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## Dr. Jessica Saxe Dr. Pressley Gilbert COVID-19 with Single-Payer Health Insurance

Elly Clary introduced our speakers– Dr. Jessica Saxe worked as a family physician for the underserved for Carolinas HealthCare System for 34 years before retiring in 2015. In practice, she saw daily examples of people who did not get needed care for financial reasons, which strengthened her conviction that everyone should have access to health care. Dr. Saxe chairs Health Care Justice – NC which advocates Medicare for All as the most effective, economic way to extend high-quality health care for all. It is a chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program of which she is on the national board. She has won many awards, including the Council for Children Dolly award for child advocacy, the Mecklenburg County Medical Society President's Award and the YWCA Woman of Achievement Award. She is a graduate of Oberlin College and Tufts



University School of Medicine and she did her family medicine residency at Duke.



Dr. Pressley Gilbert grew up in Statesville and has a BS in Civil Engineering from North Carolina State. He received his medical degree from Duke and his orthopedic surgery residency from Vanderbilt University Hospitals. Dr. Gilbert practiced adult and pediatric orthopedic surgery in Charlotte from 1984 to 2015 with several groups including OrthoCarolina. They both talked about how COVID-19 could have been different with single-payer health insurance.

Dr. Saxe started first explaining that we could have done better with Medicare for All both before and during COVID. Our health care is twice as expensive as other developed countries when you consider both public spending and private spending. Among comparable developed countries, the US ranks at or near the bottom in infant mortality and several other categories. Our life expectancy is several years shorter than that of most industrialized countries. Yet, a chart shared by Dr. Saxe showed that we have a much higher incidence of new cases of COVID per million residents than Sweden, Europe and Canada.

We have poor access to healthcare in US as we have tens of millions of individuals who either have no insurance or are underinsured, that is, the high

cost of deductibles and co-pays discourages them from seeking care. So, when it comes to COVID, we had less testing, less treatment and less contact tracing for many Americans. Not being tested meant a delay in getting proper health care related to COVID. There were shortages in ventilators, tests and PPEs. There was no national distribution plan and hospitals competed for supplies.

There have also been racial inequities in the COVID pandemic. Blacks are three times as likely to be infected and have twice the rate of deaths. Front line health care workers were furloughed or lost their jobs because there were fewer elective surgeries. Yet, UnitedHealthcare had their best quarter ever because there were fewer claims because there were fewer elective surgeries. When people need more access to health care, they have less access if they lose their jobs and in North Carolina, Medicaid was not extended so even fewer individuals have access to medical care when they most need it.

Dr. Gilbert spoke in favor of Medicare for All. The focus is in improved Medicare for all. Dr. Gilbert claims it is not socialized medicine like Britain. According to Dr. Gilbert, as health insurance companies' primary focus turned to profits and shareholder return, their efforts to avoid paying for healthcare resulted in an enormous bureaucracy of claims staffs and case managers, in addition to their already substantial overhead costs for advertising, marketing, and claims processing. Administrative overhead now accounts for 25% of premiums. Savings from reducing this enormous administrative burden could be used to provide comprehensive health care for all Americans.

Studies suggest that moving from private insurance companies and plans to a single-payer system could save hundreds of billions each year through administrative streamlining, through regulating what can be charged and by negotiating prices of prescription drugs.

In 2018, total US health care spending was \$3.6 trillion dollars. According to Dr. Gilbert the annual cost of Medicare for All would be less than that. 60% of the costs would come from existing public Medicare and Medicaid funding and 40% would come from new taxes that would be offset by having no co-pays or deductibles. 95% of households would pay less than they pay now, for greatly improved and permanent coverage.

Written By: Jim Kelley

## CLUB NEWS

**STAYING IN TOUCH** with our Rotary members is important. Please take a minute to check on your friends, report funny stories and updates back to me to share with everyone so we can see who is doing what. The Reporter can be used to share what your company is doing to get through the pandemic, what your family is doing, send me your How I Got Where I'm At....anything to keep our members in the know.

**CLUB INVOICES:** In order to fund the club's administrative expenses and projects such as District Grants to which dollars are already committed, the Board approved a motion to set quarterly invoices at \$200 until we can resume meeting in person.

**CHARLES STONE TRUST:** Charles H. Stone became a member of Charlotte Rotary in 1934, was president in 1939-1940, and district governor in 1944-1945. He died in 1963 at the age of 86. Charlie's nickname was "Mr. Rotary" and you can see why – 26 years perfect attendance, personally knew Paul Harris (founder of Rotary), and did everything he could possibly do for Rotary.

The Rotary Club of Charlotte and Rotary International were named beneficiaries in Mr. Stone's Will in 1964. This arrangement is in memory of Frank F. Jones, who Mr. Stone said was a dear friend and long-time Rotarian who introduced him to the club.

The Will states the Rotary Club of Charlotte will receive 3% of the income as long as this organization exists and its purposes and activities do not change. Rotary International is named to receive 2% of the income. Bank of America manages the account and the estate has been valued at over \$5M for many, many years.

The club's annual distribution is between \$6000 and \$7000. Funding is designated for the Interact Service Award Scholarship.

**CLASSROOM CENTRAL:** Charlotte Rotary has a long history of support to Classroom Central...financially, collecting school supplies, and hands-on volunteers to assist teacher shopping days. The club needs to confirm continued support to provide volunteers the first and last Tuesday of each month, with the most likely job being to load supplies in teachers' cars. **Catherine Bracey** is chairing this committee and there's lots of flexibility to participate every month, every other month, or even once a quarter. Please reach out to Catherine and let her know YOU can HELP. [csbracey@aol.com](mailto:csbracey@aol.com).

There are immediate needs/opportunities for your consideration as well. Again, coordinate with Catherine if you can help. It goes without saying that you will be required to wear a mask and practice social distancing.

- July 27 - 2-6 - Contactless delivery to the test teachers' cars as they pull up
- July 28 - 2-6 - Contactless delivery to the test teachers' cars as they pull-up
- Making sight word cards - project can be done at home. Takes about 2 hours

**RALSTON POUND:** Ralston was released from Mercy Hospital on Monday and is receiving speech and physical therapy. His new mailing address is Asbury Care Center, 3800 Shamrock Dr., Midwood Room 104, (28215).

**MARK NORMAN:** Mark continues recovery from his heart attack and begins cardiac rehab this week.

## MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2020	260	<i>New Members:</i>	Amarja Webb
07/21/2020	261		
Net Increase	+1	<i>Resignations:</i>	

78 members on today's Zoom call

## CELEBRATIONS

**BIRTHDAYS** (07/29/2020 – 08/04/2020)

07/29 – Bill Barnhardt, Roger Sarow, Nikki Keith

07/30 – Hank Donaghy, Nancy McNelis

07/31 – Karen Calder

08/02 – Vernon Anderson, Sandra James

08/03 – Lamar Thomas

08/04 – Mark Turner, Pau; Haddock

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES** (07/29/2020 – 08/04/2020)

07/29 – Whitney & Travis Vance

07/31 – Vicki & Chad Lloyd

08/02 – Catherine & Stan Bracey

08/04 – Maura & Wil Bosbyshell

**ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES** (07/29/2020 – 08/04/2020)

03 years – Kyle Woodruff

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS** (utilizing Zoom)

07/28 – David Mildenburg, Editor, Business North Carolina

08/04 – District Governor Mike Walker

08/11 – Bill Russell, president & CEO, Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce

08/18 – Firoz Peera & Carl Davis, Rotary Million Dinner

08/25 – Debbie Rabinovich, Research into the old Brooklyn neighborhood