New National Institute to help set health-policy agenda

The current backlash against managed competition in health care is understandable because "we still haven’t tried it," according to Alain Enthoven, one of the nation’s leading health-policy experts.

Enthoven is a widely respected author and professor at Stanford University, now on sabbatical at the London School of Public Health. His comments on the current state of health-care reform were delivered March 3 in Minneapolis at the inaugural symposium of the new National Institute of Health Policy, headed by former U.S. Sen. Dave Durenberger.

According to Enthoven, both provider and consumer concerns about managed competition result from what he called "the inevitable introduction of financial restraint into health care...something that just had to happen."

To cushion these restraints, Enthoven said, he and other architects of managed care wrongly presumed that doctors would organize themselves into medical groups that would “take charge of improving quality and improving costs, so nobody else had to do it to them.”

Enthoven also said he thinks consumers would be less resistant to limitations of managed competition if they were able to select from competing health plans, including those costing more, but offering free choice of providers.

“I think we wouldn’t have had nearly the backlash on the consumer end,” he said, “if everyone in managed care was there by choice.”

But, that didn’t happen either, Enthoven said, noting that “fewer than 10 percent of Americans have choices among health plans and full economic responsibility for the differences in premiums.”

The new National Institute of Health Policy is a partnership of Minnesota’s two largest public and private higher education institutions, the University of Minnesota and the University of St. Thomas.

Continued on page 4

State must give districts capacity to meet standards

by Ted Kolderie

On the education agenda the central question at the Capitol this year is not the Profile of Learning—not “accountability” at all.

It’s whether the Legislature is going to give districts the capacity to meet the standards for which they’re going to be held accountable.

Lack of an “accountability” program is already in place to force a crisis. These are the eighth-grade tests of basic skills. Kids have to pass those in order to graduate.

Way too many kids are not passing. It’s worst in the big cities. But even in good, solid Lake Wobegone towns way too many kids are not on track to graduate. If that happens, consequences will also fall on board members and on superintendents.

So the state is halfway across the river, standing on a slippery rock. It has put in the standards, but not yet given the districts what they need to meet those standards.

Now it has to decide whether to go

Continued on page 5

State tax policy must allow for effective citizen control

by Dan Salomone and Lynn Reed

When Minnesotans are asked which tax they would like changed, or (especially this session) what kind of tax rebate they want, they often don’t have much in the way of a theoretical framework for making an informed choice.

Understandably, their choice often comes down to how any proposal affects their personal pocketbooks. The proposal that most lowers their tax bills or returns the most money to them is the one they prefer.

Even when policymakers evaluate tax-reform and rebate proposals, their choices can be made largely on calculations of political advantage, rather than on tax-policy principles. We are not so naïve as to believe that tax-policy principles will ever be the only framework used in evaluating tax-reform proposals. Reasoned debate within the context of some jockeying for political advantage can still produce sound tax policy. We do believe, however, that the more that policymakers consider fundamentally

Continued on page 4

March 16, 1999

MINNESOTA JOURNAL
In his first state of the state speech, Gov. Ventura outlined a set of important budget principles that will set the tone for the next four years. Getting these priorities implemented will be a much more difficult task, but the Governor has not only presented a strong group of leaders to assist with implementation.

Possibly more important, however, will be to quickly coalesce this group of leaders around a vision of solving the troubling cracks in an otherwise healthy state and regional economy. Paying attention to the priorities Gov. Ventura laid out in his speech would be a good start:

- Be fiscally prudent, future potential costs where possible, balance projected budgets over four years and retain any surpluses to the peak of the next.
- Do the right things and do them well, especially evaluating programs for results and reform or eliminate programs they are not producing results;
- Create incentives instead of penalties for individuals and give individuals the right to do the right thing; companies the right to do the right thing;
- To give our eyes off these high principles. On March 3, the Twin Cities Roundtable presented the results of 78 interviews with local executives on vision, strategy and critical factors for regional competitiveness in the global economy. There was a 90 percent work force in the Twin Cities that is working in the community’s standing in the national economy. While the region is currently quite competitive, its base needs to be a service.
- Cause for that growth are diverse: entrepreneurial, new technology and education; and regional economic development programs; a shortage of professional and skilled workers;
- To make our streets and our city safe for all citizens;
- To give every family and every child the tools to achieve success;
- To help people who want a job get the skills needed to be gainfully employed and achieve self-sufficiency.

Over the past six years, we’ve invested over $200 million in our police department, seizing the opportunity to make our streets safer. We’ve bought new equipment, hired officers, and civilianized positions to put more police on the street.

