Counting the Cost of Healthcare

Activity One – Read the text and answer the questions.

US health care reform is good for economy

March 23, 2010 by Diane Francis

On Sunday the United States finally **joined the ranks** of civilized nations by passing a commitment to look after everyone's health care needs. The legislation benefits millions as well as the economy because universal health care is not just smart and fair social policy; it is also smart economic policy.

For instance, workers in Canada, Europe or Japan who lost their jobs lost income. But, until now, unemployed American workers face financial ruin if sickness **strikes** them or their families because they **lack** health care coverage. Bridge coverage has been available but unaffordable for anyone but the wealthy. Worse yet, if a major illness was diagnosed during unemployment, a worker became unemployable, bringing about a life sentence of poverty.

The catastrophes disappear under these reforms. Consumer spending, which **ground to a halt** in the United States, can increase as people realize they don't have to set **aside huge** amounts to pay for a catastrophic illness, do without necessities to pay medical bills or go bankrupt because of an appendectomy.

That's good news for Canada and others which rely somewhat on a successful U.S.

It's also good news for America's economy **in the long run** because Washington now has **oversight** over doctors and insurance companies for the first time ever. This means that the second health-care issue -- cost -- can finally be addressed.

Cost-cutting, down to Canadian and European levels, should be the next target. The Americans spend 16% of their GDP on their health care, covering only half the population **adequately**, compared with the Canadian system which covers everyone for 10% of GDP. Then there's the 3% of GDP involving U.S. litigation to cover medical bills which will now diminish because most are covered.

The health insurance lobby makes more profits in the U.S. than Canada pays out in health care benefits for 34 million people. The pharma industry lobbied for laws that made volume discounts illegal which is why Americans pay up to twice as much for U.S. drugs than do Canadians or Europeans or Japanese. Americans pay too much for doctors, tests and hospital beds.

Questions:

1. What is the article about ?
2. Find an alternative expression to ‘for instance’.
3. Find an alternative for the word ‘strikes’.
4. What do Americans lack ?
5. What ground to a halt ?
6. What did people have to set aside ?
7. Why is the legislation good news in the long run ?
8. What will the government oversee for the first time in the USA ?
9. Why do Americans pay more than other countries for healthcare ?
10. What do you think about this article ?

Activity Two - Watch the video and answer the questions.

http://www.youtube.cf/watch?v=3JNgURpy1Zg&feature=fvsr

Mr Bean - Goes to the Hospital

1. Describe exactly what Mister Bean does to get to the front of the queue. Use the past tenses.
2. Now describe how he gets a seat.
3. How does he react when he sees the person next to him?
4. Why did he go to the hospital?
5. How does he get ahead again in the queue?
6. What does he do to the little boys ticket?
7. What nearly happens when number 24 is called?
8. What idea does he have next?
9. Why does this plan fail?
10. Why does he miss his turn again?
11. What happens in the end?

Activity Three – Read the information about expressing numbers in English.

By Kenneth Beare.

When expressing large numbers (more than one hundred) read in groups of hundreds. The order is as follows: billion, million, thousand, hundred. Notice that hundred, thousand, etc. is NOT followed by an 's'.

Two hundred NOT two hundreds

Hundreds

350 – three hundred (AND) fifty 425 – four hundred (AND) twenty five

Thousands

15,560 – fifteen thousand five hundred (AND) sixty 786,450 – seven hundred (AND) six thousand four hundred (AND) fifty

Millions

2,450,000 – two million four hundred (AND) fifty thousands 234,700,000 – two hundred (AND) thirty-four million seven hundred thousand

Speaking About Numbers

Numbers are read in the following manner in English: million, thousand, hundred

Example: 2,350,400 => two million three hundred (AND) fifty thousand four hundred

Decimals

Read decimals as the given number point XYZ

2.36=>two point three six

Percentages

Read percentages as the number followed by 'percent'

37%=>thirty seven percent

Fractions

Read the top number as a cardinal number, followed by the ordinal number + 's'

3/8=>three eighths

NOTE: ¼ =>one quarter, 2/3 => two thirds, ½ one half

Expressions

Here are the descriptive names of a number of important numerical expressions:

Speed 100 mph (miles per hour)
Weight 80 kg (kilograms) OR 42 lbs (pounds)
telephone number 0171 895 7056
decimal .087
date 12/04/65
percentage 75%
temperature 28° C (celsius) OR 72° F (fahrenheit)
height 1 m 89 cm
price $60
fraction 8/13
score 2-1

Activity Four - Watch the video and answer the questions.

Watch the report and answer the questions

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-12239026

A&E hospital waiting times missed due to 'bad weather'

1. How many people go to E and A in Wales ?
2. How much time are they supposed to wait ?
3. What did Paul Kiley complain about ?
4. What was wrong with his wife ?
5. What explained the latest waiting times results in this service ?

Activity Five – Now read the article paying attention to the numbers.

January 2011 - A and E in Wales – BBC Wales

Hospital accident and emergency departments in Wales failed to hit their waiting time targets last year, new figures show.

December was the worst month and the assembly government blamed the weather and flu.

According to its report, just over 81% were seen in less than four hours in a major A&E department - the target is 95%. But between December 2009 and 2010, the target was missed every month. The assembly government said the figures should be seen in the "context of the prolonged period of cold weather."

The Annual Operating Framework (AOF) targets for all A&E departments in Wales state that 95% of patients should "spend no longer than four hours in a major A&E department from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge".The best month was July when 88.8% of patients were seen in under four hours and August when 97.8% of patients were seen in under eight hours.

Waiting times - facts & figures

- 83.8% of patients spent less than four hours in all hospital A&E facilities from arrival.
- 95.4% of patients spent less than eight hours in all hospital A&E facilities from arrival.
- 81.3% of patients spent less than four hours in a major A&E department from arrival.
- 94.7% of patients spent less than eight hours in a major A&E department from arrival.
- ***Source: Welsh Assembly Government***

"More than 50,000 people attend emergency departments across Wales every month and the vast majority of patients receive treatment within target times.

Figures for December 2010 show 60,529 patients attended a major A&E department - 74,403 in total across all Wales' hospital emergency care facilities.

Activity Six – let's play Bingo/ team challenge expressing big numbers !