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NomineeAlert

Berwick's Background

Pediatrician, Harvard Community Health Plan

Vice President of Quality-of-Care Management, Harvard Community Health Plan

Co-Founder, and Co-Principal Investigator, National Demonstration Project on Quality Improvement in Health Care

Co-Founder, President, and CEO, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Clinical Professor of Pediatrics and Health Care Policy, Harvard Medical School

Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management, Harvard School of Public Health

EDUCATION

B.A., Harvard University

M.P.P., Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government

M.D., Harvard Medical School



Who is Dr. Berwick?

On April 19, 2010 President Obama nominated Dr. Donald M. Berwick to be the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

"Utopia"

Dr. Berwick in a 1992 op-ed in the *Washington Post* portrayed a happy future utopia in which a commission took over the health care system.

The commission determined capital budgets and negotiated contracts with nurses and everyone else. The commission allocated 5% of its budget for research and the education of health care professionals. The number of hospital beds was cut; and specialized care centers were consolidated. Doctors' salaries were capped and the earnings gap between general practitioners and specialists was "addressed." A central database was established to keep

Healthcare utopia...

track of patients. Smoking was banned. New diagnostic and treatment methods were only adopted if proven scientifically—before use.

"We don't need a nominee that sees the government as the solution to our healthcare needs. We need someone who will look for private market solutions. Unfortunately Dr. Berwick is the former and not the latter. "

-Bill Wilson, President, Americans for Limited Government

health care in the world." Nor does he believe in free-market capitalism. Fn.2. "I simply do not think markets will work in health care," he said. "But I think there is a way out, and it has to do with leadership." Fn.3.

this issue:

Dr. Donald M. Berwick, Nominee for Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Sound disturbing? Imagine what he'll do at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Fn.1.

Bashes American Capitalism, Praises Foreign Socialism
Berwick frequently bashes U.S. health care and praises socialist systems, such as those in Canada and Britain. According to Berwick, "There's a myth that we have the best

Continued next page...

Sources for further reading:

Fn.1. Howard Hiatt and Donald Berwick, *One State's Utopian Dream; A Health Care System That's Politically Palatable, Fiscally Sound, Medically Fair*, THE WASHINGTON POST, October 10, 1992. Available online at: <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-1030842.html>. (Accessed April 26, 2010.)

Fn.2. National Public Radio, December 14, 2007.

Fn.3. Joyce Frieden, *Quality gains key to health care reform*, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY NEWS, September 2, 2009. Available online at: <http://www.03.entrepreneur.com/tradejournals/article/209188223.html>. (Accessed April 26, 2010.)

Fn.4. *Monday Morning*, MedContent, Inc., September 21, 2009. Available online at: <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-208747937.html>. (Accessed April 26, 2010.)

Fn.5. HEALTH & MEDICINE WEEK, December 20, 2004.

Fn.6. National Public Radio, December 14, 2007.

Fn.7. Andis Robeznieks, *Kaiser Permanente partnering with Institute for Healthcare Improvement*, MODERN HEALTHCARE, October 9, 2006. Available online at: <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-152771613.html>. (Accessed April 26, 2010.)

U.K. on course for best healthcare system in the world, HEALTH & MEDICINE WEEK, December 20, 2004. Available online at: <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-126249997.html>. (Accessed April 26, 2010.)

Fn.8. Hiram Lee, *Obama nominates cost-cutting advocate as Medicare and Medicaid chief*, WORLD SOCIALIST WEB SITE, April 7, 2010. Available online at: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2010/apr2010/berw-a07.shtml>. (Accessed April 26, 2010.)

What you really need to know about Dr. Berwick

Continued from first page...

"There is an image of Canadians flooding across the border to get care," said Donald Berwick, a Harvard University health-policy specialist and pediatrician who heads the Boston-based nonprofit Institute for Healthcare Improvement. "That's just not the case." Fn.4.

...

Both the U.S. and the U.K. are "strikingly similar" in the problems they face in improving their respective healthcare systems, wrote Berwick. But if asked to bet on which country will succeed in resolving them, "my money will be on the U.K.," he declared. "The biggest reason is simple," he wrote. "The U.K. has people in charge of its healthcare - people with the clear duty and much of the authority to take on the challenge of changing the system as a whole. When it comes to healthcare as a nation, the U.S. is leaderless," he said, describing the U.S. healthcare system as "pluralistic, chaotic, leaderless." Fn.5.

Obsessed with Race

Like so many other Obama nominees, Berwick is obsessed with race. "It's still true that race, minority race, especially being black in our country, is the strongest critique that we have about health," said Berwick. Fn.6.

Conflicts of Interest

Berwick draws a large annual salary and generous benefits (worth well over \$700,000 in total) from the organization that he started in 1991, the Institute for Health Care Improvement (IHI). Who has funded this organization? Health care companies that Berwick, as CMS Administrator, would be both regulating and paying. For example, Kaiser Permanente and has pledged \$10 million to Berwick's organization. Allina Hospitals and Clinics, National Alliance, Premier, and Ascension Health have also partnered with IHI. Fn.7.

Rationing

Dr. Berwick appears to support rationing of healthcare.

Berwick claimed, in effect, that while it would be wonderful to provide top quality health care for everyone, that was not a realistic possibility. He alleged that by demanding what is best for each one of them, "rational healthcare stakeholders are eroding a common good, simply doing what makes sense to them individually. In the short term everyone wins, but in the long term, everyone loses. ... Healthcare is not entitled to everything it has, and it is surely not entitled to everything it can get." Fn.8.

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