Healthy—and Humorous—Debate

PAGE TURNER: Featuring more than 200 examples of editorial cartoons, a new history offers an entertaining review of 100 years of often rancorous wrangling over health care reform. “Unlike the pain involved in our political struggle, cartoons deliver their uncomfortable truths with such irreverent wit and visual imagination that you can’t help but chuckle,” says Theodore Brown, a historian of medicine, public health, and health policy at Rochester. He is one of four authors of The Quest for Health Care Reform: A Satirical History, published in October by the American Public Health Association.

PHOTO BY ADAM FENSTER
No simple consensus developed about the specifics of reform, and the proliferation of proposals led to confusion, speculation, and, ultimately, stalemate.

During the 1993 presidential election campaign, candidate Bill Clinton began with a "pay-as-you-go" proposal by which employers would provide health insurance for their employees, while, at the same time, funds were set aside to pay for those who would provide public insurance for the uninsured.

The managed competition proposal was...

The late Senator Kennedy had died of cancer on August 25, 2009. Not only did he lead the death of the war in health care...