City works, but needs work on crime, families, job skills

Ventura’s budget principles can help region compete

The Roundtable report ranked Minnesota locally on a national report card of the state’s government performance standards. St. Cloud Times (Feb. 23) called for (Feb. 25) support for a $300 million state transit system. One of the key points in the report card is that the state must keep its promise of education standards. The legislature passed legislation that would allow for local flexibility.

St. Paul Pioneer Press (Feb. 15) Gov. Jesse Ventura’s trans- young people, creatively leverage private government; allow no unfunded programs if they are not producing development and revitalization projects for the next; individuals to do the right thing; community to do the right thing;

Our strong economy, the development and revitalization projects in the state are essential; but also a few warning signs. While there is much to be done. It is a difficult task, but the Governor has presented a group of leaders to look at some of the challenges.

Lyle Wray is executive director of the Citizens League.

Editors want Profiles of Learning fixed, not dumped

The Minnesota Journal

Publisher - Lyle Wray

Editor - David M. Schneider

Contributing Editor - Ted Kameleon

Skokie - Ray Homan

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We must prevent first-time juvenile offenders from becoming repeat offenders, requiring comprehensive and coordinated inter-

One cornerstone of our effort is to develop a database to allow all police departments and state to share information about juvenile offenders.

We must begin to develop county-level coordinated efforts to help young people develop the personal, social and economic skills they need to make good decisions.

What people who question in any other traditional education programs their course of learning, fixed and licensed in their areas of expertise.

We must strengthen Minnesota’s education program by creating a balanced, long-term financing system for public and private education. We must bring that same focus and emphasis on misdemeanor offenses.

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Income earners (those with over $100,000) are not as visible to the public as other voters, but they make up a significant portion of the population. A system of taxation that inoculates the majority of voters against the burden of financing taxes. Though their shares of total government spending. From their own constituents—they help support local school districts comes from nonlocal sources at 40.0 percent of counties' revenues and local government. The MinnPost study shows that taxes on business are regressive, falling more heavily on low-income households than on high-income ones. What makes business taxes seems more attractive to some legislators is the fact that individual taxpayers do not complain, and counties do not have that capacity today. It was not built for an earlier, simpler world in which kids went to school, the state gave local districts money, district promises that kids would learn and nobody really checked.

Tax policy

A heavy reliance on intergovernmental transfers to finance state and local government expenditures. The State Auditor’s office showed that in 1906, 30.4 percent of state and local governments in 11 states raised more than 40.0 percent of counties’ revenues came from state and federal aid. 1998 studies showed a worsening of the condition by school districts' 1994 revenues coming from nonlocal sources at merely 5.6 percent. Counties, municipalities, and cities (70 percent of local governments) spend one dollar for every dollar they raise—only 70 cents (60 percent for counties) from their own citizens—those who live there. More than 70 percent of all sales and local income taxes comes from property taxes. The amount of money the state collects in property taxes as a percentage of total state revenue is the highest in the nation. In 1998, property taxes accounted for 32.5 percent of state revenue, including those from home and business property, which represented nearly 90 percent of total state revenue. The percentage of nonlocal sources at 40.0 percent of counties' revenues and local government.

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Since 1985 the Legislature has authorized, and the University of Minnesota has created, the National Institute of Health Policy. The Institute, as its name implies, is a national center of excellence in health policy—research and education. It is an independent, non-partisan research institute—located on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus—that responds to the changing needs of an evolving and complexity of the health care system. The Institute was established in 1985 with an endowment of $1 million from the state of Minnesota.

The Institute's mission is to develop new information and ideas that can help policymaking at all levels of government. The Institute's work is guided by a board of directors, which includes representatives from a range of organizations, including hospitals, health plans, and other public and private institutions.

The Institute's research is focused on a number of key areas, including:

- Health care financing
- Health care delivery
- Health care access and equity
- Health care quality and outcomes
- Health care workforce

The Institute's research is conducted by a team of experienced researchers who are committed to producing high-quality, evidence-based research that can help policymakers make informed decisions about health care policy.

The Institute's work is widely recognized and has been cited in many national and international publications. The Institute's researchers have also been invited to testify before congressional committees and to speak at conferences and workshops around the country.

The Institute is committed to ensuring that its research is accessible to policymakers and the general public, and it regularly publishes reports, briefs, and other materials that provide insights into the complex issues facing the health care system.

In summary, the Institute is an independent, non-partisan research institute that conducts high-quality, evidence-based research on the complex issues facing the health care system. The Institute's work is guided by a board of directors, and it is committed to ensuring that its research is accessible to policymakers and the general public.
Aging population could double state spending by 2030

It’s been well documented that the state’s population is not-so-slowly turning gray. (See the Citizens League/Department of Human Services recent New Wrinkle report).

