

Patients' Rights and the Changing Face of Medicine

by Dr. Burnett Rucker, M.D.

Today in America, we are healthier and we live longer. And people in general are more health conscious—eating better, exercising more and smoking less.

At the same time, the face of medicine is changing. On one hand, technological advances and a better informed public continue to plummet death statistics from such things as heart attack and strokes. Medicine has remained in the forefront of the high-tech revolution with computers and sophisticated equipment, an indispensable part of the modern medical practice.

And yet our attitudes as patients reflect a more humanized, less awe-struck regard for doctors. Today we are less likely to blindly follow their advice. We are asking for far more information concerning treatments and we are much more likely to demand a say in what those treatments will consist of. The relationship between doctor and patient approaches a joint partnership more than ever before.

There is also a new emphasis, according to many doctors, on the patient as a person rather than just on a specific disease or troubled organ. For one thing, in the hospital environment, there is more time for the individual patient. In 1970 the occupancy rate for U.S. hospitals was 80 percent, according to the American Hospital Association. By 1985 the figure had dropped to an average 69 percent and at times, some hospitals are only half full. And the number of doctors generally, according to American Medical Association statistics, continues to increase faster than the population, a trend that is predicted to continue at least until the turn of the century.

But the shift in emphasis has other reasons beyond simple resources. Doctors themselves are becoming increasingly aware of the link between a patient's mental attitudes and healing process according to Norman Cousins, the former Saturday Review editor and now a faculty member at the UCLA Medical School. "People's attitudes about illness and life itself have biochemical effects," he recently told The Wall Street Journal. "You and I have cancer cells, but our body is equipped to deal with it. But at times our immune systems are impaired, and whatever enemies are inside us establish a beachhead."

There is a trend in the field of medicine to pay a great deal more attention to patient rights. For one thing, doctors realize that patients will sometimes change doctors, not because they feel their current doctor is incompetent,

but simple because they feel uncomfortable with his style.

But as well, doctors realize that anything that further demoralizes the patient is going to be a hindrance to his rapid recovery. By consulting with patients concerning their treatment, they are brought more decisively into the medical process and thereby are less likely to feel overwhelmed and at odds with it.

Then too, there is perhaps a growing awareness on the part of patients that there is no "standard" treatment for many ailments. Doctors argue about the advantages and disadvantages of circumcision. Some are for it and others against it. Some doctors will say to stay off a broken ankle; others maintain that it should be walked upon as soon as possible. One doctor will suggest heart surgery for almost anyone with a severe chest pain. Another will tell you that drugs, diet and exercise will accomplish as much as the surgery. Patients are realizing more and more that there is no final authority to whom they can turn to find out what is best. They recognize that they are the ones, in many cases, who ultimately have to make up their minds about what treatment they will receive. And that choice lies first and probably foremost in the choice of a doctor.

While the majority of doctors (more than 60 percent) continue to operate in the traditional office-based setting, there appears to be a growing open-mindedness amongst medical practitioners toward the various methods available to cater to the "whole" patient.

In Los Angeles, for instance, the Shaw Health Center now offers a range of services on the same premises with a team that includes medical doctors, chiropractors, and homeopaths. As well, several of the doctors are also trained in L. Ron Hubbard's Dianetics technology, giving them an expertise in mental aspects of psychosomatic illness and a thorough appreciation of the mental factors, such as stress, which can help to precipitate illness.

The explosion of interest in such technologies as Dianetics as well as the whole question of proofing up the immune system will probably, in the years to come, push medicine even further toward a holistic and more preventative approach.

In our high-tech age, medicine will on the one hand continue to find new and better treatments for specific ailments. There will be more outpatient surgery. There will be more forms of non-invasive surgery using such things as lasers to avoid or minimize cutting into the body to remove parts of organs. But the trend, as well, will continue toward a more humanized less technical and more involved stance with patients.

Specialization, of course, will continue as the only way that medicine in general can hope to keep up with the innovations and new techniques. But in the future, we might also begin to see a branch of medical specialists who do not see the ill at all. Rather they will specialize in well people, working to build and maintain the health and immune system of their patients.

But even today, the patient should realize that there are choices and different options available to most medical situations. Selecting a doctor is no longer just a question of medical competence. It also involves the question of compatibility and outlook. If your doctor is not giving you the kind of information and support that you would like, particularly when you are well, then you might want to look around for a different one. Today, there is more freedom of choice than ever before.

Dr. Rucker is a staff physician in two Los Angeles hospitals.



Herb Cawthorne, outgoing President of the Urban League of Portland, thanked his and the League's supporters at a reception held for him at the Northwest Natural Gas Co. last week. The statue of "Portlandia" was a gift from the Urban League Board of Directors. Photo by Richard J. Brown

Swim Lesson Registration

The Portland Park Bureau is offering swim lessons at 12 neighborhood swim pools. Registration begins Wednesday, July 22, at 7:00 P.M. at each of the pools. The dates of the Monday through Friday lessons are July 27 through August 7 and August 10 through August 21. Children three years and older may participate in the program. Classes for the non-swimmer through intermediate level are offered.

