

### Share the Wealth

How is the health of your medical practice? Obviously your patients are benefiting from your CME studies, seminars and readings and your staff received their annual earnings increase. Looking good! Our country had it's best economic year in history: Unemployment is at 4.9%, the lowest ever (in boom Reagan years it was 5.9%); Gross National Product (GNP) , the sum of all goods and services was twelve \$12 trillion compared to China's \$1.3 trillion; productivity of our workers was 3.5 compared to 100 years of 1.5 – so we are really on a roll; tax cuts have given incentives beyond our fondest expectations and your insurance carriers profits were up (Aetna +14%, Humana +20%, Pacific Care +23%, United +14%) and your federal senators and representatives got their automatic 4% annual increase. WHY doctor would you accept -4% or less for your life saving skills?

Your patients have received a large increase in their premiums and your patients assume you get the increase. Please consider sharing how much you are paid by their carrier and that you did not get a raise. But your malpractice premiums increased, as did your rent and all other areas. We are not (poor me) in collusion by telling the truth about reimbursements including the proposed -4% Medicare which all carriers currently are using to adjust their pay schedules. If we can involve our patients in the truthful facts, healthcare as we know may survive.

Most of our billings serve as the insurance carriers "float" – that is they do not pay us in 30 days – and not enough of us are reporting them to the insurance commission. You can also write a letter charging the carrier with breach of contract. The law is on our side – use it.

As we apply our good minds to helping our patients, consider a letter to your congressperson about where are they (the congresspersons) going to get medical care if *they keep reducing our reimbursements?* After a few years of this, we will owe them money! I am humbled by the ability granted to me to be able to help another in health and lifestyle. Can we together share the truth about our compensation, malpractice and paper work requirements with our patients, friends, elected officials and our staff so as to preserve the best medical care in the world?

Barbara A. Berry, M.D.  
President