



Needed to fix the health system: '21st century Dr. Marcus Welbys'

Health care in the United States is complex, contradictory and often exasperating to both patients and physicians. On one hand, there is such excellence that people travel from afar to undergo treatments at our hospitals. On the other, we expend more dollars on health care than any other nation, only to find our overall health status to be inferior to many countries which expend far less.

What's wrong? In recent decades, the biologic revolution has produced new knowledge and powerful tools, making what was once miraculous almost routine. Physicians have invested tremendous effort to absorb the new knowledge, apply new tools and push the limits of what can be achieved for patients. With such intense focus on medical science and technology, too often the human aspect, the art of medicine, has been overshadowed or even ignored. Increasingly, fewer physicians have chosen a career in primary care. As a result, the import of the traditional patient-doctor relationship has declined.

Meanwhile, the business aspect of health care has placed its top priority on technology and indirectly on the volume of tests and procedures performed. The result is the delivery of medical care characterized by high

volumes of technical services, often independent of measurable improvements in clinical outcome accompanied by too little emphasis on the humans receiving those services.

The "system" we have is provider-centric. Too little attention is paid to either what our patients want or to the formal assessment of quality or value. Patients report feeling like the objects of the "system" rather than the reason for it.

Health care as currently delivered in the United State is felt by many to be characterized as lacking intelligent design. It is nearly devoid of integration. It is confusing to its users. It is expensive. It is provider-driven, delivering high volumes of "high tech" and low volumes of "high touch."

A vision for The Villages

The Villages Health replaces the current state of affairs with one that is delightfully simple. It is patient-centered, where all the components revolve around the patient's experience. It is community-based, where the majority of health-care services are rendered physically close to, or even in, the home.

It is primary-care driven, in which each Villager has a long-term relationship with a primary care physician and receives care delivered by a team led directly by that physician based in a

medical home.

It is academically illuminated in the sense that the care rendered enjoys the benefit of up-to-date science and the latest evidence-based research through a formal and vibrant relationship with the University of South Florida, a world-class health sciences university.

It is innovative, routinely implementing fresh ideas. It is integrated, in which all elements of a comprehensive system are intelligently connected. And it is predicated upon value, in which both quality and cost remain the clear focus of attention in the delivery of care so that new technology is embraced to the extent that it supports the creation of greater value to the patients that are served.

What can I expect

Let's begin with access. Most patients want to know that they will be able to choose a physician who is well educated and trained, beginning with an accredited medical school followed by superb residency training. It means having a physician who remains connected to an organization that values ongoing learning, since medical knowledge continues to evolve. A patient wants a physician who listens to, and understands, the patient and clearly demonstrates this.

See **SYSTEM**, C8

Romney looks after taxpayers' interests

Any Republican governor of a blue state who manages to balance the budget without raising taxes should be a nominee for Mount Rushmore, to say nothing of president.

Mitt Romney was governor of a state so blue, it's North Korea with more Irish people, and he balanced the budget without raising taxes.

Even Ronald Reagan raised taxes as governor of California, imposing a \$1 billion tax increase his first year in office.

It was the largest tax hike by a governor in the nation's history, raising income, corporate, sales and inheritance taxes. Five years later, Reagan raised taxes again by another \$1.5 billion.

To be fair, unlike liberals, he also provided tax rebates that, over his tenure in office, totaled \$5.7 billion, including \$4 billion in property tax rebates.

But even Reagan didn't stop the growth of state government: While he was governor of California, the budget increased from \$4.6 billion to \$10.2 billion.

Republicans are able to contextualize Reagan's record — it was California! — but seem unable to contextualize Mitt Romney's record, even though he had to govern a state far more liberal than California was half a century ago.

When Reagan was governor, the California Assembly was majority Democrat, but the Senate was evenly split between Republicans



ANN COULTER
 COLUMNIST

and Democrats.

Gov. Romney had to contend with a 200-person state Legislature that included only 29 Republicans.

As Reagan tax guru Arthur Laffer has admitted, Reagan's specialty was cutting taxes, not spending. Reagan, he said, found "it hard to say no" and cutting spending is a "green-eyeshade budget thing," that requires poring over budgets, whereas cutting taxes can be done in the abstract.

Romney is a green-eyeshade guy. Like Reagan, Romney inherited a huge, Democrat-created budget deficit. The existing Massachusetts deficit was already more than half a billion dollars when Romney took office halfway through a fiscal year, with a projected deficit of \$3 billion for the following fiscal year.

And yet, Romney balanced Massachusetts' budget each year he was in office and left the state with a surplus, without raising taxes.

To the contrary, every single budget Romney submitted included income tax cuts — all of which were rejected by the 85-percent Democratic Legislature. (The last time Massachusetts legislators

approved an income tax cut was when it was attached to a bill raising their own salaries by 55 percent.)

Romney balanced the budget by slashing spending, eliminating ridiculous corporate tax loopholes and increasing user fees for government services consumed by only some citizens, such as court filings, taking the bar exam, boating, hunting and golf licenses.

