

PREFACE

The United States does not have a single “system” of healthcare but rather many overlapping systems. This textbook will examine and elaborate on these components, trace their development, and assess their impact on the people of the United States. The book will also address the many challenges and conflicted assumptions that undergird the way healthcare in the United States operates.

Chapter 1 explores the history of US healthcare and the challenges of balancing cost, access, and quality. It also discusses trends associated with aging and diversity throughout the US population, variances in costs and outcomes from one part of the country to another, the importance of lifestyle factors, and the impact of emerging diseases and health threats.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the healthcare professions and occupations. It includes information about the education and training required for various roles, median salaries, and likely future demand.

Chapter 3 describes acute care organizations, including hospitals, in the United States. It looks at their leadership structure and importance to healthcare.

Chapter 4 explores the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, which account for a significant portion of US healthcare costs. These industries are global in scope and present a number of challenges associated with costs and sustainability.

Chapter 5 focuses on long-term care. It presents the background and history of long-term care services in the United States, along with the organization and function of long-term care today and the challenges for long-term care in the future.

Chapter 6 seeks to foster a greater understanding of the country's mental health care industry. Readers will learn of the serious mental health challenges facing Americans, along with the history of mental health services and the various categories of providers.

Chapter 7 examines the role of the US government in healthcare, health insurance, and the licensure of health professionals. It also provides an overview of the major agencies that regulate healthcare.

Chapter 8 presents basic economic principles and concepts as they apply to healthcare. It discusses topics such as diminishing returns, opportunity costs, adverse selection, and the impact of preexisting conditions on insurance costs.

Chapter 9 delves into health insurance and its various options and components. It emphasizes the importance of risk and the use of risk pools, along with impact of deductibles, coinsurance, and copays. The chapter concludes with a look at future options for health insurance in the United States.

Chapter 10 is devoted to the issue of quality in US healthcare. It defines quality, discusses safety concerns and medical errors, and reviews concepts of quality improvement as they apply to healthcare.

Chapter 11 focuses on the uses and implications of information technology in healthcare. The chapter discusses electronic medical records, cloud computing, and issues of privacy and security. It then reflects on the future impact of information technology in the field.

Chapter 12 explores the principles of population health. Social determinants of health, health disparities, and positive health outcomes are reviewed and discussed in detail.

Chapter 13 compares the US healthcare system with the systems found in other countries. Readers will learn the four basic models on which most healthcare systems are created, and they will see how the US system incorporates elements of each. The chapter also compares the United States with other countries in terms of costs and health outcomes.

Chapter 14 considers the future of the US healthcare delivery system. It highlights the many challenges facing the current system, the need for greater integration of healthcare services, the growing impact of chronic conditions, and the philosophies behind the major political groups seeking to guide the system's direction.

In each chapter, key terms in **bold type** are accompanied by concise definitions in the margins (and in the glossary near the end of the book). Questions, assignments, and cases are provided to enhance and assess learning.

After completing this text, readers will have a better understanding of healthcare in the United States across its clinical, financial, and operational dimensions. Readers should be well versed in the system's history, its present state, and the emerging strategies for addressing the complexities and challenges that lie ahead.

INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES

This book's Instructor Resources include a test bank, PowerPoint presentations, answer guides for the chapter-end questions, and case-study instructions.

For the most up-to-date information about this book and its Instructor Resources, go to ache.org/HAP and browse for the book's title, author names, or order code (24081).

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