

The Hippocratic Oath: Corporate Version¹

I swear by Humana and the American Hospital Supply Corporation and health maintenance organizations and preferred-provider organizations and all the prepayment and joint ventures, making them my witnesses, that I will fulfill according to my judgment this oath and covenant:

To hold the one who has taught me this business as equal to my corporation president, and to live my life in partnership with him, and if he is in need of capital to give him some of mine, and to regard his offspring as equal to my colleagues and to teach them this business – if they desire to learn it – for a fee and under contract; to give a share of my practice-management techniques and computer systems and all other business acumen to my children and the children of those who have taught me, and to students who have signed the contract and have taken an oath according to Medicare law, but to no one else.

I will apply dietetic measures for the benefit of the obese, the alcoholic, the smoker, and the drug addict, but because these days everyone has the right to do his or her own thing, I will seldom be able to keep them from self-harm and injustice.

I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor make a suggestion to that effect. Similarly, as an internist, I will not perform an abortion. In fear of malpractice I will guard my life and my business.

I will not use the knife unless I am a surgeon, but I will try to learn some form of endoscopy.

Into whatever clinics I may enter, I will come for the benefit of the insured, keeping myself far from all except capitated care for the underprivileged, especially if they are not covered by the group contract.

Things that I may see or hear in the course of treatment or even outside treatment regarding the life of human beings – things that one should never divulge outside – I will report to government commissions or administrators, or will use in my book.

If I fulfill this oath and do not violate it, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and business, and to be able to retire at the age of 50 in the Sunbelt; if I transgress it and swear falsely, may Milwaukee be my lot.

¹ David Scheidermayer, *New England Journal of Medicine* vol 314, no. 1 (January 2, 1986), p. 62.