Genesis and Exodus of the Healthcare Industry

Andrew Barbash, MD | Neurosciences Director, Holy Cross Hospital, Silver Spring, Maryland.

He looked upon the earth so filled with misery and pox
On Cro-Magnon Neurosurgeons taking tumors out with rocks
With the blood banks run by leeches and their pterodactyl nursing
And observed "This can't be healthcare these mere creatures are rehearsing"
What shall we do when their lifespan will exceed eleven years?
When they no longer drink from toilet pits or make hearts from used pig ears?
There will need to be a better way to care for newer ills
A time when broadband wireless will be cheaper than their pills
He came up with a brilliant plan to revolutionize the health
To advance all medical outcomes and thereby spread the wealth
But for some strange combination of wisdom, luck, and quirk
He devised sufficient stakeholders to ensure this could not work
So a King might hire a knight to wipe out enemies with his lance
Then buy a plan to pay the cost of repairing his chain mail pants
Then along will come men with crosses of Blue who can manage that so much smarter
By inventing rules that convert poor fools from heroic docs to martyrs
He made tiny things that hide in meat and cause nasty cramps and rashes
That leave only the fittest alive to run in the royal 50 yard dashes
He made plants with spikes and purple leaves that can make one very sick
Then companies who turn green goop to gold that can flow thru a needle stick
He made medical schools to teach more tools, taking 10 years from students' lives
Then ruined careers with malpractice fears if they forget to wash their knives.
He made men whose pockets are filled with stuff from frivolous medical suits
When the experts forget the proper dosing of Peruvian medicinal fruits
He made routine birth a hazardous game between midwife, mom, and fetus
He made people who dress in masks and gloves to bravely retrieve and greet us
Then if anything goes wrong because one more time he throws snake eyes on the dice
He made lawyers to ensure that at least someone benefits while everyone else paid the price
Then along came the buildings with gadgets and learning, to find things we can't hope to fix
And those who get paid to know how NOT to pay the providers of care to the sick
He made organized giants that make tablets and gizmos from the minds of the cream of the crop
And made multiple races with all different faces whose subjective complaints will not stop
But alas came the gadgets, the photons and diodes, the software, the web and the data
Then the standards, the knowledge bases, multiuser interfaces, all in perpetual BETA
To automate the arcane, declare real what is feigned, and make INPUT like losing a toe
Then the last fatal straw—he made privacy laws to ensure they can't share what they know
"Oh what have I done, this is really no fun, they now live to one hundred and thirty
But there's no more MDs and the few with degrees refuse to get their hands dirty
Next time when I try to take research to practice I'll start with a real I.O.M.
Evidence galore, so when we screw up once more I can put all the blame right on them

Address for correspondence and reprint requests:
Andrew Barbash, MD, 1500 Forest Glen Rd, Silver Spring, MD
20902; Telephone: 866-828-9939; Fax: 866-828-9939;
E-mail: abarbash@onebox.com