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HEALTH LAW, ETHICS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

## Perspectives on Medical Outsourcing and Telemedicine — Rough Edges in a Flat World?

Sanjiv N. Singh, J.D., and Robert M. Wachter, M.D.  
N Engl J Med 2008; 358:1622-1627 | [April 10, 2008](#)

**This article has no abstract; the first 100 words appear below.**

Low-cost labor, time zone differences, and telecommunication advances have “flattened” the world of business and services; however, health care has been relatively insulated from these world-flattening forces until recently. In particular, the fundamental physicality of medicine — the need to examine a patient or look at a chart or radiograph — prohibited the remote outsourcing that was possible in manufacturing or call centers.<sup>2</sup> However, digitized health care now permits the outsourcing of a range of medical services, from clinical diagnostics to direct care.

Although outsourcing of any type triggers predictable worries,<sup>3</sup> outsourcing of health care raises special issues. Health . . .

Dr. Wachter reports serving on the board of directors of the American Board of Internal Medicine and being a paid member of the health care advisory boards of Google, Intellidot, and Hoana Medical. He reports holding an equity interest in the latter two companies, which do not make products that are relevant to this article. No other potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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