When it don’t rain, the roof don’t leak. Who needs any windows on such a sunny day anyway?

CareData of southern California questioned seniors in five plans to determine if seniors were happy with their HMO care. Eighty-four percent of those seniors who were healthy were highly satisfied, but the sicker ones were less pleased. Only 56% of those with poor health were happy with their primary care doctors. Apparently, HMOs give excellent service to those who are not ill.

Nothing is so firmly believed as that which we least know.

It seems like only yesterday, but actually it was right after the Civil War when the notion first generated that sugar had lower nutritive value. Later, in 1922 the belief was raised that food containing sugar had an adverse effect on behavior. When the lay media picked up on these irrational theories of empty calories and reactive hyperglycemia, it was only a short step to produce the Twinkie defense, in the courtroom, and functional reactive hypoglycemia to explain some hyperactive children. Alas for the health food faddists, now a Vanderbilt University study reported in JAMA has failed to substantiate the hyperactive theory in children, and it seems calories are still units of measurement.

It’s a question of whether we’re going to go forward into the future, or past to the back. (D. Quayle)

In Minnesota a proposed law would criminalize good-faith health-care decision making. The bill, called the Vulnerable Adults Act, goes beyond anything seen around the country and is designed to protect patients against medical criminal neglect. The problem is that what constitutes a vulnerable adult, and what is criminal neglect is so vague that Minnesota Medical Association has mounted a vigorous campaign to defeat portions of the act. The bill’s proponents have said that physicians should trust them to implement the act fairly. MMA leaders said they could not, and that the attraction to an ambitious, headline-seeking prosecutor might be just too tempting. A headline seeking attorney—could that be?

Avoid falsehoods like the plague except in matters of taxation.

As everyone knows, in 1993 Hillary Rodham Clinton, wife of the current President, assembled a carefully selected task force in an attempt to forge a national health care plan. To enhance the effort, a closed-door policy was established, but ultimately that was ruled legally unacceptable. As that dispute was dragged through the courts, the Clinton administration claimed the cost of the task force was only $100,000. Now all the documents have been released, and the actual cost to taxpayers for this bloated, pretentious albatross was $13.8 million.

It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, but what humanity, reason and justice tell me I ought to do.

If you have failed to communicate with your patient, bear in mind that you may be in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A complaint was brought in Idaho when a woman who cannot read lips or written words brought her daughter with strabis-mus to the doctor. On the first visit a sign language interpreter was engaged, but for subsequent office visits the requests for an interpreter were refused. The parents filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice citing the ADA, and if the department proceeds with a lawsuit against the physicians, they could be penalized up to $50,000.

Is this called the heinnie maneuver?

The doctor thought it was just a little horseplay after surgery. He finished closing the patient’s surgical wound with a surgical stapler while the circulating nurse was bending over to pick up a dropped sponge. Apparently seized by an urge for target practice, he shot the nurse in the backside with the staple gun. He claimed it was all intended as a little operating room humor, but the nurse was not amused. A New Orleans jury awarded her $5,000 in damages.

Addenda

- 76,000 Americans were injured using in-line skates in 1994, with fractures accounting for 40% of the damage.
- Cost of 100 aspirin tablets in Tokyo $36.57; in Toronto $5.04.
- Smokers in China spend an average of 17% of household income on cigarettes.
- If you have to shoot someone doing pantomine, you must use a silencer (Herb Caen). But remember, a mime is a terrible thing to waste.

Aloha and keep the faith—rts