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P6/b(6)

September 6, 1996

To: Christopher Jennings

Dear Christopher Jennings,

The President's new health care task force will not succeed if it seeks to satisfy the wishes of all major players. Specifically:

- "Leftists" who believe that all care— prescriptions, counselling of all kinds, heroic measures to save the brain dead at both ends of life— should be free to the consumer.
- Professionals who demand the right to charge whatever they please and do whatever they wish without supervision.
- Corporations— hospitals, drug companies, HMOs— whose primary goals are growth in sales and earnings and are managed by self-serving officers

The sole criterion of a good health care system should be access to appropriate technology by those who may benefit from it. If we are not to continue throwing a trillion dollars a year (and growing) down a rat hole, we need a system in which providers are salaried employees of publicly-owned systems employing good quality controls and rational division of labor. Patents on drugs and devices should be awarded with the condition of compulsory licensing at reasonable fees. Paperwork can be drastically reduced if insured care were to be free and uninsured categories to be the patient's full responsibility.

My educated guess is that such a single-payer tax funded system would cost about a third of a trillion, with savings to come from less administration, less overtreatment, and less overcharging.

I give you one homely example— a managed care outfit charged my son \$340 for a tetanus shot that would have cost the British N.H.S. about \$15.

Cordially,

