

# I met a genie



As some of you know, I am an aficionado of antiques. Browsing through a local shop recently—"We buy junk, we sell antiques"—I came upon an old, tarnished Aladdin lamp. Imagine my surprise when I picked it up and out popped a genie, and a generous one at that! For this genie granted me not just three, but ten, wishes for our country in the coming year. I thought I would share them with you.

*Every American has a medical home:* All Americans deserve a medical home, a place where their care is coordinated and managed comprehensively (and we all know who can do this job best)

*Post-marketing pharmaceutical surveillance:* It's clear that once drugs are released, it's anybody's guess what problems may arise. Shouldn't there be a structured approach to assessing benefits and harms of pharmaceuticals and devices in the "real world"?

*Turn all colds into pneumonia:* Think of the time savings if we no longer had to disclaim about antibiotics for a viral infection!

*Universal coverage for a basic health benefits package:* Why should a country as rich as America have so many under- and uninsured persons?

*Banish US News & World Reports ratings and NIH funding ranking:* For many of our academic health science centers, these rankings appear to have become the sole measures of success. What a shame that education and community health have become afterthoughts!

*Assure appropriate vaccine availability:* Doesn't it gall you that we lack a reliable supply of vaccines for our patients?

*Mandate a 40-hour physician workweek:* Just imagine how much more effective (and more healthy) we would be if we worked 8 to 5? No more skipping lunch and dinner. No excuse not to exercise. No reason to miss our children's school functions. More time to contemplate the mysteries of life.

*Develop affordable malpractice insurance:* It is a shame that great, dedicated doctors are giving up maternity care, narrowing their practices, or retiring from medicine all together.

*Establish a National Health Information System:* Not just an EMR but a fully linked information system for healthcare. Then surveillance for disease and medication side effects could occur. And imagine the possibilities for improved care with universal access to patient health information.

*Discover an original Toulouse Lautrec poster for \$12.95:* How could I resist?

What are your hopes for American medicine? The Genie told me if I could cure his back ache and claustrophobia, I might be granted a few other wishes. Contact me at, jfp@uc.edu.

Jeff Susman, MD, Editor, JFP

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