

## Pernicious effect of price controls

It is hardly surprising that Canadians must audition for family doctor care. Physicians are human and whenever humans are faced with price controls, the result is rationing, poor quality, and black-market services.<sup>1</sup>

Physicians faced with a limited price for their services are unable to support too many patients who require services that are worth substantially more than the price governments pay. (In Nova Scotia, for example, office visits pay about \$28, and the doctor pays all the costs of operating the clinic.) Consequently, some doctors try to limit the number of people they see who require large amounts of care. Those who fail to impose limits and provide only very valuable services must eventually leave practice because the cost of providing care is insufficient to support the overhead.

Consequently, in the current health care system, with price controls, rationing is inevitable. Rationing by auditioning patients is one way to ensure that Canadian practices remain viable.

—David Zitner MD FCFP  
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### Reference

1. Petkantchin V. *Economic note: the pernicious effect of price controls*. Montreal, QC: Montreal Economic Institute; 2006. Available from: [www.iedm.org/uploaded/pdf/avr06\\_en.pdf](http://www.iedm.org/uploaded/pdf/avr06_en.pdf). Accessed 2008 Oct 9.

## Correction

Errors were introduced in the biographical information for 2 of the authors of the article "Percutaneous feeding tubes," which appeared in the September issue of *Canadian Family Physician*.<sup>1</sup> The correct information is as follows:

**Dr Asch** is Head of Interventional Radiology and **Dr Myers** is Head of CT Imaging at Lakeridge Health Corporation in Oshawa, Ont.

*Canadian Family Physician* apologizes for these errors.

### Reference

1. Stiglick AJ, Baerlocher MO, Asch M, Myers A, Ho CS. Percutaneous feeding tubes. *Can Fam Physician* 2008;54:1255-7.

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