

From the President: Universal Coverage

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For some unexplainable reason, physicians have been unable to appreciate how and why their profession is being systematically taken away from them. They seem to focus on individual issues of current concern rather than the big picture. At this time, physicians are primarily concerned with malpractice reform and the current 5.4 percent decrease in Medicare payments. They also have some concern about physician persecution. Unfortunately, these issues, important as they may be, are merely symptoms of a much larger problem: a systematic, ongoing effort by the Left to socialize medicine in our country.

The Left realizes that the socialized healthcare systems in most other countries are fraught with major problems. The Left is also aware that there is an extreme antipathy toward socialism in this country as long as the entity is called socialism. Therefore, the Left is calling for a distinctly American form that will not be called socialized medicine. Instead, it will be called “universal coverage.”

Initially, universal coverage will be incrementally implemented as a “pluralistic system of healthcare insurance,” an approach that the AMA has endorsed. However, this pluralistic system will very likely have a short duration because of general dissatisfaction by both doctors and patients and will be followed by universal coverage administered by none other than our federal government – the one and only possible “single payer.”

The process described above is known as semantic manipulation or engineering, a technique that is used very effectively by the Left. The new terms “single payer” or “universal coverage” – which is sometimes used interchangeably with “universal access” even though

access and coverage are very different – are far more acceptable to the American public than the term “socialized medicine.” The Left isn't bothered by imprecise meanings. In fact, it prefers them.

The use of the term “healthcare provider” rather than the more respectable terms “physician” or “doctor” is another example of the Left's use of semantic manipulation. The purpose is to denigrate physicians.

To erode public respect for physicians, the Left also uses many other methods. The National Practitioner Data Bank is a prime example. This NPDB was initiated five years before a national sex offender data bank. In other words, doctors are more dangerous to the public than sex offenders! Some other examples include the Fraud and Abuse Data Bank, persecution of physicians for fraud and abuse, the Institute of Medicine's study regarding medical errors, and Medicare audits.

Why attack physicians? In order to achieve its obvious goal of socializing medicine, the Left has to convince the American people that their medical care is flawed and that our current arrangement is not serving the citizenry. It must somehow convince Americans to accept two conflicting views at the same time: that is the technique of inducing cognitive dissonance. We have the best medical care in the world, and yet at the same time we do not.

Unfortunately, these methods have been very successful. The Left's use of the media to spread this message has been masterful.

In the near future, the Left will also utilize prestigious purveyors, another method of legitimizing and promoting its cause. A recent editorial in the *Peoria Journal Star* even stated who they would be. Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter will launch a national campaign next year to

address the problem of the uninsured. According to this editorial, “the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation enlisted these two fundamentally decent former presidents to lead the effort along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO and health-care providers.” Whether or not the two past Presidents have been correctly identified as the prestigious purveyors, doctors need to recognize the ploy.

The entire process of the use of semantic engineering, denigration of a targeted group, and prestigious purveyors is discussed very well in *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable: When Word Games Take Lives* by William Brennan. When I read this excellent book, it became obvious to me that this process has been used by the Left to incrementally socialize medicine in this country.

If doctors and their patients don't awaken very quickly, American medicine will be completely socialized, with all the adverse consequences repeatedly demonstrated throughout the world. The finest medical care in the history of the world will be destroyed.

We know the techniques that are being used. We must quickly devise strategies to battle these techniques and to reverse the gains already made by the Left.

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