

## Health... Right?

Plan could revolutionize medical care

Minnesota lawmakers have taken matters into their own hands. Faced with federal inaction on the nation's terminally ill health care system, Minnesotans have committed themselves to what they call HealthRight, a state-subsidized insurance policy that will be offered to some 370,000 uninsured people. The plan will be financed through a tax on health-care providers, a 5-cent cigarette tax increase and a sliding fee scale for participants.

HealthRight will cover those low-income individuals who are not eligible for the federal Medicaid program. Because coverage is voluntary and the policy requires the sliding-scale payment, officials expected about 160,000 Minnesotans to sign up at a cost of \$315 million.

Opponents of the plan called HealthRight a step toward socialized medicine, but Minnesota governor Arne H. Carlson, a Republican, said passage of the plan proves states can deal with the gridlock that has thwarted federal attempts to shore up the nation's health care system.

"Passing this bill shows we can crack through that kind of opposition," he said.

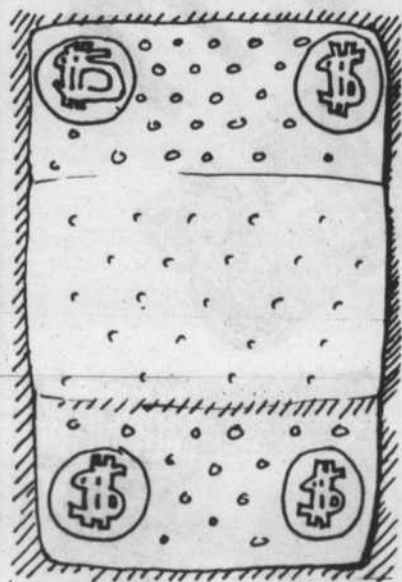
Legislators in other state capitals across the

country are looking into other health care proposals. Officials are finding that states — with their more responsive governments and healthier financial situations — are better-equipped to provide the insurance that so many poor Americans lack.

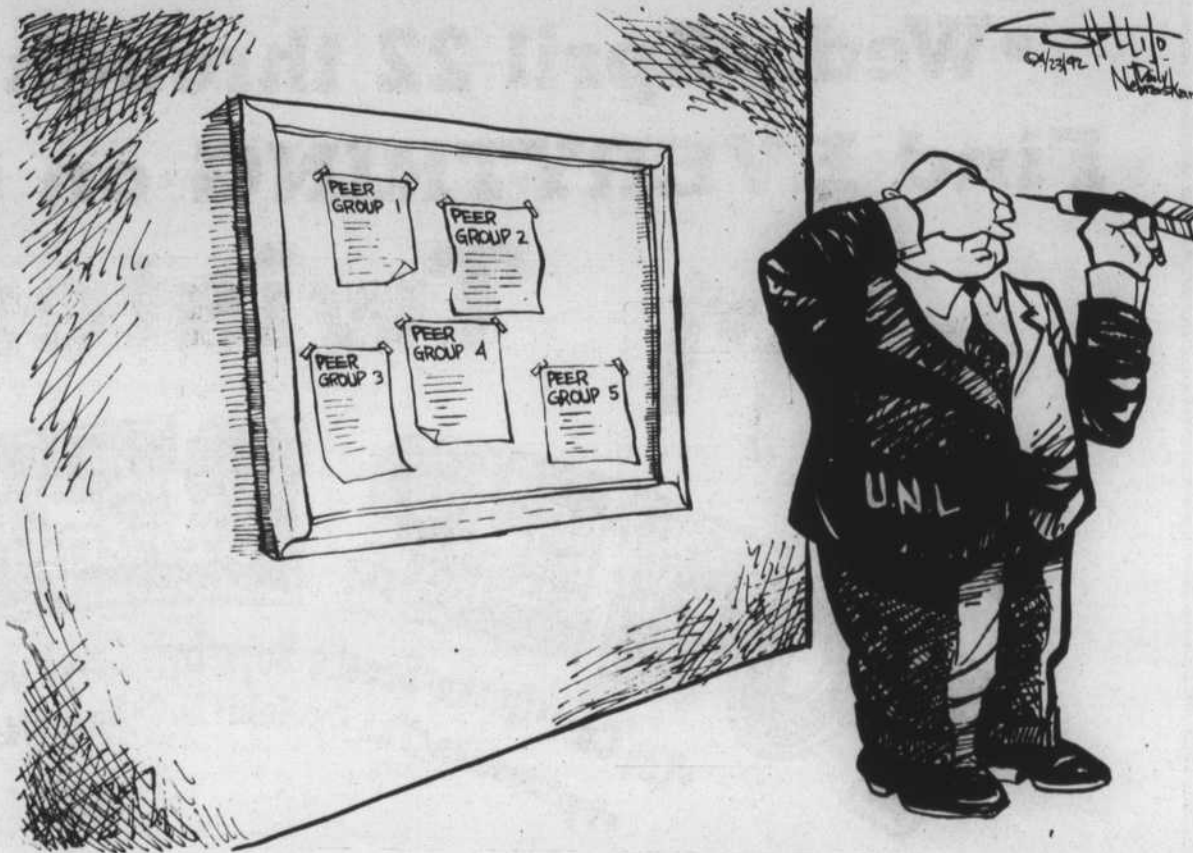
The Minnesota plan is not socialized medicine. It is a voluntary insurance plan that participants help pay for, along with a tax on one of the nation's greatest health problems.

