

# The First Step Forward

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An election is near, and the candidates are all positioning themselves on various issues. The lobbyists will be “educating” the office seekers.

Last month the Pentagon was criticized for creating a display of armaments in Philadelphia near the hall in which the Republican convention was assembled. Our military officials regarded this expensive exercise as essential for educating politicians who might be voting on our military budgets.

Several years ago, some medical societies and institutions had meetings for congressional aides to more clearly present healthcare issues. In spite of these efforts, the frustrating ways of managed care and its component insurance companies have continued. We read of the hassles presented to our patients and know of those obstructing our own practice. Patients have testified before Congress with little avail since the “Patient Rights” bill was first stalled then diluted. In August, a national TV newscaster reported the shameful insurance company practice of “slow pay” to collect interest from “the float,” something we have long suspected.

I propose that all of our elected officials try a new process to familiarize themselves with our healthcare system and its problems. Let’s take the big step of disallowing the use of the financially-free, hassle-free military health system by our congressmen, senators, and executives. Personal exposure to the quagmire endured by the everyday pa-

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tient might be catalytic to achieving a  
much-needed change in the system.