

GRIPES

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In my office, employees routinely spend a few hours removing the individual wrappers from bandages so they won't have to do it in the midst of giving shots. I called the Band Aid corporate headquarters to see if I could purchase some unwrapped Band Aids. I got a recorded message, because as so often happens, it was late on the east coast. The message went something like this: "Thank you for calling the Band Aid Customer Care Center.....for English, press 1, for Spanish oprima numero dos.....if this is a medical emergency, call 911....."

How stupid do they think their customers are? Imagine you hack your arm while cutting chicken. Blood spills everywhere, you grab a band aid, and the gushing does not stop. You reach for the phone, and dial.... the Band Aid Customer Care Center????? I mean, really!

On another note, one of the important goals we need to achieve in health care is cost control. Lots of ideas have been bandied (ha ha) about, but I think we should take a lesson from our colleagues in veterinary medicine. Vets work in an effective, no-nonsense system that runs on a all cash basis to provide medical, surgical, pharmaceutical and even post-mortum services from one location. With no insurances to bill, no federal oversight, and patients who can't complain, vets have it made. The types of blunt, honest conversation that occur in the veterinary office about treatment choices, cost, and likely outcomes could work wonders for our bottom line in human medicine. Primary care offices could even make extra money by combining after death services--just think, a "Pull the Plug Special". The family doctor's motto, "cradle to grave" would take on new meaning. But seriously, the point here is that people are not animals and medicine is not a business, and it is high time we stop pretending it is.

Another thing I would like to complain about is the driving skill of the average Eureka driver. "Merge" does not mean that everyone will get out of your way. Stopping for pedestrian traffic and thus taking the risk of being rear-ended, should not be a death defying activity. And by the looks of the oft replaced, tattered sign centered in the street in front of Ramone's, drivers must be getting "pedestrian crossing" confused with "target practice". Ever notice how all the pedestrians in a Eureka crosswalk wave timidly and try to catch the drivers eyes? Have you ever seen a self respecting San Francisco pedestrian even give motor vehicles the time of day? Something is wrong here folks. Pedestrians, take back the streets!

Here's a multiple choice question for you:

Medicine has been taken over by

- a) Religious Organizations
- b) The Government
- c) Insurance Companies
- d) Non-M.D. practitioners
- e) All of the above

(answer below*)

* Answer: e, because this is an editorial, my opinion is the right answer