# GESUNDHEIT!!!

March 11, 2009 By David Capogna

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“Americans spend $2.5 trillion a year on health care, or about $8,160 per person, more than twice as much as many countries in Europe.”

~ Tara Parker-Pope (NYTimes/Well)

This week on the spur of the moment, I decided to attend TimesTalks at the Renzo Piano's fabulously designed New York Times Building.  The topic for discussion was "Inside the News: The Prognosis for U.S. Health Care," lead by Tara Parker-Pope, a health writer for the NYTimes.  The guests included Marcia Angell, MD (a real pistol,) Robert L. Pear (dead weight), Dr. Harold Varmus (an arrogate SOB,) and a special surprise, an ER doctor from St. Luke-Roosevelt, who also serves in Iraq.  He was kind of like Dr. Owen Hunt from Grey's Anatomy, but not as hot *(did I tell you about my new fascination with red heads?)*  A snap-shot of the audience, there were more doctors than patients.  (Very well dress NYC doctors in fear of losing their beach houses.  At least, that was my take on it!)  Somehow, I thought it would be more like a rally, citizens without health

insurance, suffering from a fatal or chronic illness.  No mention of HIV/AIDS at any point during the hour and fifteen minute discussion, or even cancer *(that's with a capital "C" and pink glitter!)* There was a heated debate about statins between the ER doc and Harold Varmus.  This went straight over my head.  Yes, I didn't suffer from a stroke, but it wasn't caused by high levels of cholesterol…*next subject!*

Marcia Angell, M.D. really led the discussion for me.  In researching this blog, Dr. Angell did not make the "short list" for Secretary of Health, but a lot of bloggers and columnists recommended her.  I just downloaded the audio version of "The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What to Do About It," Dr. Angell book…if you've been keeping up with my blog regarding reading, you know what I'm talking about.  Dr. Angell first made it clear, during the discussion, that there was no U.S. health care "system."  She stated that "health" is traded as a commodity in this country, HEALTH = PROFIT.  In the grand scheme of things prevention, unfortunately, is afterthought.  Most of us commies know this, and hopefully President Obama and Kathleen Sebelius are going make a different…can I hear an Amen?!  Going back to my opening quote, Dr. Angell stated, the cost of drugs, specialists, and tests (many of them unneeded) are astronomical, and the rest of panel agreed that the US paid the most for all of this services. So where do you start…with drug companies? Marcia, Maricia, Marica also reported that a lot of the ground breaking work at the NIH, and Big Pharma was simply mass producing the drugs…just tellin' what I was hearin'.  The panel did unanimously agreed that twenty years to hold a drug patient was way too long.  Maybe there's a light on the end of the tunnel after all!  My meds costs around $50K per year; over $6000 is out-of-pocket (must to my dismay!)  I'm on Medicare, that's another blog right there.  The consensus was to have a one-pay-in-system, must likely a tax. Fortunately, we already have a host of nationalize health care systems in Europe and right over the border in Canada. Elements of these countries health systems combined with the Veterans Health Administration (VA) and Medicaid, which have been very successful, apparently, at least in price-per-tax-payer, NOT for service.

Germany, according my new BFF Marcia Angell, has one of the am gesundheitspflege besten *(one of the best health care in world.)* Dr. Angell highly recommends using Germany as a model (pardon the pun) for the nationalization of health care in the US. Ich wening Deutsch sprechen. I'm not even that's was right, two years of high school German, what do you exempt? One of the most memorial things I learned in German class was the meaning of "gesundheit!" Literally translated it means "good health." (I know I'm off on a tangent, but don't you just love how the Germans' pack so much into words like "Gemütlichkeit," there is NO English equivalent. According to Wikipedia Gemütlichkeit means: the notion of belonging, social acceptance, cheerfulness, the absence of anything hectic and the opportunity to spend quality time.) Back to my point(s), and I'm making two because of the very timely overturning of an order signed by President Bush in 2001. "Bless you" can be interpreted in many ways, but ALL leads back to Catholicism. I think a nun taught me that a sneeze and/or orgasm makes you vurlnerable to the Devil, himself! - HA I say screw the Pope for denouncing President Obama's decision to go forward with embryonic stem cell research, and screw the American nah-sayers who think that universal health care is communist. They need an extra serving of Gemütlichkeit!

Auf Wiedersehen,

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