

Don't Rely on a Quack Doctor

Written by Robert Higgs for Independent.org.

A man goes to his doctor for a routine checkup. The doctor performs a perfunctory examination and informs him that unless he receives an experimental treatment the doctor has devised, he will soon become disabled. "What's it cost, Doc?" the man asks. "Well, unfortunately it's not cheap, Mr. Smith, and I can't tell you exactly how much the total cost will be until the entire treatment has been completed, but unless you get this treatment, you will soon be in big trouble."

The man agrees to undergo the treatment. He has to sell some of his possessions and go deeply into debt to pay for it, but, relying on the doctor's advice, he believes that the alternative to getting the treatment would be catastrophic.

After the treatment, however, the man actually feels worse than before. So he visits his doctor and is startled when the doctor reports that he has relapsed and must undergo the same treatment again or he will probably die. As before, the doctor cannot say in advance how much the treatment will cost.

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