

## **Single-Payer Letter Misleading**

by Philip Prince, Springfield

*Register Guard* - July 18, 2017

With all due respect to the authors, the letter “Single-payer takes away choices” is filled with false and misleading statements. Among them:

- 1) England’s National Health Service is not a single payer system. Single-payer means the government provides health insurance (like Medicare) for everyone. It does not mean the government also provides the health care as in Great Britain.
- 2) Yes, doctors are employed by the government in England but medical decisions are made by patients in consultation with their doctors just like here.
- 3) A single-payer system not only reduces the delivery cost of health care (by removing the for-profit middle man), it actually allows for more choice. People are not limited to service providers designated through employer-provided health insurance or HMOs and are free to seek treatment from any provider. These are the elements needed for real competition in health care provision.

According to the World Health Organization, most of the top-ranked countries in overall health care efficiency have single-payer insurance (Great Britain is 18th and the U.S. 37th).

Debating the parameters of private sector vs. government involvement in health care solutions is totally appropriate in a democratic political system.

There is plenty of data out there — from the experience of other countries and our own — to inform our decisions and this much is clear: Countries with single-payer health insurance cover all of their citizens and have better health outcomes at considerably lower costs.