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HEALTHCARE FOR ALL HAS BECOME PUNISHMENT FOR ALL

By Elizabeth Lee Vliet, M.D.

In the 2008 campaign, we heard that health care in this country is “broken” and must be “reformed.” We heard “healthcare reform” would be the signature piece of an Obama Presidency. We were promised no new taxes on anyone earning less than \$250,000 per year. We heard promises of transparency in government. We heard promises of a White House that would listen to all. Now that President Obama and a Democratic majority are in office, what have we gotten?

The health-care proposals have become a massive power grab to control your money, your health options, your businesses, your liberty, and ultimately your life. It is not about insuring the poor. We already have Medicaid to cover the poor.

What the Democratic majority is doing to health care in this country is a crime. Punishment won't fall on Congress and the President, who are excluded from the health-care proposals. Punishment falls on the American people, especially the elderly.

Word of a new “stealth” strategy to ram health-care “reform” through the Senate raises even more cause for alarm and adds to the crime of this massive power grab. The plan appears to be for Senator Majority Leader Reid to merge the two Senate bills that have passed out of committee, and attach them as an amendment to a House TARP bill, already passed by the House but curiously gathering dust in the Senate. Once the Senate votes on this “TARP” bill with the health-care amendment tucked neatly inside, the health-care punishment is a “done deal” without further debate. Such an abuse of power and due process would be an unforgivable crime against the American people, perpetrated by the very people elected to represent us.

Instead of “health insurance for all,” the House and Senate health-care bills have become *punishment for all*. Here is the list of Americans who face the health-care “reform” punishment:

- *Punishment for the sick.* Those who have medical expenses each year will no longer be able to deduct those expenses on taxes until the expenses reach 10% of adjusted gross income (AGI). The current deduction is set at expenses above 7.5% of AGI, so the Senate plan now **adds** a 2.5% tax

onto those who are already paying out of pocket for medical expenses. Clearly, if someone is spending more than 7.5% on medical costs, that person is ill. The Senate bill makes the sick even sicker from the stress of having to pay more taxes!

- *Punishment for the elderly.* Medicare cuts of 404 BILLION is the latest figure released by the Senate; earlier the White House budget office said \$500 Billion – more than a full year’s Medicare budget – would have to be cut from Medicare. How can anyone begin to think these cuts will not penalize the elderly by delaying, rationing, or denying treatment?
- *Punishment for young people.* Young healthy people who do not buy government-mandated insurance will be punished in the form of an *excise tax* – reported amounts have been from \$1900 to \$3800 per person.
- *Punishment for anyone not paying the excise tax.* The IRS fine for non-payment of tax can be \$25,000 and a year in jail. So those who are punished by the new tax risk being accused of a tax crime if they do not buy government-mandated insurance and who don’t pay the penalty tax.
- *Punishment for insurance companies.* Companies providing “generous health-insurance plans” will be hit with a 35% tax.
- *Punishment for consumers who buy “generous” health-insurance policies,* as the tax on insurance companies is passed on to purchasers.
- *Punishment for those who buy their own health insurance* – a new 40% tax. Does it really make sense to punish the responsible people who take care of their own health-care bills?
- *Punishment for low-income seniors, Hispanics, and Blacks* who will lose their Medicare Advantage program under the new proposals.
- *Punishment for those with Health Savings Accounts* – HSAs will be extinct.
- *Punishment for specialists who serve mainly elderly patients, such as cardiologists and oncologists.* Such

specialists are slated to have their reimbursements for services slashed by 44% under the Senate bill.

- *Punishment for medical device makers* in the form of new taxes (a tax that will be passed on to consumers).
- *Punishment for all doctors*, who are required to purchase expensive new computer systems and software to convert to Electronic Medical Records to meet the 2014 mandates in the Stimulus Bill.
- *Punishment for those who value their medical privacy*. The Stimulus Bill requires all physicians, beginning in 2014, to send patients' medical records directly to the Federal health czar without further permission from patients.
- *Punishment for all 50 State governments*. Already running at a deficit with the recession, State governments face catastrophic increases in costs with Medicaid costs being shifted to them by the Federal government under the new proposals.
- *Punishment for everyone*, due to Speaker Pelosi's proposal for a National Sales Tax (also called a Value Added Tax or VAT) to pay for health-care reform. This new tax would hit every one hard in a recession, and would be on *top* of existing state and local sales taxes.
- *Punishments for all*. All, that is, except the exempted elite: members of Congress, the President and his family, trial lawyers, and Unions (SEIU, AFL-CIO, and others). The exempted elite retain their private care while becoming the very ones who force more taxes, penalties, and higher costs as punishment on the rest of us.

This reminds me of the Soviet Union when I visited there in 1974 and 1975. The Soviet ruling elite were the only ones with cars, comfortable apartments ... and access to the best health care.

