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We need single-payer health care

Letters In The Editor's Mailbag: Register Guard

by SARIANTRA KALI, Eugene

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As a local health care practitioner, I am privy to the changes in health care needs and quality of health care access of my community.

Before the Affordable Care Act, I saw many patients who did not receive basic medical care. I am considered a specialist but found myself discovering fractured vertebra, hands and feet as people showed up in my office rather than seeing their primary care physician, going to the emergency room or visiting urgent care centers.

After the Affordable Care Act passed, more patients were getting their basic needs met.

The following year I saw a decrease in quality of care due to the dramatic changes in insurance plans as insurance companies created ways to maximize profits. As deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, in-network versus out-of-network coinsurance percentages and copayments increased, benefit maximums decreased.

For-profit companies will never have patient care as a priority. Their priority is to their shareholders and CEOs who make bonuses in the millions of dollars.

A single-payer system would completely remove insurance companies from the equation. Although a single-payer health care system would increase taxes, it would lower costs across the board, removing premiums, pre-authorizations, calls to your insurance company, in- and out-of-network requirements, coinsurance/copayments and medical bills.

We are the only Western nation without a single-payer system. Our mortality rates are higher than in all other industrialized countries. It is time for a single-payer system to address the needs of all citizens.