

HEALTH CARE POLITICS – AN INTEGRATIVE HEALTH VIEW OF A SUPER SENSITIVE SUBJECT

HUGO RODIER MD
Perspectives on INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

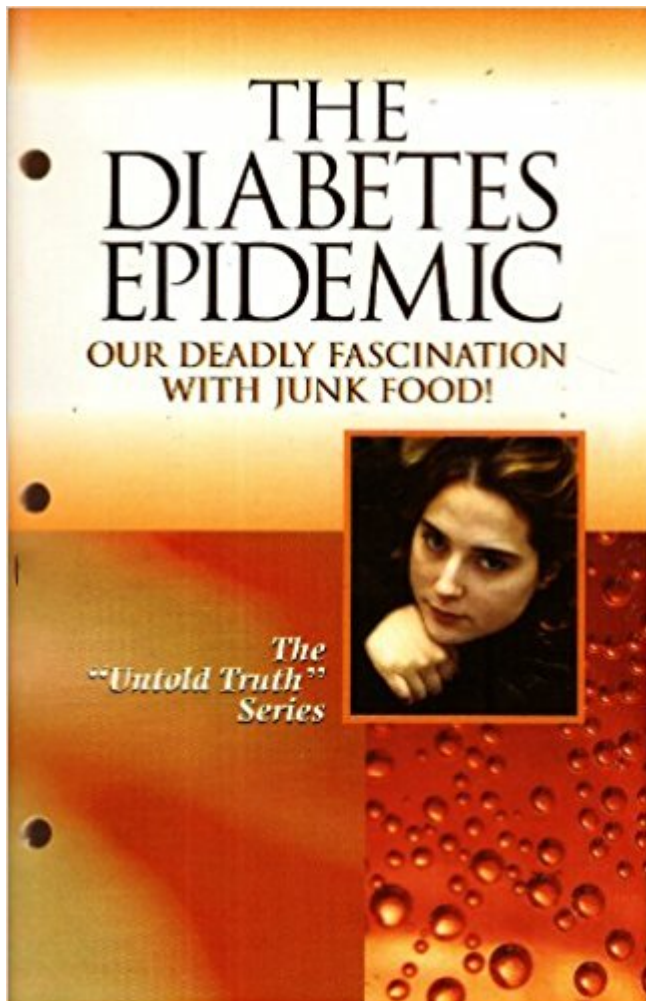
SOMETIMES POLITICS CAN BE AS TOXIC TO YOUR HEALTH AS BAD BACTERIA

The American Health Care Act was pulled last week. What will happen next? Nothing good will, unless politicians stop catering to the corporations that stand to gain the most from our dysfunctional Health Care system. As a nation we must **look for a more integrative solution**. The middle ground is more likely to provide answers that eliminate extremists on both sides of the aisle. On the right we need to stop listening to those who would abandon the disenfranchised. On the left we need to ignore those who would force us into paying for poor, but expensive care.

Consider a few troublesome facts about our Health Care system:

- It ranks dead last in the developed world when it comes to health indicators. But, it spends double the money the leading countries spend. It is run by rapacious Big Pharma and greedy insurance companies. It provides care based on profit, not solid scientific evidence ~85% of the time.
- The top 5 Pharmaceuticals made US\$50 billion in profits in 2015. We are the only industrialized country that does not negotiate lower prices with Big Pharma.
- Premiums are likely to increase while coverage is likely

to decrease.



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Because of these, and many other similar distressing facts, I believe we are having a national discussion on how to provide access into a broken Health Care system. It will be a while before it is fixed. In the meantime, consider the following proposals:

- Have a **Public Option**—a.k.a. Medicaid—for people under 65. We already have that for older people: Medicare. People with catastrophic, devastating health problems would get government-subsidized coverage. Both programs would lower the premiums of rapacious private insurance

companies by providing true competition. Both can be financed by strict adherence to evidence-based practices that eliminates unnecessary care and testing. Further savings can be achieved by negotiating lower drug prices with Big Pharma.

- Those who argue that **Medicare and Medicaid** are not as good overlook the fact that the **cost of operating these two programs is one third that of private insurance companies**. Besides, we already have a two-tier system in education and in practically everything else in our society.
- **Allow patients to buy less coverage**. Do not force them to pay for care they are less likely to use. Health conscious patients know that testing and treating are excessive, and often not necessary. They save money by eating lots of veggies, eschewing sugar and living active lives. Those who are driven by fear may still get whatever care they choose.

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