

Two local examples of how America's health system is broken

A youngster visits his Otolaryngologist (hearing doctor) for a routine examination and is billed \$175 for the consultation, of which his insurance company pays \$145. He came from the barber shop and he mentions that he has an itch in his ear. The doctor takes a look, removes a hair with tweezers, and adds a charge of \$215 for "*Foreign body removal external ear canal*" of which the insurance company is charged the full amount.

The second procedure costs the patient nothing, so why even be concerned, let alone object? Why chance alienating a physician, someone you may encounter socially some day?

Here's why. The year earlier the cost of his father's employer's insurance plan went up 44%. In order to reduce the cost to a 11% increase, the protection was diminished by requiring a \$2000 deductible for hospital treatment. Two-thousand dollars is a huge figure – perhaps unattainable – for the desk clerks, the room attendants, the grounds keepers, the cooks and servers covered by the policy. Because of excessive health care costs, in part as exemplified above, they have been deprived of the peace of mind and essential health coverage that they had in the past. For many, \$2000 deductible is equivalent to no coverage whatsoever!

An isolated example? In the same family the father considered a tooth implant. He was told by his long

time dentist that the cost would be \$1900 up front just for the surgery portion. When asked how long the procedure would take, he was advised two hours. Assuming that the dentist was not caring for any other patient over the course of the time, the almost a thousand dollars an hour rate comes to revenue of around \$40,000 a week or \$2 million a year. Even assuming lesser earnings per hour for other procedures and factoring in overhead, it still implies that the dentist is netting a huge amount of money each year, approaching seven figures.

(Doctors working in fields such as public health and infective diseases may be ill paid.)

While other advanced nations provide superior health care for a high of 12% of Gross National Product, the USA is spending 17% and still climbing. As a result, there simply is not enough savings in the economy for investment, modernization, education and social services.

So long as patients don't care what they are charged because they are insured, and insurance companies don't really care because they can up their rates, and doctors and hospital must spend a huge share of their revenues on unnecessary paper work and liability insurance, there exists no incentive for the practice of preventive medicine, and many are being over-paid for their work, our nation will be bled dry and continue down the road to second class status.

Library Task Force report available next week

The morning of September 8th looms large for those anxiously awaiting the fate of the public libraries throughout the county.

The Library Task Force will submit its official Report at the 9:15 AM weekly meeting of the

County Commissioners that takes place at their offices at 150 North Queen Street.

Copies of the report will be available to the public at that time. *NewsLanc* plans to have a representative present.

Conestoga View: Heard on the street

While the Watchdog was passing our newsletter (which he does a couple of hours a week), a long time employee of Conestoga View stopped to tell him what a tremendous improvement the new ownership was over the former county ownership.

He described the millions of dollars of investments being made to expand and update the common areas and the guest rooms.

He volunteered *“This wouldn’t have ever happened with county ownership. Whenever we asked them for improvements, the answer was ‘There is no money.’”*

LETTER: Restore Dick Shellenberger’s and Molly Henderson’s good names

“Lastly, let us resolve to do better in the future”
[from *NewsLanc*’s article]

“No. I do not agree. Before we come to this last item of a resolution for the future, before we can move on, the damage done to the reputations and leadership positions of two very good and honest people needs to be restored. If we do not, we teach a horrible lesson to any future office holder which is to forget the public interest, forget your fiduciary

responsibility, forget your personal integrity, when very powerful private interests oppose you.

Some would say that most everyone has learned that cynical lesson already and which is the reason for the corruption that is so rampant in our entire political system. If that is the history we want for Lancaster County, if that is the legacy the power players want to leave behind, then Lancaster County will be disgraced...”

NEW ERA: The editorial “‘Fee for service,’ courtesy of Sturla” huffs “[State Rep. Mike Sturla] points out that 73 percent of residents, with their own police departments, pay for state police coverage for the 21 percent who don’t have their own departments (6 percent have par-time state police service)....All that Sturla is doing is asking that the remaining 27 percent pay twice, too. That only makes a bad situation worse.”

WATCHDOG: Did the editorial writer fail to make it through grammar school math? If 100% pay their fair share, the 73% who now are paying the entire bill will pay less in the future! The above is just plain mean spirited, unless the writer is really that dumb.

**The above have been excerpted from NewsLanc.com.
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