Bankers and insurance moguls run Columbia/HCA

The advertising slogan of Columbia/HCA is that health care "has never worked like this before." No lie! Columbia/HCA is no ordinary big company that just "went bad."

The criminal investigations reported in the accompanying article arose because the practices *characteristic* of the mode of operating of Columbia/HCA—the flagship hospital company of the managed-care era—were deliberately devised by circles in international finance, mostly connected to London-centered banking and political interests, to provide themselves with gargantuan profits, by dismantling and scavenging off the hospital and medical staff base of the United States, and other nations, that was built up over decades in the public interest.

The rhetoric you hear about the benefits of privatization, about the role of for-profit hospital chains, and about "managed care" insurance plans, in supposedly lowering your costs of health care, is just propaganda to cover up the *looting* of communities and individuals: their medical care system, their livelihood, and, in more and more cases, their lives.

Look at the members of the Columbia/HCA board of directors in that light (board members as of 1996). They are experts in the process of how to loot through privatization and globalization:

Donald S. MacNaughton, former chairman and chief executive officer, the Prudential Insurance Company of America; and retired chairman and CEO, Hospital Corporation of America (HCA).

T. Michael Long, partner, Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., private banking.

Carl E. Reichardt, retired chairman of the board and CEO, Wells Fargo and Company.

Rodman W. Moorhead III, senior managing director, E.M. Warburg; Pincus & Co., Inc., financial services; Columbia/HCA director in 1994 and 1995.

Prudential's role

Prudential, interconnected with Morgan bank interests, has assumed a dominant position throughout all aspects of insurance and health care provision. For example, under its own name, and under others, such as Humana, it operates health maintenance organizations. One reflection of Prudential's policy outlook, on the question of the deleterious effects of its corporate activities on health care, is shown in its leading role in the creation of the right-to-die movement in the United States over the past 30 years. Prudential has been a leading backer of the propaganda campaigns on how local and federal governments must adjust to restricting and denying medical treatment.

For example, in 1985, Prudential Life Insurance Company's Foundation launched a program called "Bioethics in the Community: A Program of Local Decision Making." This campaign was overseen by the Hastings Center, which was formed in 1969, initially as the Institute of Society, Ethics, and Life Sciences, with sponsorship from foundations including the Rockefeller, Ford, and New World groups, for the purpose of conducting projects on how to get around the legal and other obstacles involved in terminating treatment, allocating scarce economic and human resources for care for the aged and dying (i.e., restricting care), and for softening up public opinion to accept suicide and euthanasia.

Prudential, and other banking and finance interests, are now on a spree—through Columbia/HCA, and other entities, to position themselves for all the "income streams" of medical care payments that they can grab, by buying up, controlling, and cutting health care provision at target locations throughout the world.

According to the latest count, reported in the company's April 25 press release, Columbia/HCA now owns, in the United States, "342 hospitals [344, as of April 25], 148 outpatient surgery centers, more than 570 homecare locations, and extensive ancillary services in 36 states, England, Switzerland, and Spain. . . . The company is building comprehensive networks of healthcare services, including home health, rehabilitation and skilled nursing units, in local markets around the country."

—Marcia Merry Baker

in the same area, its "doctor-partners" go through that loophole into illegal ownership and conflict of interest. The Texas Medical Association called Columbia's policies unethical for doctors, as early as 1992.

When Scott and Rainwater were borrowing from Citibank in 1988-90, they pitched Citibank on their loans precisely on the locked-in and selective "patient flows" guaranteed by doctor partnerships. Citibank's internal memos on these loans, obtained by the *New York Times,* stressed exactly this policy, whose results the Federal investigations may find criminal. The investigators in the El Paso raids also served search warrants upon the offices of a number of doctors and group practices in the city.

The doctors' limited partnerships that were "sold" by Co-