

## WHY SINGLE PAYER, UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE WILL IMPROVE OUR ECONOMIC HEALTH

**Single-payer** is the system most industrial countries use to provide all their citizens with health insurance. It is a health care *payment* system whose name comes from the fact that doctors and hospitals are paid by one organization. It is not socialized medicine. Like Medicare, health care providers are still independent, fee-for-service, private practitioners (not government employees).

**IT COSTS LESS AND PROVIDES MORE** (which is why the rest of the developed world uses it):

- **It saves time and money** because it simplifies the health care system enormously. Care is already authorized and one card works for all citizens, all doctors, and all hospitals. Doctors and nurses have more time to care for patients and no one has to wait to see if their HMO will approve coverage for this procedure from this doctor. The BILLIONS of dollars saved on paper-pushing can then be used to care for people's health. Consequently, studies show that citizens in single-payer systems have more doctor visits and more hospital days than in the US.
- **It increases choice and frees everyone from fear.** Patients can go to any doctor they want (instead of getting a list from your HMO telling you which doctor you're allowed to see). Worries go down because health care is **guaranteed** even if you change or lose your job. And, **everything is covered**: dental, vision, prescription drug, hospital, long-term care, mental health, and supplies. Employers don't have to worry about the high costs of private health insurance or whether a worker they want to hire has a pre-existing condition. An American single-payer system would also have **no lines** as in some countries because we have an oversupply of providers and infrastructure.
- **It is affordable.** Since the current corporate-profit system costs 50 to 100% more for administration than single payer systems, federal studies by the Congressional Budget Office and the General Accounting office show that single payer universal health care would save \$100 - \$200 Billion per year even *after* increasing health care benefits and covering all the uninsured.
- **It would help relieve budget shortfalls and might reduce taxes.** According to *USA Today*, state and local governments face an estimated \$1 trillion in obligations for private insurance for current and retired civil workers. In contrast, Massachusetts and Connecticut have shown that single payer would save them 1 to 2 Billion dollars per year of total medical expenses even after increasing health care benefits and covering all the uninsured. A recent New York state study estimated that property taxes could be reduced an estimated 15% to 30 %, if state and local employees and retirees were covered by a single payer system instead of their current private plans.
- **It saves a ton of money by buying prescription drugs in huge bulk quantities,** Hint: Canadians get the same drugs we use at much cheaper price because Canada does this.

### **IT WOULD ALSO ACT AS AN ECONOMIC STIMULUS:**

According to a recent study (see [CalNurses.org](http://CalNurses.org)), establishing a national single-payer health care system would create **2.6 million new jobs**, and infuse **\$317 billion in new business** and public revenues, with another **\$100 billion in wages** into the U.S. economy.

Single-payer systems produce a huge increase in jobs and wages because the biggest economic benefits come from the actual delivery of health care, not the purchase of insurance. Every direct health care dollar creates almost three additional dollars in the economy. Health care now:

- Generates 45 million jobs, directly and in other industries.
- Accounts for 10.5% of all U.S. jobs and 12.1% of all U.S. wages.
- Contributes about 25% of all federal tax revenues. Federal, state, and local taxes from the health care sector in 2006 added up to \$824 billion.

## AMERICA URGENTLY NEEDS A SINGLE-PAYER SYSTEM TO SAVE OUR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HEALTH.

- **Medical bills contribute to one-half of all personal bankruptcies.** Millions of Americans with insurance have coverage so skimpy that a major illness leads to financial ruin. The number of Americans unable to afford medical coverage now exceeds 47 million.
- **Exorbitant health care costs now threaten the competitiveness of U.S. businesses and workers.** American businesses are at an economic disadvantage, because their health costs are so much higher than in other countries. The Canadian branches of Ford, GM, and Daimler-Chrysler all support Canada's health care system because it saves them an enormous amount of money, compared to their counterparts in the US.
- **Single-payer would also end the current disgraceful practice of insurance companies refusing to pay** for medical treatment or engaging in price gouging that discourages patients from going to the doctor, seeing specialists, or getting diagnostic procedures in a timely manner.

## THE CORPORATE PROFITEER SYSTEM IS DRAGGING US DOWN: BECAUSE IT COSTS MORE AND WORKS WORSE

- It has diverted billions of health care dollars to administrative overhead, outrageous incomes for CEOs, and huge profits for stockholders.
- It has failed to contain health care costs, despite the fact that its primary goal is to *limit* access, *not adequately cover* needs.
- It pressures doctors and hospitals in ways that directly affect the kind of service provided, virtually always to the detriment of the patient.
- **It is outrageously expensive, yet quality health care is deteriorating under its rule.** Despite spending more than twice as much as the rest of the industrialized nations (\$7,129 per capita), the US ranking on most major health indicators has declined during the reign of corporate profiteers. For example, under today's corporate profit insurance system, the U.S.:
  - Ranks 67<sup>th</sup> in the world for providing health care (just behind Botswana);
  - Ranks 21<sup>st</sup> in life expectancy for men and 20<sup>th</sup> for women, both down from 1<sup>st</sup> in 1945.
  - Ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> in infant mortality, down from 12<sup>th</sup> in 1960;
- It spreads lies about the "horrors of socialized medicine" so it can continue to maximizing CEO and shareholder profits at the expense of Americans health.

Myth One: The U.S. has the best health care system in the world because it is market-based.

