



CNN Town Hall: Senator John McCain & Senator Lindsey Graham

Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2017 | Event Time: 9 p.m. ET

Location: Jack Morton Auditorium, The George Washington University, School of Media and Public Affairs, Washington, DC

Transcribed from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDMhMzNqAZ8>

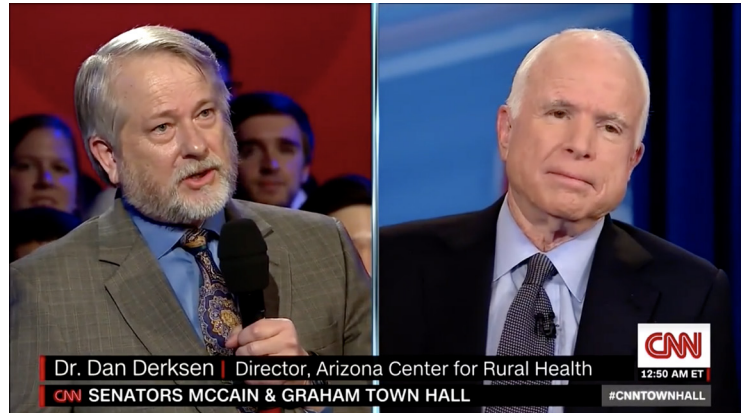
AzCRH Director, Dan Derksen, MD, was selected to ask a question at the CNN Town Hall with Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham in Washington, DC on March 1, 2017.

Dana Bash, Journalist, CNN Facilitator: I want to bring in another questioner, Dr. Dan Derksen from Arizona with a question about healthcare for Senator McCain.

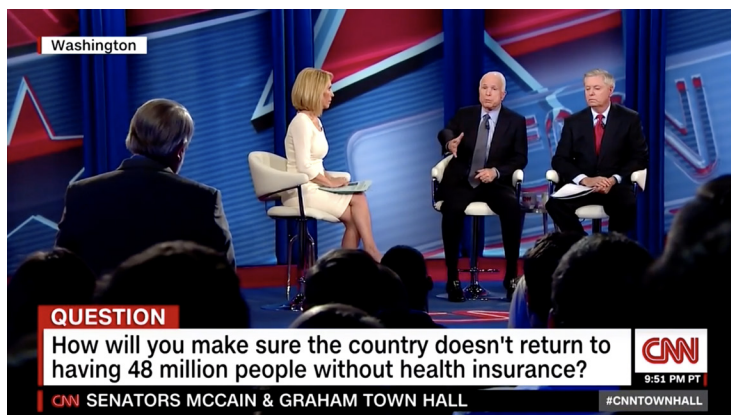
Senator McCain: Doctor

Dr. Dan Derksen, Director, Arizona Center for Rural Health: Senator McCain, Arizona's done really well the last couple years - we're in the top five for job growth, we've almost halved our uninsured, and we're hoping for a Final Four appearance with the Wildcats. Go Cats!

As a family doc though I'm very concerned that some of the talk and some of the plans around capping and cutting Medicaid will just shift the risk from the federal government to States, to rural hospitals, to the physicians and the 70 million Americans who currently depend on Medicaid for coverage.



Senators how will you work to make sure that we don't return to the days of 48 million uninsured in our country and we don't punish cost efficient, effective states like Arizona - who responsibly run their Medicaid program - through caps and cuts in Medicaid?



Senator McCain: Thank you doctor, and thank you for all you do. In case our other audience members don't know here – we were probably the hardest hit of any state in America. We had premiums that went up by a 150%, every one of our counties had got down to only one provider. For a while we had one county that had no providers. So, nobody was hit harder than when our state was.

You've got deductibles in the thousands and co-pays in the thousands it becomes and it's still unraveling. It's our job now to do what we promised the American

people in the last election – and that is to repeal and replace.

The first priority is – not to leave anyone without the opportunity to have health care. That has to be I think, the underpinning of any reforms that we may make. I would like to give states that have experimented in a different way an opportunity to follow those experiments.

What works in Arizona may not work in Massachusetts. And by the way Massachusetts has a pretty good program – you know that's the first nice thing I have said about Massachusetts in years. The People's Republic of Massachusetts. I apologize – which means this was just a joke, I apologize.

So, let's give the states the funds, and let's let them do some experimentation as to what is best for those states.

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But there has to be an underlying principle. And that is - we're not gonna throw anybody off of health care, to not be able to have the opportunity to get it. As long as that fundamental principle is there, we will be fine.

Dana Bash, CNN: But doing that Senator Graham, as you come in here, has proven to be pretty hard. Republicans as you have said, control everything - and even deciding amongst yourselves - despite the fact that you promised for repealing Obamacare for the past three or four election cycles. It doesn't seem like you're even close to getting there.

Senator Graham: Well we'll get there, I hope. If we don't we'll pay a heavy price. The bottom line is we hope Democrats will help us. I remember voting against Obamacare on Christmas Eve the year it passed, jammed down our throats. The best thing we can do is to try to get Democrats to help us.

Obamacare – when we passed it, Congress was excluded, right?

I said, I'm going to be noble. I'm going to live like the average person in South Carolina. So

I went into the state program, and I got whacked. I'm like 58 years old, a short white guy, no kids – my premiums tripled and my deductibles went up to six thousand two hundred fifty dollars.

This is not health care reform sir, this is just taking money from one group of people and giving health care free to another group of people. Health care reform is outcomes. If you really want to change Medicaid make sure a Medicaid patient doesn't have to run to the emergency room when they get sick, that they actually have a doctor. To the Medicaid person out there – if you smoke you ought to pay a little bit more.

What I want to do is to tie our outcomes to our own behaviors reward outcomes. Medicaid and Medicare by 2042 will consume all the money you send in taxes, so we're expanding a program that is unsustainable.

When you add up the unfunded liability of Medicare and Social Security... promises made that we don't have the money for. You need 72 trillion dollars in the next 40 years. If you want us to get out of debt we need to deal with entitlements.

To President Trump – I hope you are watching. Put something like Simpson-Bowles on the table, you can't take entitlements off the table and run this country. Seventy percent of the money that we spend in Washington is interest on the debt, Medicare, and Social Security.

Here's how you fix it – younger people you're going to have to work a little bit longer because we all live longer. People in my age group – you're going to have to pay a little more and take a little less.



Dr. Dan Derksen | Director, Arizona Center for Rural Health



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