Hillary Clinton –  
The Medical Issue That Won’t Go Away

In her 2008 campaign for the presidency, candidate Hillary Clinton pointedly argued that candidate Barack Obama, the upstart junior Senator from Illinois had not been vetted. The situation is suddenly reversed. It turns out that Mrs. Clinton has some not-trivial legal problems to resolve – one should never be careless with classified data.

We are now informed that she has been living with significant medical issues.

Will these medical issues become a “DQ” … or merely a caution?

*Let me state our pending medical concerns plainly:* Mrs. Clinton presents an uncomfortably high-risk medical profile for someone in her mid-50’s, let alone a candidate for President of the United States who will turn 70 the year of our next president’s inauguration.

We now know that Hillary Clinton is prone to blood clotting and fainting spells. She is, to put it plainly, a stroke risk. Her famous 2012 collapse near the end of her grueling term as Secretary of State was more dangerous than the public was told at the time. Having spent much of her term as Secretary of State flying in aircraft, Secretary Clinton fainted in early December 2012, striking her head with sufficient force to cause a concussion. It is not unreasonable to conclude that she temporarily lost consciousness.

There is a conflict in accounts about where she fell and why. But in all versions, Hillary Clinton was hospitalized and her physicians discovered a dangerous blood clot in her head, described as a “right transverse venous thrombosis” - a clot located between brain and skull. Intravenous blood thinners were administered over three days and eventually succeeded in dissolving the clot, averting what could have been a catastrophic stroke.

Mrs. Clinton’s medical records also reveal at least two earlier blood clot incidents (in 1998 and 2008). After her release from the hospital, Hillary Clinton was seeing double for at least two weeks. Double vision often accompanies a severe head injury.

Because of Mrs. Clinton’s continuing risk of further blood clotting, she was placed on high-potency blood thinners (Coumadin) for the rest of her life. According to President Bill Clinton, she “required six months of very serious work to get over” the incident.

Another credible story has surfaced: Mrs. Clinton will eventually require heart valve replacement surgery. If true, she should undergo periodic tests. When or if open heart surgery is performed, Mrs. Clinton’s Coumadin doses will be stopped for about two weeks prior to the procedure.
Stopping Coumadin raises the risk of a blood clot, even a stroke for someone with her profile. If we assume her open heart surgery is successful, a rapid, full recovery is not a slam dunk outcome.

So far, reporters have been given only one report - from Dr. Lisa Bardack, Hillary Clinton’s personal physician since 2001. The cardiologist, Dr. Allan Schwartz of New York Presbyterian Hospital where Mrs. Clinton was treated for the “potentially life-threatening blood clot”, is reportedly likely to be able add to Mrs. Clinton’s medical profile. When approached by reporters for more information, Dr. Schwartz declined. Mrs. Clinton has not yet released her full, pertinent medical history. Nor will she, in my opinion.

To be fair, heart beat irregularities traced to heart valve malfunctions may be tolerated for years before open heart surgery is indicated. But eventually, it will.

One can reasonably conclude from all this that Mrs. Clinton presents a high-risk profile for someone in her 50’s, let alone someone who will turn 70 in 2017, the year the new president takes office. If it were you or me, no life insurance agency would issue us a policy.

There are no “unexpected POTUS vacancy” insurance policies, except the selection of a highly prepared and well qualified vice president. No matter how you look at it, the death of any sitting president is a disruptive event, something that, in my opinion, the United States cannot afford during a time of international peril. Any material risk of such an event should be a pass-fail vetting topic when candidates for POTUS are under consideration.

This may, but probably will not be a campaign issue. A medical risk profile like Hillary’s can reasonably justify voting for a different candidate on health grounds alone. But Republican candidates are not likely to raise it, fearing a partisan-feminist backlash. Ah, but the Obama surrogates are not so inhibited – the bitterness between the two camps (Clinton and Obama) seems to still run deep.

So, the issue still has legs, and it will probably work in the background, changing alliances, shifting loyalties. The current administration can be expected to turn up the heat on Mrs. Clinton’s other problems (her seeming carelessness with classified information is just one); and her health issues may provide a face-saving way for her to back out of the race. In this connection, I note that a number of current and former Hillary Clinton supporters have commented, privately - and with caution – in the public square, that she seems tired, appearing at times to just be going through the motions, like someone who is reluctantly keeping a promise, now regretted.

Time will tell, but who can miss the irony? Remember when then Senator Clinton asked voters “Who do you want in the White House when the phone rings at three the morning?”

Her point was sound, but now many will ask: “Without disclosure of all candidate Clinton’s pertinent medical records, who indeed?”

