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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

Senior aides say Democratic leaders will decide next week about the future of the health-care bill.

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## The No. 1 Priority

The single most important priority that Congress must immediately address is the fact that more than 47 million of our family members, colleagues, friends and neighbors are without health insurance.

We live in an incredible country founded with a belief that all who lived here would have the opportunity to prosper. That belief and ideal is entirely at odds with the current state of health care. It is absolutely unacceptable that people might suffer and die today due to the fact that they lost their job, they live in a certain neighborhood, they speak a different language or they simply aren't able to purchase health insurance.

When I was diagnosed with chondrosarcoma and then melanoma at the age of 19, I was fortunate enough to still be on my parent's insurance plan. Even with wonderful insurance, the struggle to navigate the health-care system was tiring and stressful, especially at a time when I was trying to focus on strengthening my immune system and fighting my cancer diagnosis.

Since that time I have met thousands of cancer survivors who are not only facing the fear of such a diagnosis but who are also fighting for their financial future -- displaying the utmost courage against their illness and having to worry that they may also lose their home, their savings, or their job. This is not acceptable.

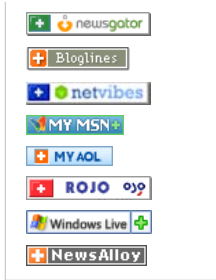
Congress must immediately act and address our nation's largest moral and ethical failure.

BY DOUG ULMAN | JUNE 9, 2009; 10:33 AM ET | CATEGORY: [HEALTH CARE REFORM](#), [INSURANCE](#)

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Comments  Please report offensive comments below.



Why aren't the physicians in this country using the same techniques used in Europe to pin point and treat specific cancer areas of the body instead of bombarding the whole body with unnecessary chemo? Why are proven alternative medicines shunned by the powers that be? When is the last time we had a cure and not just a treatment that you have to take forever? We never will be healed as long as it's more profitable to keep us sick. There's no profit in curing patients. Until drug companies & insurance carriers are controlled, we will never be healed, only kept alive to pay for more "health care".

POSTED BY: KAETC81 | JUNE 16, 2009 2:34 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

do not side with big business and the insurance companies and pers drug companies....side with the AMERICAN PEOPLE AND BARACK OBAMA .....THAT IS THE REASON HE WAS ELECTED...WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTHCARE IN OUR COUNTRY.

POSTED BY: STANTONCAROL | JUNE 14, 2009 8:31 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

As I drove through my Raleigh, NC community this morning, I felt very touched. Most of the mail boxes were adorned with pink balloons. My loving friends and neighbors attached pink balloons to their mailboxes to honor my 9 year old daughter Colleen who died a year ago today of Osteosarcoma (a type of bone cancer). Colleen's favorite color was pink. It was a wonderful and perfect tribute to our daughter who is missed very much by so many.

I work through my grief and find strength by trying to improve the health care provided to children that are diagnosed with this horrible disease. Please read about the stark reality of the health care support services offered to our children by our areas best hospital in my blog today.

There is a severe lack of emotional support services. My daughter was in one of the country's best hospitals being treated for cancer but was not seen by a psychologist of pastor or given any emotional or spiritual support services for the 6 months of her treatment including the day I had to tell her she was dying. It is a tragedy. This needs to be included in any considerations as well.

<http://striving4grace.blogspot.com/2009/06/my-inspiration-to-passionately-pursue.html#links>

Diane Moore  
[www.striving4more.org](http://www.striving4more.org)

POSTED BY: STRIVING4MORE | JUNE 9, 2009 4:45 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

To: bewert--on the subject of malpractice insurance causing the high cost of health care.

Thank you for your comments. From the context of my post, I understand how the conclusion was drawn that I believed malpractice insurance was the primary cost driver of health care. I do recognize that this is only a part of the problem. However, I also know of extremely competent physicians who made a conscious decision to close their practice because of the cost of insurance and the liability they face if in a private practice. In addition the cost of insurance is also a factor in the ever increasing costs associated with a hospital stay and medical testing. From my personal experience, many electronics manufacturers clearly

Congressional health care "reform" could create a so-called "Health Choices" Czar.

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delineate that their products are not to be designed into medical equipment, even though from a technical standpoint, the products ability to perform the necessary functionality that the equipment design requires is not in question. It is strictly a product liability issue and is noted as such in their documentation. My statement regarding the cost of insurance, while correlated with physicians in my previous post, was intended to cover all aspects of medical care. I apologize for not making that more clear.