He cut state spending by \$600 million, including reducing his own staff budget by \$1.2 million, and hacked the largest government agency, Health and Human Services, down from 13 divisions to four. He did this largely by persuading the Legislature to give him emergency powers his first year in office to cut government programs without their consent.

Although Romney was not able to get any income tax cuts past the Democratic Legislature, he won other tax cuts totaling nearly \$400 million, including a one-time capital gains tax rebate and a two-day sales tax holiday for all purchases under \$2,500.

He also vetoed more bills than any other governor in Massachusetts history, before or since. He vetoed bills concerning access to birth control, more spending on state zoos, and the creation of an Asian-American commission — all of which were reversed by the Legislature.

As Barbara Anderson, executive

See **COULTER**, C7

Help golf tourney help loved ones of fallen firefighters

The family of a firefighter never knows when he or she may answer their last call, climb aboard a pumper or ladder truck for the last time, never to return.

Even though a firefighter's loved ones live every day with that prospect in the back of their minds, nothing they can do can prepare them for the day when he or she is taken from them in the line of duty.

Firefighters, however, perhaps more than anyone else who lives with the ever-present possibility of going to work one day and not coming home, look out for their own and are there for each other.

They take it upon themselves to provide any help the loved ones of a fallen firefighter may need at the time, whether it is financial, emotional or moral support.

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation exists to assure that the ones left behind by a firefighter's death can find whatever help they may need in their time of grief.

And, to assure that the foundation is equipped to help fallen firefighters' families when they need it, firefighters all across the country play host to local golf tournaments as fundraisers for the organization.

This year, the District Public Safety Department is hosting the Tri-County National Fallen Firefighters Golf Tournament, which will start at 8:30 a.m. April 21 at Arlington Ridge Golf Club in Leesburg, according to Lt. Bradley Mattingly of the District Public Safety Department.

Charlie Dickinson, national golf coordinator for the foundation, is helping local firefighters

organize their first tournament to benefit the foundation and all of its programs and activities that "support families in a time of crisis after a line-of-duty death of a firefighter," Mattingly said.

This tournament will be the first to be held in the tri-county area on behalf of the foundation.

Villages firefighters tried their hand at organizing a tournament last year to benefit the families of fallen firefighters but were unable to attract enough players.

Mattingly said organizers hope the earlier date of this year's event, moved up from August to April, and increased participation by members of other local fire departments and members of the community, will make this year's tournament a success.

"I'm hoping to see plenty of participants. It's an exciting event," he said.

The local tournament is one of about 40 to be held nationwide this year in support of the foundation, Dickinson said.

Dickinson has been involved with the tournaments on a national level since the first one, which raised \$30,000, was held in 2004. Last year, the events generated a combined \$300,000.

This year, he said, he expects the cumulative total raised from all of the tournaments over the last eight years to top \$1 million.

As more fire-service organizations have heard of the tournaments, more of them have decided to play host to one in their community, he said.

See **FIREFIGHTERS**, C6

Letters to the Editor

Writer misrepresents statements by Fluke

To the editor:

A letter printed March 20 criticizing Sandra Fluke contains numerous errors.

The letter begins, "So, just who is Sandra Fluke anyway?" implying that this is some sort of mystery. In fact, in her testimony before a Democratic congressional panel convened by Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Fluke identified herself as a long-term advocate for contraceptive coverage, "My name is Sandra Fluke, and I'm a third-year student at Georgetown Law School. I'm also a past president of Georgetown Law Students for Reproductive Justice, or LSRJ."

The letter argues that "Ms. Fluke's claim she cannot afford contraception devices is absurd." The writer offers nothing to support his assertion that Fluke ever made this claim. In fact, she never has. The full text of Fluke's testimony shows that

she made no reference at all to her own use of contraception.

Her testimony was entirely about cases of women employed by religiously affiliated institutions who have "suffered financially, emotionally and medically, because of this lack of coverage."

Another error the writer makes is to imply that Fluke's testimony was about "contraception devices." A simple reading of the transcript shows that she was talking about contraceptive "medication." The differences are that medication is both more expensive and is used to treat medical conditions unrelated to birth control.

Finally, the letter suggests that Fluke's true purpose was "to help the president by changing the subject from contraception to women's health care."

Once again, no evidence is offered for this assertion. I do not claim to know Fluke's purpose in testifying, but I think

See **LETTERS**, C8

Letters to the Editor

With the goal in mind of maintaining a civil tone, letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters referring to news stories should also mention the headline and date of publication.

Letters for publication should be no longer than 300 words, must include the writer's address and daytime telephone number. Only the writer's name and hometown will be published. For mailed submissions, writers must sign the letter.

The Daily Sun reserves the right to edit, accept or reject any letters submitted. Each writer is limited to one published letter in a 30-day period. Due to the volume of submission, we regret we cannot return or acknowledge unpublished letters.

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SYSTEM, from C5

A patient wants care that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. This means that diagnostic and therapeutic choices are explained and decision-making is shared with and informed by the patient. It means that the physician and his team are available when needed by telephone and in person for attention the same day. Ideally, separate, free-standing urgent care centers for patients who choose The Villages Health will become a distant memory.