JBG
A license to link to this article or to publish pull quotes from it (with full attribution) is hereby granted. For all other permissions and comments, please contact the author via email at law@jaygaskill.com. The author served as the chief Public Defender for the County of Alameda, CA, headquartered in Oakland for 10 years, following a long career as an Assistant Public Defender. Then, Gaskill left his “life of crime” to devote more time to writing. Learn more about Jay B Gaskill, attorney, analyst and author, at http://jaygaskill.com/WhoIsJayBGaskill.pdf

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Some References

AP

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton released a letter from her doctor Friday … as the first candidate for president in 2016 to release detailed information about her personal health. [The report was by}… Dr. Lisa Bardack, an internist who practices near Clinton's suburban New York home.

Hypothyroidism is a very common condition, and Bardack said other notable events in her medical history include deep vein thrombosis — or a blood clot, usually in the leg — in 1998 and 2009, a broken elbow in 2009 and a concussion in 2012.

..Due to her family history, she had full cardiac testing, including an ultrasound exam of arteries in her neck, and all was well.

Bardack said that Clinton got a stomach virus while traveling in 2012, "became dehydrated, fainted and sustained a concussion."…doctors found a blood clot in a vein in the space between the brain and the skull behind her right ear. Clinton spent a few days in New York-Presbyterian Hospital for treatment and took a month-long absence from her role as secretary of state.

… the concussion’s effects, include[ed] double vision, which Clinton wore glasses with specialized lenses to address.

Clinton’s current medications include a thyroid hormone replacement, …Coumadin…to prevent new blood clots from forming. ”

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WALL STREET JOURNAL

By LAURA MECKLER

Updated July 31, 2015 5:57 p.m. ET

according to the letter from Dr. Lisa Bardack, chairman of the Department of Medicine at the Mount Kisco Medical Group in Mount Kisco, N.Y., and Mrs. Clinton’s personal physician since 2001…. Mrs. Clinton … has suffered from deep vein thrombosis in 1998 and 2009, an elbow fracture in 2009 and a concussion, which was well documented in 2012…. the concussion came in December 2012, after Mrs. Clinton suffered a stomach virus after traveling and became dehydrated and fainted. During follow-up evaluations, she was found to have a transverse sinus venous thrombosis. She began anticoagulation therapy, which reduces the body’s ability to form clots. Because of the concussion, the doctor wrote, Mrs. Clinton had double vision for a while and benefited from wearing glasses with a Fresnel Prism….she continues to take a daily drug to prevent clotting.
Hillary Clinton Took 6 Months to ‘Get Over’ Concussion, Bill Says of Timeline

The former president revealed that his wife's injury "required six months of very serious work to get over," he said during a question-and-answer session at the Peterson Foundation in Washington.

HUFFINGTON POST

…the 42nd president also revealed that he knows questions about his wife's health and age can't be ignored as the 2016 presidential race comes into focus. In fact, he called it "a serious issue."

Ed Klein, Author of Blood Feud"

"She had managed to keep her medical history secret out of fear that, should it become public, it would disqualify her from becoming president."

… Hillary fainted while she was working in her seventh-floor office at the State Department, not at home, as Reines told the media. She was treated at the State Department’s infirmary and then, at her own insistence, taken to Whitehaven to recover. However, as soon as Bill appeared on the scene and was able to assess Hillary’s condition for himself, he ordered that she be immediately flown to New York–Presbyterian Hospital in the Fort Washington section of Manhattan. When Reines subsequently released a statement confirming that Hillary was being treated at the hospital over the New Year’s holiday, it naturally intensified speculation about the seriousness of her medical condition. …

She …a blood clot between her brain and skull. She had developed the clot in one of the veins that drains blood from the brain to the heart. … Hillary had an intrinsic tendency to form clots and faint. In addition to the fainting spell she suffered in Buffalo a few years before, she had fainted boarding her plane in Yemen, fallen and fractured her elbow in 2009, and suffered other unspecified fainting episodes. Several years earlier, she had developed a clot in her leg and was put on anticoagulant therapy by her doctor. However, she had foolishly stopped taking her anticoagulant medicine, which might have explained the most recent thrombotic event.

“The unique thing about clotting in the brain is that it could have transformed into a stroke,” said a cardiac specialist with knowledge of Hillary’s condition.

…and heart valves were not normal. Put into layman’s language, her heart valves were not pumping in a steady way. … sources who discussed Hillary’s medical condition with her were told that Hillary’s doctors considered performing valve-replacement surgery. They ultimately decided against it. Still, before they released Hillary from the hospital, they warned Bill Clinton: “She has to be carefully monitored for the rest of her life.”