

**March 17, 2019**

**Dear Sacramentans and nearby Sacramento Neighbors:**

On Friday, March 1, 2019 the Superintendent of the Sacramento City school system addressed the school system's insolvency coming in November and, in doing so, described what a take-over of our public school system will look like. The first, and only, words out of the superintendent's mouth to explain it all:

Health care costs.

Also, on that Friday, there was a Senator Dr. Richard Pan-produced health care symposium at the Sacramento Capitol. (See the agenda here: <https://ph.ucla.edu/events/e-richard-brown-symposium-universal-health-care-california-planning-policy-political> )

The clear message sent from our state legislators, who possess supermajority powers, to the Sacramento School district and the California citizenry:

No. relief. coming.

We Americans represent 4% of the world's population and we pay 43% of the world's health care costs.

We northern Californians pay 30% more for health care than southern Californians.

The probability that everyone reading these words is underinsured and unaware of this medical trap is likely right at 100%. There is a reason GoFundMe for medical bills is a thing and a thing that has been made normal. It is what we are obliged to do to survive our health care system which has us dying slower, sicker and younger.

There are a myriad of forces spending vast sums of money to block health care reform and they are getting their money's worth. All of us are easily able to identify the most powerful of these forces because they are the medical corporations whose billboards line our freeways.

But there are others who play their nefarious part who go unnoticed. One example is a group of organizations known as the health care foundations, where the California Endowment is but one organization in that group.

Please find the time to read the attached document (1.4K words) because what we do not know about health care foundations is a lot. And, because the price we pay for not fixing health care involves far more than the ridiculous price of insurance bills and medical bills.

*PLEASE NOTE: The attached letter is a communication sent from this California health care advocate to other health care advocates and organizations here in California and across the country.*

Thanks,

Keith McCallin PA-C

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## **Bad news for the single payer/Medicare for All movement in California, and so the country:**

*Daniel Zingale, former executive vice president of policy with The California Endowment, has been brought on board Governor Newsom's health care team as "Senior Advisor and Communications Strategist."*

As head of policy of the California Endowment, Dan Zingale oversaw a billion dollar campaign that effectively argued, don't fix health care.

In order to appreciate the significance of the Zingale appointment, one must know about the California Endowment and other California health care foundations.

Health care foundations in California came into existence when non profit health insurance companies saw the profit potential and decided to go private. They, of course, wanted to steal away with the mountains of billions in profits captured from their non profit ways. But, our state regulatory agency, with help from the courts, said no and told them that those billions in profits must be placed in foundations and the foundations will then spend those monies to benefit the health of the California citizenry.

The California Endowment is but one of those foundations. The California Health Care Foundation and The California Wellness Foundation are others.

They are called "conversion foundations," or "health legacy foundations":

*Health conversion foundations [] are formed when a nonprofit hospital, health care system or health plan is either acquired by a for-profit firm or converted to for-profit status.*

A leading and reliable health care policy voice in California and the U.S. said:

"...the foundations will never grant money to anything that will challenge the for-profit insurance system..."

### **Health care foundations hamstringing the single payer/Medicare For All movement in four fundamental ways:**

#### **1. Foundations have created a barrier to getting the Single Payer/Medicare For All message out to the underserved communities for whom the foundations claim (as do we) to advocate.**

The California Endowment is in the last year of a 10 year, one billion dollar campaign called "Building Healthy Communities," aka, BHC. South Sacramento is one such community. Salinas, CA is another such community.

An urban sociologist who has studied the health care needs of South Sacramento, among other underserved Sacramento area communities, tells of a stark and systemic neglect. In maps and data, he reveals South Sacramento for the health care desert that it is. Meanwhile:

The California Endowment, which is mandated to promote the health of the California citizenry, spent a billion dollars to push this narrative:

*Don't Fix Health Care, spend more money on the social determinants of health.*

Social determinants of health are. more. than. real. But, placing don't fix health care, prior to those words makes for a deeply flawed but very effective public relations move:

- Health care costs, i.e., the near to trillion dollars in health care waste, consumes the monies necessary to even begin to attend to the social determinants of health. And fund public school systems. And pay for infrastructure repairs...

- There are a myriad of issues that fall under “social determinants of health.”

