

SIXTH EDITION

Essentials of the

U.S. Health Care System

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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, Eighth Edition*. Nevertheless, each new edition of this text is independently revised, with new materials that may not be found in the larger text.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented major public health challenges and caused significant disruptions in the delivery of health care services. It also exposed weaknesses in global information exchange and the reliability of information passed on to the general public. Much needs to be done to overcome future threats to the health and safety of populations.

Stipulations of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 are now firmly embedded in the U.S. health care system. Various stipulations of the act and their effects have been highlighted within the context of the discussions throughout the 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 models of health care delivery most commonly used 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 American health care from colonial times to the present and includes an updated 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 recent 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 effects 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. Current developments in nanomedicine and artificial intelligence are incorporated. *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. Reimbursement methods continue to evolve by incorporating incentives for cost and quality.

The next five chapters describe health care system processes, beginning with *Outpatient Services and Primary Care* (Chapter 7) and *Hospitals* (Chapter 8). The growth in employment has shifted from hospitals to outpatient clinical settings. *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 *Cost, Access, and Quality* (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.

New in the Sixth 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: The latest developments in managed care, military medical care, integrated care delivery systems, and public health systems; new sections on public health during the COVID-19 pandemic, the prospects for health care reform under the Biden administration, and patient advocacy organizations; the latest country-specific developments in health care reform.
- Chapter 2: The latest developments in illness and disease (e.g., COVID-19); new sections on the One Health initiative, *Healthy People 2030*, and the World Health Organization's Healthy People initiative (global sustainability goals and strategies).
- Chapter 3: Updates on the historical context of health care reform in the United States.
 - New section: "Butting Heads Against Religious Liberty"
 - New section: "Ongoing Litigation"
- Chapter 4: Updates on health care workforce development; new sections on multidisciplinary teams and the social determinants of health approach to health care delivery.
- Chapter 5: Expanded coverage of nanomedicine. Application of artificial intelligence (AI) in health informatics. Introduction to point-of-care testing.
 - New section: "Cybersecurity"
 - New section: "Current Regulatory Challenges"
- Chapter 6: Expanded discussion of the issues with Medicaid. Updated discussions of the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and the advanced alternative payment model under the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, including the organizational alignments formed by specialist physicians.
 - New section: "Payments for Quality and Cost Savings"

- New section: “Patient-Driven Payment Model (for skilled nursing facilities)”
- New section: “Payments for Rehabilitation Therapies”
- Chapter 7: New information on the role of primary care in integrated care delivery; geriatric care; and the latest patient-centered medical home (PCMH) evaluation results.
- Chapter 8: Updates on hospital employment, the status of community benefit expectations from nonprofit hospitals, and the current status of physician-owned hospitals.
 - New section: “Effects of COVID-19 on U.S. Hospitals”
 - New section: “Hospital Quality and Safety”
- Chapter 9: Updates on the effects of managed care, including changes in enrollments, access, cost savings, and quality of care. The current status of accountable care organizations.
 - New section: “Effects of Integration”
 - New section: “Oregon’s Coordinated Care Organizations”
- Chapter 10: Correlations between age, gender, multimorbidity, and functional limitations. Updates on the current status of the long-term care industry and expenditures.
 - New section: “Aging and Long-Term Care”
- Chapter 11: New strategies and examples to eliminate disparities; new section on vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Chapter 12: The latest information on chronic diseases and elderly; new sections on the Baldrige Framework for Healthcare and learning health systems.
- Chapter 13: Update on health policy issues; updates on health care reform initiatives.
- Chapter 14: Updates on the forces of future change; cost, coverage, and access dilemmas; and expectations of health care reform in the broader economic context. The implications of COVID-19 for the future of health care delivery have been incorporated in the discussions.
 - New section: “Patient Advocacy”



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Douglas A. Singh



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