Commentary

Major changes in health care are coming

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The world of health care care-fully, and that was described in detail at a health-care summit meeting in Rochester recently.

The meeting was sponsored by the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce and held at the Marriott Hotel.

Principal participants were representatives of the Mayo Clinic and Olmsted Medical Center.

Chris Gade, director of Mayo Clinic’s Health Policy Center, was the main speaker. He outlined a number of major changes that are needed to improve the health care system for everyone.

To create value by improving patient outcomes, decreasing medical errors, reducing costs and reducing wild fluctuations in price and transportation subjects the whole world is clamoring for.

In the second half of the program, Lisa Ellerquest, an administrator at Olmsted Medical Center, spoke about the small “convenience” clinic which has been established in the city to provide medical care for minor and single visits. Olmsted Medical Center and Mayo Clinic both have established two of these clinics and others have been opened in retail centers around the city.

Patients can visit these clinics without an appointment. Treatment is provided by physicians’ assistants and nurses who work under the general supervision of physicians. The fee for these treatments are relatively low compared to the cost of standard medical care.

That said that the convenience clinics have been very popular and 80 percent of the patients have expressed satisfaction with the treatment they have received.

She expects the number of small clinics to continue to grow.

A final speaker was Karen Eilenbach, director of Olmsted County United Way in Rochester. She told the audience that her agency provides health insurance policies for all of their clients and each client has an advocate to assist them as a reward for faithful service.

Now is the time to invest in clean energy

SAMANTHA CHORNOWICZ
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In my opinion to the Dec. 1 column by Phil Aracir in opposition to Gov. Tim Pawlenty’s green jobs initiative proposal, there are a number of major changes that are needed to improve our energy system for everyone.

Big Oil posts record profits

The energy challenges this country is facing today are no different from any other time in our history. We have to face the reality that our economic system is based on fossil fuels.

For years, the oil industry has been making billions of dollars in profits while our energy security is at risk.

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