

Health Care for the 21st Century: A Call to Action

Screening & Discussion Guide

Health Care for the 21st Century: A Call to Action is a 45-minute DVD presentation featuring Dr. John Kitzhaber, former two-term governor of Oregon and author of the Oregon Health Plan. Dr. Kitzhaber speaks passionately about our health care crisis, and points the way forward to health coverage for everyone using the public money already being spent on health care.

Background & Purpose

The Archimedes Movement is a grassroots, nonpartisan organization established to bring citizens together to face common challenges. The purpose of this presentation is to create public awareness about the problems affecting our current health care system, and to get citizens talking about redesigning a whole new system. The DVD is a starting point for that conversation. It defines the problem, brings understanding to our complex and confusing health care system, and empowers Oregonians to make it better.

A solution is already underway. *We Can Do Better* is the name of the Archimedes Movement's health care reform effort. Our strategy is to start with change in Oregon, through the Oregon Better Health Act, and to take it nationwide. The details of the new health care system are still being deliberated, so there's no better time to get involved. The Archimedes Movement gives everyone a voice, and we need everyone to join the discussion. The comments and perspectives shared through meetings and forums are what will inevitably shape our new system.

I'm the presenter. What do I do?

It's easy. Simply show the DVD, answer questions, and encourage everyone to join the Archimedes Movement. Our goal is 10,000 members statewide. You don't need to be an expert (that's why we made the DVD). The goal is simply to get people to think and talk. The DVD can be shown in any setting—formal or informal, public or private—from town hall meetings to your own living room.

Step 1: Prepare the Screening

You will need . . .

- ✓ a place and time
- ✓ a mix of people (friends, co-workers, colleagues)
- ✓ the DVD
- ✓ audiovisual equipment (TV, DVD player, computer, Power Point projector, etc.)
- ✓ sign-up forms, postcards, and information about the Archimedes Movement.

How much time will I need?

About 1½ hours, including time for questions and discussion.

Step 2: Prepare Yourself

Review the Frequently Asked Questions.

(See next page). It's a good idea to keep a copy on hand for reference during the presentation.

Review the DVD and Archimedes Movement

web site. These issues are extremely complex, and you won't know the answers to every question. However, familiarizing yourself with the material can help you feel less nervous.

Be prepared to actively facilitate the conversation.

Some will want to process their thoughts and feelings. Some may even share their personal health care stories. These stories can be very compelling, but you may need to be gently assertive to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

“It's not a partisan issue. A heart attack knows no party registration or political philosophy.”

—John Kitzhaber, M.D.



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At the Screening

Introduction

Start by giving a brief summary about the DVD and *We Can Do Better*, the health care reform effort of the Archimedes Movement. Mention that there will be time for questions after the screening, and that you will provide information about how to get involved (see next page).

Conclusion

End by talking about how to get involved in supporting the Oregon Better Health Act. Distribute handouts and postcards, and mention the Archimedes Movement web site. This video can be viewed online, and a DVD is available to anyone wishing to host additional screenings.

Thanks for hosting!



The Archimedes Movement
1 Southwest Columbia Portland, OR 97258
(503) 807-8574
www.WeCanDoBetter.org
A project of the Archimedes Movement

Frequently Asked Questions

For more information visit the Archimedes Movement web site.

Why is this important?

- **The rising cost of health care is hurting U.S. employers.** Starbucks spends more on health care than it does on coffee beans; Ford spends more on health care than steel. Rising health care costs reduce the ability of U.S. employers to compete globally and makes it harder for them to pay higher wages to their employees.
- **Everyday working people can no longer afford health insurance.** More than 600,000 Oregonians are uninsured, and this number is growing. Three-quarters of those without insurance are working and paying taxes to support a system that doesn't benefit them.
- **The cost of health care is taking a growing portion of state budgets,** resulting in limited funds for public education (K-12 and higher education) and public safety. Young adults will also be left to deal with the massive national debt, which is being driven to a large extent by the cost of health care.
- **Medicare is headed for bankruptcy.** In just five years, more than 70 million baby boomers will soon be eligible for Medicare. This program already pays out more than it takes in. We cannot absorb the \$65 trillion debt that will follow.

Is this going to cost me more?

It already does. Health care costs continue to rise every year. The average amount that Americans pay in health insurance premiums has risen 73% since 2000, while workers' wages have only risen 20%. If we don't change the current system now, we know for sure this will continue.

Why should we provide everyone with access to health care?

It costs us all more—in both human and economic terms—to leave a large portion of the population unable to afford access to health services. Why? Because people who can't afford care still get it. When they get sick enough, they go to the emergency room where federal laws require they be seen and treated. There they receive care in perhaps the most expensive setting, often late in the course of their illness, when outcomes are poorer and the costs of treatment much higher. These costs are shifted to those who can pay through incremental increases in bills and premiums. Roughly 10% of an insurance premium is due to this cost shift. *(more)*

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How To Get Involved

Join the Archimedes Movement

The easiest and most important way to show your support is to join. There is no cost or commitment. Sign up at the screening, or visit www.WeCanDoBetter.org to join online.

