



EPISODE 004 — GOVERNMENT HEALTH CARE FOR EVERYONE? BUYER BEWARE. JUST ASK GOLDILOCKS.

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SHOW NOTES



**Spinal Column Radio host,
Dr. Thomas Lamar**

Title: Government Health Care for Everyone? Buyer Beware. Just Ask Goldilocks.

Episode Number: 004

Host: Dr. Thomas Lamar

Show Date: 01/29/2010

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Description:

Dr. Lamar stares down the “Health Care Reform Elephant in the Room” in this tongue and cheek and thought-provoking episode. Learn why its so important that we let our voices be heard regarding health care reform, what the latest cost effectiveness studies are telling us, and how a story we all grew up on can teach us a lot about health.

Download this episode by right clicking.

Links:

Dr. Lamar's articles:

[My Health Care Reform Proposal: The Goldilocks Plan](#)
[Government Health Care for Everyone: Buyer Beware](#)

[Group Health DC vs. PT vs. booklet study](#)



Recent chiropractic cost effectiveness studies:

[Wellmark Blue Cross/ Blue Shield Physical Medicine Study](#)

[Mercer Health and Benefits Study](#)

[Milliman USA Study](#)



Does your podcast listening schedule need a little backbone? If so, then maybe it's time to schedule an appointment with your podcast chiropractor, Dr. Thomas Lamar.



Transcript:

Spinal Column Radio, episode number four.

Coming up on Spinal Column Radio — Government Health Care for Everyone? Buyer Beware. Just ask Goldilocks.



[intro theme music]

And welcome back to another exciting and information packed episode of Spinal Column Radio. My name is Dr. Thomas Lamar, chiropractor and Dad of 6. And this is the podcast that gets you to think. To think about your health in a whole new way. We're the podcast for your backbone... the podcast *with backbone*. Who knew that spinal education could be this much fun?

If you haven't done so already, we'd Like to invite you to visit our podcast website at spinalcolumnradio.com where you can learn more about us, podcasting in general, and can access the show notes for this episode. And of course, you can also leave comments and ask questions. Additionally, you can shoot me an email at DrLamar@spinalcolumnradio.com (that's D-R-L-A-M-A-R @spinalcolumnradio.com) and I'll do my best to include it in a future

show.

[transitional sound effect]

Wow, here we are at Episode number 4.... marking the end of our “celebratory weekly episode release-a-thon”... and certainly, we are looking forward to settling in to our regular, twice monthly schedule with you. Before we launch into today’s topic, I just like to say — and I know that Logan, sitting by my side here, would agree — that so far, this has been an exhilarating ride. We want to thank you for the encouraging comments, emails, phone calls, and personal contacts regarding Spinal Column Radio. It truly is appreciated.

Today on Episode number 4 we are going to talk about a topic that has been on all of our minds since the Presidential Debates — Health Care Reform.

You know, as our nation waits on pins and needles for our elected officials to craft a “health-insurance-plan-for-everyone,” the old adage “buyer beware” comes to mind. I say “buyer” because I don’t think that some realize that this health care plan will not be free. Everyone will likely see a direct cost, and most certainly we will all experience an indirect cost.

And what frightens me, is that we are looking to the federal government to draft this plan for us. We are literally asking an agency that has proven to us through their track record that they were never meant to be in the health insurance business. Ask any doctor — or any health care provider for that matter — what they think of Medicare. And then ask anyone over the age of 65 what *they* think of Medicare, and I think you will see where I am coming from. It’s not pretty, and it’s not good.

I’m concerned that in our over-exuberance to grant everyone health “insurance” tomorrow, if we are not careful, we might unknowingly strip ourselves from the very thing that we need: not health “insurance” ... health “care.”

I guess where I’m coming from here is that I want us to be confident, as citizens of the United States of America, that we know what we are signing up for here.

I know that we all want everyone to have access to health care that they deem best for themselves and their families, but to think that this will happen for free is complete fantasy. And as our legislators work feverishly to make this affordable, we need to be mindful that we may not get what we think we’re going to get.

Take for example — and yes, I realize that all of my examples are chiropractic in nature, but it’s what I know best... and I’d like to think that that’s why you are listening. So take for example Blue Cross of Northern California. To save money in the late 90’s, they dropped chiropractors from their Medicare Choice plan. (Oh the irony). If you were a senior citizen, the glossy brochures that enticed you to sign up with them, led you to believe that you would have “chiropractic services” available. What they didn’t tell you though was that these manipulation services would not be delivered by a chiropractor, but a physical therapist. Talk about being “manipulated.”

Or what about the Group Health right here in my home state that released a study — and this was also in the late 90’s — that compared chiropractic and physical therapy to an “educational booklet” for the treatment of lower back pain. Guess which one received a glowing report? Ahhh, the miraculous relief the participants of the study must have felt when that educational booklet showed up in their mailbox. Sound extraordinary... Folks, I kid you not. On the day I was preparing for this podcast, a patient of mine came in after a consultation with a Group

Health specialist for some particularly challenging lower back pain she was having, and guess what the prescription was.... a back pain book!

You know the study cited as a reason for giving the educational booklet was to “minimize potential disappointment with not receiving a physical treatment.” I know it’s hard to believe, but you can read it for yourself. I’ve put the a link to this study in my show notes. Also, I also penned an a couple of articles on the podcast topic we’re doing today, which can be found in the show notes as well.

Yes... “Buyer beware.” Are we truly going to get the health “care” that we need and want, or are we going to be subjected to misleading promises and unacceptable cost-cutting measures — all in the name of “insuring” everyone?

