

Community Service

By George E. Nessim, ASA, MAAA

Actuarially I Believe This Write-up:

A recent Gallup poll on the US healthcare system states that only 34% of Americans view the system positively. Stewardship of the healthcare delivery system is at the forefront of societal and political conversations today. Should employers be obligated to provide benefits? Does the government need to provide alternatives for the uninsured? Are hospitals obligated to serve the vulnerable? How are these services going to be paid for?

Community service has always been one of my passions. Throughout the years, I have spent a substantial amount of time on trips developing others. Last year in Lusaka, Zambia I was given the opportunity to support a growing community hospital and an elementary school for the impoverished. In 2018, I spent time supporting a mission to decrease homelessness in Honolulu, Hawaii. These opportunities would not have been possible without the flexible and financially rewarding lifestyle that an actuarial career provides.

Regardless of your preferred economic levers, capitalist or socialist, one thing is certain: no one, rich or poor, employed or unemployed, American or not, will receive the basic health care they deserve if the delivery system is not strategically designed and appropriately funded. Furthermore, only when a system is self-sustainable, profitable even, can it overflow to perpetuate improvement for those who are not at the table.

As an Actuary, my role is to maintain, build and ultimately improve the adequacy, efficiency and delivery of healthcare benefits which drive quality and cost-effective service to members and their families. I develop, guide and build human capital first and actuarial solutions second for the betterment of the organization and the health care system as-a-whole. Often, I act as a pro bono consultant to my friends and family during Open-Enrollment, explaining deductibles, copayments and coinsurance. "Maximize contributions to your tax-sheltered HSA" and "Project your costs in order to elect a cost-effective plan" seem to be my most common statements of actuarial opinion.

Being an Actuary does not only provide the resources to pursue your passions, but it also presents an opportunity to earn a spot at the table; leading the business and analytic needs of organizations in this transformative time. Hopefully, to a more efficient and advanced system that has the capacity to give back and ultimately improve people's lives.

Should employers be obligated to provide benefits? Maybe. Does the government need to provide alternatives for the uninsured? Probably. Are hospitals obligated to serve the vulnerable? I would hope so. How are these services going to be paid for? Through collaboration between all parties within the system and actuarial leadership.

Thank you to those who are leading today and developing for the future.

George E. Nessim, ASA, MAAA

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/4708/healthcare-system.aspx>