

# Experts debate health care reform

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The Center for Business and Public Policy invited two speakers to host a debate about health care reform on Tuesday.

Michael Tanner, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, a non-profit public policy research foundation, and Steffie Woolhandler, professor of medicine at Harvard University and co-founder of Physicians for a National Health Program, came as guest speakers for the health care debate: Free Markets vs. Government.

Filling more than 270 seats in Deloitte Auditorium, Woolhandler explained how she has supported a national health care plan for more than two decades.

Using many slides based on facts she researched and collected, she shared her opinion about the current health care system and criticized bringing a free market concept into the health care sector.

She said the health maintenance organization has selected Medicare and Medicaid patients discriminatively.

"I'm calling it 'cherry picking,'" Woolhandler said. On the other hand, Tanner favors single-payer health care system. He said in Medicaid, which is a health care system for the poor, recipients do not receive benefits equal to what they paid.

As for Medicare, he said, the cost is increasing every year because of the increasing aging population and improvements to medical technology.

"If you really get sick, it stops covering you," Tanner said.

Woolhandler supported a national healthcare plan because there 46 million uninsured people in the country, whereas Tanner objected to this plan because the government ties health care to jobs.

"If you lose your job, you lose your health insurance," Tanner added.

Napoleon Knight, vice president of medical affairs for Carle Foundation Hospital, attended the debate in the audience.

He said this debate was interesting because it addressed the fundamental problems about the costs of health care and access to it. He thinks the current health care system does not solve such problems.

"I'd like to have both of them answer the question: How can we reform health care if you can't reform politics?" Knight said. "I found it interesting that two very well-educated individuals still can't provide for us the answer to the problem."

Chris Burgner, sophomore in Business, said he feels people needs to be well-educated.

"Now I'm 20 years old; I should be doing my civic duty to understand policies so that I cast my vote and form my decision, not just something sounds good or something that people are telling," he said.

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