

# Introduction to Health Care Management

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We dedicate this book to our loving husbands,  
Dale Buchbinder and Rick Shanks—  
Who coached, collaborated, and coerced us to:  
*“FINISH THE BOOK!”*



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# Foreword

The discipline of healthcare management, while not particularly young, is a relative newcomer at the undergraduate level. Historically, persons wishing to be prepared for careers in hospital administration in the years immediately following World War II had to obtain a master's degree at one of just a small handful of universities that offered this type of curriculum. As the number of hospitals grew (thanks in part to the Hill-Burton Act), the need for professionally trained managers accelerated in response to this demand. In addition to hospitals, other forms of healthcare delivery and payment discovered that having managers who possessed the specialized knowledge of the field meant that new hires could immediately work with and understand the unique nuances that make health care fundamentally different from any other business enterprise. Whether the locus of practice was in physician practices, pharmaceuticals, insurance, or long-term care, graduates with healthcare management preparation were well positioned to quickly assume leadership roles in their organizations.

By the early 1970s, a new form appeared on the healthcare management education landscape. While the large and well established graduate degree granting programs continued to focus on hospital management, a small number of undergraduate degree programs began to emerge across the country. These degrees were much more diverse than the traditional residential programs that expected students to study at their respective schools full time. While some of the undergraduate programs fit this mold (and continue to do so), others were designed to meet the needs of a different type of learner with very different expectations. In many cases, the “typical” student was a full-time working adult who was attending school part-time. In others, the student was already working in the healthcare field in some sort of clinical capacity and needed to complete their degrees in order to advance within their organization. Other programs evolved to fill specific niches in physician practice and long-term care. However, regardless of where the program was located and who the students were, they all

had one thing in common and that was preparing students for entry-level management jobs in their respective organizations. The Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA) brought undergraduate degree programs on board and in the 1980s began to offer what ultimately became certification, with the goal of creating a desired standard for curriculum, student support, and program infrastructure including adequate numbers of specifically trained faculty.

In 2006, undergraduate healthcare management education became a widely accepted method for preparing entry-level healthcare leaders. While many of the graduates from our programs ultimately seek their master's degrees, the vast majority either begin work or continue their careers in the field. Given this trend, undergraduate programs must be eminently practical. For too long the only textbooks on the market were either written for graduate programs, which while good, had a very strong theoretical focus, or alternatively for current managers who needed a "how-to" book that ended up being theory free. Undergraduate students needed something midway between these two extremes—the combination of both theory and application that would neither overwhelm nor create a collective yawn.

The book that you hold contains the work of a number of well known and important educators and scholars whose careers have recognized the vital importance of undergraduate healthcare management education. Drs. Buchbinder and Shanks have done a masterful job in selecting topics and authors and putting them together in a meaningful and coherent manner. Each chapter of the book is designed to give the student the core content that must become part of the repertoire of each and every healthcare manager, whether entry level or senior executive. Each of the chapters and accompanying cases serve to bring to life what it means to be a truly competent healthcare manager.

As you read this book, keep in mind two themes that are woven throughout and will be used in each and every professional setting you might find yourself in. First, healthcare management is at its core, a relationship business. Your ability to build, grow, and maintain relationships will be the key determinant to your future success. These relationships are all around you and will include management colleagues, clinicians, payers, patients, regulators, legislators, and uncounted other stakeholders. At the heart of effective relationships will be your willingness to listen carefully to



others and to yourself. The second theme is that of organizational excellence. To quote my friend Quint Studer, people in the healthcare business are driven by “purpose, worthwhile work, and making a difference.” In this time of continuous environmental change (some might even call it turbulence), what role do you have in creating and sustaining organizations that are truly excellent? For that matter, what does excellence mean to you and to those around you?—Excellence represents the “north star” that guides the actions of the organization and those within.

This textbook will be an invaluable guide as you seek to create the map that will guide you in your healthcare management career. Our job is to create and sustain the systems that allow dedicated and skilled clinicians to deliver the safest and highest quality patient care possible. I congratulate you on your decision to become a leader in the field and a hero to your community.

