



Dr. Mal Mauney Speaks Out Against ObamaCare

Dr. Mal Mauney is a former professor of optometry and director of clinics at the Southern College of Optometry. He was the president and CEO of the Vision Education Foundation, where he developed eye-care centers that render high-tech diagnostic and/or surgical procedures by doctors of optometry and ophthalmologists. The centers also provide educational seminars for doctors to maintain skills needed to render secondary and tertiary eye and vision care. He received his optometry degree from the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1960. Dr. Mauney is also very active in community, civic, and political affairs, serving 16 years as commissioner of the Board of Education of the Memphis City Schools (four years as either president or vice president). He has been honored as Citizen of the Year by the Memphis Civitan Club, and as Lion of the Year by the Lions Club of Memphis.



Dr. Mauney is one of four distinguished physicians on speaking tours across the country as part of the [“Choose Freedom — Stop ObamaCare”](#) campaign of The John Birch Society. He was interviewed for *The New American* by Senior Editor William F. Jasper.

The New American: *ObamaCare was rammed through Congress before the final text was available for members to even read, let alone study as something this complex deserves to be studied. What are some of the more alarming provisions of the legislation that have been revealed since its passage?*

Dr. Mauney: One of the provisions that has caused quite an uproar is the requirement that every business (which would include private physicians) file a 1099 Form with the IRS for every transaction of \$600 or more. You know, today \$600 is practically nothing, so you can imagine the imposition that this is going to make on small businesses. Thousands of new bookkeeping headaches. And we find out that in order to enforce the 19 or more new taxes under ObamaCare, the IRS will be adding 16,500 new IRS agents.

Of course, there is the incredible statement by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that you can watch on YouTube, in which she says they had to pass the ObamaCare bill so they could find out what’s in it! But then you may have seen the more recent [statement by Senator Max Baucus](#) at his town hall meeting [in Libby, Montana, on August 23]. A constituent asked him if he’d read the bill. Baucus came back with this comment, and I quote: “I know you don’t want me to waste my time reading every page of that bill, it’s statutory. We hire experts for that.”

However, one thing that is even worse than what was hidden in the bill is what’s *not* in the bill. By that



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I'm referring to the still unwritten, to-be-decided policies and mandates. There are over 150 agencies, boards, commissions, or panels that it has created, and each one of these bureaucracies will now write their own rules and regulations. Can you imagine what a nightmare that will be?

The New American: *The British National Health Service (NHS), the Canadian Health Service, RomneyCare in Massachusetts — all of these continue to be held up as models that we should be emulating. What does your experience and study tell you about these systems?*

Dr. Mauney: The Fraser Institute, a Canadian think tank, has done a series of studies on the Canadian healthcare system, and in one of their studies estimated that in 2009 over 40,000 Canadians left Canada for non-emergency care. And that is likely an underestimate. They also said on average Canadians would be better with coronary bypass surgery in the States than in Canada. They also indicated in their report, that Canada is spending 41 percent more per person than they spent back in 1993, while their waiting periods are about 73 percent longer than 1993 — but it's all equal care, and it's free! You just might have trouble getting to it. And this free system turns out not to be so "free" after all; the Canadian national and provincial governments are now admitting their healthcare spending is not sustainable and will end up bankrupting them.

A number of years ago, I had the opportunity to spend a number of weeks in Canada, and about six weeks in England. I read everything, so I read all their papers — they were waiting almost two years for cataract surgery. Also in a UK paper just recently, there were 3,000 deaths due to medical mistakes. An interesting [editorial in the London Daily Mail](#), a major newspaper, detailed some of the terrible scandals at supposedly model hospitals and commented: "The dead hand of central government control is ruining the national health service and the patients are paying with their lives."

Closer to home, here in Tennessee, a number of years ago we had a governor — a Democrat — who pushed through something he called TennCare. It nearly bankrupted us. More recently, in the past three years, with a new governor — also a Democrat, by the way — Phil Bredesen, we have been able to make a great deal of badly needed changes in the TennCare program. But it was an enormous financial disaster, much like Medicare, and much like, as I understand it, RomneyCare in Massachusetts. Now Romney poses as a conservative Republican, but his government-controlled state healthcare program alone is sufficient to disqualify him from any claim to that title. It's a major reason I don't have a great deal of use for Romney.

The New American: *One of the things that has tilted many supporters toward ObamaCare is the spiraling cost of American medicine and healthcare. But how much of those skyrocketing costs are the result of previous federal mandates, taxes, and regulations?*

Dr. Mauney: From estimates that I have seen, as high as 70 percent of the costs health care can be attributed to government intervention. With the forms, the procedures, the reports, regulations, bookkeeping, etc. — it not only dramatically drives up costs, it also adversely impacts the quality of care in many ways. Many times we are accused of running too many tests. Well, with the way things are arrayed against you, should you happen to misdiagnose something or have a situation where perhaps this test would have shown something, then you're open to a malpractice suit, a liability. So, a lot of the costs are driven up by the necessity to protect yourself. Of course, once the government puts it's hands in it, matters only get worse; that's almost always a virtual guarantee. I remember when they were pushing Medicare in the '60s. I was in practice at that time, and I said, "Just you wait, they'll be buying us with our own money." At that time the AMA was probably 80 percent against Medicare. But in a few years, because of growing dependence on Medicare payments, opposition melted. So it is with



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ObamaCare; I think it's something like only 20 percent of AMA members who opposed it.

The New American: *The American Medical Association (AMA), the most well-known medical organization, endorses ObamaCare. What do you say to people who argue that it's AMA-approved?*

Dr. Mauney: Yes, well, the AMA tries to perpetuate the perception that it speaks for the vast majority of physicians, but, of course, it does not. Most of its members have entirely abandoned the AMA because they couldn't go along with the organization's increasingly liberal-left policies. As you are probably aware, its membership represents only roughly 20 percent of American physicians and is over-represented by doctors who are in one way or another in the government sector.

The New American: *Are you positive about the prospects for repealing ObamaCare?*

Dr. Mauney: I'm definitely encouraged by the stand that people are making. In various surveys it's running from 55 to 65 to 70 percent of the people would like to see the thing repealed. The danger we have to be on guard against is those Democrats and Republicans peddling the "repeal and replace" nonsense: We'll repeal it, then replace it with some type of ObamaLite. We don't need any replacement; after repealing ObamaCare we need to repeal many of the other unconstitutional, costly, and onerous policies and mandates that have been driving up the cost of healthcare and destroying our freedom of choice in medicine. I know there are defeatists who say it's futile to try, the odds are stacked against us, but I'm one of the folks who agree with that great philosopher Yogi Berra when he said, "It ain't over 'til it's over."

The New American: *You'll be on speaking tour along the eastern seaboard throughout October, correct?*

Dr. Mauney: Yes, I'll be speaking in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Those who are interested in attending any of these events can find details at the [Choose Freedom — Stop ObamaCare](#) campaign website.

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