

Excerpted from pages 1-3

*Health Reform: The End of the American Revolution?*

By Lee Kurisko, MD

Published by Alethos Press LLC – 2009

Do not reprint or use this document in any way without the express written permission of the author and publisher.

[alethospress@comcast.net](mailto:alethospress@comcast.net)

## INTRODUCTION

### THE HIDDEN TYRANNY OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

All great truths begin as blasphemies.

Bernard Shaw

Every man is a creature of the age in which he lives; very few are able to raise themselves above the ideas of the time.

Voltaire

Imagine that your doctor said you had a critical narrowing within one of the main blood vessels to your brain, but you would have to wait three months for corrective surgery; just enough time for it to block off completely. Imagine that you had a major stroke because you could not find a family doctor to manage your high blood pressure and diabetes. Imagine waiting months for an MRI only to find out that your back pain came from a huge tumor rather than a disc problem. Imagine waiting weeks or months for a CT scan to have your tumor diagnosed and then waiting weeks again for a diagnostic biopsy while the tumor continues to grow and spread.

Are these examples of health care in Zaire? No, they are not. These are actual cases of medical care in which I have been involved while working as a physician in Thunder Bay, Canada. Such are the common horrors of health care delivered under the paradigm of socialism.

In the United States, politicians are vying against one another, promising to increase government control of health care to “solve” the health care “crisis,” which they identify as too many uninsured and the ever-increasing cost of health care. We shall see later that the seeds of

these problems have been sown and fertilized by government actions. Adding more bad public policy on top of bad public policy is no cure for what ails U.S. health care.

#### **Bread and heart valves**

Socialism is defined as the political and economic theory of social organization in which the government owns and/or controls the means of production, distribution, and exchange of commodities. Here the commodity is health care.

In my homeland of Canada, it is unthinkable to the average Canadian to allow privatized medical care. In Canada, the bulk of the delivery of health care, and the policies that determine its practice, are controlled by government, i.e. politicians.

There are many examples of the negative consequences of such governmental constraint on resources. Let's consider bread.

Imagine if the government declared itself the sole provider of bread. The government would determine how much wheat to grow, how many bakeries to allow, how many loaves of bread to bake, and the number and location of bread stores. The number of loaves of bread baked would be far below public demand. People would stand in long lines, squabbling over those few loaves of bread. Disorder would reign. Such is the state of Canadian health care.

The Soviet Union was known for its long bread lines just as Canadians are known to have to tolerate long lines for health care. If a socialized bread program cannot efficiently deliver a loaf of bread, how can you be assured that a socialized health care system can get your heart valve replaced?

#### **Universal health care: Caution**

Universal health care is one of those terms with many meanings. When national politicians use it, they generally mean a nationalized (socialized) health care system, overseen by the political/governmental system. This idea has huge negative implications for society that few people in the United States realize. Canada provides us with experiential insight, having lived with universal health care under its Medicare system for more than 40 years.

Under the Canada Health Act, it is illegal for anyone to open private MRI centers in most provinces in Canada. It is also illegal for the citizenry to exercise their own discretion and voluntarily spend their own money at such centers. A government that can restrict rights like this has declared itself the grantor of freedom rather than the guarantor of freedom. The people are no longer represented; they are ruled. If the government can arbitrarily strip one group of their freedom, they can do the same to others; to you. The principle is true in Canada and in the United States.

George Orwell's book, "1984" was about a fictional society in which a "benevolent" government restricted the freedom of the populace and scrutinized their every action. It is ironic that Canada's system of universal health care was formalized by the Canada Health Act in 1984.

When a government is the sole payer of health care, inevitably that government will control the availability of resources to constrain costs. Since health care recipients pay none of the cost of care directly, this results in unrestrained demand, and it is inevitable that government will end up running it all. It is a fantasy on par with Santa Claus to expect that government will restrain itself in paying for care without also controlling it, and the "it" here translates to people. Government controlling people is an anathema to the goals and values of America's Founding Fathers and the American Revolution.

In an irony almost beyond description, a Canadian a dentist or chiropractor can purchase and operate an X-ray machine, but a medical doctor trained in diagnostic radiology is severely restricted in doing so. Neither can that doctor privately own and operate an MRI or CAT scanner. This is like forbidding an auto mechanic from purchasing new service bays.

The Canadian Bill of Rights states clearly that all Canadians have an inalienable right to "liberty." Yet, Canadian government selectively revokes the liberty of some people, leaving the entire society at risk.

In Canada, patients, doctors, nurses, potential investors, and employees who would be served by privately delivered health care, are stripped of their freedom by the "benevolent" government of Canada that has made free enterprise health care illegal. If Canadians are

truly free and independent people, why can't they freely engage in free enterprise? They should be free to live as they see fit as long as they don't infringe on others' rights to do the same.

Many Canadian forefathers died in World Wars fighting against tyrannies that disregarded human liberty. Yet, Canada has a health care system predicated upon the loss of individual freedom.

Despite the sorry truth that Manitoba features some of the longest waiting lists in the world, its Ministry of Health has interfered with the opening of a free enterprise surgical clinic. Manitoba forces its citizens to needlessly live in pain for up to two years for hip replacements in the name of preserving the ideal of "universal health care." So much for the humanitarian nature of the Canadian health care system. Even though a private surgical center would shorten public waiting lists, Canadian health officials have stripped these patients of the right to spend their money as they see choose....