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The U.S. has the least efficient health care system among 11 developed nations, and solutions to this problem are not being developed in Washington. Wisconsin used to blaze new trails as a model for the nation to copy. Time to return to our pioneering roots.

ALTOONA, WI - What passes for a debate on Capitol Hill over the future of health care in America shows how very far we have to travel to reach the destination of civilized medicine in this country.

Those currently in charge of Congress have a vision of the future that involves making health insurance far more expensive for those who need it most and leaving [tens of millions more people uninsured](#). Their vision also would let states [take away protections for people with pre-existing medical conditions](#), meaning that more than 50 million Americans could be put in the dismal position of only being able to buy insurance that doesn't cover the care they actually need.

President Trump and congressional Republicans desperately want to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, more commonly known as Obamacare. That law erred on the side of getting more people insured and requiring insurance to cover the health conditions people have, but in doing so the goal of keeping insurance premiums affordable is made next to impossible to achieve over the long haul. What Trump pushed and House Republicans passed errs on the side of lowering premiums for most people in the long run, but does so by jacking up costs for the sickest among us and taking insurance coverage away from large numbers of people.

Blue Jean Nation 'Show the way on health care, Wisconsin'

Written by Mike McCabe, Blue Jean Nation

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Neither approach does anything about the biggest single failing of the U.S. health care system. Health care [administrative costs in America are twice as high](#) as the global average. Compared to the rest of the world, more of our health care dollars pay for paperwork and less of the spending goes for patient care. That's because we have a multi-payer system that forces health care providers to submit claims for payment to dozens and dozens of different insurance companies. That means dozens and dozens of different forms to fill out. And dozens and dozens of different systems to navigate and different procedures to follow to get medical treatment paid for.

This is why the U.S. has the [least efficient health care system](#) among 11 developed nations. Solutions to this problem are not being developed in Washington. The problem is not even being discussed on Capitol Hill. Neither party's favored approach addresses it.



That being the case, answers need to come from outside of Washington. It's been a while since Wisconsin [blazed new trails](#) and made itself a model for the nation to copy, but there's no more urgent need than health care system innovation to inspire Wisconsin to return to its pioneering roots. We have a program in Wisconsin called BadgerCare that provides coverage to low-income people. It should be Wisconsin's goal to make everyone in the state eligible to enroll in BadgerCare. No one would be required to enroll, but everyone should be eligible. BadgerCare should be there for all Badgers.

For starters, Wisconsin should put the single-payer BadgerCare plan on the [state's insurance exchange](#). Offer people looking for medical coverage a public option in this marketplace that now only offers private insurance plans. Let anyone and everyone buy into BadgerCare. Show the nation an alternative to the multi-payer monstrosity that produces administrative costs that are double what the rest of the world pays and leaves America with the stigma of having the least efficient and most costly health care system among developed countries.

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Lead the way, Wisconsin.

— *Mike McCabe*