

Health Reformers Take Heed!

Most major players have been excluded from Hilary Rodham Clinton's health care reform deliberations thus far. Organized medicine, the health insurance industry and hospital care would love to be a part of the group, but can't get in the front door. We're assuming that these insiders pore over reams of health care data, expert opinion and long-range projections as they plan.

Most Americans have also assumed that the role of the average citizen will only be to speak out at town meetings or tell legislators to buy in to whatever program emerges from behind closed doors.

But maybe the substance of health reform will come from the everyday experiences of Americans, from letters like this one:

Dear Missus Clinton:

Im writin you to do somethin about the sad state a denistry in these United States. Last week I took my youngest, Elmer Ray to Doc Jones in town 'cause he still got most a his teeth (Elmer Ray that is) and they's been ahurtin him somethin awful so as to keep him up at night wailin like a hound dog in the moonlight. Doc Jones don't see no kids, specially them thet bite, so he sent me to a denist up Lil' Rock way.

Well I knew we was uptown 'cause that denist was wearin more chains than a prison gang and his shoes were made a some animal I ain't never seen. Anyway, he told me Elmer Ray didn't have no tooth decay and couldn't have cause Ann Eye-D-R in Washinton where you and Mr. Clinton live now says tooth decay is adisa pearin. Causa Florida-somethin theys puttin in the water. Well thet didn't sit right by me so I called Ann to straighten this out. Shucks, back home we still need four folks to

play cards or make a full set a teeth, so I know theres still tooth decay!

Mister Clinton can set easy 'cause his folks are workin. She answered my call by name—Ann-Eye-D-R! But now I'm even more confused 'cause she told me thet there is still tooth decay in fifty percent a kids. Now THET I can see, cause most kids down 'round home still got half a their teeth. So I went back up to that denist and told him, but now he won't see us cause we got the card and it don't pay. He wanted more then we got even when ya throw in the pick up. I finally found a denist closer ta home who takes the card and she seen Elmer Ray one time but Im outta gas money. My husband said I should call Ann back so I did and asked her how ta get some money for Elmer Ray. She says most government money's goin to some guy Perry O'Dontal or to that Florida-somethin. I caint reach Perry and we plan to stay put in these Arkansas hills, so thet don't do us no good. You'll be glad to know Elmer's teeth stopped hurtin finally and he's eatin agin. My idear to you, Maam, is that when you fix up the health care part you include denistry. We still get tooth decay out here. I might also say thet you take some a thet money your a givin to thet guy Perry and pay denists to fix kids teeth. Those is the idears of a mother who knows.

Sincerely,

*Betty Sue Smith, mother
Smilin Gap, Arkansas*

P.S. My sister lives in Florida and she says her kids got cavities too, so puttin money into Florida-somethin just don't seem to be enough. Also, I voted for ~~you~~ Mr. Clinton.