

OP ED: The Number Two Unanswered Healthcare Question or What's The Government Doing Here At All?

By Elizabeth Lee Vliet, M.D. ©8-18-09

Healthcare reform has been a consuming focus of my time in reading, studying the issues, talking with experts, listening to my patients, and figuring out medical insurance options for me and my employees. Throughout this process, from the 2008 campaign through the 2009 summer of heated Town Hall debates, I am struck by the fact that there is an overarching question that keeps haunting me. It is such a fundamental question, I am amazed that it is not being addressed in open debate:

Why is the government even involved in healthcare at all, much less pushing to *take over* the private healthcare sector?

There is no enumerated power in the Constitution of the United States to give the federal government the authority to be involved in health care at all. Medicare is already an infringement of the 10th Amendment. Under the Constitution, it is the *states* that correctly should be overseeing this program, not the *federal* government.

Yet, President Obama has said publicly many times during the campaign that his goal is to have a *federal* single-payer (translate: government run and controlled) health care system. Federal control of healthcare has been a longstanding stated goal for many Democrats –from Senator Jay Rockefeller to Hillary Clinton to Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, to Senator Ted Kennedy and others.

The federal government already has all the *regulatory* powers it needs to be able to control what is done in the private sector. Why are Democrats seeking to violate the Constitution further and take *complete* control now of *private* healthcare? What could possibly explain this urgent and desperate push to *take over* the entire private healthcare sector, rather than simply modify the parts that need to be fixed? It makes no sense.

Unless, there is another agenda they are not admitting. For now, I will set aside the fundamental argument *against* federal involvement in healthcare. I will focus only on the “why” behind a push for a federally-run single-payer healthcare system. Here is how I see it.

Follow the money. Medicare and Medicaid are going broke now. The government has no money to bail them out. Plus, few in power are openly talking about what hits in 2011: the first of the “baby boomers,” turn 65 and become eligible for Medicare. Baby boomers –those born between 1946 and 1964 –will add another *76 million* to the Medicare rolls. And that's *before* the current push to extend Medicare-type coverage to millions as a “public option.”

On top of more people coming into Medicare, there is the devastating deficit we now face. Since January 20, 2009, the Democrats in control of the White House *and* both

houses of Congress, have passed legislation that *increased* the federal deficit to more than 11 *trillion dollars* (\$11,674,435,708,805.72 as of mid-day August 16, 2009, to be exact).

The federal deficit is now greater than the deficits of *all US presidents combined*, from George Washington to George W. Bush. The federal government is broke! The government can only print so much money, or tax us so much to raise what is needed to cover the staggering deficits *plus* cover more Medicare beneficiaries. The federal government desperately needs to get its hands on more money.

So, *follow the money*. What's another source of revenues the federal government currently does *not* control? **The *private* healthcare sector.** It's the only component of our current healthcare system with money!

I believe the *real* reason the government wants to take over healthcare is simple. The government needs the money that is currently in the private sector. Once everyone is swept into the public, taxpayer-funded system, the federal government will have all of this additional money under their control.

This to me is the only reason that makes sense for the current administration totally refusing to listen to some excellent and viable alternative options to fix *only what is "broken"*...payment and insurance issues for those with pre-existing conditions or those between jobs who can't get private insurance.

Since no one is answering this fundamental question, I have come to the following conclusions I think are obvious:

1. The plan all along has been to take over all of healthcare to create a government run single-payer system that controls costs and saves money by rationing and denying care. President Obama, Professor Jacob Hacker, and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, and many other Democrats have all clearly stated this goal in multiple settings over many years.
2. Our Constitutional right to life and (medical) liberty will be lost. Elected officials will sell out the American people to give the federal government control of private revenues.
3. Everyone, except the anointed and exempted ones (the President, Congress, and certain Unions), will be waiting in long lines just as has been the case under every nationalized, government run healthcare system on the planet.
4. Everything will cost more as the government keeps printing more and more money to pay the debt. We will have less and less money to spend on things we would like to use our money for, as we instead send more and more to the IRS in taxes. We will shortly reach the 60-70% tax burdens of Europe.

We need to get back to our roots: every American *citizen* deserves to *keep* the right to choose how, when, where, and with whom we seek our healthcare.

There are many ways to do just that and achieve the common sense goals most people think we should aim for:

- individual choice and patient empowerment
- reduction of government interference and regulations that artificially increase health insurance premiums and costs of medical services
- free market competition across state lines for individuals to buy their own medical insurance
- patient ownership of their medical insurance policies
- reaffirmation of the physician-patient relationship to make medical decisions without third party interference –private insurers *or* government bureaucrats.

The Declaration of Independence and our Constitution guarantees each of us the inalienable rights endowed by our Creator to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We cannot not have any of these, if the federal government controls our healthcare.

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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.



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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.

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

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