

<http://registerguard.com/rg/opinion/35500606-78/single-payer-wise-compassionate.html.csp>

Single-payer wise, compassionate

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According to Reginald Jensen (“Single-payer is not the answer,” April 17), the best approach to good health is simple: “Eat right, exercise regularly for life, and get plenty of rest.” Such an approach, he maintains, will reduce your health care expenses by “50 percent or more.”

Unfortunately, this approach doesn’t address the cost of having a car accident or breaking a hip or getting cancer, any of which could result in the kind of medical bills that would result in bankruptcy for many.

Jensen also describes insurance as “dipping into someone else’s bank account.” Does that mean he puts the money that would have gone to pay for medical insurance in a private bank account instead to build up funds for when he gets sick? I doubt it.

How long would it take to build up the kind of reserves necessary to pay for a several-day hospital stay, along with doctor fees among other expenses? For most of us, more than a lifetime.

And that’s why a single-payer, publicly funded system is so much better. We all pay in, hoping we won’t need to use it, but at peace with ourselves knowing that it is there when we do, and content to do so, knowing it will benefit others when they need it.

Participating in such a system is therefore not only personally comforting, it’s also an opportunity to exercise human compassion.