

I've been paying more attention lately to the health care debate or what I prefer to call the sick care debate. What I've found that is usually missing from all the shouting about the repeal of the Affordable Care Act is just how outrageously expensive sick care has become in recent years.

NHEA - The National Health Expenditure Accounts is the official agency that collects data that gives a fairly accurate estimate of total health care spending in the United States. Dating back to 1960, the NHEA measures annual U.S. expenditures for health care goods and services, public health activities, government administration, the net cost of health insurance, and investments related to health care.

In 2016 health care comprised 18% of our national GDP, which equals \$3.4 trillion. To put that number in some sort of perspective, our medical industrial complex is approximately the size of Brazil's total economy, the seventh-largest economy in the world.

If we move forward a few years to 2025, seven and a half years from now, health care spending is projected to approach 20% of GDP or \$ 5.5 trillion. That means that we will be spending 20 cents out of every dollar on sickness. This growing commitment of resources inevitably means less money is available for other purposes. For families, it means more expensive insurance premiums, higher taxes, and lower wages. For federal and state governments, it means less funding for other public priorities like education and infrastructure.

Politics aside, the numbers speak for themselves; the state of American sick care is simply unsustainable. It doesn't matter

whether a plan is scripted by Democrats, Republicans or both parties trying something new like working together or the Medicare for All single payer option proposed by Bernie Sanders, none of them are sustainable.

If health care costs continue to increase at the rate they've been going in recent decades, they will continue to wreak havoc on our national finances and damage our economic outlook even further. But what it also means is that we are a very unhealthy society.

Most of the chronic diseases too many of us are experiencing are not random occurrences but the consequence of the things we do every day, our personal unhealthy habits over time. Lack of personal responsibility for our health is really the elephant in the room that we can all do something about. At the very least we can all try to consider, on a daily basis, the long-term consequences of our present actions!