If we are truly going to “craft” a plan that insures everyone, it is imperative that we turn to the treatments that are effective — both in terms of how much they cost and if they actually work. Well in the last half of 2009 three studies surfaced in the field of chiropractic regarding cost effectiveness that should give anyone drafting a health care reform proposal pause. I’ll go a head and highlight them here, and if you want to read more, check out the show notes for their links.

[transitional sound effect]

Reporting after one year, a Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield physical medicine pilot study found that patients who received chiropractic and other physical medicine procedures were less likely to have surgery and had lower overall total health care costs [ding] when compared to similar patients that did not receive such services.

[transitional sound effect]

In another study, an assistant professor of Harvard Medical School, along with a chief physician at Mercer Health and Benefits, asked this question: “Does the availability of chiropractic care improve the value of health benefit plans?” Their answer: “When considering effectiveness and cost together, chiropractic physician care for low back and neck pain is highly cost effective [ding], represents a good value [ding] in comparison to medical physician care and.... is likely to drive improved cost-effectiveness [ding] of U.S. care.” Would you believe their findings did not include medication expenses?

[transitional sound effect]

Finally, Milliman USA recently released a “previously confidential report” that looked at the financial impact chiropractic care would have on the medical costs for patients with common spinal diagnoses. Amassing over 2.5 million “member months” of claims data, they found that those seeking chiropractic care had “materially lower health care costs [ding] than those who did not.... ten to 23 percent lower costs....” [ding] Extrapolating this data to a member pool of one million, they projected that if six percent of this population shared a common spinal diagnosis and half underwent chiropractic care, a savings of \$1.2 million per *month* [ding] would be realized. That’s over \$14 million a year! [ding, ding, ding, ding, ding]

[transitional sound effect]

So, as our elected leaders scramble to come up with a “plan,” let them hear your voice. Insist on care that will deliver for your hard-earned dollar.

I recommend checking out ChiroVoice.org. This is a website that was created by the American Chiropractic Association as a “tool” for chiropractic patients and advocates to communicate with their elected officials. By signing up — and it’s completely free and quick — you’ll be kept in the loop as to what is happening with regards to health care reform and, perhaps more specifically, how chiropractic is fitting into the picture. Plus, when choice opportunities arise, you’ll stand ready to write your elected officials via email, along with a bunch of other people — to sound off, let your voice be heard, and create an impact — an impact, that just might affect your health.

[transitional sound effect]

So, you may be wondering, what is Goldilocks doing in the title of this podcast?... Well, hang in there, she’s about ready to make her entrance.

I don’t know about you, but the fact that the health care proposal that our elected officials in D.C. are trying to push is over 2000 pages... makes feel a bit uneasy. *Two thousand pages!!* We should have sirens and red lights going off! Having this many pages makes it all too easy for provisions, restrictions, and mandates to silently slip into the health plan while, we the public, stare transfixed on the promise of “free health care for everyone.”

You know with six kids, I’ve read my fair share of story books... but if one of my kids were to plop a 2000-page fairy tale on my lap to read to them, I can’t say that I’d be able to do it. There are simply too many other things vying for my time. And I’d hazard to say that many of our elected officials are probably in the same boat.

Now, I don’t propose to be an expert at drafting health insurance plans, but my gut tells me that it needn’t be so long.

At the risk of oversimplifying the matter, there is much wisdom to be gained from a childhood storybook we are all familiar with — and one that is *considerably* shorter: “Goldilocks and The Three Bears.”

You’ve heard the story. Too hot. Too cold. Just right. In some ways, this classic story reminds me of the body’s ability to self-regulate as a means of staying healthy. You see, the body is constantly working to make sure things are “just right.” Not too hot. Not too cold. When things go awry and we become sick (ie. too hot, too cold, pain, dysfunction, ill health — you get the idea), we will do whatever it takes to get back to that place where we are “just right.” Sometimes we will default to the medicine cabinet in hopes of achieving this goal. Unfortunately, drug therapy is often only a crude attempt to *chemically* make things “just right.”

Chiropractic takes a different approach. It recognizes that the *system* that is in charge of keeping things “just right” is the nervous system. It is this system that literally controls and governs all of the other systems of the body. Chiropractic looks to remove any interference in this *master control* system’s ability to function properly. Because when the nervous system is functioning as it should, the body is capable of staying on course to make sure that things “just right.” And that is how Goldilocks would have liked it.

The supremacy of the nervous system is a drum that we chiropractors have been beating for the past 115 years. Many patients who seek out chiropractic for neck and back issues are not only elated when their pain is dramatically diminished or eliminated, but, perhaps more so, because they seem to have increased energy and a greater sense of overall well-being.

When we keep things simple and move towards health care habits that honor our body's ability to heal and self-regulate, a whole new health paradigm emerges — one that truly empowers the "health" in *health* care. Because if we don't, we just might end up with a National Health Care Plan alternatively entitled "The Big Bad Wolf."

[outro theme music]

Okay, that about draws the curtain on today's show. Have questions or something to share? Let us hear them by dropping a comment or two in the show notes for this episode. Also, remember to check out ChiroVoice.org and let those in D.C. hear you. It's super easy.

Spinal Column Radio would like to remind you that true health comes from the inside out — not outside in. As such, the content of this podcast, along with the show notes and related links, is not intended to cure, diagnose, treat, or prevent any disease. But, instead, is meant to inform and inspire you in asking better questions regarding your health. Since the circumstances surrounding your particular situation are unique, you are encouraged to consult with a Doctor of Chiropractic — or other health care practitioner of your choosing.

Next time on Spinal Column Radio we'll take a fascinating look back at the history of radio and how chiropractic played a key role in it — I guarantee that you'll learn something.

Until then, this is Dr. Thomas Lamar, your podcast chiropractor.

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