Does it make sense to put off fixing health care until we solve the problem of obesity? Shall we await until fast food is no longer a staple in the daily American diet?

Shall we wait until we transition our prison system from its current concentration camp design to something other than that?

Shall we wait until the percent of Americans voting goes from 40% to above 90%?

Shall we wait until a medical transportation system is in place that will transport those living in health care deserts to deliver those citizens to distant hospitals and clinics so as to get their half and tiered care?

South Sacramento as well as Salinas, CA, and all the other BHC sites, as well as our middle class, as well as our younger generations, are actively being cemented into a permanent health care underclass while the California Endowment sells well the idea of not fixing health care.

## **2. Foundations grant billions to a myriad of individuals and organizations and so a myriad of individuals and organizations are not interested in fixing health care once and for all.**

Many grantee websites post mission statements that speak of determined advocacy while doing nothing to fix the root problem that creates the need for their advocacy in the first place.

Medical advocacy is a cottage industry that is fueled=funded by grants from foundations, and those medical and health advocacy organizations compete fiercely for those grants. It's a Hunger Games competition.

Foundations fund many of the so-called health care policy experts and policy organizations who are featured in our major media.

Foundations fund health care journalism, which we must begin to see as no type of journalism at all. Courtiers-in-journalist-clothes are a very real thing and they deliver the vast majority of that which is called health care journalism.

## **3. The foundations are just another driver of the public relations machine that controls public opinion.**

Is your public radio station, as Capital Public Radio is here in Sacramento, underwritten by the California health care foundations, and national health care foundations, and local hospitals and hospital systems?

Here in Sacramento, Capital Public Radio tag-teams with the Sacramento Bee, CalMatters and the California health care foundations, among others. See public opinion be turned so easily, by such mediums, away from fixing health care.

## **4. Foundation monies drain away talented, influential and often affluent, individuals and keep them focused on not fixing health care.**

This talent loss/brain drain refers to individuals in the general public as much as it does foundation grantees.

Many grantees are mere marketers. For them, the health care issue is just a widget and faux-advocacy is their game. For them, fixing health care would prove very bad for business.

Many grantees are dedicated professionals with a social worker's determination, but they can only find work in the "Billions-For-Band-Aids" approach to fixing health care, which is no fix. This is an unfortunate reality that profoundly hampers genuine advocacy and reform efforts.

### **Conclusion:**

Our California governor has brought into his office and placed on his health care team a person who has a curriculum vitae that features an undeniable success championing the idea:

*Don't fix health care.*

What is happening here in California is that the powers that be, who have supermajority strength and pie all over their faces and fingers, are working diligently to protect the for-profit insurance industry and the profits of the medical corporations. In so doing, our leaders work to:

- Maintain the health care deserts
- Keep GoFundMe as the go-to supplemental insurance plan for all
- Push public schools systems toward insolvency
- Keep our health care system first in the world for its ability to extract cash from consumers and communities while keeping us last in measures of health system equity, access, administrative efficiency, care delivery, and health care outcomes.

Meanwhile the underinsured - which is most of us, only learn how painfully unbeneficial our health care benefits are when we are most desperately in need of those benefits.

Shot by a lunatic then mugged by the health care system, is an All American thing.

There is not any health care policy debate happening in California, nor is there even a political fight. In California, politicians represent well the health care profiteers while never-ending public relations campaigns run cover for them.

The greater public relations game began back in 1917 with the creation of the Creel Committee on Public Information prior to WWI. But, regarding health care, the ability to control well public opinion came in 1944 when the California Medical Association hired the public relations team of Whitaker & Baxter to kill California Governor Earl Warren's single payer bill. So successful was the public relations campaign, Whitaker & Baxter were then hired by the American Medical Association to kill Truman's national single payer bill in 1952.

It was a public relations campaign that killed SB562, California's single payer bill, in 2017.

The health care foundations stand in the way of fixing our health care system. Appealing to our courts, given the mandate, is not an unreasonable plan, but it is likely to prove a citizen-fool's errand given that Citizens United is the law of our land.

Alternatively, since health care foundations fly under our radars yet operate right in front of our faces, it might take nothing more than informing the uninsured and the underinsured of the contributions of the health care foundations toward keeping our health care system broken.

Acknowledgment of this health care foundation problem, which is not just a California concern, could very well prove diagnostic and therapeutic.