

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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We should be able to compare medical costs

Readers wondering how our healthcare system got so dysfunctional and expensive have politicians and ideologues of all stripes to thank. The latest example is Dr. Deane Waldman, an adjunct scholar for the Rio Grande Foundation, who comes with a strange attack against Think New Mexico, the independent, bipartisan think tank.

Last month Think New Mexico made a perfectly sensible proposal that patients and doctors deserve to know in advance the price and quality metrics for common medical services and procedures at any one of New Mexico's 44 hospitals. Indeed, as Think New Mexico has pointed out, it is easier to find information about the price and quality of a toaster than a common medical procedure in New Mexico in 2014.

It seems odd to me that a libertarian organization, like the Rio Grande Foundation, would be opposing the ability of patients in this new era of high deductible plans to be able to shop around in a more free and transparent market for the most affordable, high-quality medical care. I also found it disconcerting that Dr. Waldman identified himself at the top of his column as a member of the New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange Board.

Based on my experience as a physician practicing in New Mexico for almost three decades, it is apparent that we need more common sense, and less political ideology if we are to improve our health care system. I join my colleague Dr. Barry Ramo in supporting transparency in price and quality of medical services and procedures, which will save lives and dollars, and I urge other New Mexicans to support Think New Mexico's proposal. It is a rational, bipartisan plan long overdue.

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