



# RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Since 1889

## Secretary Sebelius talks health care at St. Patrick Hospital

**MICHAEL MOORE**  
OF THE MISSOULIAN

The federal secretary of Health and Human Services said bad information about health care reform has hampered the effort to actually implement reform.

"There's been a lot of misinformation out there," said Kathleen Sebelius, who visited Missoula on Monday with Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., before traveling on to Libby.

From the so-called "death panels" to small employers who believe health care reform will cost them more instead of less, the misinformation spread by reform opponents has been yet another barrier between Americans and better, less expensive health care.

"We just have to have

some time to get the information out," said Sebelius, who appeared at St. Patrick Hospital for a town hall-style meeting that focused primarily on community health care centers like Missoula's Partnership Health Center.

Baucus sidestepped a question about the political machinations surrounding the health care reform bill, which passed in March without a single Republican vote.

"There's all kind of obstacles. ... We just do the best with what we have," said Baucus after being asked about Republican opposition to the bill.

His comment drew polite applause.

Support was considerably higher as Sebelius and Baucus talked about more federal money being

spent on community health centers, which serve the uninsured and under-insured.

Partnership Health Center, which saw nearly 11,000 patients last year, recently moved part of its operation into the old Creamery Building, a move made possible by federal stimulus money. Other federal programs, including the health care reform act generally known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, are making more money available for community health care centers, and Partnership is depending on some of that money to bolster its current services and offer additional care.

"We are bursting at the seams," said Barbara Monroe, who serves on the Partnership board of directors. "... We need

funding."

Baucus promised to look into the status of that money, then handed out his private e-mail address to the crowd and urged them to get in touch with him directly. He also urged Sebelius to check on Partnership's funding predicament.

"He doesn't forget much," Sebelius said with a laugh. "I imagine we'll be checking into the Creamery building very soon."

Baucus and Sebelius also touched on another central issue affecting Montanans and health – the state's rural population and the growing lack of primary care doctors.

The health care reform act provides incentives for medical students to become primary care docs instead of specialists, including forgiving

loans if they serve rural areas.

Baucus said that's a positive step in refocusing health care on patients instead of health care providers.

"We have to spend our health care dollars on the patient," Baucus said. "... We've not thought a lot about the patient."

Instead, American health care has focused on quantity, because more patients means more reimbursement money, he said.

That, of course, is how America became the country that spends more of its income on health care than nearly every other developed nation.

"We need to have reimbursements on the basis of quality," Baucus said.

More primary care and a better, less waste-

ful reimbursement system are steps that health care providers support, said St. Patrick Hospital President Jeff Fee.

"There is serious interest in changing the way health care is provided in western Montana," Fee said.

The struggle to make the needed changes was summed up by Frank Reed, a doctor at Community Medical Center who quoted Winston Churchill: "We can always count on the Americans to do the right thing, after they have exhausted all the other possibilities."

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### THIS WEEK IN HISTORY – AUGUST 1910

Every Tuesday the Ravalli Republic takes a look back at a week in history from the pages of Ravalli County newspapers. Phil Connelly scours the archives at the Ravalli County Museum to make this happen. This week we take a look at August 1910.

#### Many perish in fires in the West

Mercilessly and relentlessly the forest fires in Western Montana and Idaho are sweeping over a vast area, driving thousands of fugitives before them, destroying small settlements and wiping out of existence millions of dollars of property.

gees have been brought to Missoula. They had been transported from Idaho by train. Ironically, people on board the train were able to warn people in their homes about the coming fire danger. Many were able to flee with only the clothes on their backs. One woman gave birth in a boxcar just after her arrival in Missoula.

Note: The 1910 fire, also called the Big Blowup, consumed over 3 million acres. It remains the largest fire in the history of the country.

#### Fire at Deer Lodge

A fire which did damage estimated at least

#### Famous nurse passes away

Florence Nightingale, the famous nurse of the Crimean War and the only woman to have received the Order of Merit, is dead at the age of 90 in her London home.

She came to prominence for her pioneering work in nursing during the Crimean War, where she tended to wounded soldiers. She was dubbed "The Lady with the Lamp" after her habit of making rounds at night. Although she had been an invalid for a long time, rarely leaving her room, her death was somewhat unexpected. Her obit-

#### Western Apple Show – Missoula. Oct. 10-15

This year's show will be bigger, grander, better and more important than last year's show. There will be \$3,500 in cash and special premiums.

Expect to see myriads of red apples, large grain and vegetable exhibits.

Prizes will be awarded for honey, jellies, jams, bread, cakes, etc.

#### Magnificent mansion renovation complete

The massive renovation of the colonial residence of Mrs. Marcus

of the first floor are ornamental plaster and doors are of mahogany. Mrs. Daly plans to spend most of her time in the newly completed mansion.

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**Correction**  
An article on the front page of the Aug. 9 edition of the Ravalli Republic incorrectly identified a charge against Hamilton resident Michael Spreadbury. It should have stated that Spreadbury was pleading a conviction of criminal trespassing, a charge that the city dropped earlier this month after the Montana Supreme Court upheld an order of protection restraining Spreadbury from entering the Bitterroot Public Library for five years.

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