

ESSENTIALS OF THE

# U.S. Health Care System

FIFTH EDITION

**LEIYU SHI, DrPH, MBA, MPA**

Professor, Bloomberg School of Public Health  
Director, Johns Hopkins Primary Care Policy Center  
Johns Hopkins University  
Baltimore, Maryland

**DOUGLAS A. SINGH, PhD, MBA**

Associate Professor Emeritus of Management  
Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics  
Indiana University, South Bend  
South Bend, Indiana



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# Preface

This text is a condensed and simplified version of our standard text on the U.S. health care system, *Delivering Health Care in America: A Systems Approach, Seventh Edition*. Nevertheless, each new edition of this text is independently revised, with new materials that may not be found in the larger text.

This text retains the systems model to organize the major themes of U.S. health care delivery. The first three chapters lay the foundation that is necessary for understanding the U.S. health care delivery system, which is distinct from any other system in the world. *Major Characteristics of U.S. Health Care Delivery* (Chapter 1) gives an overview of U.S. health care and contrasts the American system with the three most commonly used models of health care delivery in other advanced nations, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Germany. *Foundations of U.S. Health Care Delivery* (Chapter 2) explains the different models for understanding health and its determinants. In the context of American beliefs and values, this chapter also discusses the issue of equity using the concepts of market justice and social justice and explains how health services are rationed in both market justice- and social justice-based systems. *Historical Overview of U.S. Health Care Delivery* (Chapter 3) traces the history of U.S. health care from colonial times to the present and includes an added section on health care reform. The key to understanding the nature of the current health care system and its likely future direction is to understand its evolutionary past. This chapter also describes current trends in corporatization, information revolution, and globalization as they pertain to health care delivery.

The next three chapters are about the resources—both human and nonhuman—employed in delivering health care. *Health Care Providers and Professionals* (Chapter 4) addresses the roles played by some of the major types of personnel in health care delivery. It also discusses some key issues pertaining to the number and distribution of physicians and the effect these factors have on the delivery of health care. *Technology and Its Effects* (Chapter 5) focuses on medical technology and the various issues related to its development and dissemination. *Financing and Reimbursement Methods* (Chapter 6) explains the concept of health insurance,

the major private and public health insurance programs in the United States, and methods of reimbursing providers.

The next five chapters describe the system processes, beginning with outpatient and primary care services (discussed in Chapter 7) and hospitals (discussed in Chapter 8). *Managed Care and Integrated Systems* (Chapter 9) examines managed care and integrated organizations, such as integrated delivery systems and accountable care organizations, as well as the different types of arrangements found in integrated organizations. *Long-Term Care Services* (Chapter 10) explores the meaning and scope of long-term care and provides an overview of community-based and institution-based long-term care services. *Populations with Special Health Needs* (Chapter 11) highlights vulnerable populations and their special health care needs, including populations with mental health issues.

The next two chapters deal with the main outcomes of the health care system and the ways in which those outcomes are addressed through health policy. The main outcomes associated with health care are presented in the *Cost, Access, and Quality* chapter (Chapter 12). *Health Policy* (Chapter 13) gives an overview of health policy, including the major participants in its development and the process by which it is created, in the United States.

Finally, *The Future of Health Services Delivery* (Chapter 14) explores the future of health care in the United States in the context of forces of future change, health care reform, conflicting issues of cost and access, future models of care delivery, global challenges, and technological innovations.

Leiyu Shi  
Douglas A. Singh

## ► **New in the Fifth Edition**

This edition has been updated with the latest health statistics and pertinent information available at the time the manuscript was prepared. Some key additions to the text include the following:

- Chapter 1: Current status of managed care and integrated delivery system under the Affordable Care Act; current status of health care reform; health care systems in selected countries.
- Chapter 2: Implementation of *Healthy People 2020*; assessment of the *Healthy People* initiative; preparation for *Healthy People 2030*; the concept of value-based practice.

- Chapter 3: Coverage of mental health care in its historical context, including a new section “Reform of Mental Health Care.” New section: “Health Care Reform in a Flux.”
- Chapter 4: Current development of the U.S. physician and health care workforce and challenges; the transition from patient-centered care to population health; the need for chronic disease managers.
- Chapter 5: Introduction to the Drug Supply Chain Security Act of 2013 and the 21st Century Cures Act of 2016. New section: “The FDA in a Global Environment.”
- Chapter 6: New sections: “Issues with Medicaid”; “Payment Reform Initiatives.”
- Chapter 7: Community health centers’ current scope, efficacy and value, and challenges; status of the primary care workforce around the world.
- Chapter 8: Updated section on hospital employment and staffing.
- Chapter 9: Updated sections on integrated delivery systems and accountable care organizations.
- Chapter 10: Updated section on the nursing home industry and expenditures on long-term care.
- Chapter 11: Current disparities described in the literature (racial, socioeconomic status) in terms of access to care, quality of care, and health outcomes; programs (national, regional, local) that address disparities (racial, socioeconomic status) in terms of access to care, quality of care, and health outcomes; the chronically ill; patient safety.
- Chapter 12: Quality initiatives both from the government (e.g., the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality) and from the private sector; programs to contain health care costs.
- Chapter 13: Updated information on health policy issues and challenges after the ACA.
- Chapter 14: Updated sections on the health care coverage, cost, and access dilemmas; the future of health care reform; movement toward a single-payer system; the cost-control imperative; Medicare’s generational impact; and future models of care delivery.



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We gratefully acknowledge Sylvia Shi for creating the cartoons for this text. We are also grateful for the valuable assistance of Hailun Liang. Of course, all errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.



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