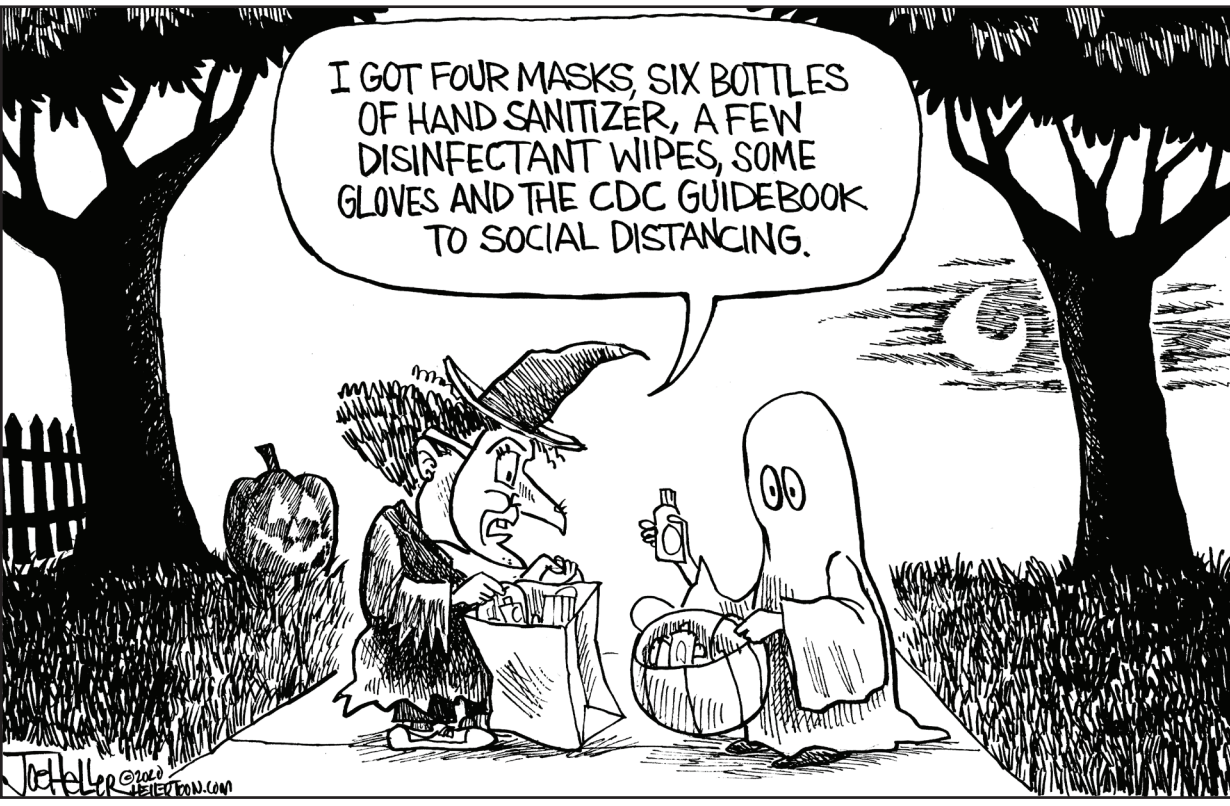


Cottage Grove Sentinel
 116 N. Sixth St.
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

Opinion

The First Amendment
 Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



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Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must: 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:

nhickson@cgsentinel.com

Wrong healthcare questions are still being asked



monwealth Fund naming us *dead last* among the top 11 industrialized countries for overall healthcare dollar-for-dollar.

While there are many reasons for healthcare's

only 900 beds.

The reason?

Billing specialists are needed to determine how to bill the varying requirements of multiple insurers.

Why the need for multi-

next 10 years.

Imagine the money American taxpayers would save if those on Medicare could benefit from the same Medicaid-negotiated drug prices?

One has to wonder why Congress is so opposed to weighing in on controlling the cost of prescription drugs and healthcare as a whole, and what — if any — role those who benefit most from that \$3 trillion industry play in that decision.

As taxpayers, we are America's shareholders — and Congress is our board of directors. It's time we ask why the board of America, Inc., isn't pursuing a more cost-effective healthcare plan that will guarantee a better return on our investment, which in this case literally puts lives at stake physically and financially.

Rather than bickering over ways to pay the astronomical costs associated with healthcare and prescription drugs, Congress needs to slow down and address the issue of controlling those costs in the first place.

Establishing affordable healthcare isn't as much about how to pay more but about how to pay *less*.

From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

astronomical costs in this country — from defensive medicine practices for avoiding lawsuits, to the "branding" of healthcare providers similar to designer clothing (the bigger the name, the more money they can demand from insurance companies) — the same two cost factors rise to the top of the list:

- Administrative costs.
- Drug costs.

WHO studies, Consumer Reports and even health economists like David Cutler at Harvard University agree that those two factors are the driving forces behind skyrocketing healthcare costs. On average, 25 percent of healthcare dollars go to cover administrative fees.

In an interview on the PBS News Hour, Cutler gave the example of Duke University Hospital, which has 1,300 billing clerks and

ple insurers? Because more and more, single insurers can't cover the rising costs of medical procedures and drug prescriptions, particularly at a time when the median age in America is 40.

In most countries, government negotiates drug prices with drug makers, which virtually guarantees lower prices. However, when Congress created Medicare Part D, it specifically denied Medicare the right to negotiate drug prices. At the same time, the Veterans Administration and Medicaid aren't under the same restriction and pay the lowest drug prices.

According to Congress's own Budget Office, if Medicare Part D recipients received the same discount as Medicaid recipients, the federal government would save \$116 billion over the

LETTERS

Public input needed for new homeless camp

I am curious as to why there has been no discussion concerning the new homeless town being constructed behind the post

office.

From what I understand, this facility will contain 15 plastic private suites for the homeless which will be heated, have wi-fi, fenced in for security, have Bucks

toilets supplied, possibly a mobile shower facility and food.

I think this should have been brought to the public's attention before being done.

Many people in this community do not want a first-class homeless shelter to attract new homeless to Cottage Grove.

—Stephen Nisewander
 Cottage Grove



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