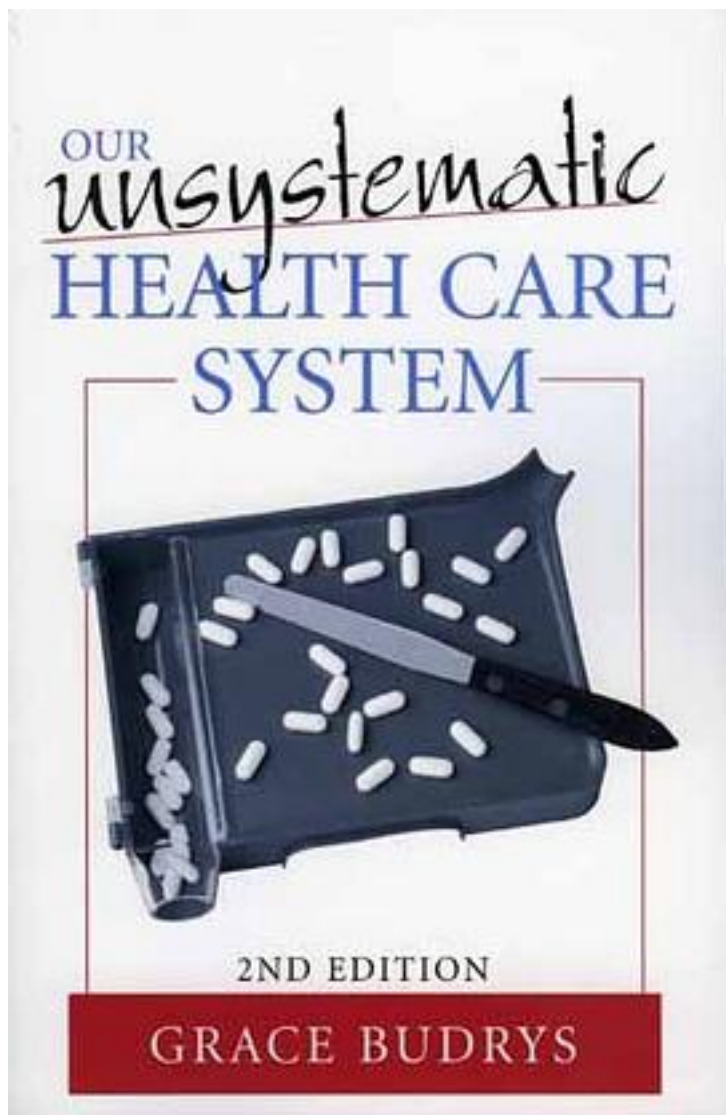


Our Unsystematic Health Care System



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The aim of this book is to present the reader with a comprehensive overview of the U.S. health care delivery system. A central theme running through the book revolves around the fact that Americans have expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with the country's health care arrangements for many years, yet have been unable to come up with reforms that would address the main point of dissatisfaction: the steadily rising cost of care. One of the primary objectives of the book is to provide a clear explanation of the health insurance arrangements operating in this country; both public, such as Medicare, and private, which is generally employment-based. The workings of structures that combine payment and provision of health care services, namely HMOs (Health Maintenance Organizations), are described in detail. The health care systems developed by other countries are examined to illustrate how this country's 'unsystematic system' differs from those in most other highly industrialized countries. Special attention is directed to hospital and health occupational trends. Statistics gathered by government agencies and researchers associated with various nonprofit organizations are used to illustrate points of discussion. The final chapters of the book address attempts to control costs and changes promoted by sponsors of the most recent reform plans.

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