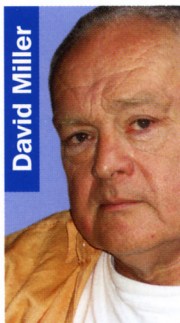




Accreditation

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ONCE UPON A TIME, THAT IS WITHIN living memory, doctors were like birds in a big cage.

There were strict guidelines with hard work and dedication, but it was a self regulated environment. Anyone who did not warble in tune was given a severe pecking, and serious cases were ejected from the roost. This was a serious fate because all had worked hard for their place on the perch. Ranks closed and in-cage scandals rarely became public.

Then one day in 1974, a great god arose from the political mire. This being called Medicare opened the cage and said to the birds, "be free, for behold unto each of you I give a tree, hereafter called a provider number. Eat your fill, because this is a

miracle fruit which never runs out."

Most birds had been happy in the cage and some considered Medicare to be a false god. Yet others such as the Edelstein bird were tempted, went forth and gorged in this land of milk and honey. The Edelstien created a chain of extravagant night clinics adorned with baby grand pianos, which attracted after-hours feeding benefits. In greed, he forsook his power of natural flight and took to the air in a pink helicopter, which proves yet again that those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make crazy.

The god was suitably shocked and created a legion of enforcers and the pink helicopter was shot down in flames. The many though, had to suffer for the sins of the few. The subsequent investigation pogroms of the '80s will be remembered by survivors. There was an enormous cull, further fuelled by rising insurance premiums. The real estate vocational option was looking more attractive and many birds flew away to safer pastures.

However, in time, higher and wiser forces looked down on the remnants of the medical flock with benevolence, because they finally realised this flock is important to the survival of the human species. But they are

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jealous gods, demanding of paper worship in ever increasing reams. The need for extra regulating angels and demons created a bureaucratic legion, expanding still to this day.

Reliance on governmental manna became increasingly essential to keep all medical species viable, for example increased pressure on the solo GP to keep abreast of overheads became intense, such as not being able to share feeding expenses for the secretary bird with other GPs.

Now, the solo GP is a shag on a rock, an endangered species in the rising waters of bureaucratic change. But this bird treasures

