

# Introduction to U.S. Health Policy: The Organization, Financing, and Delivery of Health Care in America

Donald A. Barr

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Health care reform has dominated public discourse over the past several years, and the recent passage of the Affordable Care Act, rather than quell the rhetoric, has sparked even more debate. Donald A. Barr reviews the current structure of the American health care system, describing the historical and political contexts in which it developed and the core policy issues that continue to confront us today.

This comprehensive analysis introduces the various organizations and institutions that make the U.S. health care system work?or fail to work, as the case may be. A principal message of the book is the seeming paradox of the quality of health care in this country? on the one hand it is the best medical care system in the world, on the other it is one of the worst among developed countries because of how it is organized.

Barr introduces readers to broad cultural issues surrounding health care policy, such as access, affordability, and quality. He discusses specific elements of U.S. health care, including insurance, especially Medicare and Medicaid, the shift to for-profit managed care, the pharmaceutical industry, issues of long-term care, the plight of the uninsured, medical errors, and nursing shortages. The latest edition of this widely adopted text updates the description and discussion of key sectors of America's health care system in light of the Affordable Care Act.



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