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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Hi, Nancy — Does this work regarding the tenses regarding your surgery? I kept it in the future tense and put a note in your bio that lets readers know it will have happened. Good luck tomorrow. —Jeff



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 U.S. healthcare policy hits home

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 'I am getting a poisonous lump out of my body. I can't
3 imagine having to choose whether to get this thing out whether to
4 pay the rent.'

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 I HAVE NOW very reluctantly and angrily joined the club
7 of women (and a few men) with treatable breast cancer.

8 It's treatable. But it's terrifying.

9 I am fortunate that my local hospital has moved very
10 quickly from ultrasound to surgery, as I very much look forward

11 to the unwelcome intruder leaving my body, although I know the
12 process will be pretty unpleasant.

13 There is still much to learn, but my diagnosis seems to be
14 about the same as 51% of others. My lesion is very small, caught
15 early, and will be surgically removed. So of course, I feel
16 nervous, as most people would. I'm also worried, as I am
17 culturally Jewish to my core. (If there are Jews who don't worry, I
18 haven't met one.)

19 Although I am at the early stage of this process, the
20 experience has already prompted many thoughts.

21 * * *

22 FIRST, I AM angry. Why? While I ate a lot of junk growing
23 up, I have been a healthy eater for years. I've done all the right
24 stuff: I've not smoked, I've not taken recreational drugs, I've
25 exercised — pretty much all the lifestyle advice.

26 But even if we can be careful about our food, nothing
27 shields us from the ravages of the industrial capitalism, where few
28 if any regulations exist about what enters our air and water. This
29 is a time to be working for change, and I have to focus on getting
30 well.

31 Second, I am fortunate to have my initial treatment at my
32 local hospital, knowing that it is in danger from so many people
33 losing their health insurance subsidies and from other major
34 deficiencies in the crappy U.S. system of healthcare funding.

35 What should be a stable institution — one focusing only
36 on helping local people get and stay healthy — is constantly
37 needing to tighten the belt, causing hours-long waits in the
38 emergency department and far more stress on hard-working
39 medical professionals.

40 Third, I am grateful beyond measure that I am enrolled in
41 Medicare and have a backup insurance plan, even knowing full
42 well that there will be unexpected bills.

43 Who knows what kind of stupidity will ensue related to
44 our complex and ridiculous system of for-profit insurance
45 companies cleaning up with every illness and injury?

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A RECENT *New York Times* story described the millions of people who are dropping their previously subsidized and almost-affordable health insurance, thanks to the Republicans whose only interest is in subsidizing billionaires.

“When Joyce Rena Bumbray-Graves, a 63-year-old home care worker from Woodbridge, Va., saw premiums for her husband and herself more than double, from \$544 a month to over \$1,300, she had to give up her insurance,” the *Times* reported.

Sorry, but no income tax on tips and lies about affordable gas and groceries will not pay the monthly health premiums that have risen to epic numbers.

The stories are heartbreaking, and the people who are being charged the most, and have the most to lose, are people who are 60 or older, who have one to five years before they can receive Medicare — if the Trump cartel has not used all the funds to build the Arch de Trash, to fund the disaster in the Middle East, and to fully steal everything that is not nailed down.

When I am getting quality care, I think about these people — and the choices they would have to make.

I am getting this poisonous lump out of my body as soon as it was able to be scheduled. I can’t imagine having to choose whether to get this thing out whether to pay the rent.

This country is not No. 1 in much these days, but we do top the charts in medical bankruptcies. *Forbes* magazine told us on April 5 that the U.S. has more than double the rate of medical debt of any other developed nation. And this statistic was true *before* the Republicans wiped out the Affordable Health Care Act (“Obamacare”) subsidies with no replacement.

According the *Times*, many who are not dropping coverage altogether are enrolling in garbage plans with high deductibles, so medical debt will only pile on.

The stupidity of Donald Trump is on display yet again, claiming that his sorry TrumpRx plan will do anything to fix the

81 system. Note: Don Jr. will benefit from every transaction by being
82 a partner in a company, BlinkRx, that “helps” drug companies set
83 up direct-to-consumer sales. The grift is endless.

84 And TrumpRx does nothing for most users. It sells only
85 name brands, which are far more expensive in almost every case
86 than generics, sometimes 10 times as much. A(nd a little tip,
87 fellas: pharma is not health care!)

88 * * *

89 TEN STATES ARE stepping up to try to fill the gap. Surprise!
90 All are Democratic-leaning states: California, Colorado,
91 Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico,
92 New York, Vermont, and Washington, as of February. New
93 Mexico is fully filling the gap.

94 But, of course, this will be yet another hardship for state
95 taxpayers, while Washington, D.C. accrues debt with the very
96 expensive Trump Gestapo, concentration camps, stupid building
97 projects, and — of course — the even-stupider war on Iran.

98 We know where the money is, and it is not in a state like
99 Vermont, where one billionaire lives (as of early 2026).

100 The super rich need to pay their fair share. That is the
101 first, second, and third reason to demand that every candidate
102 running for Congress pledges to tax the wealthy — and to field
103 primary contests against those who support the current tax
104 structure.

105 Universal healthcare is a basic foundation for a
106 functional society — and we had better get together to make this
107 demand, or we will continue to fall fast and hard.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

108 **NANCY BRAUS**, a retired independent bookseller, is a
109 longtime activist. Her surgery took place on May 4.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

110 #####BEGIN MAXISSUE#####
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#####END MAXISSUE#####

LINKS:

111 #####BEGIN LINKS#####
#####END LINKS#####

VIDEO:

112 #####BEGIN VIDEO#####
#####END VIDEO#####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

113 #####BEGIN LOGLINE#####
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