"right." To call it a right when the recipient did not earn it is merely to compound the evil. It is charity still—though now extorted by criminal tactics of force, while hiding under a dishonest name.

As with any good or service that is provided by some specific group of men, if you try to make its possession by all a right, you thereby enslave the providers of the service, wreck the service, and end up depriving the very consumers you are supposed to be helping. To call "medical care" a right will merely enslave the doctors and thus destroy the quality of medical care in this country, as socialized medicine has done around the world, wherever it has been tried, including Canada (I was born in Canada and I know a bit about that system first hand).

I would like to clarify the point about socialized medicine enslaving the doctors. Let me quote here from an article I wrote a few years ago: "Medicine: The Death of a Profession." [*The Voice of Reason: Essays in Objectivist Thought*, NAL Books, © 1988 by the Estate of Ayn Rand and Leonard Peikoff.]

"In medicine, above all, the mind must be left free. Medical treatment involves countless variables and options that must be taken into account, weighed, and summed up by the doctor's mind and subconscious. Your life depends on the private, inner essence of the doctor's function: it depends on the input that enters his brain, and on the processing such input receives from him. What is being thrust now into the equation? It is not only objective medical facts any longer. Today, in one form or another, the following also has to enter that brain: 'The DRG administrator [in effect, the hospital or HMO man trying to control costs] will raise hell if I operate, but the malpractice attorney will have a field day if I don't—and my rival down the street, who heads the local PRO [Peer Review Organization], favors a CAT scan in these cases, I can't afford to antagonize him, but the CON boys disagree and they won't authorize a CAT scanner for our hospital—and besides the FDA prohibits the drug I should be prescribing, even though it is widely used in Europe, and the IRS might not allow the patient a tax deduction for it, anyhow, and I can't get a specialist's advice because the latest Medicare rules

prohibit a consultation with this diagnosis, and maybe I shouldn't even take this patient, he's so sick—after all, some doctors are manipulating their slate of patients, they accept only the healthiest ones, so their average costs are coming in lower than mine, and it looks bad for my staff privileges.' Would you like your case to be treated this way—by a doctor who takes into account your objective medical needs *and* the contradictory, unintelligible demands of some ninety different state and Federal government agencies? If you were a doctor could you comply with all of it? Could you plan or work around or deal with the unknowable? But how could you not? Those agencies are real and they are rapidly gaining total power over you and your mind and your patients. In this kind of nightmare world, if and when it takes hold fully, thought is helpless; no one can decide by rational means what to do. A doctor either obeys the loudest authority—*or* he tries to sneak by unnoticed, bootlegging some good health care occasionally *or*, as so many are doing now, he simply gives up and quits the field."

The Clinton plan will finish off quality medicine in this country—because it will finish off the medical profession. It will deliver the doctors bound hands and feet to the mercies of the bureaucracy.

The only hope—for the doctors, for their patients, for all of us—is for the doctors to assert a *moral* principle. I mean: to assert their own personal individual rights—their real rights in this issue—their right to their lives, their liberty, their property, *their* pursuit of happiness. The Declaration of Independence applies to the medical profession too. We must reject the idea that doctors are slaves destined to serve others at the behest of the state.

I'd like to conclude with a sentence from Ayn Rand. Doctors, she wrote, are not servants of their patients. They are "traders, like everyone else in a free society, and they should bear that title proudly, considering the crucial importance of the services they offer."

The battle against the Clinton plan, in my opinion, depends on the doctors speaking out against the plan—but not only on practical grounds—rather, first of all, on *moral* grounds. The doctors must defend them-