Dear Patient,

If you are sitting in a doctor's office reading this, you probably care about your health. Whether you know it or not, you are facing a fearful threat to it: not from germs or from cancer cells, but from politicians.

Politicians in Washington, D.C. and in many states are now considering various versions of national health care or universal health insurance. The following article, ''National Health Care: Prescription for a Fool's Paradise,'' explains why *any* government-funded program (local, state or federal) would mean worse care for you and higher costs.

It is crucial that we stop such plans before they are put into effect--government programs, once in place, are very difficult to get rid of. After you've read the article, discuss it with your doctor, your family, your friends and your colleagues. Tell as many people as possible what this sort of government-funded medical care is going to do to them. Equally important, drop a note to your congressmen and state legislators, telling them that if they vote for this or any similar measure, they will lose their jobs at the next election. Better yet, send them a copy of this article (feel free to make photocopies), with your name and address and ''I agree'' written on it. This is a matter of your life and health; if anything can rouse you to write to your representatives, this should be it.

If you are interested in learning more about the ideas expressed in this article, we suggest two authors. Henry Hazlitt's *Economics in One Lesson* explains in simple, common-sense terms how economics works, especially how government interference disrupts a free market. The only works that explain, step by step and irrefutably, why capitalism makes available the best in health care, and, furthermore, why it is the only moral economic system, are Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead,* and her non-fiction works such as *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal.*

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Wishing you the best of health,
Dianne & Salvatore Durante

National Health Care: Prescription for a Fool's Paradise

by Dianne L. Durante and Salvatore J. Durante

Suppose I promise you health care like you've never had before. When you visit a doctor or a hospital, all you'll have to do is show a card, and someone else will foot the bill. You'll never have to fill out another insurance form or wait for another reimbursement to come in. And, I promise, you'll get the same quality of care you get now, and won't have to pay more taxes for it.

Would you vote for me? Most people would. Would you get what I promised? No, because it's impossible to deliver. This is the promise of those who advocate "national health care" or "universal health insurance" (on either the state or national level). In either case, what is involved is extensive or complete government control of health care: control of who pays for services, who provides them, and who receives them.

We have, before our eyes, an example of a very similar system that has been operating now for 26 years: Medicare. This article aims to demonstrate, by a detailed look at Medicare, that such government interference in health care is harmful from the first to buyers and providers of health care, and in the long run is disastrous. Government medicine, on the national or the state level, is a prescription for a fool's paradise.

To understand the economic principles involved in government intervention in medicine, let us look at something less emotionally charged than medicine. Hats, for instance.

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Basic Economic Lessons

Let's say we all agree that hats are worth having, or even a necessity, and that all Americans have a right to them. We pass a law stating that the government will pay for everyone's hats, through taxpayer dollars. What happens? First of all, hat sales skyrocket. I'm not particularly fond of hats, but if I can get them for free or below cost, why not?

Lesson One: there is no limit to demand, if those who get the product or use it are not paying, directly or in some way they can see. This is unavoidable. The freeloaders will try to get all they can, and most of the rest of us will want something to show for our tax dollars.

If such a law passed, most hatmakers would be delirious with joy. Everyone wants hats! They expand their shops and produce as many hats as they can. What happens next? The average price of hats shoots through the roof. Why?

There are two reasons. First, of the hats now being sold, the more expensive ones—the ones only a few people could afford before—will now be in much greater demand, since the individual hat-buyer no longer has to pay from his own, limited resources. If the latest style is a platinum-plated beret, anyone who wants one will now get it.

The other reason for the rising prices is competition: specifically, lack of it. New products, such as the first camcorders or the first compact disc players, are usually expensive. Prices drop because more people want to make money from a product: they try to come up with cheaper and more efficient ways of producing it, so they can sell the product more cheaply and grab some of the mar-