If HealthRight works, it could be the successful model from which a national plan could be built. It's a shot in the arm for health care, and something of a miracle cure for those Minnesotans who — until now — were simply out of luck if they were out of money.

Lawmakers in St. Paul have diagnosed the problem correctly. Time will tell if their medicine works. But anything is better than standing around, watching the patient bleed.



David Badders/D/N



PAUL SOUDERS

## Public has short attention span

I, like so many others of the twentysomething, TV generation, have an attention span in length somewhere between music videos and "The Brady Bunch."

Not even my friends can finish reading my articles, and most of the time, I can't either. To do so would require actually performing the task of reading for a period of time up to 20 minutes long, much longer than Taster's Choice ads.

So I have decided that I would just chop up my article into tiny, easily digestible chunks. This not only makes my workload lighter, but entitles you to skip the bits you don't like, while reading with frothy-mouthed interest the bits you do like. Sort of like MTV.

● We have had about 25 inches of snowfall in the 1991-92 season, just a few inches shy of average.

Ironically, absolutely none of it fell during winter. There's a sort of mutant symmetry in having all of our snowfall one month before and one month after the actual snow season itself.

● In case you wouldn't have come to class anyway and so didn't notice, classes were cancelled this Tuesday for the first time in five years. When I was a freshman (you know you're in trouble when a story starts "when I was a freshman"), it was something ungodly like 50 below zero with windchill during the dead week before Christmas — with about a foot of snow.

It wasn't this wonderful, wet, perfect-for-snowmen snow, but nasty, crunchy, dirty, blowing-in-your-face-on-the-way-to-finals snow. And there was an inch of well-polished ice on the road. And we had to walk 10 miles to school uphill with no shoes.

The mercury never dropped below 20 on Tuesday and they called classes off, which leads me to believe that deep down, the administration must be all right. After all, they'll call off classes when it's obvious that most everyone is able to come to class but won't because it's the perfect day for sledding. You kids these days have it so easy.

● In response to charges that he lacks direction, George Bush's campaign has taken a new turn: the Issue



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of the Week. I'm not kidding.

This approach is only fitting as the man, during his presidency, has generally taken the Position of the Week to placate the masses.

● Yesterday was Earth Day. George Bush's Issue of the Week during Earth Day Week was... international trade?

The president still hasn't decided yet if he's going to the Earth Summit in Brazil. Ecology groups are giving the president a "D" for environmental action.

If I were getting D's for the last four years, today I'd be wearing polyester and asking "What would you like on your Whopper?" George Bush gets six figures and his own plane.

