

Medicare for All: A Citizen's Guide

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Discussing both problems with American health care and potential solutions, Abdul El-Sayed and Micah Johnson's *Medicare for All* acknowledges that "health insurance doesn't make health care affordable, and it doesn't protect you from financial ruin," and so proposes that Medicare be made available to everyone.

The book notes that, while the United States spends more on health care than any other nation, it has worse health outcomes than most other industrialized countries. *Medicare for All* explains this complicated issue in detail, addressing many aspects of US health care in clear terms. For example, its section diagnosing the current state of American health care goes into the myriad reasons why private insurance involves so much more overhead than Medicare; the monopolistic nature of small-town hospitals and their impact on pricing; and how outbreaks like the COVID-19 pandemic reveal the precariousness of the current employer-based health care model. The book tracks the history of health care policy in the US, from the earliest attempts at reform to the successful passage of the Affordable Care Act, including the arguments and players on all sides of the ever-evolving debate.

The book also debunks plenty of misleading arguments against Medicare for All, such as the notion that health care consumers can effectively shop for services, which does not acknowledge that care is often required without notice, or that a single-payer system is somehow equivalent to socialized medicine. But just as important is the case that El-Sayed and Johnson make for expanding upon what already works in Medicare for seniors and others, making these services available to all Americans.

The debate about US health care is raging, with a single-payer system growing in popularity as an option, and *Medicare for All* is a valuable resource for understanding those important discussions.

JEFF FLEISCHER (January / February 2021)

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