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# Preface

Never underestimate the power of a good cup of coffee. The idea for this book came about in October, 2003, when Nancy Shanks and I sat down for java and breakfast and began to talk about the field of healthcare management, the role of educators, and the courses we were teaching. When the conversation turned to our introductory courses, we both said—almost in unison: “I’m not happy with the text I’m using.” We were unhappy because the books that were available were either too advanced (or too simple) and had too few learning tools for students and professors. In addition, there was a dearth of case studies related to healthcare management in a wide variety of settings. As we emptied a pot of coffee, becoming giddy with caffeine, we took turns telling each other: “You should write a textbook!” At last, we agreed that we should write a textbook together.

We turned to our colleagues for their collective expertise and conducted an online survey of 37 healthcare management educators. Much like Goldilocks, our colleagues, too, had yet to find a textbook that was “Just right!” Like us, they found that many of the healthcare management textbooks were: too dense and over the head of the student; contained no appropriate case studies; too expensive; and didn’t contain enough graphs, tables, charts, or figures. The same survey enabled us to identify which topic areas were critical for an introductory textbook in healthcare management.

After we shared the results of the survey with our colleagues, we sent out a call for chapter authors and case studies. Master teachers and researchers with expertise in each topic stepped forward and offered to assist us with this exciting project. Each contributor knew exactly what did or did not work in the classroom and was eager for a student-friendly, professor-friendly textbook. We are grateful to all our authors for their insightful, well-written chapters and realistic case studies. Without them, this dream textbook would not have become a reality.

This textbook will be useful to a wide variety of students and programs. Undergraduate students in healthcare management, nursing, public health, and allied health programs will find the writing to be engaging. In addition, students in graduate programs in discipline-specific areas, such as business administration, nursing, pharmacy, occupational therapy, public administration, and public health will find the materials theory-based and readily applicable to real-world settings. Along with lively writing and contents critical for a foundation in healthcare management, this book has the following features:

- Learning objectives and discussion questions for each chapter;
- Instructors' resources online for each chapter, including PowerPoint slides, sample syllabus, and test items;
- Fifteen case studies in a wide variety of settings, in an assortment of healthcare management topics; and,
- A case study guide, with rubrics for evaluation of student performance, enabling professors at every level of experience to hit the ground running on that first day of classes.

We hope you enjoy this book as much as we enjoyed bringing it together. May your classrooms be bursting with excited discussions, and may your coffee cup always be full.

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# Acknowledgments

This book is the result of a 3-year process that involved the majority of the United States' leaders in excellence in undergraduate healthcare management education. We are deeply grateful to the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA) faculty, members, and staff for all the support, both in time and expertise, in developing the proposal for this textbook and for providing us with excellent feedback at every step of the way.

In the beginning, Nancy and I met over coffee at a meeting: the AUPHA Undergraduate Workshop in Nashville in October of 2003. After consultation with our colleagues and friends, we decided to launch a survey to delineate the key topics to be covered and the deficiencies in the marketplace this book needed to address.

Lydia Reed, CEO of AUPHA, was instrumental in assisting us with getting this survey out to AUPHA Undergraduate Program Directors (PDs). The PDs, in turn, were generous and giving with their time and suggestions. Their guidance enabled us to avoid the beginner authors' dilemma of writing the right book—for the wrong audience. Thanks, thanks, and thanks again to our Undergraduate colleagues!

Louis Rubino, Chair of the AUPHA Undergraduate Program Committee, gave us a bully pulpit by providing us with time on the Undergraduate Program agenda to present the findings of our survey, to refine our proposal, and to get the word out that this book was coming. When we asked for contributors for both chapters and case studies, we were overwhelmed with the level of responsiveness from our colleagues.

Over 30 authors have made this contributed text a one-of-a-kind book. Not only are our authors experts in their disciplines and research niches, they are also practiced teachers and mentors. As we read each chapter and case study, we could hear the voices of each author. It has been a privilege and honor to work with each and everyone of them: Patricia Alt, Joanna

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