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The death panels are here already

>By BByByBy Ann Rosen Spector, PhD.

The new health care plan is not going to be a miracle. As flawed as a compromise plan will be, we can't stay with the hodgepodge system we have.

The Republicans tried to scare the American people from supporting health care reform by hissing, "The death panels!" Sarah Palin, with her gift for in-depth analysis of the issues, said on her Facebook page in August that she didn't want Obama's bureaucrats deciding who was worthy of health care.

Fine. Does that mean she and her supporters think the bureaucrats in the insurance industry are better equipped to make those decisions? For that's what we have now. Their interest in health care appears less than my interest in knowing all the state capitals. Their interest is in profit.

Notice how many events insurance companies sponsor and how lush their corporate boxes are at the stadiums. Who pays for that? Your insurance premiums help a lot. Salaries of executives are high, but the reimbursement for health care providers is based on quantity, not quality. A physician who has just completed his residency is paid the same amount for any procedure as a person with decades of experience.

If that's not health policy, what is?

Harvard surgeon Atul Gawande recently wrote, our current health care delivery system is "fragmented, disorganized, and inconsistent." The new health care plans, he said, at least try to improve that in the same way the FDA improved American agriculture over the last century by trying pilot programs and seeing what works.

The idea of health care for all was first discussed in the US in 1916 so we are hardly rushing into anything.

Health care is being rationed now; we kid ourselves if we think it isn't. We need to rethink how health care is funded and administered. Start from scratch rather than using duct tape and spit.

ones or the very real ones who are making non-medical, money money decisions every day?

Be afraid. Be afraid now. Unless your relatives or very close friends are the head of insurance companies.

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