

*Modern Healthcare* published the below in its Opinions/Letters section on July 20, 2009:

**One thought: water boarding**

Looking at the logos of the six organizations mentioned on p. 7 of the June 8, 2009 “Promises and threats” article made me even more skeptical regarding the likelihood of an improved healthcare system. Specifically, the thought that came to mind...It may now be illegal to use with terrorists, but water boarding is still being used by Washington to coerce politically compromised statements from interest groups.

And what an interesting group these six make. Four of the members still enjoy retail pricing, while the other two – the groups that actually have the greatest responsibilities for outcomes and bear the greatest malpractice risks – already often receive less than their costs. By the way, the leaders of these same two groups are the ones promising to deliver even more care under the threat of being paid even less.

The provider’s voice has been absent in the policy debate since the defeat of Hilarycare. It was after that when providers decided that lobbyists were much more valuable than their own leadership and thus abdicated any chance to really show what works and what doesn’t. The final blow came when the American Hospital Association and other hospital groups declared war on doctors.

I recall a lesson about business partners that an old Cuban born physician taught me. He said, “There are those who bring the cow and those who milk the cow.” From the looks of this unlikely alliance, it appears we have two members bringing the cow, three members milking the cow, and one member eating the cow.

Through this framework of “reform,” we will all need to get used to being vegetarians.

Sincerely,

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