

Single Payer/Medicare For All is a moral and economic imperative if Americans, American Businesses, and America are going to continue as leaders on the world stage. Denying healthcare and/or billing exorbitant mysterious prices dehumanizes and unjustly judges the worthy and the unworthy. Time magazine ran an article this year with the fact that American babies are less likely to survive their first year than babies in other rich countries. “More U.S. women are dying from pregnancy or childbirth complications today than in recent history, causing alarm stateside as maternal mortality drops worldwide.” Americans did NOT vote to stop the Affordable Care Act. Trump stated time after time. “I want to get rid of Obama Care.” “We are going to have something much better.” “I will protect coverage for preexisting conditions.” Meanwhile the justice department is supporting Texas and 19 other states attempt to declare the Affordable Care Act Unconstitutional, including protections for preexisting conditions. 28 -36% of adults in Ohio have preexisting conditions.

We have tried private for profit health insurance since WWII. We have listened to experts and health insurance companies. Each new change HMO, PPO, Medicare Advantage is offered with the promise of lowering prices and the prices come down for a while and then go up and up. This will never happen as long as the incentive for health insurance companies is making money for stockholders. Sir William Osler wrote, “Medical Care must be provided with the utmost efficiency. To do less is a disservice to those we treat and an injustice to those we might have treated.” Our system is the most expensive least effective system in the advanced world by almost every measure. David Himmelstein M.D. wrote, “ if you can make money by manipulating the system, whom you care for, what you do; we distort the system and inflate the costs and we can’t make it work.” ? It is possible to analyze the true cost of an item add a fair profit and come to a price agreement. Capitalism is not working for many health care prices. It is obvious the companies are charging what they can get away with and matching prices.

It is time to get rid of the for profit health insurance system and cover every American or every Ohioan with single payer. We now pay approximately \$10,000 per year for every individual's health care in the U.S. This number includes children with much lower costs and Medicare patients with much higher usage and much higher total costs. Approximately 31.3 million Americans under the age of 65 do not have health insurance. Providing health care for all of them would cost a maximum of \$312 billion. The \$250 billion dollars just from the insurance tax cut goes a long way toward covering all of the uninsured. We have by far the most complicated payment system in the world. For every M.D. in the U.S. there are 6 clinical and 10 administrative jobs. Elizabeth Rosenthal reports that..."Once one drugmaker, one hospital, one doctor says, "Hey we could charge \$10,000 for that procedure or that medicine." Maybe it was \$5,000 two months ago, but once everyone sees that someone's getting away with charging \$10,000, the prices all go up to that sticky ceiling." One year of treatment with the medication Ocrevus for multiple sclerosis costs \$65. A Mercedes Benz costs \$32,000 to \$66,000. Our car companies Ford and GM have both reported spending more for health care for their employees than they spend on steel! Starbucks spends more for healthcare insurance than it spends on coffee beans! "While non-health care industries typically might employ 100 full-time equivalents to collect payment for \$1 billion in services, health care employs an astounding 770 full-time-equivalents per \$1 billion of physician services." [2/20/2018](#)

Finally, every comprehensive study of single payer health care versus our current for profit system demonstrate considerable savings in a single payer system. The savings are found in administrative waste, medication prices, physician office billing, and negotiating the true cost of care. Prozen and Cutler estimated \$383 in savings in 2010. Woohandler and Himmelstein estimated \$616 in 2017. This is enormously important. Most of the stagnation in American wages is more than made up for with holding the line on health care costs. The total federal budget is around 4 trillion dollars. The total health care costs in the U.S, are well over 3 trillion dollars. The single most important thing we can do for our economy, our employers, and our fellow Americans is Single Payer Health Care. Let Ohio lead the way! Respectfully submitted Cris Elstro RN, MSN