



Practicing Medicine in the Era of Health Reform

Session 1

The Evolution of the U.S. Health Insurance System

Harris Berman, MD

August 11, 2014

Awaiting Health Reform – 50
years later!

--

The Long Road to Universal
Coverage

Bismarck –European Approach



- Compulsory
- Universal
- Health Insurance
- Enacted in 1883
- *A right*
- Not a *privilege*

The American Approach



- Robin Hood method:
- “Steal from the rich,
Give to the poor”
- Fee-for-service
- Sliding scales
- Cost shifting

Health Insurance in America

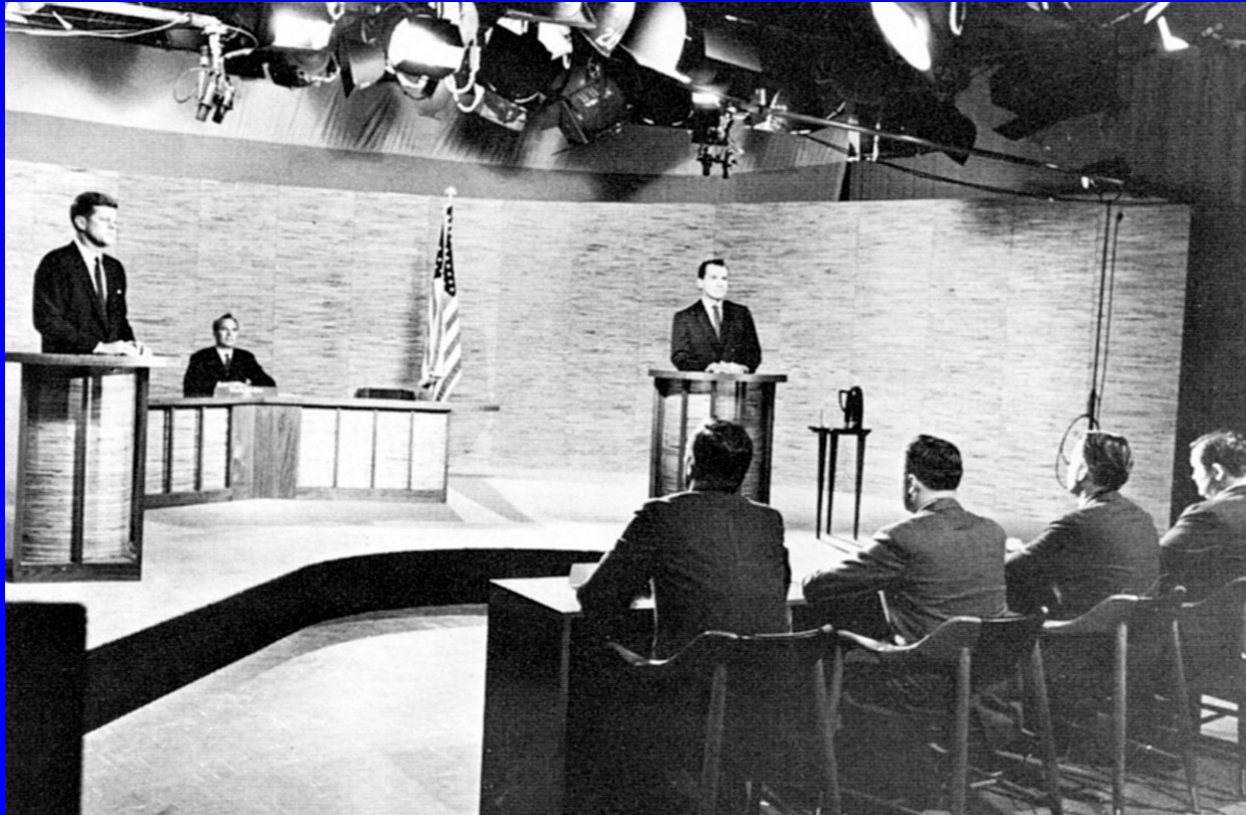
- Birth of the Blues
- Private
- Voluntary
- Encouraged by
 - Tax laws
 - WW II Wage/price freezes

