

Catastrophic Care: Why Everything We Think We Know about Health Care Is Wrong

David Goldhill

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CATASTROPHIC CARE

WHY EVERYTHING WE
THINK WE KNOW ABOUT
HEALTH CARE IS WRONG



DAVID GOLDHILL

"A devastating and utterly original analysis of what has gone wrong with the American health care system. Read it, and take a deep breath."

— MALCOLM GLADWELL

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#182413 in Books 2013-11-05 2013-11-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.98 x .86 x 5.171, .70 #File Name: 034580273X400 pages | File size: 43.Mb

David Goldhill : Catastrophic Care: Why Everything We Think We Know about Health Care Is Wrong before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Catastrophic Care: Why Everything We Think We Know about Health Care Is Wrong:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A fantastic tour of a broken systemBy barrosd12This book should be

required reading for anyone who's ever wondered, "well, what exactly is so bad about our healthcare system?" In this fascinating read, David Goldhill approaches the matter of care from the lens of a business person, which I can wholly appreciate. The problems we face in healthcare today, he contends, are primarily a result of a broken marketplace for healthcare. We are not consumers in this system, we are pawns for powerful surrogates to extract profit from. Goldhill takes us on a whirlwind tour of almost literally every facet of care I've never even thought about, from Medicare and Medicaid to the broken rewards systems that are powering the next generation of physicians. Overall, I felt the analysis was incredibly well done and well researched, little was left to the imagination as to why and where our system has failed us, and even though the book itself seems to have come out before the ACA was enacted, it seems mildly prophetic in a lot of ways in showing how a continuation of a broken system can only continue to be broken. I think my favorite part of the book is that it doesn't heavily lean into the idea that America should be like Norway or Finland. It surprised me to learn those systems are also heavily problematic in terms of controlling cost. Rather, a more interesting example forward for America is Singapore, of all places. By the end of the book, we're treated to a comprehensive assessment of how to fix a system that waylays itself with profligate actors that have no incentive to change. In the next 5 years, we're likely to see a collapse in Medicare expenditures in a similar fashion to what happened with the housing industry. Goldhill's solution is elegant and pragmatic, in my opinion. He prescribes a three-pronged system that simultaneously moves incentives for insurers to only truly insure against catastrophic events, for marketplace consumers to save their own money and demand cost-effective care at a basic level and to do all this while managing to either spend the same amount of money we're currently pouring into a broken system or to even save money while doing it. 41 of 44 people found the following review helpful. The word is out - 'the Emperor (health care debate) has no clothes' By Ilya Valkovsky Written for a general (but thinking) audience, this book could really turn around all public discourse on health care and become a seminal work on the subject. The divisive health care debate of recent years is centered over WHO should shoulder astronomical medical costs. The issue of taming the exorbitant prices and costs is relegated to the side issue of waste and abuse. David Goldhill takes a new and different approach. He puts aside the standard assumption that health care is somehow exempt from the normal rules of economic activity. He focuses on WHY the costs became so exorbitant in the first place. Goldhill shows persuasively that the costs are the result of the very design of our current medical system, and the only way to bring the costs down to earth is to REPLACE entirely the current economic arrangements of our medicine - both the private insurance system and Medicare/Medicaid. That's a book of new ideas. These ideas are breakthrough innovative, brilliant, deeply thought through; analysis superb. As with all things new and complex, it requires an effort to understand. If you have any background or interest in economics, even the economics of everyday life, give it more consideration. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An argument to empower the most important players in healthcare - us, the consumers. By Reviewer Highly recommended. The author makes a clear and compelling argument that basic economic forces should have the primary role in allocating scarce healthcare dollars. Without standard market incentives and the interplay between buyers and sellers - like we see in the normal world for housing, food and other essential goods and services - the US will never be able to control the runaway costs of healthcare. The growth of Big Healthcare is staggering, and scary.

In 2007 David Goldhill's father died from infections acquired in a well-regarded New York hospital. The bill, for several hundred thousand dollars, was paid by Medicare. Angered, Goldhill became determined to understand how it was possible that well-trained personnel equipped with world-class technologies could be responsible for such inexcusable carelessness; and how a business that failed so miserably could still be rewarded with full payment. Catastrophic Care is the eye-opening result. In it Goldhill explodes the myth that Medicare and insurance coverage can make care cheaper and improve our health, and shows how efforts to reform the system, including the Affordable Care Act, will do nothing to address the waste of the health care industry, which currently costs the country nearly \$2.5 trillion annually and in which an estimated 200,000 Americans die each year from preventable errors. Catastrophic Care proposes a completely new approach, one that will change the way you think about one of our most pressing national problems.