Get Others to Join

Tell your friends, family, and co-workers about the Archimedes Movement.

Get Informed

Visit www.WeCanDoBetter.org to learn more about the latest developments, find out about chapter meetings, and discover what you can do to support the Oregon Better Health Act.

Join the Online Forum

At www.WeCanDoBetter.org you can continue the discussion and share your ideas with people from all over the state.

Join a Local Chapter

You can also continue the discussion by sharing your ideas and getting involved with a local Archimedes Movement chapter. Visit www.WeCanDoBetter.org to find a chapter in your area.



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Frequently Asked Questions—Continued

How are we going to pay for this?

We already have all the money we need. The problem is how it's spent. More than \$17 billion is spent on health care each year in Oregon alone, yet the health status of our population is not improving. We will start by reallocating the public dollars we currently spend on health care in a way that is more equitable, more efficient and more effective at achieving health. This includes Medicaid and Medicare. Another revenue source is the tax break currently given to businesses that provide health insurance to their employees.

Are you talking about taking away the tax break businesses get for providing health insurance coverage to employees?

We're talking about reducing the double-digit increases in health insurance premiums that are forcing many employers to pass costs to their employees or to drop coverage altogether. For employers offering coverage, health care is a cost of doing business. Fifty years ago, a tax benefit was established to offset this cost as an incentive for employers to offer health care to their employees. The problem is that today health care costs have risen to the point where they've started to outweigh this benefit, causing employers to drop coverage at the rate of over 4% percent each year. Our goal is to create a "core benefit" of health services not tied to employment. All Oregonians would be eligible for a basic coverage package and fairly contribute to its financing. This would relieve employers of a significant burden, while still leaving them the option to offer secondary insurance tailored to attract and retain the workforce they need.

What if I want more than basic coverage?

The Archimedes Movement supports a system in which we all contribute to the cost of a "core benefit" that everyone is eligible for. If you want to use your money to purchase health services above and beyond those included in the basic coverage package, you will be free to do so.

What are the details of the plan?

There is no plan yet. Since most of the public money spent on health is governed by federal laws, any state wanting to do something different must first seek permission to do so from the federal government. The Oregon Better Health Act is that first step. It will allow Oregon to seek the necessary authority from the federal government to use federal and state dollars in a way that makes sense to us. It does not commit to any

(more)

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The Current U.S. Health Care System: How We Got Here

Universal Access to a Defined Benefit: Using the Model of Public Education

Categorical Eligibility: Medicare, Medicaid and Work-Based Health Coverage

The Coverage Gap and Cost Shifting: How We Manage the System

A Case in Point: Douglas Schmidt's Story

Chapter 2

Imagine the Health Care System as it Should Be

Retro Design: Our Current Policies of Contradiction and Inequity

Chapter 3

Taking Control of Our Health Care Future

Our Responsibility: Take Action, Get Involved

The Call to Action: Get Involved



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Frequently Asked Questions—Continued

specific action, nor does it mean Oregonians have reached agreement on the details of any plan (such as which health services are covered). The Oregon Better Health Act simply opens the door of possibility, giving us the tools to shape our own future. Supporting this act sends the message to our legislators that you're in favor of a new health care system that is financially sustainable and provides access for all.

What if I'm on Medicare?

We need to restructure the U.S. health care system to ensure that it will allow us to care for those who currently depend on Medicare, as well as those who will depend on it in the future. Today, most people on Medicare have to purchase a supplemental insurance policy because Medicare falls short of their needs. Those with long-term care needs must spend themselves into poverty in order to become eligible for Medicaid, at which point their needs compete directly with those of poor women and children. There are 43 million people on Medicare today. More than 70 million baby boomers will become eligible for the program just five years from now. Given that health care costs rose 35% between 1998 and 2002, it is impossible to keep this program fiscally solvent.

Why are we talking about this at the state level, instead of in Washington, D.C.?

The crisis in our health care system is a national problem and a system problem. It cannot be solved at the state level without fundamental changes in the federal structure, within which state efforts must take place. But the U.S. Congress has, up to this point, been unwilling or unable to address the difficult questions that must be answered if we want to create a more equitable and sustainable system. We simply don't have time to wait for Congress to do something.

Is this the same thing as "single-payer" or "socialized" medicine?

The term "single-payer" refers to where the money used to finance health care comes from. When people refer to a single-payer system, they often think of the Canadian system. This is not the only example. In the U.S., Medicare is a single-payer system because most of the financing comes from the public (government). Yet, care is delivered through the private sector with insurers playing a significant role. "Socialized medicine" is a model in which the providers work for the government. This is not what the Archimedes Movement is proposing. ★