



Docs 4 Patient Care

To our patients...

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DOCS 4 PATIENT CARE .ORG

Dear Patient:

Every physician takes an oath dedicating oneself to the care of patients. Motivated by this oath, we are compelled to speak out and clarify what we believe are important facts regarding the healthcare debate. The real facts are not accurately reported to the public. We need to explain to you what the consequences of a new government run health plan will mean to you.

For historical and cultural reasons, physicians have been largely silent on political issues. This has been a mistake. Everyone, including our patients, has misunderstood our reluctance to speak out as silent support for the government's plan. Nothing could be farther from the truth. **We will be silent no longer.**

The government's plan is frightening! Here's what's going to happen:

1. A new government health plan will be created. This would be similar to expanding Medicare to make everyone eligible regardless of age. It will start out innocently as a government option for those people currently uninsured or under insured. The plan will be subsidized by taxpayer dollars, allowing premiums to be underpriced relative to the rest of the healthcare market. Private insurers will be unable to compete and then forced out of the market, creating a government-run single payer system. **With no competition and no accountability, "universal health care" will be slow and inefficient.** Costs will go up, not down. Rationing of care will begin, and **patients will languish and die on treatment waiting lists.**

2. The government will set standards of care. The government wants to be in charge of what treatments are available to you. A **Federal Health Board** will create a set of one-size-fits-all government rules, which will be used to ration, delay or deny you care. You and your doctor will no longer be free to make treatment decisions. And it may become illegal to get the treatment you need by paying for your own care. The government rule-makers will not be accountable to anyone and will be motivated only to reduce costs. **The doctor-patient relationship will become the "doctor-government-patient" relationship.** If you thought hassling with your HMO was difficult, wait until this comes along.

3. Electronic medical records will become a curse, not a blessing. Instead of using technology to reduce costs and improve quality, technology will become an instrument of the government to monitor doctors and patients and intrude on your care. **"Big Brother" will be watching us.**

As our patient, there are some things we want you to know:

1. No one cares about your health as much as your doctor. Not the bureaucrats. Not the insurers. Not the politicians in Washington. **Physicians are your most reliable, most trustworthy advocates.**

2. We don't have to passively accept the government's proposed plan. The administration's strategy is clearly to push a reform bill through very quickly, before any review and discussion can take place. As Tom Daschle wrote in his recent book, "The (health care reform) issue is too important to be stalled by Senate protocol." **In other words, politicians want to cheat the proper law-making process in order to get their way.**

3. We don't have much time! The House and Senate each plan to have a bill ready within the next 2-3 weeks. The American people will be denied opportunity for discussion and debate. We still have an opportunity to slow the process down enough to allow some dialogue. **It's time to fight!**

4. Physicians want health care reform too. But we do not share the government's vision of government-centered health care. We instead envision patient-centered care, brought about by a series of tax code changes, regulatory changes and changes to insurance plan structure that brings cost issues to the doctor-patient relationship. **This will bring cost accountability to the appropriate decision-makers – doctors and patients – and allow market forces to drive down costs and make the system more efficient.**

What Can You Do?

1. Become an informed patient. Do your own research. Learn as much as you can. Talk about it with your co-workers, friends and family. **Don't let the politicians and the media tell you what to think.** Don't assume they know what is best.

2. Write your congressman.....NOW. Congress plans to have the reform plan completed by the end of June, perhaps even sooner.

3. Talk to your doctor during your visit today. The more support we get from you, our patients, the bolder we can be.

4. **Visit Docs4PatientCare.org.** We have recently formed a group dedicated to giving practicing physicians a voice in the health care reform process: **Docs 4 Patient Care.** We add to the web site almost daily. Please visit the web site often and get more information.

Please help us! Our health care system is fighting for its life, and there isn't much time left.

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