Cost for the ten, thirty minute lessons is \$12.00. The classes have one instructor to six students ratio. The swimming lessons are offered at Creston, Southeast 44th Avenue and Powell Boulevard; Montavilla, Northeast 82nd Avenue and Glisan Street; Mount Scott, Southeast 72nd Avenue and Harold Street; Pier, North Seneca Street and St. Johns Avenue; Sellwood, Southeast Seventh Avenue and Harold Street; Metropolitan Learning Center, 2033 N.W. Glisan Street; Buckman, 320 S.E. 16th Avenue; Columbia, North Lombard Street and Chautauqua Blvd; Dishman, 77 N.E. Knott St; Grant, Northeast 33rd Place and Thompson Street; Peninsula, North Albina Avenue and Portland Blvd; and Wilson, 1151 S.W. Vermont Street.

America's first aerial photograph was taken from balloon over Boston in 1860. Taken by J.W. Black, it was entitled "Boston as the Eagle and the Wild Goose See It."

THE MOUNT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH

N.E. First & Schuyler • 284-1954



John H. Jackson, Minister, M. Ed., M. D.
9:30 A.M. Church School
11:00 A.M. Congregational Worship
5:00 P.M. Vesper Service
10:00 A.M. Baptism Fourth Sunday
11:00 Communion Each First Sunday

The American Baptist Convention, American Baptist Churches of Oregon; Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention; National, Oregon, Portland Ecumenical Ministries, American Bible Society, M.&M. Board.

R. D. SEVIER & SON GARBAGE SERVICE INC.

1101 N.E. ALBERTA



Business is still picking up.

CONTAINERS & DROP BOXES AVAILABLE

Residential & Commercial

Complete Automotive Service

Motor Tune-ups • Brake Line

• DEQ Adjusting •

Call Lilian

287-0262

Peninsula Park Christian Church

5949 N. Albina

(Ainsworth & Albina)

281-3576

Sunday Bible Lessons 9:45 A.M.
Sunday Worship Service 11:00 A.M.
Wednesday Prayer Hour 6:30 P.M.
Friday Bible Studies Class 6:30 P.M.

Recreation Activities

- Participation in the State Games of Oregon
- Compete in the Portland Basketball League
- Camping hiking and retreat facility accessible to church groups and families
- Family social hour weekly activity

Harold Bishop, Minister

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." 1 Cor 9:24 (NIV)



Antique & Classic
Interior Restoration

ORIGINAL FACTORY DUPLICATION

• AUTO • TRUCK • MARINE • AIRCRAFT •

Convertible Tops - Carpets
Boat Tops - All Types Of Repairs
Landau Tops - Complete Interiors
283-1620

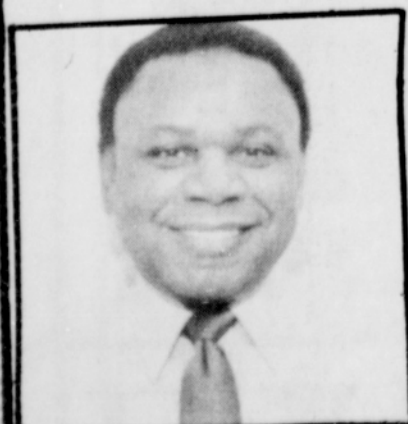
(One Day Service)
PRICES STARTING:

CARPET \$95.00 & up
Convertible Top \$225.00
Body Side Molding \$30.00
Headliners \$110.00
Vinyl Tops \$95.00
Tonneau Covers \$95.00
Seat Repair \$30.00

Price Includes Installation
5510 N. INTERSTATE — PORTLAND, OR.

"To accomodate your busy schedule"

EDWARD E. WARD, DMD
GENERAL DENTISTRY
"DENTAL CARE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY"



- PREVENTION ORIENTED
- FRIENDLY PROFESSIONAL STAFF
- INSURANCE GLADLY ACCEPTED
- SEDATION FOR SENSITIVE PATIENTS
- FEES DISCUSSED PRIOR TO TREATMENT
- VISA/MASTERCARD
- NEW PATIENTS WELCOMED
- ALL BUS LINES — VALIDATED PARKING
- OFFICE HOURS MONDAY SATURDAY, 8 AM - 5 PM
- EVENINGS AVAILABLE
- ADA MEMBER.

503-228-3009

Dr. Edward G. Ward
610 SW Alder, suite 1008

Payment Plan Available

Walnut Park Lock & Key
533 N.E. Killingsworth
503-288-6338

8:30-6:00 Mon.-Fri.
10:00-5:00 Sat.

24 hr. Emergency Service

Why do more families call Cox's at time of need?

Cox Funeral Home has a staff dedicated to the families in their hour of need with low cost funerals, dignity and liberal terms.

Shipping • Cremation • Burial
2736 N.E. Rodney • (503) 281-4891
Portland, Oregon 97212

YOU ARE WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT
84 N.E. Killingsworth • 281-0499
"A warm spirit of fellowship always"

To the Glory of God
The Ark of Safety
Church of God in Christ
FOUNDER: The Hon. J. P. Moore - Bishop W. V. Peterson, D.D. - Assisted

the Bible says—
Follow peace with all men & holiness without which no man shall see the Lord

Tuesday	Bible Band	7:30 p.m.
Thursday	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 p.m.
Sunday	Sunday School	9:15 a.m.
Morning	Worship	11:15 a.m.
Y.P.W.W.	Worship	6:30 p.m.
Evangelistic	Worship	8:00 p.m.
Tuesday Friday	Noon Day Prayer	
Friday	"The Pastor Speaks"	7:30 p.m.
Saturday	Morning Prayer	9:00 a.m.

*Showers of Blessings, bread & butter
Sunday morning, 10:00 A.M.
Singing: KAAR 1984M Day