CASE AND COMMENTARY
Intentional Misdiagnosis to Get Insurance Coverage
Commentary by Faith Lagay, PhD

Case
A 32-year-old man presents with no significant past medical history. The patient's 38-year-old brother was recently diagnosed with colon cancer and recently underwent a subtotal colectomy. Given the young age of his brother, the patient is now concerned about getting (or already having) colon cancer. Although he has no abdominal symptoms, he insists on a screening colonoscopy. The physician shares the patient's concern and believes that given his family history such an intervention is warranted. However, the patient's health insurance plan will not pay for a colonoscopy, but the physician knows that the plan will pay if the patient has had recent weight loss and change in bowel habits, although this diagnosis is inaccurate.

Question for Discussion
What should the physician do? [1-7]

See what the AMA Code of Medical Ethics says about this topic in:

Faith Lagay, PhD is managing editor in of Virtual Mentor.