

LETTERS TO HOBBIT

Volume 4

To the Short Sahib

From India With Love

Please let me be asking you two short questions (pun intended). Recently a few of my friends bought a healthcare company in Singapore. I think it's a great investment and I have been thinking myself of doing the same for some time. But can you please be advising me on this – Medisave is allowed now to be used in Malaysia; how do I go about getting approval for Medisave to be used in India as well?

Also, recently, I have been doing some research on the Singapore healthcare scene. The Ministry of Health's website states the following, "The public healthcare delivery system is geographically structured as two vertically integrated delivery networks, Alexandra Health Pte Ltd (AHPL), National University Health System (NUHS), National Healthcare Group (NHG) and Singapore Health Services (SHS)."¹ I actually count four networks but it says two. I am being very confused. Were the other two bought by someone else? Can I be buying one or two such networks?

Yours Affluently,
Lotsamaneey Singh
5 Rivers Company
New Delhi, India

¹ <http://www.moh.gov.sg/mohcorp/about.aspx?id=82>, accessed 1 March 2010

Dear Halfling

Money No Enough No More

Can I borrow a hundred thousand dollars from you? I didn't make it into the local medical school and cannot afford to go overseas on my own. I also tried getting some money from sugar daddy Jack but that didn't work out too. But with this new pre-employment grant for overseas-based medical students, I can go and get a grant to pay for my tuition fees if I get a place in an overseas medical school. All I need is one year of school fees and to agree to get bonded and come back to serve my bond. This is better than getting a place in the local school where I still have to pay tuition fees (and also get bonded). It is like winning lottery and I can say good riddance to "Uncle" Jack! Some more sure win one!

Miss Wendy Foyce
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Dear Katek

You Lose, We Pay

I am very concerned about recent developments in the Orc Healers Council. As you are well aware, the Council has been prosecuting and punishing many prominent Orc healers. It appears that there is a trend of these Orc healers successfully appealing to the Realm Courts to get these Council decisions overturned. All these mean that the legal bills have grown by a lot recently for the Council. Since the Council is self-funded through the Orc healers' subscriptions, does it mean that our subscriptions will increase in the near future? There is a strong market rumour that subscriptions are going to go up very soon due to these reversals.

More importantly, there is a moral hazard here – the regulators may be bringing the cases before the Council very enthusiastically; if they win, the regulators look good and get promoted. If they lose, it's no big deal because we rank and file Orc healers, and end up footing the hefty bills. There must be some accountability here. We Orc healers should not be made to pay for others' unsuccessful actions in the name of self-regulation. There is a movement to pay for outcomes in healthcare. Maybe there needs to be a move to pay for outcomes in healthcare regulation too.

Dr See Beh Kiang
MBBS (Honours)
Cerebral Volvulus Clinic
888 Ziam Road

Dear Shorty

Do No Harm Can Already

Recently there was an interesting case of medico-legal confluence² in Middle-Earth. The Orc Healers Council found a doctor guilty of professional misconduct for offering an unproven treatment modality called therapeutic auscultation. There was an appeal and the Courts overturned this for various reasons. One of the reasons given was that it was OK to give therapeutic auscultation because it cannot be proven that this modality did any harm to the patient.

I was always given to understand that as Orc healers, it is ethical to only give treatments we know are scientifically proven to be effective and clinically indicated. But it now appears that this is too stringent a criterion – all we need to do is to prove the treatment does no harm before we can dish it out and charge a handsome fee. I am thinking of offering the following modalities immediately – therapeutic palpation, therapeutic percussion and maybe even therapeutic torchlight shining.

This could well be the beginning of a great new era for us underpaid Orc healers, what with the clampdown on aesthetics and so on.

Dr Pecunious Peh
Peculation Therapy Clinic
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2 Medico-legal confluence – a euphemism for legalism killing ethics

Dear Hobbit

A Grateful Doctor/Parent

I have been a regular reader of your column for many years and I feel compelled to share my joy with you on the recent announcement of the pre-employment grant scheme. I have three children who all wish to follow in my footsteps to be a doctor. Unfortunately, my first child didn't make it into our local medical school and I had to send her overseas. I was thinking my three kids could easily cost me 1.5 million dollars for their medical education. But now with this scheme, I need to only perhaps budget for one year of medical education, or 20% of 1.5 million, or \$300,000.

Of course at the back of my mind, I do wonder about those poor kids who didn't make it into the local medical school and cannot even go overseas for one year of medical education. What are the avenues open to folks like them? Nonetheless, I am deeply grateful for this scheme which is very relevant to folks like us. Most of the 1.5 million that I originally budgeted can be used for a new Porsche and the enlargement of my wine cellar at home.

Yours gratefully
Dr Tan Huat Huat
Plastic Surgeon, Mount Expensive Hospital
88 Nassim Cornwall Gardens Road

Dear Ring Bearer

Disappointed...

I have been told that when I graduate from my boutique medical school, I can be part of a great training system that is structured and gives me protected time for training. Yet now that I am a resident, I find that I am treated just the same as everybody and doing the same work. I find this a great disappointment and certainly not in-line with the hefty tuition fees that I had to pay in the last four years. What can I do about this? I did try to complain to my Department Head once, but to no effect. I simply cannot be working so hard doing medical chores as these plebeians from other run-of-the-mill medical schools. My intellect is not well-suited to such spinal work. I must be given time to think, reflect and ruminate on the great mysteries of medical science like I am destined to do. Your advice is much appreciated.

Dr Maximillian Wilberforce Ironwood III
Resident Evil et Emeritus
Middle-Earth General Hospital

P.S. Can you also perhaps recommend a reliable car tyre and repair shop to me? Recently my car tyres have been punctured quite a few times and numerous scratches have appeared on my car post-call.

Dear Fellow Squirt

Global Warming

Recently my father got admitted into a subsidised non-air-conditioned ward in Rivendell Hospital. Let me say that it's really getting hot here in Middle-Earth with all this global warming. It's so hot that everyone is stewing in this heat (maybe I should cut off my beard and shave my body hair, I don't know) and it is unbearable for staff, patients and visitors. I think life is really unfair. First they build these wards to be non-air conditioned, then they decide to give it such low ceilings that even a dwarf like me can touch the false ceiling boards and then finally to top it off – they make the wards face the evening sun! (Strangely, the air-conditioned wards meant for the rich and nobles face the morning sun – I wonder which idiot planned it this way). I think one day I will go berserk in this heat and chop someone up with my mithril axe. Not to mention my body odour at the end of a long hot day....

I think it's really high time we put air-conditioning in all the wards in Middle-Earth. After all, wasn't it said by some wise ruler of an island that the air-conditioner is the world's greatest invention?

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