

When all else fails, why not try the right thing? By Tom Grace,
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With the defeat of the Republican healthcare bill last week, Congress can now consider real reform, one that will cut costs, cover everyone and dramatically lower property taxes in upstate New York.

Single Payer, or Medicare for all.

In Chenango County, we would save nearly \$10 million a year in property taxes now spent on Medicaid. In fact, this would eliminate the county's single largest expense, reducing taxes countywide.

Every county resident, every American, would be covered, and rationing healthcare based on ability to pay would stop.

Businesses would no longer have to struggle with providing health insurance and could concentrate on business.

Individuals would face no mandates to buy insurance, although anyone who wished to buy a private insurance policy could do so.

Americans could keep their doctors because single payer reforms only how healthcare professionals are paid, not how medicine is practiced. And the cost of healthcare would likely decrease by eliminating overhead and private profit at the expense of those enrolled in Medicare For All.

According to Physicians For a National Health Program (<http://www.pnhp.org/>): **“A national health insurance program could save approximately \$150 billion on paperwork alone. Because of the administrative complexities in our current system, over 25% of every health care dollar goes to marketing, billing, utilization review, and other forms of waste. A single-payer system could reduce administrative costs greatly.”**

The price of prescriptions would drop because Medicare would be able to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for reasonable prices as in Canada and other Single Payer countries.

At a town meeting in Vermont last weekend, Senator Bernie Sanders got an ovation when he announced he will introduce a Single Payer bill to Congress in April.

As reported by the Huffington Post and Common Dreams (<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2017/03/27/thunderous-applause-welcomes-sanders-call-medicare-all>) “We have got to end the international disgrace of being the only major country on earth not to guarantee healthcare to all people as a right, not a privilege,” Sanders told the 1,000-strong audience in Hardwick, Vermont, where he appeared alongside the other members of the state's congressional delegation. “Within a couple of weeks I am going to be introducing legislation calling for a Medicare-for-All, single-payer program.”

To repeat: For dramatically lower property taxes in upstate New York, for covering all Americans, for lower healthcare bills, for freeing businesses from an onerous mandate, for making our county, state and nation more competitive with our friends and rivals, we need Single Payer now.

Is there a downside? Yes. Private health insurance corporations might face financial challenges. So, if Single Payer is obviously better than the current mess, why don't we have it?

To answer this, I think we need to look at the Center for Responsive Politics on the Internet at Open Secrets <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php?ind=H04>. According to this source, in our last election cycle, the pharmaceuticals/health products industry donated over \$27 million to congressional candidates - over \$15 million for Republicans and over \$12 million for Democrats.

But a concerted push right now by citizens calling their representatives might push Congress to take the right path – lower our taxes, lower our healthcare bills, give us Single Payer.

