Once again we are getting into a little bit more black humor. Because here we have a whole team of nurses and doctors. And the doctors here... and then the doctors say, "suture," and the HMO bean counter says, "pocket knife." And then the doctors says, "Band-Aid." And the doctor says, "Let us get him into intensive care." And the HMO bean counter says, "Call a cab."

But here is a real story, front page headlines, New York Post: "HMO's Cruel Rules Leave Her Dying for the Doc She Needs." All of a sudden it is not so funny anymore. Because now we have a picture of a person who has probably lost her life because of an HMO medical decision, which, by the way, under Federal law, an employer plan is not liable for the consequences of the medical decision, providing the cost of care not delivered. And if the patient happens to die early, then they are not responsible for anything.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is getting kind of late, so I want to talk about two more patients. I want to talk about a conversation I had about a year ago with a pediatrician who worked in the Washington, D.C. area. She is now doing research at one of the national labs.

I asked her why she left the practice of medicine. She was a pediatric specialist in a pediatric ICU. And she said, Well, I just got past the point of being able to deal with those HMOs anymore. But the straw that really broke my back was one day we had come into the intensive care unit a 5- or 6-year-old boy who had been drowning. He was still alive but just barely. We had him plugged into the IV. We were giving him all the fluids and electrolytes and oxygen and the like. And it was not too good. We are trying to save his life. He has a temperature of 104. And as mothers can tell, he needed to go to the emergency room.

So his parents lived south of Atlanta, Georgia. His mother does the thing that the HMO says, phones the 1-800 number, and tries to get him to this person who has never seen this little boy. He says, Well, I will let you go to an emergency room, but I am only going to let you go to this one emergency room which is more than 65 miles away. That is all I will authorize. That is the only one we have a contract with, to save money.

So Mom and Dad, they are not health professionals, they wrap up little Jimmy in a blanket. They get in the car, Dad starts driving. They are halfway there, and they pass three other hospital emergency rooms they could have stopped Jimmy at. But they do not have authorization. They are not health care professionals. But they do know if they stop unauthorized they will be stuck with potentially a very large bill.

So they follow the medical decision that that HMO reviewer made and push on. Except that before they get to the hospital that Jimmy is supposed to go to. His eyes roll back in his head. He stops breathing. His heart stops. And his mom tries to keep him alive. They pull into the emergency room.

Mom leaps out of the car with this little baby, screaming, save my baby. Save my baby.

A nurse comes out gives him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. They bring the crash cart out. They start the IVs. They give him the medicine. And they manage to get him going again. They manage to save his life.

Unfortunately, they do not manage to save everything on Jimmy. Because of that cardiac arrest from that decision that that HMO made, Jimmy ends up with gangrene of both hands and both feet and the doctors have to amputate both hands and both feet.

Here is a picture of little Jimmy today. In order to save as much length on his arms and his legs, they put skin grafts on and then they amputated his hands and his feet.

I talked to his mom about a month ago. Jimmy is now learning to put on his bilateral hook prostheses. But he still needs a lot of help on getting on his bilateral hook prosthesis.

This little boy will never play basketball. I will tell the Speaker of the House that that little boy will never wrestle. When this little boy grows up and marries the woman that he loves, he will never be able to caress her cheek with his hand.

Do my colleagues know what the opponents of this patient protection legislation say? They say this is just an anecdote; we should not legislate on the basis of anecdotes.

I would say to them, this little anecdote, if he had a finger and you pricked it, it would bleed. And do my colleagues know that, under Federal law, that HMO which made that medical decision is liable for nothing.

Is that justice? Is that fair? We need to change that law to encourage HMOs not to cut corners like this so that we do not end up having to cut off hands and feet.

A judge reviewed this case and the HMO's decision and came to the determination that that HMO's margin of safety was "razor thin." I would add to that, as razor thin as the scalpel that had to amputate little Jimmy's hands and feet.

My colleagues, as my colleague from New Jersey pointed out, for years now we have been trying to get this to the floor for a fair debate. We had a rigged debate last year with a fig leaf bill.

I am telling my friends on both sides of the aisle that there are Republicans and there are Democrats that have come together and we are working on a bipartisan bill. We will introduce that soon, and we will do everything we can with more than a majority of the Members of this House to bring this to the floor and to correct these types of decisions.

I would encourage my friends on the Republican side of the aisle to contact myself or the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), the Georgia bulldog, who has done as much as anyone to advance this, or my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle, to contact the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) or the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and get on board this bipartisan effort.

The only way we are going to solve this is to work together, both Republicans and Democrats, put aside partisan differences, and fix this for the people in our country.

CORRECTION TO THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE, AUGUST 2, 1999, AT PAGE 18942

REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 1467, EXTENSION OF AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the
S. 880. An act to amend the Clean Air Act to require the Administrator to promulgate rules from the list of substances with respect to which reporting and other activities are required under the risk management plan program, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3381. A letter from the Secretary of Agriculture, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Tebufenozide; Pesticide Tolerance [ OPP–300866; FRL–6902–1] (RIN: 2070–AB78) received July 14, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3382. A letter from the Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Tart Cherries Grown in the States of Michigan, et al.; Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Technical Amendment to the Section 8 Management Information and Reporting Requirements (RIN: 2557–AC30) received July 26, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3383. A letter from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's final rule—Technical Amendment to the Section 8 Management Information and Reporting Requirements (RIN: 2557–AC30) received July 26, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3384. A letter from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting notification of the approval of the retirement of Lieutenant General Joseph E. Hurd, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3385. An act to amend the Clean Air Act to remove Hazardous Fuels from the list of substances with respect to which reporting and other activities are required under the risk management plan program, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, August 4, 1999, at 10 a.m.