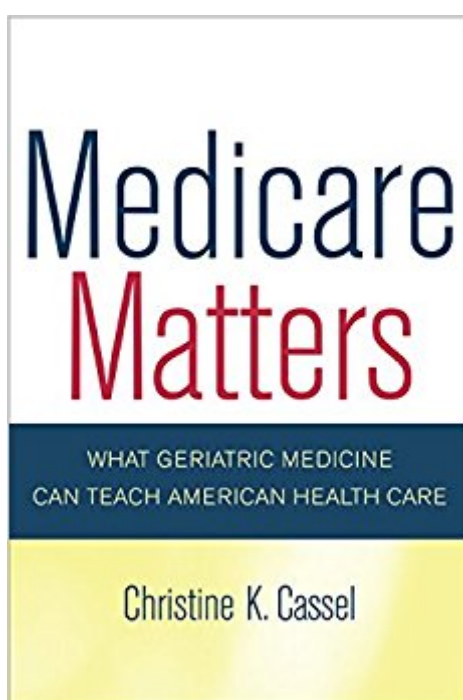


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Medicare Matters: What Geriatric Medicine Can Teach American Health Care (California/Milbank Books On Health And The Public)



Synopsis

Savvy, comprehensive, and authoritative, this book, written by a physician with more than thirty years' experience caring for elderly patients, assesses the current state and the future prospects of Medicare, perhaps the most influential health-insurance program of our time. Christine K. Cassel draws upon the latest developments in science and medicine in a sweeping analysis of Medicare's social, demographic, institutional, political, and policy contexts. Writing in accessible language, using case studies to illustrate how policies translate to everyday lives, and applying lessons from the practice of geriatric medicine, Cassel makes a powerful argument for reforming and modernizing Medicare. She offers a new vision of what healthy aging could be and delineates what is needed to realize this vision, including changes in the medical sector, in the policy arena, and in our cultural beliefs about aging. Cassel sheds light on a wide range of issues pertaining to Medicare, including debates about coverage and the looming deficit in the Medicare trust fund. Perhaps the most controversial issue she addresses is the challenge of rationing some kinds of care. Anchoring her discussion of Medicare in the idea that care for the elderly represents a social contract between government and its citizens, Cassel describes both the principles and potential of a progressive approach to geriatric medicine. She further argues that with this approach, we can also address the chronic problems of our larger health-care system and provide all Americans, no matter what their age, with high-quality and affordable medical care.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One of the great leaders of our time in American medicine tackles one of the great health-care issues of our generation: the design, fate, and principles of Medicare as a system. Care for our aging population and coverage through Medicare provide key testing grounds for our nation's moral and technical capacity to extend health and relieve suffering. Dr. Cassel is unique in her ability to bridge the worlds of clinical science, health-care policy, and social ethics as she helps us think through how best to meet that test. This book is a welcome guide and a clear charter for a nation that cares—or ought to care—deeply about addressing the needs of its aging population. —Donald M. Berwick, MD, MPP, President and CEO, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Christine K. Cassel, M.D., is President and CEO of the American Board of Internal Medicine and ABIM Foundation.

A veteran frontline Geriatric physician, Dr. Christine Casell has given a clear incisive description of the role of geriatric medicine in managing Medicare patients and what it can teach the US health care system. She also shows how politics has complicated a non-partisan issue such as Medicare compromising the care of millions of vulnerable elders. She does compliment a few systems (most of them integrated) such as the VA, Mayo Clinic and Kaiser Permanente in the way they coordinate care for the frail elderly. It is a must read for all those policy wonks and politicians in Washington as well as those who influence policy in the AMA, AARP and the AGS. Even though the book was written in 2005 most of her recommendations have yet to be accepted by Medicare in 2010. It is also a wake up call for all Geriatric Medicine fellowship directors to revamp the way fellows are taught. As a frontline geriatric physician running a geriatric interdisciplinary team myself for over 20 years the care this nation provides our vulnerable seniors is fragmented, costly and fraught with significant quality issues. The back cover has glowing tributes written by Drs Berwick (CMS) and Halvorson (Kaiser). It has been 5 years since the book was written and I hope the present health care crisis creates an impetus for Medicare and other Health care Insurance companies to implement her well thought out recommendations sooner rather than later.

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