I understand at a personal and professional level the perils of government-run health care. I have patients in my practice who have come from many countries with government-run health care that does not address women's unique health needs. I live in a State with a large Native American population, whose health care under the Indian Health Service, run by the Federal government, has been abysmal. I have personally had an emergency hospitalization in England. I am walking today because I had the best spine surgery care in the World at Johns Hopkins. If I had lived in Britain, or Canada, or Europe and had to wait for MRIs and surgery, I would be paralyzed from the neck down.

I will never agree that nationalized health care *anywhere* provides better quality of care than we have in the United States. I am not alone. Recent polls by different organizations have found that 80-90% of M.D.s and D.O.s oppose government-controlled health care.

Don't be fooled by the American Medical Association's endorsement of Obamacare. Only 17% of practicing physicians actually belong to the AMA. The recent "white coat" photo op at the White House was a carefully selected group of 2008 campaign donors of "Doctors for Obama." They were *not* any more representative of practicing physicians across this country than is the AMA itself.

The American people should be even more alarmed by a recent *Investors Business Daily* poll revealing that 45% of those doctors who responded said they would retire or resign from medicine rather than practice medicine under government control. Who will take care of patients then?

The proposed health-care plans are the most massive transfer of power to the Executive Branch of government that has ever occurred or has even been contemplated. This concentration of power in the Executive Branch violates the Constitutional requirement for balance of power, and for separation of powers among the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of government.

This crime against the American people is far worse than the Stamp Act levied by King George. That was the final straw that set off the *first* American Revolution. 

Elizabeth Lee Vliet, M.D. is a women's health specialist who received her M.D. degree and internship in Internal Medicine at Eastern Virginia Medical School, then completed specialty training at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She received her B.S. and M.Ed. degrees from The College of William and Mary in Virginia. Dr. Vliet is the 2007 recipient of The Voice of Women award from the Arizona Foundation for Women in recognition of her pioneering advocacy for the overlooked hormone connections in women's health. Dr. Vliet's books include: It's My Ovaries, Stupid!; Screaming To Be Heard: Hormonal Connections Women Suspect – And Doctors STILL Ignore; Women, Weight and Hormones; and The Savvy Woman's Guide to PCOS. Dr. Vliet is a seasoned expert commentator and a passionate fighter against government takeover of health care in the proposed Health Care "Reform" that seeks to eliminate or penalize private options. Dr. Vliet's educational medical website is www.herplace.com. Doctor Vliet has been speaking to the health-care reform issue on many National TV and Cable Networks, including shows such as Stuart Varney, Neil Cavuto, Fox & Friends, as

well as, many major syndicated radio shows. For more information on health-care reform, Dr. Vliet suggests two patient advocate Web sites on health care: www.JoinPatientsFirst.com, www.PatientsUnitedNow.com, or the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons at www.aapsonline.org. To book Dr. Vliet on interviews, email Rose Henning at rosehenning@herplace.com or call 520-797-9131 (MST).

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DISCLAIMER: Dr. Vliet speaks as an independent physician, not as an official spokesperson for any organization. Dr. Vliet has no financial ties to any health care system, pharmaceutical company, or health insurance plan. Her allegiance and advocacy is to and for patients.

"A mandate requiring all individuals to purchase health insurance would be an unprecedented form of federal action," said a 1994 report by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office. <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/48xx/doc4816/doc38.pdf>. The government has never required people to buy any good or service as a condition of lawful residence in the United States."

Hovering on the Edge of Tomorrow
Continued from Page 2

but never do so because of a combination of blindness, false patriotism, gullibility, exceedingly poor memory, and (for some) wanting to share in the loot. And it doesn't just happen in Canada or the United States, it is true of every country!

So as these parasites drain your essence and vitality, they disguise their vampirism by employing code words such as "for the public good" and "protection of the public." Whether it is the resurrected 1993 Hillary Clinton plan of government "healthcare" currently being pushed through the U.S. Congress or attempts to bind down farmers, ranchers, and organic businesses with suffocating, expensive regulations, such anti-freedom measures are always accompanied by refrains from the leeches that this is all being done for the "public good." "The public good" – always the cry of tyrants and dictators – has fooled citizens of every country, no matter how free they originally were.

Change Means Opportunity

The World of 2009 is a very different one than that of 1909. And the World of 2014 or 2020 will almost certainly be a very different one than that of 2009. Many people can



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sense that we are all on the threshold of change, but are not sure what kind of change. Will it be a change in our society, a change in our political system, or a change in our economic system? Many others stumble forward in life, as our 1909 counterparts did in their own time, with not a clue as to what might strike them in just a few years' time.

Yet, change means opportunity. It means the opportunity to get it right this time. To avoid another 1914. To see that the parasites don't manipulate events this time, steering us into yet another set of world-changing disasters. As we hover on the edge of tomorrow, it is more important than ever that, at this critical point in history, we act quickly and decisively to steer events and our institutions towards freedom and not slavery, towards the light and not darkness.

If only the people living in 1909 could have known then what lay in store for them in five years' time, might they have not acted differently? Hopefully more prescient, we of 2009 have the chance to change our future, if only we will seize that chance. 

Washington is a city that cannot govern itself but has no qualms about telling the rest of us how to live. —Jerry Pournelle