From Booklist Dysfunctional and undisciplined. That is Goldhill's assessment of the current U.S. health-care system. President and CEO of the Game Show Network, Goldhill believes the trouble stems from "a culture lacking customer accountability: high prices, excess, errors, underinvestment in information technology, lack of follow-up." Spurred by the death of his father from a hospital-acquired infection, Goldhill has devoted considerable time and thought to repairing health care. His book sprouted from a 2009 article he penned for the Atlantic. Encounters with the health-care system usually involve gargantuan intermediaries; Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance companies, entities Goldhill cites for inefficiency. They also generate increased demand for services. His alternative to the status quo combines national health insurance (for everyone but not everything) with a market-based system that gets rid of intermediaries and allows individuals to deal directly with providers. Individual health accounts, catastrophic insurance with a high deductible, and health loans are key

components. The health-care system is gashed. Goldhill thinks it's time to rip off the colossal Band-Aid and apply a different kind of balm. --Tony Miksanek Praise for David Goldhill's *Catastrophic Care* "A devastating and utterly original analysis of what has gone wrong with the American health care system. Read it, and take a deep breath. . . . [Goldhill] will convince you that our 'solutions' are not solving our problems. They are making our problems worse." --Malcolm Gladwell "Thought provoking. . . . A for-profit business executive who actually states that better than adequate health care should be available to all people in the country. . . . Mr. Goldhill observes and explains the issues in an understandable manner for the layperson." --New York Journal of Books "The best popular health care book . . . a crystal clear account of what has gone wrong and how to fix it." --Tyler Cowen, Holbert L. Harris Professor of Economics, George Mason University "Powerful; edge-of-the-seat riveting; because it is not, in any sense, a policy book. Rather, this is a story about saving ourselves. . . . It steps outside of the established political debate and lexicon; one of the rare books addressing a major national policy issue that is able to do so in language not already debased by the problem itself. . . . Alas, healthcare civilians can't actually read most books about healthcare (and if you can, then you are part of the problem). But you can read this one." --Michael Wolff, *The Guardian* "David Goldhill is a genius observer of a broken system in need of fresh ideas. His testimony and common-sense ideas are devastatingly important in light of out-of-control medical prices. A must-read for doctors, policy-makers and patients alike. *Catastrophic Care* is a defining book of our era, and a roadmap for fixing our country's leading debt driver. You will never see medical care the same way." --Marty Makary, MD, author of *Unaccountable: What Hospitals Won't Tell You and How Transparency Can Revolutionize Healthcare* "For those who are troubled by both the failures of our healthcare system and the misdirected diagnoses and prescriptions offered by pundits, policy experts, and politicians from across the political spectrum, David Goldhill offers a brilliant and much needed antidote. By calling out with remarkable clarity the numerous, but now almost invisible incentives and regulations that drive the dysfunction of our current system, *Catastrophic Care* provides an illuminating framework for understanding the crisis, and then a path to the kinds of reforms that will surely be necessary." --Jeffrey S. Flier, Dean of the Faculty, Harvard Medical School "[A] fascinating and infuriating expose of the American health care system . . . Goldhill persuasively argues that a consumer-driven system; which will require greater vigilance and commitment on the part of citizens in actively managing their health; is the first step toward sustainability and lower individual and government costs. . . . Goldhill's reasoned, logical alternative to the current system goes beyond political finger-pointing, and while his take is sobering, it's one that offers sound solutions." --Publishers Weekly "Highly readable presentation of one businessman's solution, likely to provoke discussion if not agreement." --Kirkus "About the Author David Goldhill is president and chief executive officer of GSN, which operates a U. S. cable television network seen in more than 75 million homes and is one of the world's largest digital games companies. He is a member of the board of directors of The Leapfrog Group, an employer-sponsored organization dedicated to hospital safety and transparency. Goldhill graduated from Harvard University with a BA in history and holds an MA in history from New York University.