Role of AMA



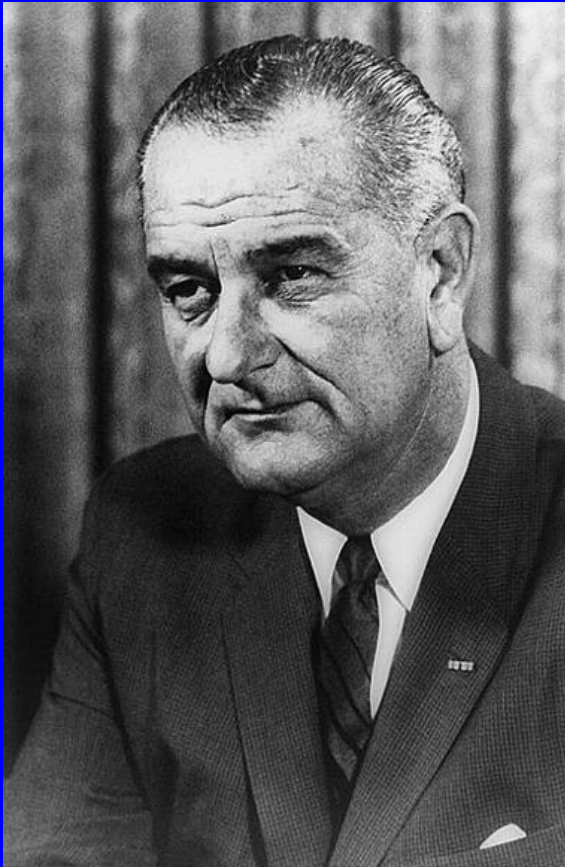
- Fear of Socialized Medicine
- Fighting windmills!

John F. Kennedy



Promised Universal Health Care

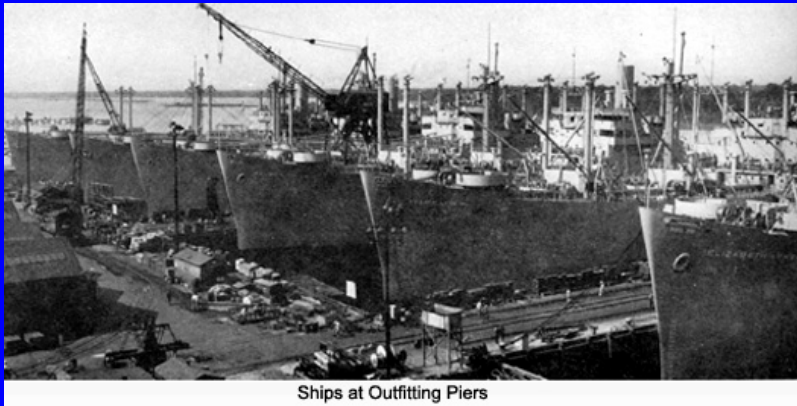
Lyndon B. Johnson



- Medicaid - 1965
- Medicare – 1965
- “The Good Old Days”

