

LETTERS, PUBLISHED JULY 30, 2017

July 30, 2017 at 5:00 am |

The only time Congress bothers to lift a finger...



KALISPELL'S FUTURE LOOKS STRONG

I applaud Kalispell Mayor Mark Johnson and the City Council for awarding the bid to begin the Glacier Rail Park Development. Kudos also to City Manager Doug Russell and his staff for all their hard work. Infrastructure development creates jobs — now as construction begins and in the future as strong infrastructure supports profitable enterprise. It's tax dollars returning to the pockets of taxpayers, and I'm all for it. —Mike Merchant, Kalispell

ROADBLOCKS TO PHYSICIAN EMPATHY

I would like to congratulate Dr. Costrini for his recent column on building empathy between doctors and patients. I agree this is a good idea. Another reason for the lack of empathy, I believe, is that too many practitioners spend all day staring at screens, or at computer printouts, which de-humanizes the whole process.

I have another subject to offer Dr. Costrini for his ideas for future articles. Apology.

When a doctor harms a patient, either physically or financially through error, fatigue, incompetence, carelessness, or through a failing system, the mature and humanistic response is to apologize. In my opinion there are three parts to a meaningful apology: 1) Say you're sorry for the pain you have caused. 2) State the reason for the error even if it was systemic or unintentional. 3) Offer to make amends — "how can I make amends?"

Regardless of the obstacles, a good man or woman will live up to their role in hurting another person and rise above the obstacles to make things right.

Doctors face several obstacles to this personalized approach. 1) If they admit a mistake, they may face a lawsuit. 2) If they would like to make amends, they have to work through an impossibly large bureaucracy. 3) Many have become arrogant because of the way they have rigged the system in their favor during the 20th century. Fortunately, this system will be changing soon. Here is an example of how the system is rigged — Physicians feel that they legally must make the most self-centered (and profitable) recommendations, or risk being sued for not recommending the gold standard procedures if the person has a problem later. How convenient.

In my view, things are changing. As the population becomes more informed: 1) Many view doctors with suspicion rather than admiration. 2) They avoid appointments with doctors as much as possible. 3) They practice wellness. 4) They inform themselves and choose safer, less expensive alternatives. 5) View death as a natural part of life and do not play into the "use my gadget or you will die" sales pitch.

I realize that many doctors view their work as a business — but does this mean they should promote their own practice over the patients needs? I recently brought a copy of the Hippocratic oath to a senior executive at the hospital. This person humbly admitted never seeing or reading it. It clearly states that one of the ways a physician can hurt a patient is financially — I wonder how many in our medical community have read the oath, or think it is antiquated and out of date?

So, empathy is a good start, Dr. Costrini. Now let's move forward and accept responsibility for when we injure patients. I think one way to create a more thoughtful medical workforce is to require physicians to pay 50 percent of the costs of any complications that occur from their work. This would promote responsible medicine and be proof of true empathy. —Steve Eckels, Kalispell

TESTER IS NOT A FRIEND OF WILDLIFE

We 30,000 strong Montana environmentalists are looking for our champion, and it is not U.S. Sen. Jon Tester.

He denies us our needs: Wildlife (especially grizzly bears and wolves) saved under the Endangered Species Act; more appropriate designated wilderness for wildlife habitat and their survival; and elimination of Montana "dirty coal" mining and the Keystone XL Canadian tar sands oil transmission pipeline causing severe climate change issues.

He refers to us as the "lunatic fringe" enviros. He is a DINO (Democrat in Name Only) and behaves like a moderate Republican. We will abandon him on this next go-round, since we supported him the last two elections and he betrayed us. Do the math. We will organize ourselves. Without our support, he loses. So if he continues to ignore our needs, he loses.

For those of you who know me but disagree with me about not supporting Tester, I quote the following:

"Be who you are and say what you feel... because those that matter don't mind... but those that mind don't matter. So, here I stand, I can do no other." —Bill Baum, Martin City

DAINES WRONG ON HEALTH CARE

On the June 28 teleconference, Sen. Daines shamefully misrepresented the Affordable Care Act and the Senate health-care bill (Better Care Reconciliation Act).

1. He lied by saying that women were part of the Senate committee that drafted the bill.
2. He claimed that the ACA increased premiums. This is only partially true. The ACA required insurance companies to provide expansive coverage which did lead to increases, but after 2015, the average rate of increase has dropped. More to the point, the CBO showed that under the BCRA premiums will skyrocket again.
3. Daines misrepresented Planned Parenthood: 97 percent of their work is preventative. About 3 percent is provision of abortions. No federal money pays for abortions. He claims that only a "smattering" of people use Planned Parenthood. Actually, 2.5 million men and women visit one of their health centers every year. Planned Parenthood helps prevent over 500,000 unintended pregnancies per year.
4. Daines said that the Medicaid cuts would return it to the people it was intended to serve. This is a ridiculous statement: Medicaid is intended to serve people who cannot afford health care. The cuts he supports will take health care away from over 70,000 Montanans, including the 49 percent of births that Medicaid finances.
5. Daines' claim that the BCRA would give Montanans a choice about their health insurance is insulting. A choice between feeding your family and buying health insurance is no choice. Daines uses the rhetoric of "free market" to hide the fact that he is most interested in giving huge tax breaks to his wealthy supporters.
6. He failed to mention that every health-care organization was opposed to the BCRA, including the Montana Rural Health Association and the Montana Hospital Association.

The way Sen. Daines conducts himself on behalf of Montanans is shameful. We deserve a senator who will stand up for us. —Eileen McGurty, Lakeside

'THEY WERE RIGHT'

My Republican friends warned me that if I voted for Hillary we would end up with the most lying, corrupt and inept administration in the history of this nation. They were right. I voted for Hillary and we have the most lying, corrupt and inept administration in the history of this nation. —Roseanne "Rocky" Feckete, Bigfork