical community bear some responsibility for failing to report problem doctors and nurses sooner? Their failure to hold themselves accountable is part of the problem.

Then there is the American public who believe that medicine should perform miracles for them and it should cost little. We are part of the problem. We over use and demand perfection which drives up the cost of health care.

Hospitals bear some responsibility for building temples to health. While these building are often beautiful, the added cost does nothing to help sick people but sick people have to pay for it.

So just who is to blame for our present problems? We all are and it will take a solution that forces all of us to change before things get better. The government, the medical establishment and the American people need to wake up to this reality.

Alan Lust resides in Otsego.

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