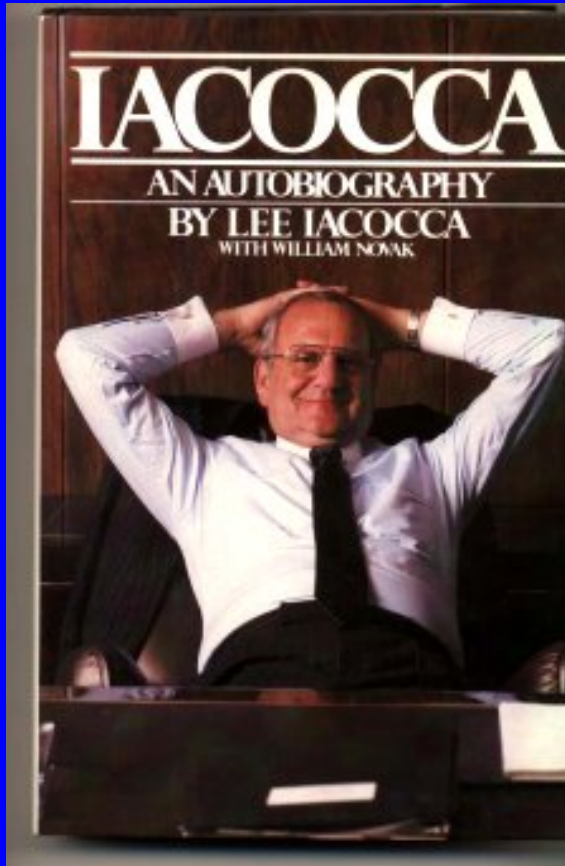
HMOs

- Kaiser-Permanente
 - 1940's
- East Coast early HMOS ('60 – 80's")
 - HCHP
 - Matthew Thornton (NH)
 - Rhode Island Group Health
 - Tufts, Bay State, Pilgrim



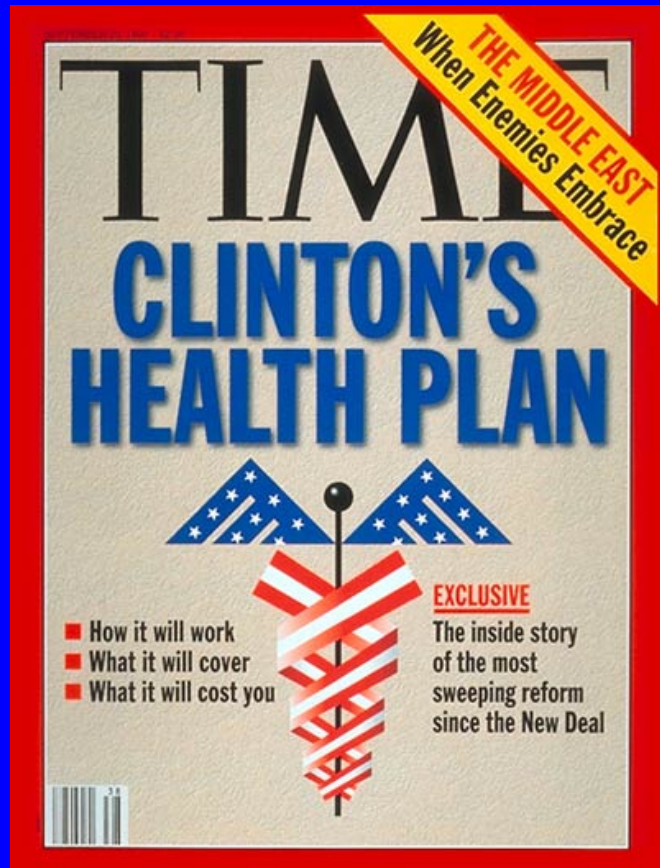
Ships at Outfitting Piers

Lee Iacocca



- Sounded seminal warning:
- Rising health care costs = Big Handicap!
- Result: Growth of HMOs/Managed Care

Clinton Health Plan



- The Timing
- The Plan
- The Politics
- The Result

Lessons Learned for Massachusetts Politicians

Heed the lessons of HSPH's Bob Blendon's study:
("Should everyone have coverage?")

Deep in our hearts: 75% agree

Deep in our wallets: 43% agree

Change my care? Only 30% still agree!

Health Reform enacted

- Obama succeeded in enacting health reform
- Rolling it out slowly over a few years
- Supreme Court challenge – could have dismantled all or parts of reform!
- Where do we go from here?

As Winston Churchill said,

“You can always
count on
Americans to do
the right thing -
after they've tried
everything else.”

