

Dear Review Journal:

We read with confusion the commentary by Victor Joecks regarding his accusation that the successful creation of new health care capacity, in an area of Las Vegas often called “a medical desert,” somehow constitutes intellectual dishonesty.

He is incorrect in suggesting that the Culinary Health Center, which is bringing more primary care doctors to a state that currently ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in physicians per patients, is “hypocritical.”

Around the country, the healthcare community sees increased access to more doctors as great progress, and the new Culinary Health Center will serve over 130,000 members of the Culinary Health Fund -- who are Las Vegans and members of the public.

For Mr. Joecks to imply that the Trustees of the Culinary Health Plan, which includes executives from some of the largest gaming companies in Nevada, are hypocrites for their tireless efforts to provide health care resources for their employees, while not providing them for free to all in the community, is completely ludicrous.

Of course, we agree it would be great for all Las Vegans to have a quality Union Health Plan that provides the access to care and health benefits that the Culinary Health Fund has created and protected for 40 years. But the fact that it doesn't now exist does not make the new Culinary Health Center hypocritical - it does display a large hole in Mr. Joecks' argument and understanding of a nationally recognized model of labor-management cooperation.

Mr. Joecks also rails against the recent passage of SB539, approved by the Senate 19-2 and the Assembly 27-15, and signed by the Governor last week. Prescription price transparency will provide the first step in understanding the escalating costs of prescription drugs, specifically those that treat diabetes, which impacts nearly 300,000 Nevadans (members of the public) already struggling with the disease, and 1/3 of the population that is pre-diabetic.

Opinion polls show 86% of Americans overwhelmingly support requiring manufacturers to disclose prescription drug pricing. The vast majority of Americans, the Nevada Legislative representatives, and the Nevada Governor view this legislation as a sound step forward in the face of insulin prices that have increased 387% between 2006 and 2013 in the U.S., without explanation.

Innovatively increasing physician capacity in Las Vegas and requiring steps to understand prescription cost increases are not hypocritical or intellectually dishonest. However, Mr. Joecks' determination to opine negatively without any policy grounding is both.



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