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Health Care:

How Can We Reduce Costs and Still Get the Care We Need?

Date of Forum • February 17, 2016

What common concerns were most apparent?

- How to get people to live healthy lifestyles
- Profit motives in healthcare a problem, but government intrusion is a problem too
- Desire for single-payer care, but unsure if cost could be paid by savings from improved health overall and fewer emergency room trips
- That the current system that now exists is flawed and expensive

What elements of this issue seemed most difficult for the participants?

- Dealing with tradeoffs
- Cost vs. quality of care
- Overall, participants weren't familiar with the discussion guide, so the possible actions weren't apparent to them. When this is the case, reading the possible actions to them might have prompted deeper discussion.
- Unwillingness to really consider and acknowledge tradeoffs

What things did participants appear to hold most valuable as they wrestled with trade-offs?

- Individual choice
- Strong desire for care for all; fairness

- That end of life care options should be decided by the patient, whenever possible; that family members should understand and acknowledge patient's wishes to discontinue painful procedures for short-term longevity

Which trade-offs were participants most comfortable with?

- *Government involvement okay**
- Could manage the tradeoff of flat fee/risk of "flat" care by devising method to cover extraordinary events with tiered fees
- Raising fees on those who chose unhealthy lifestyles

Which trade-offs did participants struggle with the most?

- *Government involvement**
- Fairly unwilling to really make the tradeoffs; more readily talked about what they wanted
- Those that imposed possible extra fees on those who could least afford it

** Dichotomy of tradeoff elements noted.*

Did the group identify shared directions for action?

- Supported adoption of a flat fee system of healthcare; also supported wellness programs.
- Mostly option 2
- Using media promotion and education to create focus on health and healthy lifestyles

What do we still need to talk about?

- How entrenched the pharmaceutical companies are with the insurance industry

How can we summarize our collective feelings about the health care issue?

- How expensive health care is and what we can do about it
- If we increase the Medicare age, what is the stop gap that we would create for those who need help in the "in-between" years?
- That we need to collectively and strongly focus on health
- How can we hold health care costs down when there is continuous economic inflation?
- More health education is needed for all ages