

Opinions/Letters

No defense

Andy Slavitt and David Ostler attempt—without success—to defend Ingenix by justifying the existence of their company rather than refuting the specific charge that Ingenix misuses data (“In defense of data,” Feb. 25, p. 46).

It was also interesting to see their comrades Karen Ignagni of America’s Health Insurance Plans and the New York Health Plan Association (as quoted in the Feb. 14 *Wall Street Journal*) deflecting criticism of “reasonable and customary” charges by throwing dirt at physicians.

Ignagni claims that physicians bill at a rate equal to \$800 an hour for simple office visits, something I find hard to believe. And the New York Health Plan Association continues the demagoguery by stating in the *Journal* that “Physicians routinely and grossly inflate their out-of-network charges, and have been doing so for years.”

I do not particularly care for Andrew Cuomo’s approach of suing everyone in sight, but take pleasure in watching the big fellas squirm a little. Maybe Congress ought to take another look at the McCarran-Ferguson Act granting limited immunity to insurers. If what they are doing through Ingenix isn’t price fixing, what is?

To Slavitt and Ostler’s credit, they do not resort to name calling themselves; they have paid lobbyists doing the dirty work.

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