● Speaking of Earth Day... We're hearing less about it this year. My guess is that the average-type person is sick to death of having to hear from celebrities once a year about how concerned they are about the environment, when the same celebrities, with their gas-guzzling automobiles and private jets and tested-on-animals cosmetics, are some of the most obvious consumers.

● Today is the English Department's Shakespeare Day. This is my

third year as an English major and I haven't yet gone to Shakespeare Day, even though my professors tell me it's lots of fun.

But then, these are people who still hang around college 20 or 30 years after they've actually graduated.

● Speaking of graduation... The big event is just around the bend (something like 15 days away). I've still got a year or four left here at the U., so I won't bore you with stories of the trials and tribulations of graduation. I'm sure you've heard enough of those already.

● There are more than 5 billion people on Earth, twice as many as there were in 1960. We'll definitely see 6 billion by the year 2000, maybe 10 billion by 2015.

For perspective, the entire human population at the end of the Paleolithic (early Stone Age) era was about 6 to 10 million. That many people could comfortably live in the modern San Francisco Bay Area, with room to spare, but they pretty much had the whole world to themselves. This is progress.

● The humpback whale population also is growing. There are now tens of thousands of the critters — more than there were in 1970, but still fewer than in 1770.

● A Pennsylvania law restricting access to abortion and requiring spousal or parental notification is up before the mostly conservative Supreme Court. It's ironic that most Americans would go to war over abortion but can't be bothered to vote, which just goes to prove how sex-crazy people in this country are but don't want to be.

I wish I could end my attention-span-friendly column on a more positive note, but then, there isn't much positive happening these days. (There was that bit about the humpback whales, though.)

If you've managed to actually read all the way until the end of the column, you're probably one of my parents, so I just want to add that my MasterCard bill came on the same day as my tuition bill. Send money.

Souders is a junior English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Columnist ignorant of feminism

Playing the devil's advocate, as Chris Halligan admitted he was doing in "Feminism robs masculinity" (DN, April 15), isn't difficult when simplistic arguments are used. Even the headline lacked depth. What does he mean by feminism and masculinity?

A 1992 sociology textbook defines feminism as "advocacy of social equality for the sexes." We doubt if Halligan is aware of this meaning. He stated that feminists have attempted to "empower themselves over men." This is not what equality means and is not the purpose of the feminist movement. What he means by masculinity is anyone's guess. He mentioned the "power of men to be men." Does he mean the stereotypical male? Most research indicates that this isn't even healthy! Instead, men enlightened by feminism are capable of caring and compassion for all human beings... certainly worthy qualities.

Besides "robbing masculinity," his main concerns seemed to be that the feminist movement (made up of both women and men incidentally) caused the increased divorce rate and has now put the "destiny of a man's life" into the hands of any woman with whom he has sex (referring to rape).

Any knowledgeable student of social science knows that the increase in the divorce rate during the 1970s and 1980s was related to a number of factors, such as changes in laws (championed as much or more by men than by women), societal accep-

ance and, for a while, by the scars of the Vietnam War. Also, the 1970s was known as the "me decade," and just as many men as women chose divorce as a way to find personal happiness. The feminist movement did enable women to gain more financial independence and self-esteem. Would Halligan propose to go back to the so-called "good old days" when women could easily be trapped in loveless marriages?

The part related to rape left us wondering about his point. He decried rape, then hinted that men are often wrongly accused. In fact, many rapes still go unreported, and almost all victims become further victimized. The feminist movement seeks to protect both sexes from violence and false charges and to aid victims.

Empowering humanness and supporting equality are worthy purposes of true feminism. Perhaps Halligan could benefit by understanding a phrase popular a few years ago: Men of quality are not threatened by women for equality.

Sharon L. Hanna  
Lincoln

Lyn K. Patterson  
senior  
business management

Susan P. Brown  
senior  
advertising

## EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are: Jana Pedersen, editor; Alan Phelps, opinion page editor; Kara

Wells, managing editor; Roger Price, wire editor; Wendy Navratil, copy desk chief; Brian Shellito, cartoonist; Jeremy Fitzpatrick, senior reporter.

Editorial columns represent the

opinion of the author.

According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.