P.S. to the NEWS
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## THE PSRO ACT

The secret activities of the "plumbers" in breaking into the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist have been almost universally condemned. But if the "plumbers" had delayed their raid until 1974, it would have been legal under a new law which took effect January first.

Snoopers from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare are now allowed to probe physician's records of private patients under the law called "Professional Standards Review Organizations" -- or PSRO for short. Here are some of the consequences of this law:

Your medical records -- from general health history to psychiatric diagnosis -- may be examined by Government bureaucrats. The Government can decide -- against your wishes or the advice of your doctor -- whether you can be admitted to the hospital, and whether you must be dismissed from the hospital.

Your doctor may be fined $5,000 for deviating from Federal procedures which describe exactly what may and may not be done about your health situation. You and your physician are part of a computerized file system which will establish certain "norms."

The idea of Federal bureaucrats in Washington setting "standards" for physicians about the care of their patients is not much different

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from bureaucrats setting "standards" for parents regarding care of their children. There is no evidence whatsoever that Washington paper-pushers are better able to handle patient care or child care than physicians or parents.

How could such legislation as this PSRO law be passed without most people ever hearing about it? PSRO was Section 249F of the 165-page Social Security Amendment passed in 1972. It was inserted by the Senate after the House had passed the bill, and then was passed by the House as part of the compromise bill without hearings, and without most members even knowing that PSRO existed. Those who did could hardly vote against Social Security when it came up for a final vote in an election year.

The effective date of the law was a year later, which explains why we are just finding out about it now. Yet, this section has been called "the most radical piece of health legislation in this country's history."

More than 40 bills have been submitted to Congress this year calling for repeal of PSRO; 18 state medical associations have formally urged repeal, and that many more will soon consider similar resolutions. Congress should repeal PSRO because it is just as wrong for Federal snoopers to pry into your medical and psychiatric records as it was for the "plumbers" to pry into Daniel Ellsberg's. PSRO is a hazard to your health and to your privacy.

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