Does a great system equal a great doctor?

Physicians come in all varieties. There are many good ones and some not-so-good ones. For now, let's keep it simple. Primary care physicians are key. Overall, they are less common than we need. In an ideal system, 50 percent of physicians specialize in primary care, while the other half practice in more focused specialty areas. Unfortunately, fewer than 20 percent of physicians currently choose to practice in the primary-care specialties, such as family medicine and internal medicine. Initially, we are emphasizing the recruitment of primary care physicians to The Villages.

Why emphasize primary care?

Excellent primary-care physicians and the teams they lead can expertly manage a significant majority of the health issues in our community. Every patient needs a primary-care physician serving as quarterback. A primary-care center that each patient can call home is a good place to start when health care is required. Through the involvement of USF Health, excellent specialty physicians, skilled in both the art and science of medicine, will be available to integrate their efforts with those of the primary-care physicians. Have the days of "Marcus Welby, M.D." passed us by with the advances in medical knowledge and specialization that we have experienced? No! The 21st century "Dr. Welby" takes time, listens, communicates clearly and cares deeply about his patients. He is compassionate and has a warm bedside manner. This is the "high touch" component of our system. At the same time, the "Dr. Welby" of today is extremely well trained, board certified and practices in an accredited medical home. He is armed with the greatest in modern medical technology. He updates his own medical knowledge as science continues to evolve. He collaborates closely with his colleagues. He has replaced the antiquated paper chart with a powerful, electronic medical

record, enabling all health providers to share necessary information and integrate their efforts while fiercely protecting patient privacy. This is the "high tech" component. Making The Villages "America's Healthiest Hometown" involves heavy lifting. It will involve substantial challenges and major changes. Each member of the community can play a role in bringing this idea to fruition. Why should we be satisfied with anything less for our community and for ourselves?

Dr. Stephen Klasko, an obstetrician-gynecologist, is the dean of the USF Morsani College of Medicine.
Dr. Joseph Hildner, a family physician, is the founder of Family Doctors of Belleview.
Dr. Elliot Sussman, an internist, is the past president and CEO of the Lehigh Valley Health Network in Pennsylvania and a consultant to The Villages in health care.
All three are also faculty members at USF Health.

LETTERS, from C5

that critics of what she has to say should at least accurately represent her arguments before they attack her personally.
Raymond Moore
The Villages

Florida parks director invites residents to visit

To the editor:
"Spring begins."
My calendar has informed me of the official beginning of this refreshing season, although I've felt it outside for a few weeks now. As a Floridian, I know spring will be short, but it will also be time to break out of your everyday routine, release some stress, get out of the office and experience nature in Florida's state parks. Take the time this season to experience nature with all five of your senses – seeing Florida's vistas, smelling newly bloomed flowers, feeling the sand between your toes, hearing the sounds of children playing and tasting the treats of your picnic basket in a state park. Spring is an optimum season to engross yourself in the natural and cultural resources of Florida's state parks. There are so many opportunities for new experiences and the special places to continue your old family traditions. Sometimes it is a hike in the forest, a walk on the beach, building sand castles with your kids, watching a sunrise or a sunset, grilling lunch under a big oak tree, looking for a bird species to add to your life list or paddling your canoe on a long stretch of river. It's about immersion, surrounding yourself with nature and coming away with a renewed appreciation for Florida's splendor. Sometimes you need a slow, relaxing experience, and sometime you might prefer a fast, exhilarating experience.

I encourage you to spend time in Florida's award-winning state parks this season. Savor the atmosphere of spring and enjoy the Sunshine State in ... the "Real Florida."
Donald V. Forgione
Director
Florida Park Service

Never re-elect an incumbent

To the editor:
Our federal legislators can vote themselves raises and perks without consulting the taxpaying public. Welfare recipients can vote themselves benefits by re-electing those politicians promising them everything except work. Add to this the same process in most every political subdivision that "bargains" with nonfireable entities. All this with taxpayer dollars. The controllers of our taxpayers dollars spend a good share of their elected term trying to get re-elected. "Pensions and perks for life" after one term in office is obscene. We have only one option to harness this ongoing mess – term limits without after-term benefits. The word "serve" was meant to serve the

taxpayers not those elected. A good start to get back control or our hard-earned tax dollars is to never reelect anyone regardless of their political identity.
Erle Jackson
The Villages

Have golf-cart lights checked, adjusted

To the editor:
To my knowledge no one has written about this subject or problem that confronts those who own and drive a golf cart: The headlights must be checked for adjustment. I have seen many golf carts that the lights shine right at drivers of oncoming golf carts, effectively blinding them so that the operators may not see pedestrians or other golf carts in front of them, particularly in the early mornings and evenings or at night. At time of purchase, golf carts should be inspected for this problem, and current golf-cart owners and operators should have their carts checked and adjustments made if necessary. Please have this done for everyone's safety.
Ronald R. Rose
The Villages

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