

## **Title: The Critical Number One Unanswered Healthcare Question**

OP-Ed: The Critical Number One Healthcare Question No One Will Answer

By Elizabeth Lee Vliet, M.D. ©8-17-09

As a physician, I have been immersed in the healthcare reform issue for a long, long time. Even with all my work and study on this, I still do not have real answers to this crucial question. The President hasn't explained it. House and Senate leaders have not answered it. The only response has been "We need "reform," the current situation is "unsustainable."

To me, this question is so fundamental, I am shocked that no one is addressing it openly and honestly for the American people.

### **Why the desperate urgency to pass a thousand page healthcare bill in the summer of 2009 if it does not take effect until 2013?**

If it's so urgent a problem to fix that no one can take time to read and study the bill, or discuss alternatives, why on earth are we waiting *four years* to implement the bill once it is passed? That makes no sense.

Unless, of course, they do not want us to know what is *really* in the bill. Or, unless there is another agenda altogether.

There are actually lots of creative, effective ways to fix the medical insurance coverage problems without a take-over or revamping of 1/6 of our entire economy, without adding millions more people to a system that has no increase in doctors, nurses or hospitals to serve them, and without pushing to do such a massive task in less time than the President took to chose a family dog. But these alternative proposals are not seeing the light of day in the current political and media focus on saying the only options are the "status quo" or "Obamacare."

The American people deserve honest answers that make sense. Since I can not get answers from politicians, here are my thoughts on why no one wants to address this openly and debate alternative options. I think Democrats, and some Republicans, are refusing to answer this Number One question for political reasons. Let's look closely at the timeline.

**My answer.** I think there are several parts to the urgency in pushing to ram a healthcare bill through this year. Here is how I see the administration's strategy shaping up:

**Step 1:** If the bill does not take effect until 2013, that allows the Democrats a full 3 years until 2012 to develop a healthcare mantra for public consumption. I can hear the Campaign ads and rhetoric now: "See, the Republicans lied all along. See, you did not lose your doctors. See, you did not lose your private plan. See, we told you Medicare wouldn't change that much. See, you didn't get care denied. We kept our promise and got this healthcare mess fixed, and you didn't get hurt. The Republicans lied, so elect us again!"

**Step 2:** It's now 2012. People have short memory. They forget their concerns about the Healthcare Reform bill of 2009. Obama wins again. Democratic Senators and Representatives

also win on the same “We fixed healthcare” platform. After some losses in 2010, Democrats are back in the majority.

**Step 3:** It's now 2013. THE OTHER SHOE DROPS. The 2009 Healthcare Reform Bill now takes effect AFTER the 2012 Presidential and Congressional elections. ONLY NOW can the draconian changes start to occur because the Democrats have another four years of “supermajority” and complete control of power. Finally Americans begin to wake up and see that all those “Republican lies” are coming true. It is too late.

One by one, the predictions fall into place:

- Private insurance is no longer available as companies have been driven out of the market by the 2009 Healthcare Reform bill that imposed restrictions on private plans, mandated coverage rules, higher taxes, and employer penalties. 85 million Americans have lost their private medical insurance and have nothing left except the government run plan.
- Rationing is underway, everyone now has weeks and months waiting to get doctor appointments and diagnostics tests, just like Canadians, Europeans, and the British do now.
- Government now owns electronic medical records and patients' personal health information, records go to federal “czar” without your permission.
- Government now has access to bank accounts, supposedly for direct debit of health care premiums and co-pays. In reality, the Healthcare Reform bill of 2009 gave them access to personal accounts for anything.
- Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel's “Complete Lives System” has become the U.S. version of Britain's rationing board, NICE. Government experts now decide what care will be allowed for the very young (under 2), older people (over 50), and the disabled. Care is limited or denied based on your age and value to society, as decided by government “experts.”
- Physicians become paid by the government to have “end-of-life” discussions with their patients. Frequency of “end-of-life counseling” increases as people become older and sicker. Elderly people are pushed toward accepting hospice and “comfort care” to die, instead of being allowed treatment.

All of us who tried to warn about these risks will turn out to be right. It has happened in *every other nationalized health system on the planet*. These scenarios take place daily now in Britain, Canada, and Europe. But people in 2009 were confused and too “numb” to listen, or too naïve to believe that it COULD happen in America.

Now is the time to stop the juggernaut. 2013 will be too late.

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DISCLAIMER: Dr. Vliet speaks as an independent physician, not as an official spokesperson for any organization. Dr. Vliet has no financial ties to any health care system, pharmaceutical company, or health insurance plan. Her allegiance and advocacy is to and for patients.



Dr. Elizabeth Lee Vliet

Elizabeth Lee Vliet, M.D. is a women's health specialist who received her M.D. degree and internship in Internal Medicine at Eastern Virginia Medical School, then completed specialty training at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She received B.S. and M.Ed. degrees from The College of William and Mary in Virginia. Dr. Vliet is the 2007 recipient of The Voice of Women award from the Arizona Foundation for Women in recognition of her pioneering advocacy for the overlooked hormone connections in women's health. Dr. Vliet's books include: *It's My Ovaries, Stupid!; Screaming To Be Heard: Hormonal Connections Women Suspect-- And Doctors STILL Ignore; Women, Weight and Hormones; The Savvy Woman's Guide to PCOS*. Dr. Vliet is a seasoned expert commentator and a passionate fighter against government

takeover of health care in the proposed Health Care "Reform" that seeks to eliminate or penalize private options. Dr. Vliet's educational medical website is [www.herplace.com](http://www.herplace.com).

For more information on healthcare reform, Dr. Vliet suggests two patient advocate Web sites on healthcare: [www.JoinPatientsFirst.com](http://www.JoinPatientsFirst.com), [www.PatientsUnitedNow.com](http://www.PatientsUnitedNow.com), or the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons at [www.aapsonline.org](http://www.aapsonline.org).

**To book Dr. Vliet on interviews, or for permission to publish, email [Rose Henning](mailto:rosehenning@herplace.com) [rosehenning@herplace.com](mailto:rosehenning@herplace.com) or call 520-797-9131 (MST).**