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Health care should be available for all Oregonians

Letter to *The News Review*

by Jean Galleher, Sutherlin

January 13, 2017

Dr. Howard Bauchner is the editor-in-chief for the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association which publishes original research, reviews and editorials covering all aspects of the biomedical sciences. In his Jan. 3, 2017, editorial Bauchner poses this question: Is health care coverage a basic right or privilege?

He believes (and I concur) that before this country embarks on new health care reform in 2017, that this basic fundamental question needs to be answered. Do we as a country believe that all citizens should have access to affordable health care, or should health care only be available to individuals who can pay or purchase insurance.

I have been following this issue for the past five years and I believe that access to affordable health care should (and could) be available to all Oregonians. However, the question remains: How can our state afford to provide affordable health care to all Oregonians? I am hopeful that these answers will be included in a soon-to-be published Rand study funded by the State Legislature. If you are interested in this topic and the results of this study, go to hcao.org (Health Care For All Oregon) for more information and subscribe to the free monthly newsletter.

I conclude by quoting Dr. Bauchner: "I hope that all physicians, including those who are members of Congress, other health care professionals, and professional societies would speak with a single voice and say that health care is a basic right for every person and not a privilege to be available and affordable only for a majority. Free access to this editorial is available at <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2595503>.