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**CANCER SURVIVOR**

**Doug Ulman**

Doug Ulman is a three-time cancer survivor and president of the Lance Armstrong Foundation.

**THE DAILY DOSE**



**Democrats: decision in one week**

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Graphic: Either way, a small effect

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**The President's Bold Speech**

My cell phone rang yesterday morning around 8:45 a.m. I immediately knew why my mom was calling. My last living grandparent had passed away.

My mom's voice confirmed that my premonition had been correct. Her mother had just suffered heart failure after a prolonged battle with cancer and had died in her hospital room in Florida. While this news was not a surprise, it wasn't easy to hear.

I spent most of yesterday thinking about her and as I prepared to listen to the President speak about health-care reform this morning she was still top of mind.

The health-care debate is not someone else's issue. It is not someone else's responsibility to solve. It is something that impacts all of us. I don't know if my grandmother got state of the art care, had the best pain medication or was offered a clinical trial when she was initially diagnosed. There are so many things I don't know because the variance in quality across the U.S. is so vast.

As I listened intently to the President, I was struck by the boldness with which he is tackling what I believe is the number one issue facing our country.

His emphasis on electronic medical records was inspiring. As a cancer survivor, I will celebrate the day when I can empty my home office closet and throw away the many folders of scans, tests, and pathology reports from the last thirteen years.

His belief that we must focus on prevention and early detection is also uplifting as we know this will save lives and money. We are spending a mere fraction of our health-care dollars on prevention and yet we know that the largest return on our investment will be in this arena.

His statement that pre-existing conditions must not preclude anyone from obtaining insurance is critical. We must not allow discrimination against those who have already survived any number of ailments or conditions.

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The one comment I take issue with is the President's belief that most Americans listen to, trust, and accept the advice of their doctor. That may be true - it certainly has been in the past - but we need to continue to empower patients and their families with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed decisions about their health. We, the people, need to be in charge of our health care and not the insurance companies. This is a fundamental shift that will take time but I believe is paramount.

If we can inspire and empower Americans to take control of their health, along with ensuring that everyone has access to state of the art medical care, we will create a healthy nation that will prosper in the future.

While I grieve the loss of my grandmother I am feeling an unfettered optimism that our country can ultimately address the health care crisis and improve the lives of so many millions of our friends and neighbors.

When I last spoke to my grandmother on the phone a few weeks ago she ended the conversation by saying "I don't know how much time I have but I love you and I wish you the best of luck and success." In honor of her, and the millions of others who have suffered through our current system, we must commit to massive social change that solves the health-care burden.

BY DOUG ULMAN | JUNE 15, 2009; 3:25 PM ET | CATEGORY: [HEALTH CARE REFORM](#)

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Doug, I could not agree with you more. I have written extensively on young adult cancer. Many people think of cancer recovery as an opportunity for a new lease on life. But when patients are young and living with a pre-existing condition, their cancer history becomes more of a ball and chain than an open door of opportunity. Insurance companies have no motive to provide care to patients who are already sick. The system must change.

(Also, my condolences to you and your family.)

Kairol Rosenthal  
blog <http://everythingchangesbook.com/>

POSTED BY: [KAIROLROSENTHAL](#) | JUNE 16, 2009 5:33 PM  
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Everyone knows health care in the United States is busted. And everyone knows it won't change unless the American people stand up and say "No More". But it has to be a new system everyone uses. My number one requirement is that the new system is mandated that everyone in Congress use the same system. If Congress writes the rules for the new system, they must also use it. Not weasel out with their own system. This will put the check and balance into the system that ensures its sustainable and has the quality for all.

POSTED BY: [STOOFY](#) | JUNE 16, 2009 11:53 AM  
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