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Single-payer should be priority

Letter to the *Register Guard*,

by Marc Shapiro, Eugene, Founding member Health Care For All-Oregon

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Secretary of State Dennis Richardson's promise of "accountability" to get Oregon's finances in order should certainly be welcomed by its taxpayers.

Past fiascos, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles' computers, the Oregon Department of Transportation's rebuild of Highway 20, Cover Oregon and, the grandest of them all, Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System all point to the need for a watchful eye before, not after, the fact.

However, the alarm raised by Richardson with respect to Medicaid/Oregon Health Plan eligibility, which was echoed in The Register-Guard's May 19 editorial, completely misses the real underlying catastrophe.

The doubling in enrollment in the Oregon Health Plan under the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion saved countless lives, substantially reduced the need for emergency care that was too late to be effective and, for many, provided primary care for the first time in their lives.

While according to Richardson the Oregon Health Authority could be spending as much as \$37 million per month on ineligible OHP recipients, the real problem is that removing them from the OHP will leave them, once again, without access to affordable health care.

The solution to the underlying problem will not be found in auditing the OHA, but rather, in working toward a single-payer — "improved Medicare for all" — system.

It would be refreshing if The Register-Guard's editorial staff would recognize the information it has, thankfully, provided to its readers, and put its editorial weight behind the one system that has been shown to be able to provide better care to the entire Oregon population at less cost.