

A NEW YEAR, A NEW PRESIDENT

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A new year, new president and new administration lie ahead, and no one knows quite what to expect. This interval between election and inauguration has been characterized by an unnatural calm; the horizons and the unknown vistas beyond are obscured by an uncertainty. It may be that after the recent confusing presidential campaign between two out of the ordinary (and unlikely) contenders, nothing more should be expected. President Ford, a not quite positive and forceful leader, has dropped out of the news and back into obscurity at a rapid rate. President-elect Carter, his outlines still fuzzy, seems content to maintain a low profile while carefully sidestepping controversy. Many of us who were not Carter supporters are willing to be persuaded by his performance that we were wrong.

Behind one of the fogbanks on the horizon lies Carter's Plan for American medicine. So far as we can determine, he has not backed off from his determination to reorganize and eventually nationalize health care. Medicine should continue to be concerned about its future. It does seem strange, in view of Carter's apparently cautious approach in other sectors, that we don't hear about any of the leaders of medicine—various colleges and academies and the AMA—nor any of its recognized, intelligent public voices (people like Irvine Page of Cleveland, Mark Altschule of Boston, Michael Halberstam of Washington) being called in for consultation and advice. The President-elect's concept of health, delivery of care and medical practice continues to be strangely influenced by an uncommon group of immature socialistic, bureaucratic and academically oriented advisors. If there are any practical, down-to-earth clinical brains in the listing given out as Carter's "medical team" they are not readily discernible.

Meanwhile, there is some temporary encouragement in the deliberate manner of Carter's '91 \$10 approach; perhaps he will not be as liberal as conservatives expected, or as conservative as liberals feared. And at least, for the time being, we are not being subjected to the blatant, image-creating, publicity-conscious promotion efforts that sold us a Kennedy and New Frontier. Another Camelot we don't need.

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