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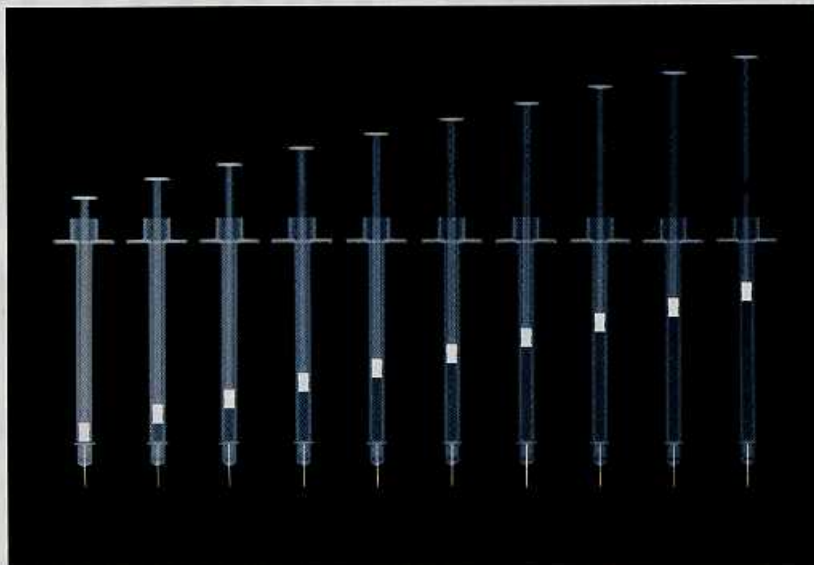
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Health care providers have the power to bring down U.S. medical spending, but they're not going to change without a fight. Photograph by Nick Veasey for TIME

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Bitter Pill

To understand why U.S. health care spending is out of control, you just have to follow the money. This **in-depth investigation of billing practices** reveals that hospitals—and the executives who run them—are gaming the system to maximize revenue and sticking patients with bills that have little relationship to the care that's provided. **The free market in American medicine is a myth, with or without Obamacare**

by Steven Brill

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Photo-Illustration by Sean Freeman for TIME

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