

Healthcare

The Augusta County Democratic Committee believes that health care is a right, not a privilege, and our health care system should put people before profits. We are blessed to have the Augusta Health Medical Center available to us but for too many Augusta County families, health care costs are far too high, even for those with insurance. The ultimate solution is to secure universal health care for all Americans under a single payer system. The United States is the only first tier country in the world without universal health care for its citizens. This situation needs to be rectified. Although a single payer system covering all Americans is the ultimate goal, this will be a long fought battle. In the interim, we believe the following items need to be addressed immediately:

- The Augusta Regional Clinic must continue to be supported and expanded.
- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) needs to be strengthened not repealed.
- Virginia needs to expand Medicaid under provisions of the ACA to provide more low-income families with both medical and health maintenance services.
- Medicare as we know it needs to be strengthened and not privatized, voucherized, or phased out. Those over 55 should be able to opt into Medicare.
- We support a phased-in approach (starting with rural areas) whereby everyone would eventually be eligible to buy into a publicly provided plan using the network of Medicare providers to get more Americans affordable health care coverage. This plan is a first step towards eventually having a Medicare-type plan for all US citizens.
- Out of control prescription drug costs need to be reined in by having the Government negotiate with the drug companies as one very large customer.
- Mental health must be treated with at least the same seriousness that we treat physical health.
- Addiction is a disease not a crime and must be treated as such. Drug and alcohol addiction, particularly as related to the opioid crises running rampant across the nation, must be confronted by expanded access to prevention and treatment programs.