Universal healthcare. Medicare for All. Healthcare as a human right. These buzzwords fill our airwaves and generate emotions along a spectrum from visceral disgust to ecstatic optimism. Before the politicians and policymakers promise America this panacea, we should understand what this promise means for the patients and providers who will live within this construct. What about the business interests that gain (and lose) from the current (or new) healthcare delivery system in the U.S? Have we considered the unintended consequences of making such a policy shift? Have we taken the time to understand what must happen to deliver on the promise of healthcare as a human right? Starting with a viewpoint from within the exam room, Dr. Marker will discuss “the good, the bad, and the ugly” parts of the doctor-patient relationship as it plays out in the current healthcare delivery system. How could things change for the better (or the worse) under a new system? Drawing on the body of international experience with universal healthcare and the traditional priorities of the American people, he’ll talk about what healthcare as a human right might “look like” in America. Moving from the buzzwords to reality generates more questions than answers, more unknowns than certainty, and more need for philosophical contemplation than is allowed by the pace of modern media. In this discussion we’ll explore the deeper meanings of “healthcare as a human right” from the perspective of a practicing physician who desires to be thoughtful about what his patients really want and need – past, present, and future.

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