

Plan Now

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

There is no doubt our current health care system has to change. Last year, the U.S. spent a total of \$2.3 *trillion* on health care.¹ In case you're not sure how much that is, that's \$2,300,000,000,000! (Just think about what the chiropractic profession could do with that kind of money.)

Using the above figure as reference, the U.S. currently spends 16 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on health care. This is expected to increase to \$4.2 trillion, or 20 percent of our GDP, in the next eight years.¹ That is more than any other Western country and twice as high (in terms of percentage of GDP) as what Canada spends (9.7 percent of GDP) on health care.²

Health care reform is at the top of the list for every presidential candidate. The question is not whether we will have health care reform. The question is, who will create the plan?

A few months ago, America's Health Insurance Plans, a Washington-based trade group for the health insurance companies, came out with its own plan to reduce health care expenditures by \$145 billion a year by 2015. According to the plan, this will be accomplished by expanding use of information about doctors, hospitals and treatments.³

According to one report, a national board would be created to compare the costs and effectiveness of new and existing drugs, devices and treatments, and share its conclusions with doctors and patients. The board would start as part of a government agency and eventually evolve into a private institution. The program would include payment incentives for doctors and hospitals that choose the most efficient care.

Sounds like a reasonable idea, depending on who gets to make the rules. That obviously is the frightening part. Who will make the rules? With as much as \$4 trillion at stake every year, you can be certain plenty of effort will go into influencing who makes the rules. Many lobbying groups already have seen the handwriting on the wall and are well into pursuing their share of a pie that is *almost five times larger than the defense budget*.

Where chiropractic care falls in the ultimate health care reform plan is crucial to our future in this country. We need to do everything we can to ensure those who are ultimately involved in forging our health care reform plan understand the value of chiropractic care. They need to recognize there are no substitutes for the care provided by the 60,000 doctors of chiropractic across the country.

What should your role be? It's actually quite simple. Do whatever you can! There is much to do. If you can support the chiropractic lobbying effort financially, please do so. If you can't, please take the time to do the things that require the contribution of time. Both time and money are very important. The lobbying is well underway, but the players still are being decided.

The chiropractic profession is under the gun to move quickly as the newly elected politicians focus on the issue. Stay abreast of the national effort to include chiropractic in the coming health care

reform. Be ready to participate in your community.

References

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3. Goldstein A. Health insurers press plan to save U.S. \$145 billion. Bloomberg.com. www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=akNXGDCQW4Z0.

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