POSTED BY: WAYNEINGRAM | JUNE 9, 2009 4:22 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The idea of the AVAILABILITY of health care for each individual is certainly noble and something I would desire for my children and grandchildren. When catastrophe strikes, as it has more than one of my family and the word "cancer" is first heard. Paying for it can be a life crippling or at least altering event, almost as much as the sickness itself.

But from our founding fathers, there has been a realization that all noble ideas cannot be afforded and personal responsibility must be a large ingredient in each benefit that is attained across any field of life. I am willing to work very hard and to give a part of my earnings to help those who are less fortunate, based on uncontrollable events (not their bad decisions) For those who have not been industrious with their time and assets and not made sacrifices that lead to healthy living, I am not willing to then in addition hand over a great percentage of my earnings so that they may reap the same benefits.

The government has never run anything as well as free enterprise (welfare, schools, IRS, military-paying 200.00 for a toilet seat) They haven't balanced a budget in years. Let the government establish laws that protect the individual from unscrupulous individuals and companies. Then we will have an unhindered freedom to pursue "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" Then let Americans do what they do best and you will see a health care system that will make the world jealous.

As soon as the government is viewed as an ATM we have lost the role of personal responsibility, we are throwing away the golden rule and have simply become a group of selfish individuals who will one day wonder what to do when the ATM is out of money.

POSTED BY: WAKEBRDN | JUNE 9, 2009 3:24 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Get CANCER yourself or your loved one.

Sit across from many different patients during long days of chemo.

Who gets the "good" expensive anti-nausea meds that makes it easier and who doesn't?

You, who never thought you would be here in this club, who has been healthy, well educated, with money, from a good neighborhood, from a good athletic club and are fit, who eats organic, you sit and WATCH.

How do we use our dollars for change?  
 What can we do?

Not let our portfolio manager invest in drug companies stock?

Not let our stock advisor invest in insurance companies stock?

Not invest in medical equipment stock?

Not buy hospital municipal bonds?

Not buy drugs from certain drugstore chains?

Find out who are the insurance/medical/pharmaceutical/legal lobbyists and expose them what they lobby for/against?

Pull out? Not go along?

What CAN we do to turn this around?

POSTED BY: CHRIS757 | JUNE 9, 2009 3:21 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

To: wayneingram--on the subject of malpractice insurance causing the high cost of health care.

Please see the Jan. 12, 2009 issue of Barron's, specifically the article entitled "A Healthy Dose of Insurance"

You can read it here: <http://tinyurl.com/ox52v4>

Note a couple of things:

1) the medical malpractice industry is a \$10 billion per year business. That is approximately .000004.3% of the \$230 trillion per year US health care expenditure. That is not a large enough percentage to have any significant impact on overall health care costs.

2) According this article, in the investors magazine Barron's, medical malpractice insurance can be a very profitable business. In fact, "...The company generally averages one lawsuit a year for every 10 doctors it insures, in line with national numbers...Typically, APC reckons to pay out on about 20% of the lawsuits, but Clinton says the size of the settlements has been trending significantly lower..."

I think your concern is misplaced.

POSTED BY: BEWERT | JUNE 9, 2009 2:50 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I agree the government needs to do something with the health care. They need to start with the people who are abusing the system. Working in healthcare I see the abuse first hand. Seeing the abuse day after day makes me almost want to quit working in the healthcare field. I truly enjoy helping people but it gets harder and harder everyday. Is there a hot line to report abuse? What is the abuse? people get doctors to give them disabilities and they don't need it(these people get checks from the government for their disability and free healthcare). Also people that lie and say they don't make enough but they are getting paid under the table. The people that do this get some of the best care because they can have any test done without precerts(some do require but few). On the other hand elderly people can't get some on these test done because there insurance won't cover it or they are worried how they are going to pay for it!!!!!!! The young people that abuse the system don't care about paying for it, they can just use another name or different hospital or move to another state because their insurance covers them anywhere. They don't worry about who's in network or is this going to be covered under my insurance plan!!!

POSTED BY: CLERMRI | JUNE 9, 2009 1:05 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

November 20th, 2008 my husband was overseas working when 3 year old Armstrong was being lifeflighted to a hospital nearly 75 miles away.

He was diagnosed with 2 brain tumors. A Glioblastoma Multiforme and Mixed Glioma. His tumor grew back within weeks and he underwent 3 brain surgeries before he started radiation.

Then we were told the the only medication that "might" help save him was not approved for brain cancer yet and even if it was the cost would be \$30,000!

I had to leave my sick son and go to Washington D.C. to speak in front of an FDA hearing on Avastin before approval was finally passed and my son could have a chance at living.

