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Agnew Hits Kennedy Stand On Health Care as Extremist

From News Dispatches

NEW ORLEANS, Nov. 28—Vice President Spiro Agnew today accused Democratic Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of extremism in arguing for an overhaul of the American health care and medical system.

"The language of extremism attracts attention," Agnew told a meeting of the American Medical Association, "but if the senator hopes to ride to the presidency on a charge that Americans are getting poor medical care, and the whole system should be replaced with nationalized medicine, he is riding a mighty frill horse."

Agnew, who was addressing the AMA's Political Action Committee, said Kennedy's proposals for reshaping the U.S. medical system would cost \$59.4 billion and dismantle a health care system "regarded as one of the finest in the world."

"I do not believe that even his colleagues among the doom-sayers, who have other favorite catastrophes to panic about, will agree to diverting up to one-fourth of the national budget to health financing," he said.

Agnew said some of the greatest strides the United States had ever taken in the health field would be within the next few months, with proposals drawn up by the Nixon administration.

"Whether these strides are forward or backward will depend on the on the Congress' ability to resist socialist demagoguery masquerading as liberal compassion," the Vice President said.

Agnew chided the AMA itself for engaging in "scare rhetoric."

Agnew referred to an AMA ad in Life magazine last month which said pollution-related diseases have cost \$38 billion and carried the heading: "If America dies, where will we bury it?"

"I'm not surprised at that sort of scare rhetoric coming from a Democratic presidential candidate who hopes to capitalize on it in an election year, but I am a little surprised at the AMA yielding to the fad of apocalyptic rhetoric," the Vice President said.