

Why we can't afford this health care system

Letter to the *Corvallis Gazette-Times* by Dianne Farrell, Corvallis
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An Associated Press story on election issues in the Saturday, Sept. 24 *Gazette-Times* featured American health care as part of its “Why It Matters” series on election issues. In that article the claim is made that while “the U.S. spends far more than any other advanced country (on health care), its people are not much healthier.”

That is incorrect. Americans are much less healthy. We are 11th (last) in health quality among wealthy nations (Source: Commonwealth Fund 2014). We are 37th in the world and trail far behind many much less developed countries, like Morocco (Source: WHO).

Why are we No. 1 in cost? Largely because one third of our health care dollars goes for administration; that is, for insurance company administrative costs, plus staff required in doctors' offices and hospitals to deal with insurance companies. What we can't afford is the system we have!

People say we can't afford “Medicare for All.” But Medicare has 1.4 percent overhead — if you don't count Medicare Advantage (private) and Medicare Part D (drugs). (If you do, overhead rises to just under 6 percent.)

Check out pnhp.org (Physicians for a National Health Program) or mvhca.org (Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates members of Health Care for All Oregon — hcao.org).