Correspondence

Legal Care

The article by Dr. Rice on “LegalCare“ is one of the most timely and important pieces I have read in a long time.

Unfortunately, this tongue-in-cheek article, which is so painfully true, will fall on deaf ears. No one is even considering tort reform in any of the proposed “healthcare reform“ bills.

The legal profession deserves to be lampooned, as lawyers are largely responsible for much of the decline in medical ethics as well as that of the legal system itself.

Congratulations to Dr. Rice for exposing the hypocrisy of legal professionals who advocate enslaving physicians in the supposed interest of affordable, accessible care (under government control), yet who bristle at the idea that the same principle should apply to them.

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The Cost of Medical Care

Most people have been conditioned to believe that there is no way that they can pay for medical care. In one talk I give, I ask people how much a routine office visit with a pediatrician or internist would cost. Generally the response is dead silence. Everyone knows his copay, but beyond that simply believes that the real cost is so much that it would bankrupt him. He believes that because it is the only thing he ever hears. The left has been cultivating the notion that only government can pay for medical care since Medicare was passed in the 1960s—even though, as Dr. Summers shows, Medicare was actually a bankruptcy bill.

The alternative to empowering individuals, including patients, to transmit their knowledge or valuations is to entrust bureaucrats to arbitrarily determine prices. As Thomas Sowell pointed out, “The simple fact that central planners in the Soviet Union had more than 24 million prices to set shows the absurdity of the task undertaken by central planning."

Recently, Hunter Lewis reiterated the same theme: “The central paradox of Keynesianism is that it attempts to ‘fix’ the price and profit system—by subverting it.”

The U.S. government mandated CPT codes and Resource-based Relative Value Scale are eerily reminiscent of the Soviet pseudo-pricing system. Government interference destroys the patient-physician contract along with real prices.

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Erratum

In Table 2 on p 105 of Indur Goklany’s article on death and death rates from extreme weather events, the total number of deaths should be 57,029 (in thousands), that is 57,029,000, not 7,029 (thousand), as the table reads. We apologize for what was apparently a printer’s error, and we thank a reader for calling it to our attention.