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Liberal Bias: ABC News Spends a Week Campaigning for Single-Payer, Canadian-Style Health Care

Only Government Can “Fix” Health Care

Confirming once again that the producers and editors at ABC News see the world through a liberal lens, the network spent all of last week promoting the idea of universal government financing of health care. Dropping any pretense of balance, ABC neglected conservative ideas for more competition as a way to lower prices, and no story explored how a centralized, single-payer system might degrade the high quality of U.S. health care. A bias diary:

■ **Sunday, October 19:** On *World News Tonight/Sunday*, anchor Carole Simpson laid bare the network’s agenda:

“Even though the U.S. spends twice as much per person as any other developed country on health care, the U.S. is the only developed country that fails to provide universal coverage for all of its citizens.” ABC Medical Editor Dr. Tim Johnson rued: “Until all of us embrace the idea that health care should be a right, not a privilege, our system cannot be glibly described as, quote, ‘the best in the world.’”

■ **Monday, October 20:** “Our private health insurance system is so fragmented and chaotic that we waste enormous amounts of money on paperwork,” Johnson warned on *Good Morning America*. “Unless our government starts to wake up, and our political leaders start to wake up to the problem, we’re all in big trouble.” Later on *World News Tonight*, Peter Jennings invited Johnson to debunk the “conventional wisdom” that “the marketplace is where the price is best established.”

No, no, said Dr. Tim: “That’s true for commodities like a car, where you go in and you can make choices and you can even walk out of the showroom if you want. You can’t do that when you’re sick.”

■ **Tuesday, October 21:** On *Good Morning America*, Claire Shipman highlighted a cancer victim whose insurance company would not pay for an experimental treatment. To Johnson, “this illustrates part of the problem with our fragmented system. When you have all these different

companies...it’s the luck of the draw as to what state you live in or what insurance company you have....There should be uniformity of rules so we’re all on the same playing field.” On *World News Tonight*, Jennings condemned managed care: “It is not an exaggeration to say there are more people tracking payments than treating patients.”

■ **Wednesday, October 22:** *World News Tonight* touted regulation: “Canadians are spared higher drug prices, in large part, because of price controls,” John McKenzie enthused. “Every industrialized country has price controls on patented medications except the United States.”

Canadian System Isn’t Socialism, It’s Free
Peter Jennings: “I think the conventional wisdom is still that a single-payer system, as you and others have described it, is socialized medicine and that isn’t for the United States.”
Tim Johnson: “Socialized medicine means that the government both financing health care and owns and operates the doctors and the hospitals.”
Jennings: “Like Britain, for example.”
Johnson: “Like Britain. In Canada it’s a split system. The government indeed does collect the money and disperse it. They run the financial part of health care. But the delivery system is free.”
— *World News Tonight*, October 20.

■ **Thursday, October 23:** On *Good Morning America*, Johnson profiled two men who lacked health insurance. “The Institute of Medicine, a highly reliable group, has estimated that 18,000 Americans every year die prematurely because of lack of care due to lack of insurance. It’s financially bad, it’s morally bad,” he preached.

On *Nightline*, Dave Marash opined that while Canadians have adopted some U.S.

practices, “on the American side, there seems little inclination to adapt any of the strengths of the Canadian system, while the major failure of the American system — the 43 million people with no health insurance coverage at all — is only expected to worsen.”

■ **Friday, October 24:** Mark Litke trumpeted the success of another universal health care system: “These days in Taiwan, whatever the treatment, with modern or traditional medicine, Taiwanese will get it, and get it cheaply.... Implemented only a decade ago, it is already widely praised and envied.” At least by those at ABC News. — *Rich Noyes*

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