6 days after Armstrong recieved his first dose of the medication he died. It was too late. It had been 4 months since his diagnosis and his tumor had grown because he wasn't able to get the proper medication.

It is a horrible injustice that my son, other people children, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters; are dying every day because they do not have access to the care they need!

Now is the time for change.

POSTED BY: TEAMARMSTRONG | JUNE 9, 2009 12:59 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

While it is certainly appropriate to call upon Congress to enact legislation to make health care available to all Americans, the time to lack specificity in the demand should be over as well! I am not suggesting that this discussion should go the way of most debate in Congress and be decided on partisan lines. Rather this debate should be decided on one simple premise. If you are FOR providing coverage to ALL Americans, then you are correct, if your ideas would not make quality care available and affordable to ALL Americans, then you are WRONG. BUT, from the outset, the premise MUST be that every American MUST be covered, PERIOD.

I just called the Capitol Switchboard and the lovely woman who answered the phone is a Federal employee and, bless her heart, she has health care as a part of her job benefit, and the plan is pretty darned good. Her ultimate bosses, the Congress and their staffs all have health care, and judging by the results Senators Kennedy and Specter have fortunately received, their plans seem pretty good as well. WE old folks are headed to the rolls of Medicare, shortly. While not perfect, coupled with private supplemental plans, coverage can be pretty good. Under the plan, health care issues are not financially catastrophic events!

Now Medicare is NOT perfect, but fixing it, expanding it, basing a premium upon the participant's income, and then expanding private supplemental coverages available for purchase just might be a path upon which we could get EVERYONE covered. That way, private insurance companies keep making money, poorer folks get covered along with their more affluent neighbors, and doctors can get paid for their work, even if they are specialists! Under the all encompassing plan, the "red herring" of high malpractice insurance can be deleted by a NATIONAL insurance and at the same time a database of Doctor's poor performances and damaging practices, once out from under the AMA, could lead to true actions against poor practitioners!

Businesses would immediately become more competitive against companies from overseas who do not have to pay for health insurance for their workers. A benefit of good

supplemental insurance could be negotiated at far lower costs to employers. Young adults who continue to be savaged by cancers at an alarming rate would be immediately provided with coverage when they were "too old" to remain on their parents plan. YES, I advocate keeping the private plans out there as well. Disciplined by competition to LOWER COSTS not lower benefits. So there is my idea, a blend of private and public plans to make care available to all at rates which reflect the financial strength of the INSURED, not the insurance company or an employer. Will it cost the taxpayers? Absolutely, but it will cost them far less than having millions of Americans not covered or under-insured. Just give us all access to the same benefits we give our employees in Congress

POSTED BY: STEARMAN1 | JUNE 9, 2009 12:58 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I am quite sick of the capitalist bandwagon everyone is expected to ride and not to mention pay for the ride. We are practicing socialists in that we subsidize most industries and corporation, overtly by bailing them out and covertly by poor regulation.

And yet we have arguments to not support a universal Healthcare system ? Healthcare is not an individual but a society's responsibility. Health care is also an inalienable right. Archaic quote but sound mind in a sound body.

POSTED BY: ALVEENA | JUNE 9, 2009 12:44 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

AMEN!! doug, your dedication and straight forward commentary continues to inspire me. LIVESTRONG!!

POSTED BY: EEH920 | JUNE 9, 2009 12:38 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

We constantly hear that our health care system is broken and that the fed. govt. needs to fix it. However, the underlying problem is completely unrelated to health care. Our litigious-oriented culture has forced health care providers to take a defensive posture. Those who choose to practice medicine are obligated to pay ever increasing insurance premiums, close their practices or create joint practices with other physicians in an attempt to mitigate costs. I understand and agree that as patients, we need protection from those who practice medical care who are less than qualified. However, I believe we have gone far beyond the point of reasonable protection. Having said this, it is difficult for me to envision anything changing for the better. If we truly want health care to cost less and be more widely available, then Congress needs to focus on changing the environment which has driven our system to where it is today. Unfortunately many of them would have to acknowledge that the legal community has been an integral participant in the creation of this problem... I just don't see that happening. As a result, they will address the problem in the only manner in which they have demonstrated proficiency... exorbitantly spending taxpayer money, seemingly without discretion, and not resolving any problems.

POSTED BY: WAYNEINGRAM | JUNE 9, 2009 11:45 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Well said.

POSTED BY: LAURABERRY | JUNE 9, 2009 11:25 AM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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