

Point of View

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TO BE EQUAL

BASIC PRINCIPLES SHOULD GUIDE HEALTH REFORMS

By John E. Jacob

America is on the brink of making momentous changes in the way health care is structured, delivered, and paid for.

That should put African Americans on the alert to guard against the national tendency to develop new policies that often ignore the interests of minorities and the poor.

I know the new Administration is committed to helping those most in need, but health care brings all of the heavyweights out in force, and many of those

special interests have other agendas that can sway Congress.

So it will be crucial for the Administration and supporters of meaningful reform to stand firm behind proposals that deliver equal access to quality health care for all, and especially for those who today are severely underserved by the present system.

The need for changing the present system is urgent, as demonstrated by the racial gap in health.

African Americans suffer significantly higher rates of many deadly diseases than whites do. Our infant mortality rates are much higher than white rates. About a fourth of blacks and over a third of below poverty-level families are without health insurance.

The result is as clear as it is unacceptable — excess deaths from preventable diseases ... chronic conditions going untreated ... people unable to work because of ill health and condemned to a lower quality of life.

The current debate over reforming the system is driven by economics — the escalating costs of health care and its effect on the economy.

But the real issue is equalizing access to quality health care. The vast amount we spend on health care should be buying more and better care for all, and not just for some.

As the President's Task Force develops its detailed plan, advocates need to push the basic principles that should drive a reshaped health care system

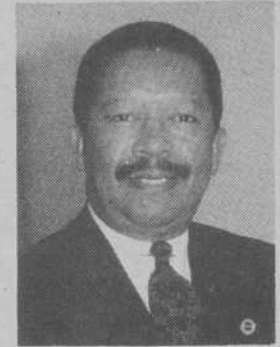
which would be universal, comprehensive, equitable, and accountable.

Universal, in the sense of covering all Americans and removing financial barriers to affordable health services. Health care is a basic human right that must be available regardless of personal wealth or income.

A reformed system must also be comprehensive and of the highest quality. There's a lot of talk about what should be covered, but any reform worthy of the name would include preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, and restorative services necessary to address medical conditions.

It is essential that access be assured through partnerships with community-based health delivery organizations.

For many of the black poor, doctor's offices and hospitals are unknown, even dangerous territory. People don't seek care until they are very sick, sometimes not until it is too late for effective



JOHN E. JACOB

treatment.

Combined with the severe shortage of medical personnel in the inner city and in rural areas, that means many African Americans do not seek or get quality health care.

So what works for the nation as a whole may not work for the chronically underserved. Reform should mean more than rearranging the furniture. It should mean reconstructing new delivery systems that are more effective than the old, failed ones.

Therefore, real reform must include a system of neighborhood health care service centers that are user-friendly and have strong education, prevention and outreach programs.

The debate over reconstructing our health care system goes to the heart of democratic values and to our vision of the kind of society we are and the kind of society we want to become.



POLITICAL POINTS

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams



"WUZUP WIT DA ROUGE?"

There's plenty going on at the historical Moulin Rouge, but at the same time, there's not nearly enough. But the fact that enough is not happening is surely not because people are not trying. The problem is, a lot of people that should be helping out, simply ain't.

The legislature passed a general fund budget in 1991 for the period July 1, 1991 through June 30, 1993, that totaled two billion dollars. A little over 40% of that budget comes from state gaming from casino entertainment tax. This of course indicates the large amount of money that is generated from gaming in the Silver State. Not only is gaming the number one tax payer in Nevada, it's also the number one revenue producer in Nevada. Yes, gaming is the best game in town and without a doubt, it is the "life blood" of Nevada. That's why a greater focus must be directed toward Bonanza Road.

It was just a few short weeks ago that everywhere you looked, the words "All Of Us Together" beamed

throughout Clark County. And a lot of people talked about how wise it is for all of Las Vegas to come together for the benefit of "All Of Us together." But that was before the verdicts came down in the Los Angeles Geanland beating by LAPD. It seems like All Of Us Together only applies when some people think that they may lose some property. While at the same time, these same people never stop to think what exactly caused the frustration in the hearts and minds of those that promote an uprising. The same frustration that comes when people are faced with the reality that the "right to pursue opportunity and equal access" promised in the U.S. Constitution is not defined by the same yardstick for everyone.

It just makes sense for any community to participate and pursue the number one industry in the state. Not only that, but gaming is the largest employer in the state as well. And with gaming proliferating fast in other states in America, the word is getting around that gaming and hotels will keep a cash flow strong enough to keep a community's economy stable.

Plus it creates jobs and attracts other businesses as well as tourism. So if ALL OF US TOGETHER is really about what we claim it is, then ALL OF US WOULD BE TOGETHER IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY.

As we see more and more multimillion dollar resorts popping up every day in Vegas, are we only expected to work in casinos and never operate any? I don't think so. The city funded flop of the Main Street Station was a direct slap in the rich history of the Moulin Rouge. By the way, while the city was busy supporting a guy named Snow who was simply passing through town, the Moulin Rouge, which opened first in 1955, was being accepted into the national registry of Historical Landmarks. However, for Snow's efforts, he was supported with cash (tax dollars by the way) while the Moulin Rouge was supported with proclamations. Is this 1893 or 1993?

Let's not be confused here. In no way am I suggesting that the Preddy's are looking for a hand-out from anyone, however they sure would appreciate just removing the calculated ob-



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

stacles that are placed in their way. The same obstacles that never seem to surface in the paths of so many others.

Again as the cry and plea for peace take the center stage each time an injustice occurs, sooner or later someone will wake up and realize that regardless of how much money is spent to keep the peace and regardless of how many people talk to residents about calmness; it must be remembered that as long as we live - NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE. And the Moulin Rouge deserves some Justice. Justice not just from some of us, but from ALL OF US TOGETHER.

Councilman Frank Hawkins has started a push at City Hall to get the Rouge some play. Also, I have, along with Assemblyman Arberry, introduced state legislation seeking funds for the restoration of the Rouge. Let's all get busy and play some part in getting the resort back in full operation. Who knows what will come after that. More next week.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WORDS FROM THE LAS VEGAS BLACK PANTHER PARTY

April 29th marked one year ago that the streets of Los Angeles and Las Vegas burned in fury over the acquittal of four Los Angeles police officers who beat a brother unmercifully for 72

seconds.

It also marked another event which has long been over due! Gangs from all over Los Angeles sat down at the table of Brotherhood and talked about peace. This event to me seemed even more important because for over (See Letters to Editor, Page 4)

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Betty Brown, President & Publisher
Lee Brown, General Manager / Editor
Ramon Savoy, Advertising & Marketing Dir.
Lourdes Cordero-Brown, Office Mgr.
William G. Ramirez, Assistant to the Editor
Willis Brown, Production
Ulysses Palrose, Distribution
Don Snook, Graphics

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6225 University Ave., Madison, WI 53705
(608) 238-7550

Contributing Writers:
Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams
Ray E. Willis (CCSD)
Rev. Jesse Scott (NAACP)
James S. Tate, Jr., M.D. (NAARPR)
R. K. Brown
Gwen Walker
Kimberly Bailey

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