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Health For US All: The Transformation of US Health Care

Mary Zennett
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Statistics indicate that lack of health insurance ranks as the sixth leading cause of death in the United States and studies presented in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* list errors made by conventional medical practitioners as the third leading cause. *Health for US All* presents a plan for comprehensive healthcare reform that would improve these shocking statistics. The author asks readers to consider "How is the conventional healthcare system promoting a doctor's ability to 'do no harm' and to live up to the Hippocratic Oath?"

Mary Zennett is board certified in adult and child/adolescent psychiatry and has practiced medicine for twenty-two years. As a founder of the National Alliance for Health Reform she works to achieve meaningful healthcare reform in the United States. Her business training includes a master's degree in Health Care Administration.

The managed-care system once touted as the solution to health insurance woes has failed that promise. It has grown into an unmanageable bureaucracy that generates endless paperwork robbing doctors and staff of essential time with patients and resulting in increased costs.

Zennett supports her ideas for reform with numerous professional references. Treating patients for disease after it has manifested is not enough and she proposes integrating complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) into conventional healthcare practices. CAM modalities promote health maintenance before disease strikes and address issues of mind and spirit as well as body.

At present thirty-six percent of adults in the US use some form of complementary or alternative medicine. "It seems clear that we can no longer afford not to incorporate prevention and wellness into day-to-day health care" Zennett writes. The author ranks health maintenance for all Americans as foremost in the debate over how to administer healthcare to them presenting models of both private and government-sponsored healthcare and listing the pros and cons of each.

Complementary medicine is treatment used in addition to conventional medical therapies such as massage therapy or acupuncture. Alternative medicine represents treatments chosen instead of conventional medicine such as naturopathy or homeopathy. The integrated medical approach uses both alternative and mainstream medicine. Deeper research into the efficacy of CAM treatments would be necessary prior to implementation of this approach.

"The core value of a transformed healthcare system is the dignity and sanctity of life" Zennett writes. Her synergistic model holds a person's health at the center with the doctor's caring role surrounding the individual. The allied system of administrative healthcare would play a smaller tertiary role.

Public officials involved in establishing healthcare policy and people interested in following proposed reforms will find value in this book. Some readers may be discouraged by the book's medical journal-like tone. It ends with the last point of the author's outlined vision for a reformed health plan. A brief summarization beyond this point would provide readers with a more satisfactory conclusion.

This model of a "Good Health Plan" could benefit all Americans by lowering healthcare costs and treating patients as whole and complete individuals. The facts presented in the book highlight the fact that meaningful reform must take place.

MARGARET CULLISON (February 12, 2009)

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