The Minnesota Taxpayers Association (MTA) recently found that as people over 65 make up an increasing percentage of the population, program costs could swell state spending to twice its current size by the year 2030.

MTA analyzed per-client costs and historic growth rates of state program areas from 1990 to 1996 and compared them with personal income growth. From 1990 to 1996, health and human services made up less than 20 percent of the state’s budget. But if per-client costs and growth rates were projected out, the rapid growth of older people would make up almost 65 percent of all state spending by the year 2030.

Under such a scenario, state spending could consume about 17 percent of all personal income, compared to eight percent today, if no structural changes are made.—Ron Wirtz.

The MTA also released an analysis of state aids and public payrolls that found local governments in Greater Minnesota much more dependent on state and federal aid than cities and counties in the seven-county metro region.

On average, cities in Greater Minnesota received almost 30 percent of their total revenue from government aid, compared to an average of only 17 percent in metro-area cities. Similarly, nonmetro counties received 45 percent of all revenues through government-aid programs, compared with 35 percent for metro counties.

The economies of nonmetro counties were also 60 percent more dependent on public-sector wages than the economies of metro counties. Wages from public-sector jobs constituted almost one-fifth of all wages earned in Greater Minnesota counties, compared with 13 percent for metro counties.—R.W.

money spent per child and significantly cutting class sizes, the latest education proposals being discussed at the Capitol to improve education outcomes are increasing spend per child and reducing class sizes.

—Kris Lyndon.

Speaking of reducing class size, increasing spending to buy more teachers is one way to get there—not the only way, just the most expensive. Another way is to move the “specialist” teachers into the regular classroom. Montlake elementary school in Seattle did that famously some years back and performance rose.

You hear less about that because, like all reallocation strategies, it affects jobs. So the opening proposal is always to reduce class-size by raising spending—to see if the public will pay. Remember: There are other ways.—T.K.

Elementary schools in South Korea are facing a massive shortage of teachers, according to the Korea Herald. Class sizes are increasing steeply, teaching hours are up and music and art specialists are being assigned to teach general subjects.

The shortage is mainly due to recent legislation that lowered teacher retirement ages from 65 to 63, coupled with a growing preference for early retirements among teachers. In Seoul alone more than 1,600 elementary teachers quit through regular or early retirement at the end of February. Education ministry officials estimate another 12,000 teachers nationwide will quit in August. Meanwhile, applications to education colleges are declining.

Seems Minnesota is not alone in coping with a teacher shortage. —Janet Dudrow.

A recent U.S. News & World Report article on higher education enrollment noted that many classrooms at universities nationwide are now dominated by women. The article credited the surge with greatly improved opportunities for women and an increasing percentage of men opting out of higher education for the immediate pay-off of work, often in high-tech industries.

But Minnesota enrollment trends throw some contrasting light on this national trend. For one, college enrollment among Minnesota females is on the decline, dropping from 52 percent of female high school graduates in 1987 (and 45 percent for males) to 43 percent for females in 1996 and 38 percent for males. More glaringly, the rate for female graduates in rural school districts went from 53 percent to just percent in the same nine-year period.

These enrollment trends have convinced the Minnesota System of Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) to undertake a major initiative to increase student recruitment and retention rates—this on the heels of a 4.3 percent decrease in MnSCU students last fall.—R.W.

“Take Note” contributors this month include Minnesota Journal and Citizens League staff members and Janet Dudrow, policy analyst at Dorsey and Whitney.

Take Note

“Old age is the most unexpected of all the things that happen to a man.”—L. Trotsky

There is something wonderfully ironic, isn’t there, about a governor who says “the free ride is over” and in the same speech comes out for light-rail transit and commuter rail?—Ted Kolderie.

Americans who look admiringly to Europe as a model of urban planning and development should look more carefully, argues Ken Orski in the current newsletter he writes on land use and transportation. European himself, Orski notes:

“Between 1970 and 1990 the share of population living in the central city has declined in virtually every European city, despite the fact that local governments have more control over land use, public transit is far more extensive and suburban home ownership is not subsidized by the tax code.

“The old-style cities we see on postcards and from sightseeing buses are isolated pockets of urbanity inhabited by students, young professionals and the very rich. Europe’s middle class has moved to the suburbs; where they shop in malls, live in auto-oriented subdivisions and drive on traffic-clogged arteries. Most tourists are not aware of this: They tend to stay in the historic city centers.”—T.K.

At a recent Mind-Opener meeting, John Brandl (former Citizens League president and current dean of the Humphrey Institute) had some interesting statistics about public education in the 20th century.

