

2011's Last Viral Lie About Health Reform

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When so many good things have happened as the result of health care reform, I hate to end this year with a rebuttal to a viral lie about the Affordable Care Act. However, this one seems to come from a credible source but is so wrong that I can't resist.

This is how the email reads:

MUST LISTEN This needs to go viral. A brain surgeon called into the Mark Levin show. If you are over 70 years of age and you go to the ER and you are on government supported care, you will get comfort care instead of surgery. A government panel (a group of people that know absolutely nothing about medicine) will decide if you can have surgery and it has been decided that it will be denied if you are over 70. Patients will also be called "units" instead of "patients". Sarah Palin was correct--DEATH PANELS!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwsnHGI5K-E&feature=player_embedded

The video shows the radio host, Mark Levin, listening to this so-called brain surgeon call into his show. The surgeon claims that he has just been to a meeting of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons in Washington, D.C., where he learned something shocking! Obamacare will require only "comfort care" for people over 70. ***If you read the comments below the YouTube video, you are directed to the AANS site itself, where the Society blasts this person and his claim as a complete hoax. This disclaimer is on the AANS site under the "AANS news" subtitle:***

"On November 22, 2011, an individual claiming to be a "brain surgeon" made several statements referencing neurosurgical care on a Mark Levin radio show segment. The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) reviewed this segment and found that it contained several factual inaccuracies. Please

read the following statement regarding this matter. Should you have additional questions, contact Alison Dye, AANS/CNS Senior Manager of Communications, at 202-446-2028.”

The statement continues:

“The AANS and CNS are unaware of any federal government document directing that advanced neurosurgery for patients over 70 years of age will not be indicated and only supportive care treatment will be provided. Furthermore, in conducting our own due diligence, it appears that the caller who identified himself as a brain surgeon may not actually be a neurosurgeon, nor was there any session at the recent Congress of Neurological Surgeons' scientific meeting in Washington, DC at which a purported government document calling for the rationing of neurosurgical care was discussed.

Neurosurgeons are committed to providing timely, compassionate, and state of the art treatment for all patients -- regardless of age -- who have neurosurgical conditions. As such, we have requested that this podcast be removed from Mark Levin's website as it portrays inaccurate information which could potentially be harmful to the patients that we serve.”

What motivates a person to misrepresent themselves while also blatantly lying about health care reform? Money? Anger? Ignorance? Hard to say. But as we say goodbye to 2011 and anticipate even more kooky and mean-spirited accusations about health care reform, I hope you will all bookmark and consult websites like politifact.org, factcheck.org, or snopes.com before you pass along any of these lies and distortions.

Follow Linda Bergthold on Twitter: www.twitter.com/lab08

Fight Back:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 28, 2011

Contact:

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Washington, DC – On November 22, 2011, an individual claiming to be a “brain surgeon” made several statements referencing neurosurgical care on a Mark Levin radio show segment. The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) reviewed this segment and found that it contained several factual inaccuracies which we wish to clarify.

The AANS and CNS are unaware of any federal government document directing that advanced neurosurgery for patients over 70 years of age will not be indicated and only supportive care treatment will be provided. Furthermore, in conducting our own due diligence, it appears that the caller who identified himself as a brain surgeon may not actually be a neurosurgeon, nor was there any session at the recent Congress of Neurological Surgeons’ scientific meeting in Washington, DC at which a purported government document calling for the rationing of neurosurgical care was discussed.

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The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 8,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit www.aans.org or www.cns.org.