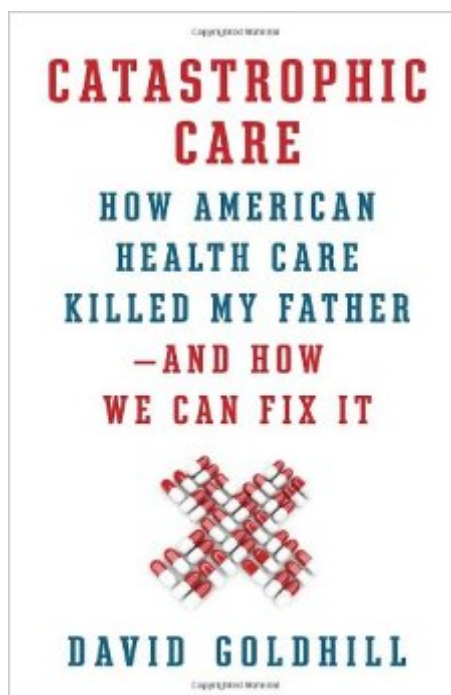


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# Catastrophic Care: How American Health Care Killed My Father--and How We Can Fix It



## Synopsis

A visionary investigation that will change the way we think about health care: how and why it is failing, why expanding coverage will actually make things worse, and how our health care can be transformed into a transparent, affordable, successful system. In 2007, David Goldhill's father died from infections acquired in a hospital, one of more than two hundred thousand avoidable deaths per year caused by medical error. The bill was enormous and Medicare paid it. These circumstances left Goldhill angry and determined to understand how world-class technology and personnel could coexist with such carelessness and how a business that failed so miserably could be paid in full. *Catastrophic Care* is the eye-opening result. Blending personal anecdotes and extensive research, Goldhill presents us with cogent, biting analysis that challenges the basic preconceptions that have shaped our thinking for decades. Contrasting the Island of health care with the Mainland of our economy, he demonstrates that high costs, excess medicine, terrible service, and medical error are the inevitable consequences of our insurance-based system. He explains why policy efforts to fix these problems have invariably produced perverse results, and how the new Affordable Care Act is more likely to deepen than to solve these issues. Goldhill steps outside the incremental and workish debates to question the conventional wisdom blinding us to more fundamental issues. He proposes a comprehensive new way, where the customer (the patient) is first—a system focused on health and maintaining it, a system strong and vibrant enough for our future. If you think health care is interesting only to institutes and politicians, think again: *Catastrophic Care* is surprising, engaging, and brimming with insights born of questions nobody has thought to ask. Above all it is a book of new ideas that can transform the way we understand a subject we often take for granted.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 384 pages

Publisher: Knopf; 1 edition (January 8, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307961540

ISBN-13: 978-0307961549

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1.3 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (95 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #682,544 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #183 in Books > Business &

Money > Insurance > Health #241 in Books > Medical Books > Administration & Medicine  
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## Customer Reviews

This book should be required reading for anyone who's ever wondered, "well, what exactly is so bad about our healthcare system?" In this fascinating read, David Goldhill approaches the matter of care from the lens of a business person, which I can wholly appreciate. The problems we face in healthcare today, he contends, are primarily a result of a broken marketplace for healthcare. We are not consumers in this system, we are pawns for powerful surrogates to extract profit from. Goldhill takes us on a whirlwind tour of almost literally every facet of care I've never even thought about, from Medicare and Medicaid to the broken rewards systems that are powering the next generation of physicians. Overall, I felt the analysis was incredibly well done and well researched, little was left to the imagination as to why and where our system has failed us, and even though the book itself seems to have come out before the ACA was enacted, it seems mildly prophetic in a lot of ways in showing how a continuation of a broken system can only continue to be broken. I think my favorite part of the book is that it doesn't heavily lean into the idea that America should be like Norway or Finland. It surprised me to learn those systems are also heavily problematic in terms of controlling cost. Rather, a more interesting example forward for America is Singapore, of all places. By the end of the book, we're treated to a comprehensive assessment of how to fix a system that waylays itself with profligate actors that have no incentive to change. In the next 5 years, we're likely to see a collapse in Medicare expenditures in a similar fashion to what happened with the housing industry. Goldhill's solution is elegant and pragmatic, in my opinion.

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