



President's Comment

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A snippet from the novel "Little Man, What Now", by German author Hans Fallada printed in 1932.

At the doctor's office:

"Let us in first if you don't mind," said Pinneberg and pushed Lammchen (his fiancée) in front of him. "And we're private. I have an appointment. My name is Pinneberg."

At the word "private" the apparition raised a hand and switched on the light in the hall. "The doctor's just coming. Please wait a moment. In there please."

As they went towards the door they passed another which was half open. That must be the **ordinary** waiting-room, and all the thirty people who Pinneberg had seen coming in past him seemed to be sitting in it. They all looked at the two of them, and a buzz of voices arose:

"That's not fair."

"We've been waiting longer!"

"What do we pay into the public health scheme for?"

"I'd like to know what makes that stuck-up pair any better than us."

The nurse appeared in the doorway: "Can we have a bit of quiet, please? You're disturbing the doctor! It's not what you think. This is the doctor's son-in-law and his wife. Isn't that so (it was not true)?"

Pinneberg smiled, flattered. Lammchen hurried towards the other door. There was a moment's quiet.

"Oh, do hurry up," whispered the nurse, pushing Pinneberg from behind. "Those medical-card patients are so common. What on earth do they think they're entitled to for the **pittance** we get from the public scheme?"

Written 80 years ago, does this sound eerily familiar? Is this the road we've been forced to travel down the past 30 years or so with U.S. healthcare?

I have to admit deciding what subject to address with this month's editorial has been a challenge. The level of political activity since my last editorial has increased exponentially. "'Tis the season," so to speak, which is a segue to my primary subject.

On September 25, at the Turner home, the EPCMS PAC was very fortunate to have several high profile candidates attend our meeting chaired by Dr. Tune. We had Barbara Carrasco, Beto O'Rourke, Dee Margo, Joe Moody, and Judge Chris Antcliff each present their political viewpoints individually followed by a question and answer session. It was a great setting with an intimate roundtable discussion. The candidates were all generous with their time and forthright with their positions.

Following the meeting, the PAC **voted** on its endorsements for this upcoming election. It will support Mr. O'Rourke for U.S. Congress, Mr. Margo for Texas State Representative, and Judge Antcliff for Texas 8th Court of Appeals. All 3 candidates will receive financial donations from the PAC to assist with their respective campaigns.

There is not enough space to elaborate on all of the hot topics, but some of the highlights of the discussion were about SGR and our overwhelming support of its repair. Both national candidates agreed that doctor's reimbursements from Medicare cannot be reduced any further and pledged to support this endeavor. The major discrepancy was about "Obamacare". Mrs. Carrasco supports total repeal and replacement; and Mr. O'Rourke says he is **not** in favor of its repeal, but does believe there needs to be major modifications. The support from the PAC for Dee Margo stems mostly from the long-standing policy of endorsing a **friendly** incumbent.

I have heard from a few physicians that they are disappointed with some of the endorsements made by the PAC. My only response is that this meeting was announced and publicized well in advance. E-mails were sent out to all medical society and PAC members. I know how challenging it can be to attend these meetings given the time constraints of our profession. Unfortunately, the PAC had to move forward on its endorsements that same evening de-

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spite only 12 physicians in attendance. We value everyone's input, and hope that in the future, we will have better representation.

I also want to review my recent participation as a representative of the EPCMS and its local membership on a panel discussing ACO's (accountable care organizations). This panel symposium took place on October 1 as part of the "Mano y Corazon" conference which was co-sponsored and organized by Senator Jose Rodriquez and The National Association of Hispanic Nurses. I was honored to be there amongst very respectable local and national experts on ACO's.

In my preparation for this event, I learned a great deal about ACO's. They are basically the government's attempts to reduce the cost of healthcare by moving from fee-for-service model of reimbursement to a value-based method of reimbursement. The government hopes through this arrangement, which is designed to be a collaborative effort be-

tween physicians and hospitals, to provide higher quality care at a much lower cost. Outcomes will be a major data endpoint in determining quality amongst other measurements. The incentive for physicians, in theory, is the opportunity to share in any achieved cost savings. My main recommendation to all of you is to research an ACO and its contract thoroughly before you sign onto one. The ramifications (legally and financially) can be significant, and your due process limited, should you become disenchanted with or be terminated from it after contracting.

Election Day is Tuesday November 6. I implore you to vote. Agree or disagree with the PAC, obviously, this is your best opportunity to make a difference.

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