

POLITICO

Letter to the Editor

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By Curtis Rooney

A recent article by Chris Frates brings to mind the late New York Democratic Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's saying, "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts" ("Fight for Health Savings Pits Small Fry vs. Mighty," July 31). The story suggests a "David vs. Goliath" struggle. This notion is backward. The revenue and profits of the medical device industry dwarf the Group Purchasing Organization industry. Think Jupiter vs. Mercury!

Like an old bar joke, the piece describes claims of "one paid spokeswoman, an industry whistleblower and an attorney working for free." Unfortunately, the punch line isn't funny! Their story is really a multiyear campaign to disaggregate the health care buying power of hospitals and sue their way to better financial health. For example, the paid spokeswoman admits lobbying more than 50 Hill offices, but nowhere does she name her employer. The "whistleblower" worked in the industry for six months a decade ago, but the Department of Justice wouldn't take her case. The "pro bono" lawyer is a recent stockholder in one of the medical device companies named in the story.

What is funny is their proposal to save Americans billions annually. Look closely and their numbers simply don't add up. Recent market research finds that GPOs save the nation over \$36 billion annually (based on a survey representing over 420 hospitals); a study last month found that number could go as high as \$64 billion. That is health savings hospitals and taxpayers can take to the bank.

Curtis Rooney is president of the Health Industry Group Purchasing Association.