

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Too many corporations lose their moral compass

I was interested in learning the connection between the low administrative costs of Medicare vs. private insurers. According to reliable sources such as Forbes, Reuters, Washington Post and others, I gathered some very disturbing information.

Just Google William McGuire, the former CEO of one of the largest health insurers in this country, UnitedHealth Group. While he drew a salary of \$8 million a year, he also enjoyed stock options of \$1.6 billion. He was investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission. In 2007 he agreed to forgo \$420 million in compensation and benefits.

Another interesting character in the health care reform protest is Rick Scott. He is the multimillionaire investor and controversial former hospital CEO of Columbia/HCA. Rick is leading the reform opposition with CPR (Conservatives for Patient's Rights) ads on TV. He is using \$5 million of his own money and up to \$15 million more from supporters to resist a government-run program. He is using the same PR firm that masterminded the "Swift Boat" attacks against John Kerry in the 2004 election. Columbia/HCA eventually pleaded guilty to charges that it overbilled state and federal health plans, paying a record \$1.7 billion in fines. He was ousted from the board in 1997.

I am grateful for Medicare, the government-run health program. Wall Street and too many corporations have lost their moral compass. I wonder how many uninsured could be covered from the egregiously excessive corporate profits and CEO salaries.

Florence Hammelev

No reason to panic about swine flu

Stress and anxiety can lower your immune system's defenses, leaving your body vulnerable to sicknesses, including the swine flu. The last thing we need to do is literally worry ourselves sick over catching the flu. Schools are doing little to ease parents' fears, either. Rather, they are catering to the same people who come into Walgreens asking for surgical masks and Tamiflu as preventative measures.

The best way to prevent swine flu is to follow the same cleanliness standards that prevent seasonal flu: washing your hands, covering your mouth and using hand sanitizer. You can also wipe down surfaces with antibacterial wipes to prevent the spread of sickness in your home. As always, eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and stay home from work or school if you are sick. At the onset of symptoms, visit your doctor, who may prescribe an antiviral drug, such as Tamiflu, to prevent influenza complications.

So do not freak out, and do not let other people freak out, either. We should not deny our children a public education because we were too cowardly to take the simple preventative measures necessary to keep them healthy. School districts should not be closing just because a few kids are sick, and doing so only fuels the panic.

Kaitlyn Wierzchowski

Congress should share its health plan with us

I totally disagree with Aurora Simonelli in her recent VOP. She claims that 89 percent of Americans are happy with their health care coverage. Where does that figure come from? Made up, no doubt. I bet you can't even find 89 Kenoshans who are happy with their health care coverage. Government meddling in the health care mess is no panacea either. The biggest lobby groups out there are doctors and insurers. We know the drill. We pay more and get less. Why does it have to be that way? Obama got elected to make a change. Now that was a mandate. Of course, there was no way any health care reform would have been accomplished under Bush or even McCain. Our country's government needs to step up and take better care of its citizens across the board. Indeed, focus on stamping out fraud, guaranteeing coverage for all, simplify the legal end and work on improving people's lifestyles. Our Congress has voted themselves a fabulous package that they have enjoyed for years. It is time they share it with the rest of us.

Michael Rasmussen

Editor's note: Letters are welcome. They can be sent to "Voice of the People," the Kenosha News, 5800 Seventh Ave., Kenosha, WI, 53140, or e-mailed to vop@kenoshanews.com. Letters should be written as concisely as possible and should not exceed 275 words. Letters must be signed with name, address and phone number. Names will be withheld on request. Writers are limited to one letter per month. Please include a recent photo of yourself if you would like one to run with the letter.



