

MUSIC

HEALTH AND BEHAVIOR

## Singin' the managed health-care blues

By Anita Manning  
USA TODAY

There is very little to laugh about when it comes to managed care, but what there is, Sam Bierstock has found.

An eye surgeon for 15 years, he gave up his practice in 1992 and became a medical information systems consultant. "It didn't take long to see that everybody is frustrated with managed care," he says.

So, he started a blues band.

Dr. Sam and the Managed Care Blues Band. It's what he calls an "integrated music delivery system."

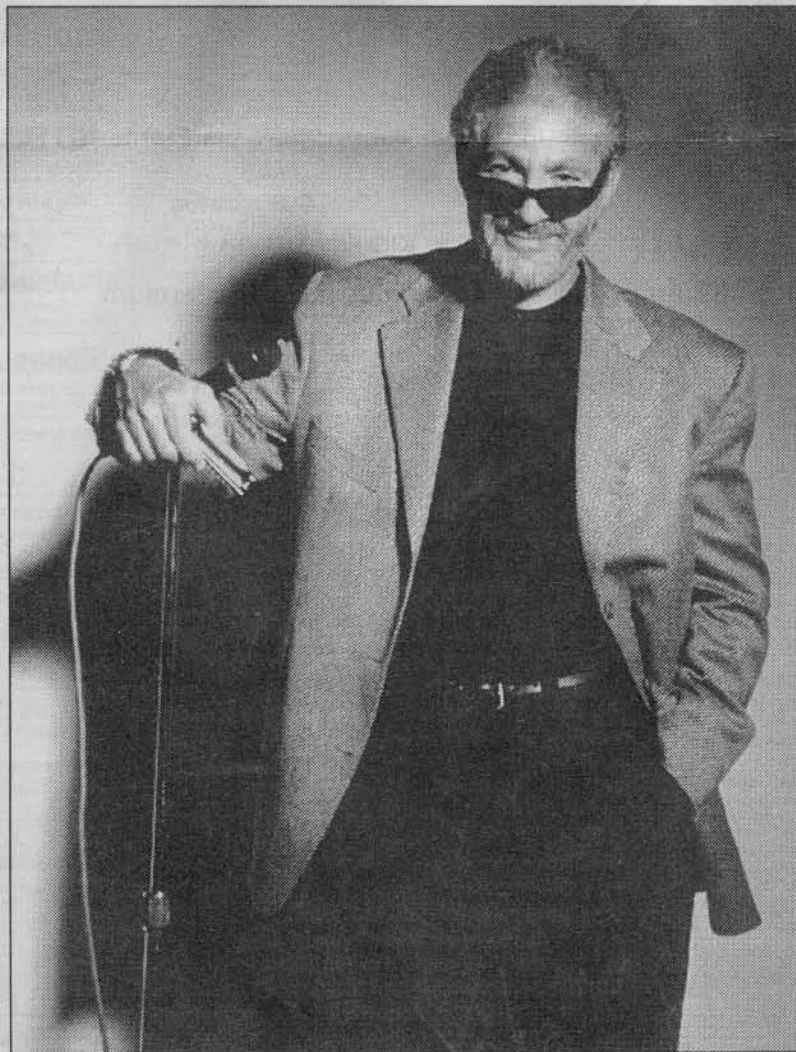
The group includes Bierstock on harmonica, a medical technician on vocals and lead guitar, a dentist who composes and plays keyboard, and a thoracic surgeon on drums. "If I can use nonmedical people and pay them less," he says dryly, "I'll do it."

He's full of one-liners that parody the language of managed care: "I maintain a list of preferred musical providers," he says. "People can listen to other musicians if they want, but that's out of their pocket."

He wrote last month to Hillary Rodham Clinton, urging her to address the "crisis in the American music industry," as she did the health-care crisis. "The president's love of music and abilities as a provider of musical entertainment should allow the importance of this matter to be apparent to you on a personal basis," he wrote, citing the "skyrocketing prices" of tapes, CDs and stereo equipment. "The time has come for managed music," he wrote. He has even trademarked the phrase "managed music." Hillary Clinton has not yet written back.

Dr. Sam and the Managed Care Blues Band plays three or four times a month, mainly at medical and pharmaceutical conferences, says Bierstock, 50, of Boca Raton, Fla.

Their repertoire is varied, including standards, some Otis Redding tunes and blues favorites, spiced with parodies that poke fun at health care in the 1990s. They're working



**Blues doctor:** Dr. Sam Bierstock and the Managed Care Blues Band parody the frustrations of dealing with managed health care in their songs.

on a compact disc that is expected to be released this fall.

"People have been loving the material," he says. "It's a nice opportu-

nity, particularly when you're entertaining in the health-care world, because they're really frustrated."

The best cure, he says, is a good

### Odes to oddities in '90s medicine

A sample of the lyrics from *You're One-Hip Mama* (Cause They Won't Pay for Two), by Dr. Sam and the Managed Care Blues Band:

*Well tell me baby, say what you  
gonna do*

*Tell me baby, say what you  
gonna do*

*They fixed one of your hips but  
they just won't pay for two*

*Well we tried last week and you  
tried the week before*

*They told us that you can't  
come back no more*

*Said it's just too bad that your  
hip is feeling sore*

Other song titles:

▶ *Give Me One Good Reason to Practice*

▶ *What Now My Glove* (a digital recording)

▶ *If You Won't Refuse Treatment, We'll Find Someone Who Will*

▶ *You Picked a Fine Time to Leave Me Blue Shield*

▶ *You Better Come Home With Me Baby Cause We Are Allowed to Stay Overnight*

▶ *Arrivederci Neuroma*

laugh. Besides, the band is good "you just can't stand still when listen to the music."

To reach Dr. Sam and the Managed Care Blues Band, call 561-3673 or check out his Web page <http://www.millennialgroup.com>. Sam