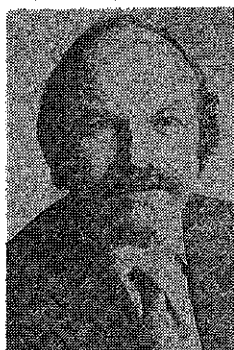


Editor's Page

Editorial Comment

I received two items in the mail one day, a couple of weeks ago, the May 5th issue of *Detroit Medical News* with my editorial, "Chains of Gold" in it, and the April, 1975, issue of *Michigan Medicine*. On page 220 of *Michigan Medicine* I found an interesting article entitled, "After One Year of Work, MSMS Negotiating Committee To Recommend Non-Participation." The MSMS House of Delegates authorized its Negotiating Committee with third-party carriers to immediately collect "non-participation proxies" from all MSMS members, to be held by MSMS, and to be executed only if an impasse develops. This recommendation and the article in *Michigan Medicine* deserves careful consideration and positive action. Every physician in Michigan will do well to weigh his own response when he is called upon to be willing to give up the "Chains of Gold" for the preservation of medicine.



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Non-participation in Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans does not mean that the Medical Profession aims at destroying them. Non-acceptance of payments directly from third-party carriers simply places the responsibility of payment to the physician where it really belongs—within the doctor-patient relationship. Non-participating physicians will still sign insurance forms, as a convenience and help to their patients. By not accepting payments directly, they withdraw the power that third-parties now must have, out of necessity, because they disperse funds and they must have some rational way of regulating them. Many fail to understand these simple truths, and yet, if third-parties, including government, are to be kept out of the doctor-patient relationship then we must see to it that it remains at all times a relationship between two, and not three, parties.

Our profession is being tested. Each of us will have to consider not only his own welfare in the short run, but that of medicine and even his own best interests in the long run. United we stand, divided we fall. This is still true today. This is the old and tested concept that factory workers and union organizers have always understood, but which is somewhat strange to physicians. We must learn the importance of this principle, however, and learn it soon, if we are to maintain the practice of good medicine in our State and in this country.

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