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Thank Goodness for John Goodman

Written by John Stossel

The health care debate would be poorer without the contributions of John Goodman's National Center for Policy Analysis.

Goodman makes more good points in a *National Review* article:

There are three basic questions to be asked about the design of any health-care system. If you answer these questions the right way, the path to reform is rather easy and straightforward. But if you answer even one question the wrong way, you will get caught up in a cycle of complexity - with fix upon fix, each trying to patch up the problems created by the previous one.

Hint: Right answers are ones that give people incentives to meet their own needs without imposing costs on others. Wrong answers are ones that give people perverse incentives to impose costs on others...

He writes about a patient-centered choice:

There is already a good model for this patient-centered alternative. In the Medicaid Cash and Counseling pilot program,

homebound disabled patients manage their own budgets. They can pay market prices and hire and fire those who provide them with health services. Satisfaction rates approach 100 percent (something unheard of in health care anywhere else on the planet).

David Goldhill expands on Goodman's arguments in a cover story in *The Atlantic*. He suggests using market forces would:

"...overcome our addiction to Ponzi-scheme financing, hidden subsidies, manipulated prices, and undisclosed results; and rely more on ourselves, the consumers, as the ultimate guarantors of good service, reasonable prices, and sensible trade-offs between health-care spending and spending on all the other good things money can buy."

If my Lefty nephew's magazine (Scott Stossel is the *Atlantic*'s managing editor) starts making such common-sense points, maybe the tide is turning?