

We Get Letters & E-Mail

Managed Legal Services: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Dear Editor:

So, fair is fair. I've got a "Modest Proposal" that would likely make Jonathan Swift proud: Shouldn't we chiropractors be lobbying for the creation of "managed legal services," and also for federal government control of legal/attorney services? Isn't it really past time? William Shakespeare told us in *King Henry VI* many years ago (circa 1591-2), "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." But perhaps it's a managed system and government regulation, rather than death by hanging, that is needed in the public's interest! And for the good of the chiropractic profession.

Let's be fair and use the same logic and arguments that were used to create "managed health care services," and that are now being used to force federal government control of health care delivery services under a national health insurance plan scheme: "greedy" and overpaid providers, lack of management controls, reforms past due, consumers being ripped off, many classes of people unable to afford good professional providers of services (or any at all), out-of-control costs, lack of compassion for human grief and misery, no federal government oversight on the system, very little regulation, minorities denied access and suffering inequities, self-serving conduct by providers, concealment of malpractice and negligence, discriminatory access, monopolistic practices, double standards with one level of care for the wealthy and descending tiers for the rest of us, varying degrees of quality, little standardization, other countries with better access to professional assistance, better-appearing international comparison statistics, people forced into bankruptcy by huge bills and exorbitant fees that are out of proportion to the tasks performed or training needed or value received, etc., etc.

Just as we have been informed that health care is too important to leave to the doctors to make the decisions, it should be obvious to all by now that legal services are way too important to be left to the lawyers. My friends, family and I have all been victimized much more by the so-called legal system in the U.S. than I ever was by the medical or health care system. We've suffered more from lousy legal services and seen our savings dwindle more due to exorbitant hourly and case fees for attorneys than we ever suffered from hospitals or doctors. (And maybe as a proviso, since lawyers are making the rules for the doctors in the proposed system, just maybe the doctors should be put in charge of making the rules for lawyers in *my* proposed system. Hmm...)

Every day, chiropractors, medical doctors and other providers are told how to practice by the insurance companies and managed care organizations. Chiropractors were literally forced to join managed care plans under the threat of an economic gun at their heads. If doctors of all types and hospitals are already being forced to perform under a "managed care system" and soon will be placed under a "national health insurance plan," why shouldn't the same thing apply to attorneys and legal services, i.e., managed legal services and national legal insurance?

If it's good for the chiropractors, medical doctors, etc., then it should be good enough for the lawyers, too, right? Many feel that the autonomy, the power, the fun, and the higher incomes have been taken away from the average practicing chiropractor by managed care. So, shouldn't a similar

system be put in place for the average practicing attorney at law?

Why isn't our federal government helping We The People in this area? Health care services are a right of all, and legal services are a right of all too! After all, fair is fair.

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The above letter to the editor is the opinion of the author only and should not be construed as the position of the World Federation of Chiropractic. Dr. Baird chairs the WFC Public Health Committee.

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