



Providing quality health care a moral imperative

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“The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll last week found strong voter antipathy for how (President Donald) Trump is handling health care and for the sunken House GOP bill,” Alan Fram reported in the Sunday Daily News. “That included widespread worry that people would lose coverage and opposition to its higher premiums for older people, smaller subsidies for lower earners and cuts in Medicaid aid for the poor.”

A lot of people are understandably outraged at the prospect of losing the baseline health coverage they are currently receiving under the Affordable Care Act. And any alternative that requires panhandling on the street for medical treatment that should be readily available to everyone in the richest nation on earth should be enthusiastically rejected.

Contrary to the misguided beliefs of many of our legislators, providing quality health care to everyone who needs it – regardless of their ability to pay – is not an economic problem with moral repercussions. Rather, it is a moral imperative with economic implications. There is a huge difference.

No American should ever be denied medical treatment because they can’t pay for it – just as no American should ever be forced into bankruptcy because of a catastrophic injury or illness. As is the case with individuals, where societies choose to allocate their resources is a reflection of their core values. Personal responsibility and initiative are important, but not as important as our collective obligation to take care of the least among us.

In the final analysis, individual lives are worth more than political ideologies or financial institutions. When people are hurting and scared, the last thing they need is yet another condescending and patronizing lecture from our elected representatives on how the free market will somehow miraculously provide medical treatment to people who legitimately can’t afford it.

Aaron W. Hughey
Bowling Green

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