

# It is time to quit talking and start working on health care

It seems that there is now more talk in America about health care than there is action to change it.

I know, I'm a cynic. It takes a lot of planning to make a big change in something as important as health care. But over a year into President Clinton's term of office, there has still been no concrete proposal sent to Congress for them to mull over.

It's just a war of words.

Sure, I guess that the constant supply of back-and-forth arguments between the insurance companies and Hillary Rodham-Clinton could pass for a debate, but let's be serious. How is America benefiting from the banter between these two camps? They aren't.

Probably the most visible aspect of the health care debate is the series of television ads put on by a coalition of insurance companies that more or less advocates the status quo.

I'm really getting quite sick of their ads. You've probably seen them. They show a husband and wife whose normal, everyday functional family lifestyle entails doing nothing but ripping on the Clinton health care plan. (They even have a copy that just sits on the coffee table.)



ROBBIE REEVES

They always start something like "How was work today? You know, I was thinking about the new health care plan, and I just can't believe that they are actually thinking about putting a cap on health care..."

I have seen those two actors so much that I hope that someone caps their health care and pulls them from the TV screen. The insurance companies need a new schtick, and soon.

Maybe it is just blind idealism, but I believe that everyone should have access to health care, and to be able to get insurance at reasonable rates. Health care shouldn't just be limited to those that make a ton of money every year, but to everyone. And Clinton's proposed health care plan is a step in the right direction. But much more needs to be done.

The recently-passed Oregon Health Plan is now in the

process of getting uninsured Oregonians, many of whom haven't had health insurance for years, insured. It would be great if a similar movement could be undertaken throughout the country.

Republicans often complain that this big capitalistic bastion called America shouldn't want anything like socialized medicine, or a plan that is even close to the Canadian plan. But what is wrong with the Canadian plan? Everyone has access to health care, and everyone is insured. Patients have to pay certain expenses such as eyeglasses and some elective surgeries, but just about everything else is covered.

If that is the case, and more people would be able to have access to medical care, then I am totally in favor of a Canadian system. I would be in favor of a North Korean system if more people could be served than today. I don't care if the system is capitalistic, socialistic, or, for that matter, communistic. I doubt that people bleeding to death care about the political philosophy of their health care plan if someone in the emergency room can apply a tourniquet.

Of course, the Canadian plan

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has not been perfect. There have been occasional delays in medical treatment in non-emergency cases. But then, no plan, no matter how well-thought out, will ever be perfect. Doctors aren't perfect, nor are nurses, hospitals, patients, or society in general. So why should we expect any more from a health care plan?

Clinton is right on target when he says that fixing health care extends beyond the health care system itself. It requires reducing gun violence and other injurious crime, working to end poverty, and increasing preventative medicine. And taking these actions, in return, would reduce the costs of health care by ensuring that people would

be able to get health care immediately (and at a lower cost) when they need help, rather than showing up in the emergency room sometime to get major treatment (which, of course, costs more).

Those that campaign against any change at all (like the insurance companies and many conservatives, for example) should be ashamed of themselves. Just because they are fortunate enough to have medical insurance and a good doctor doesn't mean that they should assume that the same applies for everyone else. It doesn't. Just look at the response of all the uninsured that have flooded the application lines to the Oregon Health Plan. Doesn't that speak for itself?

Now all we need is a plan. Not rumors about what might be in a plan, like we have been getting from Washington for the past year, but a plan. And there needs to be constructive action from all involved, rather than the vacuous and utterly petty exchange of insults, threats, and scare tactics.

People need a new health care plan. They need it now. Let's get on with it.

*Robbie Reeves is a columnist for the Emerald.*

## LETTERS

### Wrong quote

John Davidson's quote of Burl Ives in a letter to the editor last week (ODE, Feb. 25) was a little off. The real words are: "Mr. Rabbit, Mr. Rabbit, your ears are mighty long; Yes bless God, they're put on wrong. Every little soul must shine, shine. Every little soul must shine, shine."

I grew up with Burl Ives, too — great guy.

Sandy O'Malley  
Accounting

### Bad Bono

Recently, the lead singer of U2 received a Grammy, and for his acceptance speech he told the youth of America to "fuck establishment!" The audience cheered him. What the audience failed to realize is that Bono is being a hypocrite.

This "establishment," which allowed him to enter this coun-

try, capitalize on banging bongos and plucking strings and make millions, is the very establishment that he's telling everyone to "fuck." U2 has some cool tunes, and Bono may be considered by some a good poet, but he is no social architect to be telling people what they ought to do to the establishment of this country, especially when he is benefiting from it. I can only hope that the millions of people who listen to U2's song lyrics, as if they are the gospel truth, will see their way around Bono's abstraction of establishment and realize what a social misfit Bono really is.

We are the establishment and dregs like Bono shouldn't be tolerated for spreading words of social disorder in our mainstream media. The people of this country determine who they want as social figures, and somehow Bono found his way into that position. I hope the people who supported him to get there

realize they created Frankenstein.

John Eccleston  
Eugene

### Irish history

Yes, I am white but I am not Euro-American.

I am Irish-American. As an Irish-American student, I have encountered numerous injustices at the University.

There is no Irish student union here. There is no Irish representation in the ASUO. And I am damn tired of being stereotyped as a Guinness-guzzling, potato-eating, Euro-centric, IRA terrorist Mick.

So as a member of an oppressed minority at the University, I would like to propose an Irish history month to raise awareness of the Celtic people. Also, there needs to be more Celtic instructors on campus.

I would also like to see at least

one Celtic history class added to the required curriculum for University students.

It's time for the Celtic minori-

ty to fight for an end to this oppression! Erin Go Braugh!

Mike Shannon  
RTMD

## CORRECTIONS

Two typographical errors in the letter of Nawab Chakaar (ODE, March 8) altered its meaning. The correct sentences should have read, "It is the duty of all humans to fight against injustice and to teach tolerance and be able to coexist peacefully with all people..." and "...tyrants...kept in power by Western governments, who are preaching democracy on one hand, and on the other hand (like in Algeria's democratic elections, where an Islamic party won) it is discouraged."

Typographical errors in the letter of Rachel Rubin (ODE, March 8) altered its meaning. The correct sentences should have read, "We believe that this act was completely counterproductive to any idea of peace..."

"By autonomy I mean that a Palestinian state that is fully governed by the Palestinians themselves with those exiled allowed to return at will. We, at the Jewish Student Union, are willing to do whatever is necessary to hasten the day when Palestinians no longer are under the rule of Israeli military."

The Emerald regrets the errors and inconvenience they may have caused.

University Theatre Presents

The Illusion

by Pierre Corneille  
adapted by Tony Kushner

February 10 - 12, April 3, 4, 5, 11, 12  
Rushmore Theatre, 140-142

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# March 10-11

10:00 am - 2:00 pm • EMU Suite 5