



The Archimedes Movement

Frequently Asked Questions

This set of questions and responses were prepared for the April 5th Leadership Training, but it is certainly not an exhaustive list. Revisions will be made after the training, emailed to participants and posted on the website.

As a presenter there will be times when someone wants to shut you down by using terms or metaphors that have embedded values. There are ways to respond to those comments, especially if you don't try to argue but instead re-frame the issue the way you want it to be framed.

What is the Archimedes Movement?

We are a group of everyday people demanding fundamental, sustainable solutions to important social problems facing Americans. The first issue we're taking on is the crisis in our health care system.

What is "the plan?"

It won't be so hard to outline a new plan. We don't have to start from scratch. We do have to ask ourselves "what do we need in order to achieve better health, and how can we design a system that actually gets us there?"

Are you talking about Socialized Medicine? Single payer? Universal health care?

We're not talking about socialized medicine; we're talking about civilized medicine. Besides, we already have a system of universal access called the emergency room.

Socialized Medicine is where the providers (doctors, hospitals, etc.) work for the government. And single payer only refers to who is paying. They all describe how to pay for services, but the real issue is what we are buying with our money, not only how much money we're spending.

At the end of the day, it's individuals like you and me who are the ultimate payer in health care, because that's where all the money comes from. Government does not have money unless we pay taxes. Businesses don't have money unless we pay for their goods or services.

Are you talking about having the US adopt Canada's, England's, or some other country's health care system?

No, we're not trying to re-create what exists in other countries, but we certainly can learn from their experiences. The Archimedes Movement is about creating a

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new health system based on the values and outcomes Americans want, and these are reflected in the principles and framework created by Oregonians from around the state, stakeholders, and Archimedes members.

How is this better than what is proposed by presidential candidates, or what's being tried in other states?

States' efforts have been remarkable but there is no state that can solve the national health care crisis. What states can do is push the debate and make it clear that this is a national problem which requires a national solution. Without elevating the debate above the question of how to pay for insurance, costs will continue to escalate. We have to go beyond putting more money into the current system; it's not just how do we pay for it – it's asking ourselves what we are buying and how those services can be delivered in the most efficient ways.

What will happen to my insurance?

Whatever changes take place you should have an opportunity to compare it to whatever you have now. Any plan that's developed should meet principles of equity, fairness and affordability. No one should be afraid of losing access to care because of a change in personal circumstances. Everyone would be "in." The goal is for everyone to have access to a defined set of essential, effective health services – a core benefit. There may still be a role for private insurance, but the core benefit would be available to everyone.

What will happen to Medicare?

Those on Medicare today will not be affected because whatever plan that's developed wouldn't make changes overnight. Plus, just like everyone else, people on Medicare would have an opportunity to compare what's being proposed with what they have today. We have to remember though, that if the current Medicare program is not planfully changed the demographic shift occurring when the baby boomers begin to hit Medicare (2011) will result in reductions in benefits, increases in premiums and taxes or perhaps all of the above. There are 43 million people on Medicare today; 78 million people were born during the baby boom. Without changes Medicare is not sustainable as the baby boomers begin to turn 65.

Why is this important to me?

We all pay for the current inefficient and outdated health care system - through taxes, premiums, and increased costs for goods and services. We pay more for services by leaving large numbers of uninsured in our midst. If we don't establish a new health system that is equitable, affordable, and sustainable, three things will happen: decreased benefits, increased costs, and increased

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out-of-pocket. We have to do this sooner or later. Let's do it so we all benefit.

How much is this going to cost me?

Currently taxpayers subsidize health care for Medicare, Medicaid, and employer-based benefits. The central problem is not money, but how the money is being spent. Our tax dollars are not being spent wisely. Experts agree that if we design a system that is efficient, and delivers services that are focused on maximizing health, that we have more than enough money today to provide health care for all. Quality affordable health care is an investment in our nation's future, our children's future.

This won't happen overnight. It may take a decade to make the transition, and yes, we may have to make some investments in the short term in order to re-tool our current industries to meet the needs of the new system. But remember that the US spends more overall and more per person on health care than any other industrialized nation on the planet and we still have poorer health outcomes. There is agreement that we can spend our money more wisely and efficiently, leading to better health and control the rising costs of health care.

What do I get?

A successful health system that partners our own personal responsibility with a system that is affordable, equitable, and sustainable.

I've heard people say that everyone has access to health care now through the Emergency Room. Why create a new system?

Universal access through the ER is an inefficient use of highly trained clinicians and state of the art equipment and facilities. And not all communities have the same resources available. Our objective is to create a sustainable system that uses resources wisely, ensures that everyone has access to a defined set of effective, essential health services.

Why are you named the Archimedes Movement; who is Archimedes?

Archimedes was a Greek mathematician and inventor. He invented the lever and is often quoted as having said "Give me a lever long enough and a place to stand and I can move the Earth. We here in Oregon have an opportunity to be the lever and be the demand for fundamental change.

It sounds like you're talking about Socialized Medicine or Communism.

We're not talking about socialized medicine; we're talking about civilized medicine. Socialized medicine is where the providers (doctors, hospitals, etc.) work for the government. That is one strategy that reflects how money is moved through the system. What this issue is really about is creating a uniquely American solution that reflects American values of honesty, fairness,

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equity and shared responsibility.

You want to have a government run system and I want to keep government out of our pockets.

When it comes right down to it, the government is us. We subsidize – as in pay taxes for – health care services for Medicare, Medicaid and employer-based benefits. The government doesn't have money unless we pay taxes. Our tax dollars also go to pay for fire, state and local police and prisons, the FBI, CIA, Homeland Security, and our armed forces. When it comes to our security as a nation, it is the government's role to protect us but they can only do what we give them money to do. Protecting the health of our population is at the heart of securing this nation.

I want a market-driven/free-market approach.

Private markets are an essential component of sustaining any plan, but markets are going to go where the money is. We have to realign incentives so that businesses want to invest in and accomplish things that will lead to improved health outcomes. Right now they invest in things that are reimbursed – high tech, acute care – when our pressing needs are to improve the health of people with chronic conditions. We have to agree on what the purpose of our health system is; once we do that we can determine how to re-design the system to get us there.

The American Dream is the promise of opportunity and upward mobility. Health is the first rung on that ladder of opportunity. A successful health system will incorporate personal choice and responsibility, and both public and private plans will have a role in moving us toward health care for all.

Are you talking about more rationing?

Health care is rationed today. John Kitzhaber said several years ago that "One of America's most cherished political illusions is that we all receive the same healthcare regardless of income. Another is that we don't ration healthcare. The reality is very different."

Rationing is a word that scares many people. What we really need to talk about is what we should use public dollars for – the money we hold in common to support everyone. There is only so much that the public will tolerate in taxes, and therefore the necessary debate is to define the floor – that level of care that the public will ensure is available to everyone regardless of income. Defining the benefit then making sure that those services are provided in a high quality, efficient way using the best practices that are available.

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