

Healthcare, Shmealthcare?

It's daunting to think that the government could be spending *billions* on healthcare. But, how does it affect *you*?

Okay, so there's been a lot of noise from the Obama administration, and the media, and everyone else under the sun about healthcare. Obama's proposal hasn't passed, and the kinks need to be ironed out, and I'm sure it'll be altered many, many, many times. If it does pass, the effects will be huge, especially for our age group (19-29). These effects aren't necessarily negative, because based on statistics, reform might be something our state will benefit from.

Regarding healthcare, after sorting through the facts and opinions, I've decided that reform *will* benefit me.

Let's first start with the problems at hand. Once you turn 19, your health insurance coverage can vanish overnight. This would, in part, explain why 19-29 year olds make up nearly one-third of the uninsured population. This means 30% of young adults don't have health insurance.

Young adults fall into a dark gap once we're out of the house and on our own. If we're just getting into the job market, our income is low, putting health insurance on the back burner.

Since we're young whippersnappers, it's easy to assume our health is in check. However, according to statistics, one in six young adults have a chronic condition, including asthma, high blood pressure, or even cancer. One in four of us are considered obese, and our age group has the most injury related ER visits - one in six of us end up there every year.

Another reason we fall into the healthcare gap is because some of us work part-time and aren't covered under our employer's healthcare. Some part-time employees are covered, but only under the condition that they remain a full-time student. This is my current circumstance; I have to send a copy of my proof of enrollment every semester. If I forget (almost every time) I'm quickly reminded when told I'm not covered and must pay the full bill. It's all a large pain in the ass.

Even some full-time workers at small businesses are not covered because the cost for an employee's insurance is unrealistic. Oklahoma has 56,338 employers who are considered to be "small business." That makes up a significant amount of Oklahoma employers, explaining why one in five employees lack health insurance in Oklahoma.

The Obama health care bill states that through tax credits and health insurance exchanges, it will make insurance for small business more affordable.

The plan will force insurances to put a cap on how much they charge young adults and will also have to provide premium subsidies for those who can't afford one large payment, potentially helping women. In thirty-three states, insurance companies are permitted to charge

higher premiums based on gender. A 22-year old woman can be charged one and a half times more than a 22-year old man.

Those that are still claimed as dependents can remain on their parent's health care plan until the age of 26. Those who choose not to be claimed as a dependent will have the option of a health insurance exchange, offering a choice of plans.

All of these provisions offered will directly benefit our age group. However, Obama has yet to specify how he plans on funding this reform. Not to mention, he's downplayed the impact it'll have on the insurance and medical industries.

What comes to play here is your own priorities. I personally am worried about finding a job with insurance (keep in mind I'm a writer), so I support reform. However, many of you petroleum engineers will more than likely get health insurance the day you sign your contract. You don't want your hard-earned dollars bearing the burden when I get a sore throat (thanks a lot).

All of the arguments for and against this reform are understandable and justified. What's so beautiful about this country is that the democratic process will have its way, and eventually some resolution will be forced down our throats. I just hope it doesn't send me to the hospital.

If you want to learn more, check out www.healthreform.org.



News&Notes

by Boyd Street Staff

More like Richard Wrangham! Amirite?

NEWS: Richard Wrangham, a noted British anthropologist and primatologist at Harvard, says that the unrivaled success of humans is pretty much based on the fact that we have mastered the use of flame and subsequently used it to transform raw food into cooked food.

In Wrangham's book, *Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human*, he explains that he believes "the transformative moment that gave rise to the genus Homo, one of the great transitions in the history of life, stemmed from the control of fire and the advent of cooking meals."

NOTES: I'm pretty sure all the large animals like dinosaurs and sabre-toothed tigers not being around long enough to eat everyone played a part. Thumbs and becoming self-aware kind of helped, too. Actually, he's probably got a very good point, since he's pretty smart and was somehow able to write an entire book about this. I think a pamphlet would have worked just as well. You don't get an advance for that, though.

Let it ride! Again.

NEWS: U.S. Rep. Barney Frank has said that he will introduce a bill, in the near future, that will overturn the three-year ban on internet gambling, likely to be opposed by Republicans.

With the current legislation imposed during the Bush Administration, the U.S. Justice Department has had to crackdown on European online gambling companies, which violates U.S. commitments under the World Trade Organization.

NOTES: Finally! And they might as well overturn it since it seems like the current ban has stopped, oh, about no one.

This is awesome

NEWS: With an abundance of monkeys in India, it comes as no surprise that officials in the northern Indian state of Punjab have decided to build a "rehabilitation center" to tame the sometimes dangerous and pesky rhesus macaques that invade towns and villages.

"In addition to veterinary doctors, the center will have experts and it would be a sort of good manners school for the monkeys," a Punjab Wildlife Department official told *The Hindu* newspaper.

NOTES: We can cook with fire, but we can't keep our homes from being ransacked by a horde of marauding primates. That being said, this "rehabilitation center" could prove to be very fruitful (sweet nativity-scene Jesus, I'm hilarious). If all goes well, I am one step closer to acquiring a monkey butler named Bivens. They better provide a complimentary tuxedo upon completion of the program. I can provide the top hat, monocle, tropical shirts and smoking jacket.