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Did you know that if your patient’s insurer denies the drug the patient has depended on for the past 10 years, requiring the patient to fail two other drug regimens before the first drug can be resumed, and then the patient subsequently comes to harm, the insurer cannot be sued? It’s time to fight back! It’s time for Joe’s Prior Authorization Emergency Response Program.

With the recent change of drug insurers in Rhode Island leading to extraordinarily time consuming reviews and potential life threatening outcomes, it is more urgent now than ever to sign up for Joe’s Prior Authorization Service (JPS). The time is ripe to strike back at the faceless corporate exploiters who are squeezing your patients and your practice. With Joe’s PA Service, you not only get some consolation, but you also help your patients and, not incidentally, help me pay off my mortgage.

How does it work? First of all, JPS only hires the hearing impaired. This increases employment in a group of chronically underemployed and discriminated-against workers. We have found that by hiring hearing impaired telephone workers who use TTY, we can increase the amount of time required by the insurer by at least 78%. When JPS calls insurers they are immediately told that our service employs partially deaf “prior authorization specialists, skilled in timely resolution of prior authorization requests. Please note that attempts to disconnect because of communication difficulties will result in an immediate filing of a discrimination suit that will join a class action suit currently in progress.”

JPS has a clearly stated preference for the speech impaired, as well. Stuttering and slurring slows down the usual discussion, allowing for a more considered opinion at the insurer’s end. We encourage free communication so that all the information that we provide is spoken. While this often involves repetition, we believe that this makes for a more sensitive and voice-focused insurance representative.

“Better to get it right the fourth time than get it wrong the first,” is one of our mottos. We also never give the correct member ID the first time, and we then give an incorrect birth date as a safety measure to confirm that the insurer has the correct client’s data, in addition to making sure the insurance agent is alert.

We have developed innovative software that prevents telephone disconnection. Once our PA specialist has been put on hold, music from our end will be piped in, overriding whatever music is being used by the insurer. We have found that Hebrew rapper, Mogen David and the Grapes of Wrath, at a decibel level of 100 is appreciated by many of our employees, encouraging perseverance in the face of lengthy holds. On reconnecting, the insurer will be able to choose from several options:

- Please enter the member’s ID number, social security number, your own name, birthdate and social security code. Please enter the name and telephone number of your company’s lawyer. Please listen to the entire message as our menu has recently changed. There are eight options.” The last option allows for the second menu to be offered, which then allows the insurer to be reconnected to the PA specialist.

Upon reconnection to JPS, the true name, ID number and birthdate of the client are correctly given. We then provide 10 diagnoses, including ICD codes, and a list of all medications and doses. These are spoken and then spelled out. The insurer is asked to repeat them to confirm that they are correct. The JPS communications specialist then explains the rationale for the choice of medication. When questions arise, the JPS communications specialist puts the insurer on hold and consults with the ordering physician. On occasion this causes delays but these cannot be avoided if accuracy is to be maintained.

JPS has an ongoing quality assurance program. We have noted that our program is initially not very helpful, but generally after 7 working days, and 15 notifications of impending discriminatory lawsuits for employment discrimination, we have found that prior authorization denials have plummeted at every office. We have been unable to expand our communications specialist staff because the amount of time required at each office declined so precipitously after the first 2 weeks of service. Almost all offices now employ our service only part-time.

We have noticed, unfortunately, that some of our laid-off and underemployed workers have begun to work for the drug insurance companies.
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It probably began this way: Back in 1837 a German educator named Friedrich Frobel created a new and more humane curriculum for very young children in his community. He was motivated by the curious belief that the formal education of very young children need not be designed to prepare them immediately for adulthood and its remorseless practices; instead, he believed that children, say three years of age, should be educated solely to prepare themselves for the many problems that they will necessarily confront when they reach ages four or five. An ideal classroom, he therefore contended, should not be modeled after a factory workplace or an infantry basic training program; rather it should be designed much like a friendly garden for playful children (a kindergarten, in German), a place to learn, first, to coexist and, simultaneously, to do no harm.

Frobel declared that there was sufficient time, later in childhood, for youngsters to absorb the uncompromising lessons of a competitive, unforgiving world. And so his model school encouraged children, in their diminishing innocence, to tend gardens, sing songs, admire the neighborhood birds; and after a light lunch, take naps with their youthful peers.

Where did napping begin? Certainly not with the feral creatures of the jungle nor with the nomadic hunter-gathers. Their survival, most assuredly, depended on an uninterrupted attitude of vigilance. The Romans eventually learned to take naps (perhaps, some think, the cause of the decline of their Empire) calling them their sexta hora, meaning the sixth hour beyond dawn; and the origin, eventually, of the Spanish word, siesta.

Napping, as a daily event, is tolerated (if not actively advocated) in certain southern European nations despite, concurrently, a northern European philosophy which regards pursuit of leisure, daydreaming or daylight napping as things emblematic of non-productive, wasteful, even slothful behavior adopted largely by vagrants, social malcontents and the senile. Furthermore, declared some Nordic thinkers, daytime naps such as the siestas of some southern nations were the external manifestations of a deeply rooted backwardness and congenital lack of industry.

Naps are declared to be nonproductive, not in the best interests of the nation and clearly contrary to the will of nature. Furthermore, since these siestas are free of charge, Americans fear them; nothing that good, that sensuous, can
possibly be in keeping with acceptable Puritan virtues. In general, when there is work yet to be done, how can it be deemed morally proper to nap while the sun is still above the horizon? (And furthermore, how will I ever be promoted to assistant vice president if I despoil my afternoons with stolen naps?) And so adult Americans, much as they fear the outcomes of ill-gotten gains, are disquieted by the moral consequences of taking naps.

But what do sleep physiologists tell us about those afternoon naps taken by adults? Those spontaneous interludes of rest—recklessly snatched from the adult work-schedule—turn out to be more refreshing and with a depth of sleep that is frequently quite profound and intense. Nightmares rarely interrupt the sleep interlude and a sense of refreshment welcomes the napper upon arising.

Admittedly, we humans are measurably higher on the evolutionary scale than our domesticated house cats. Still, there is much that we can learn from those indolent creatures who have replaced their diligent pursuit of rodents with purposeless, nonproductive naps. How rarely have your house cats been observed pacing the floor worrying about the Dow Jones Average or their impending collegiate grades? Nor does a cat, in his anxiety, construe his afternoon naps as a dress rehearsal for death. For that cat, sleep is merely an unencumbered gift to be enjoyed whenever sleep beckons. And sleep is not a bauble to elicit shame nor proof of some inherited form of indolence.

Sleep, like breathing, is a fundamental part of our lives. And whether it is sought for or not, sleep will periodically overtake us. Sleep arrives as a periodic gift both to the homeless vagrant and to the prince, to the simpleton and to the wise one, to the innocent child and to the elderly adult not yet weary of life. Sleep, too, is in the kingdom of honesty; and as there are no atheists in the foxholes of combat, so too there is no enduring hypocrisy, duplicity or self-deception in that alternate realm called dreams.

Author
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Disclosures
The author has no financial interests to disclose.

Quotes: Rx for Life

“To cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always.”
— Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau (1848–1915)

Submitted by Fred J. Schiffman, MD, of Providence

Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau was the first in this country to cultivate the tubercle bacillus. His laboratory and sanatorium at Lake Saranac, N.Y., was the first devoted exclusively to the treatment of tuberculosis in the United States and opened in 1894.

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