Did Someone Call for a Doctor?

BY: Tylla Bradley

The immediate effect of the healthcare bill signed into law by President Barack Obama does require medical attention. From a dizzying lightness in the head to a churning of the stomach to the sincere desire to scream, the past months have quite literally torn apart a nation, leaving victims dazed and confused in its wake. Whether you're a tea partier with high blood pressure or an advocate dizzy with jubilation, the nation needs a recovery period to figure out what just happened and how to cope in the wake of the latest legislation that was passed.

Someone once said that two things were certain in the life: death and taxes. This bill provides both. Granted, for some of the senior Americans, it will be quite a race to see who gets them first, death from healthcare rationing or the exorbitant taxes to pay for healthcare. Despite all the reassurances that rationing won't exist in the new federal healthcare system, there is no other way adequately distribute limited medical supplies. My only reassurance is that if you're healthy and profitable, you're probably near the front of the queue. Cost efficiency is ever the watch word and every pill, surgery, and hospital visit is an investment in the future of the program. You think I'm kidding. Look across the Atlantic at our British forefathers who initiated their own National Health Services in 1944.While the concept of "cradle to the grave" healthcare sounds marvelous, in practice not so much. These are recent headlines from the British newsmagazine the Daily Mail

- Cancer scans delayed in NHS funding crisis as doctor fear 'slash and burn' cuts
- As neglect cases fuel 30% rise in complaints, we ask: are nurses still the caring profession
- Professor demands action after "thousands of unexpected deaths" in 25 hospitals

Granted, those are the most glaring and terrifying headlines. There are also happy stories that are the result of the NHS, like the morbidly obese young woman who was approved for "free" stomach band surgery while the NHS denied cancer patients life prolonging medication because it was "too expensive."

Three primary problems that are so intertwined it's impossible to separate

- The quality of medical personnel
- The quantity of medicine, medical supplies, and hospital space
- The cost of supporting the entire system on taxpayer funding

According to a survey conducted by the Medicus Firm, 46% of the surveyed physicians said that they would stop practicing medicine if the healthcare bill passed. Steve Marsh, a managing partner at The Medicus Firm in Dallas said that "The reality is that there may not be enough

doctors to provide quality medical care to the millions of newly insured patients." In addition, even if the estimated number of physicians did not leave the profession, the quality of care and general morale of the physicians is likely to decrease do to the increased workload and reduced salaries. In addition to physicians, the shortage of nurses and other medical professionals that has sustained over the past few years will drastically affect the patient care.

In addition, the new taxes that are imposed on the pharmaceutical companies and medical device manufacturers will either force them out of business or pass the additional cost to the consumers. Either way, this discourages research and development into new drugs and equipment that could save lives while encouraging hospitals to continue using outdated equipment due to budget concerns.

Finally, who's going to pay for all this? Poor people, by definition, are poor, i.e. they don't have money. The uninsured might have money, but just not for insurance. And the people who actually have insurance, well, they're already paying. So the solution, raise taxes across the board, except for the poor since they can barely afford to exist. So, the uninsured are going to pay and the insured are going to pay more so that everyone can be insured. The only problem is that the primary collection method is via the tax system, or the ultimate federal bad guys, the most hated federal employees of all time, the IRS. Granted, tax collection is difficult during the best of times, politicians and celebrities are constantly being called out for non-payment. (Seriously, if some of the richest people in the US can't/don't pay what are the little guys supposed to do?) How much more so now? In addition to further complicating an already confusing tax system, the healthcare bill makes it more unlikely that a refund will occur. All the frustration of filing without the anticipation of that little something. Who's going to file? Seriously, considering the odds are in your favor of not getting caught. And, is it really a crime if everybody else is doing it? Kind of like illegal downloads. Anyway, the point is raising taxes actually reduces the amount of money coming in.

Bottom line, coping with the newest addition to the law books is going to take a lifetime of adjustment and drastically change the American medical system as we know it. So, start popping the vitamins and enjoy the recovery period, because we're preparing to enter a whole new world.

So, suck in the queasy stomach, take a deep breath, and hope that everything holds together because it's going to be a bumpy ride.