First, he noted that from 1960-1990, the nation tripled per-student spending for K-12 after adjusting for inflation. Second, 100 years ago, the average class size in this country was 37 kids. Fifty years ago it was 27 kids. Today, if you count all the kids and all the teachers—including those “unassigned” to a particular classroom and those with administrative duties—you’d have 17 kids per teacher, which is what we are hoping to get in every Minnesota classroom over the next few years.

So despite tripling the amount of

Minnesota Journal
Citizens League
Suite 500
708 S. Third St.
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Welcome

New voices and new visions

March Mind-Openers feature new state leaders

With the appointment of new commissioners and agency heads, Governor Ventura’s administration has begun to take shape. His appointees bring a variety of political backgrounds and personal experiences to their posts and will have a significant impact on state policies over the next four years.

The March Mind-Opener series will feature five of the Governor’s recent appointments in areas of particular interest to the Citizens League: transportation, education, health, planning and regional governance. Please join us as these new policy leaders share their vision for the agencies they lead.

All meetings in this series will be held from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. at the University Club, 420 Summit Ave., St. Paul. Cost per meeting is $10 for Citizens League members, and $15 for non-members. Unless of course you take advantage of the March Madness promotion. To register or for more information please call 612-338-0791, or email us at info@citizensleague.net.
TUESDAY, MAY 4
for the League's 46th ANNUAL MEETING
featuring TIM PENNY

The League's annual meeting surfaces, explores and provokes discussion of issues of public life. In recent years, Robert Putnam, Alan Erhenhalt, Haynes Johnson and David Broder have all addressed our annual meeting. Last year, panelists Al Quie, Rev. Curtiss DeYoung, Matthew Ramadan, Alfred Babington-Johnson and Anita Pampusch discussed the role of communities of faith in... ind. Cluster Study Update

Staff members are continuing to conduct pre-committee meetings to assemble background information and to help clarify and frame the charge for the League's new study on industry clusters.

League members can expect committee sign-up information to arrive soon. For more information, please call Ron Wirtz at 612-338-0791.

This spring, hundreds of people are participating in more than 40 community-based conversations to discuss:

- How we can make our communities more stable, livable and accessible through fair and affordable housing; How we can create housing choices that better connect citizens who need jobs with employers who need workers; How we can reshape our schools so that all children can learn together and succeed.

This year former Congressman Tim Penny will talk about the emerging policy opportunities that result from the changed political landscape and our ongoing economic prosperity. And he will speculate on the implications of Governor Ventura's election on engaging young people in politics and public life. Details will be announced soon.

Industry Cluster Study Update

The Citizens League’s latest policy study will focus on the topic “Aging and Disabilities in 2030.” The study is a follow-up to the League’s recent work with Project 2030: A New Wrinkle on Aging, and is being done through a contract with the Minnesota State Council on Disabilities. It will examine issues similar to those studied for A New Wrinkle on Aging, such as transportation, health care, housing and services, but with a particular emphasis on seniors with disabilities.

One-third to one-half of all people over the age of 65 have a certified disability, defined as the inability to complete at least one task required for independent daily living. Thanks to medical advances, the rate of disability among older people has actually gone down in recent years. However, due to demographic trends, the overall number of disabled people will continue to increase as a result of the huge wave of aging baby boomers.

As the number of disabled people grows, so too must the systems designed to care for and otherwise support these individuals. By many accounts, the current system falls short of meeting the demands of today, and is ill-equipped to meet the rapidly growing needs of tomorrow.

This League committee will examine data about the number and condition of seniors with disabilities and look for trends that might inform policy makers and the private market as they prepare for the future. The committee will also analyze the service needs of seniors with disabilities, including the utilization and geographic distribution of existing services, in order to determine the system's ability to meet future demands.

League Board member Emily Anne Tuttle has agreed to serve as co-chair of the study, and efforts are currently underway to select a second co-chair. Committee work is expected to begin in early April and conclude by the end of June.

If you are interested in serving on this study committee, please fill out the form below. For more information, call Kris Lyndon at 612-338-0791.

Committee Membership Application

If you are interested in serving on the League study on seniors with disabilities in 2030, please fill out the form below and mail it to the League office or send us an email.

Name __________________________ Occupation __________________________
Address __________________________ Employer __________________________
________________________________ work address __________________________
City, St, Zip __________________________ City, St, Zip __________________________
email __________________________ telephone __________________________

daytime phone __________________________

Mail to Citizens League 708 South 3rd Street, #500, Minneapolis, MN 55415 or email info@citizensleague.net