HARROWING HEALTH CARE

With health care circulating 2020 Presidential candidates' debates, employees and students are hopeful for positive changes to current policy.

Above: HEALTH CARE HARDSHIPS: East Bay Deli manager Maisha Delph (left) works at the restaurants salad bar, Marriott Columbia employee Terri Harley's (middle left) cleaning supplies sits in the lobby, Presbyterian College freshman Lauren Andrews (middle right) stands at the Soda City Market and Columbia City Center Partnership employee David Kellogg (right) sits in Marriott Columbia. All would like to see changes implemented in health care after the 2020 election. "(We should) go back to the old days where it was better to manage with the health care system, where it was affordable through your employers," Kellogg said. "It helps because it's a two way street, it helps the employers and employees out." Photos by Samaiyah Ra'aid and MacKenzie Caudill

By Mackenzie Caudill, Isabella Johnson, Natalie Schliekelman and Samaiyah Ra'aid -- TOP competitors

Candidates for the upcoming 2020 presidential election have been debating issues with health care, such as coverage expansion, drug costs and providing Medicare for all, according to Politico. Although it is a highly politicized issue, many employees and students are directly affected by politicians' policies on health care.

"Health insurance (costs) now (are) extremely high for people in our low economy. They don't have any basic balance of a way they can afford health insurance. It is a big issue in America." Marriott Columbia employee Terri Harley said.

Harley, whose mother is a diabetic, has seen her mother's struggles with receiving health care under current policy.

"(Her diabetes) is costing her very much. It's so expensive that sometimes she won't have enough money to pay for her medicine and I think that is really cruel to people who have that illness, you know, (there are) a lot of people who have illnesses. They don't have enough money to pay for their medication," Harley said. "That's not fair to have someone who has a health issue. I think that is really sad in this country."

Providing affordable health care for those with health issues who struggle to afford treatment is a priority for Harley when thinking about health care policies.

"There should be some type of guidelines for people who have health issues, like diabetes, and cancer, where (health care providers would) be obligated to have it and so (people with health issues) don't have to pay so much just for having health issues," Harley said. "There's some-times doctors that cut their patients when they're not paying their bills, (even if) the patients need the medication to live."

East Bay Deli manager Maisha Delph does not have health insurance, something that has made her hesitant to rely on the health care system for aid.

"(Not having health care is) taking a big toll on my body as a 23 year old. After you're off of your parents' insurance, you just get sick and that's where a lot of people start spreading diseases," Delph said.

"When I get a cold or the flu, I don't want to go to the doctor because it's going to be like $150 and not everyone can pay that."

Delph believes issues with health care affordability are having an effect on people's willingness to receive medical services.

"If something big was to happen like (the coronavirus), where people need emergency health care, people are actually afraid of going to the doctor and being in debt (so they won't go) to the doctor which is just ridiculous to me," Delph said.

Lauren Andrews, a freshman at Presbyterian College, believes that 2020 democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders has the best plan for health care.

"I think the state of (health care in America) right now is not good. I like Bernie Sanders' policies. I like the idea of universal health care. I think that health care is a human right, and I don't think that the American government right now sees it as such. I think for them, it's more of a capitalist thing," Andrews said.

City Center Partnership employee David Kellogg sees the most advantages in a system where employers provide health insurance.

"(We should) go back to the old days where it was better to manage with the health care system, where it was affordable through your employers," Kellogg said. "It helps because it's a two way street. It helps the employers and employees out."

Delph feels that there is a middle ground between universal health care and the current system that would improve health care accessibility for everyone.

"I think the government, since they control most of our money, they could make (health care) more affordable," Delph said. "I think everyone should have free health care. I understand why we can't have free health care, but I do think that health care is very important to people."

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