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Book Review

*Total Care Management: Physician Executive's
Guide to Medical Management for the 21st Century*
by Raymond J. Fabius, MD, CPE, FACPE

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Book Review

Total Care Management: Physician Executive's Guide to Medical Management for the 21st Century by Raymond J. Fabius, MD, CPE, FACPE

Recent polls suggest that 60% of Americans believe that managed care harms the quality of medical care, and 52% say the managed care movement has been "a bad thing." Further research has shown that 61% of Americans believe that the health care system requires fundamental change, and an additional 25% want it completely rebuilt.^{1,2} While opponents of managed care have used such sentiment to call for an end to the system, supporters like Raymond J. Fabius, MD, have instead proposed some improvements. In his book, *Total Care Management: A Physician Executive's Guide to Medical Management for the 21st Century*, the senior Medical Director at Aetna articulates a comprehensive and detailed strategy for providing high quality, cost-effective care to populations of patients.

The manual covers a broad range of topics from maternity management to credentialing and describes specific programs introduced by managed care organizations (MCOs). In a chapter entitled "A Dozen Gifts to Health Care Delivery from the Managed Care Movement," Fabius applauds MCOs for their establishment and encouragement of performance standards, practice guidelines, centers of excellence, and technology assessment. In subsequent chapters, he discusses ways in which MCOs can develop and apply these measures to improve healthcare quality and reduce costs.

Perhaps one of the best examples of these improvement and cost-saving measures is disease management. An entire section of the book is devoted to patient management in asthma, diabetes, and other areas of care. The author argues that management must shift from being reactive to being proactive and recommends that MCOs take an aggressive approach to identifying patient populations for early intervention. Sources of identification include referrals, emergency department visits, re-hospitalizations, specialty equipment use, prescriptions filled, and most importantly, the primary care physician (PCP). Fabius suggests financially rewarding physicians for identifying patients who meet the criteria for various disease management plans of MCOs. His early intervention plan includes education of patients, clinicians, and staff through pamphlets, symposia, and practice guidelines; patient access to specialists through coordination with PCPs; and case management through appropriate uses of home care, medical equipment, and social services.

One important theme that runs throughout the book is the need to increase the number of services provided by non-physicians outside of the hospital or doctor's office. For example, normal bowel preps, IV antibiotics, IV hydration, and other preoperative services can all be performed by nurses in a patient's home. Further, the author recommends saving time and money by increasing the use of physician assistants and nurse practitioners for routine procedures and checkups. In fact, he asserts, everyone in health care delivery needs to expand his or her role. For instance, medical directors will need to act as statisticians to interpret the increasing

mass of performance data available, and nurses and office staff will need education so that they are more engaged in the care of individual patients.

Considering the lack of trust that many people have in the health care system, acceptance of greater MCO involvement in identifying and intervening with at-risk populations may be difficult. In the last chapter, "Pulling It All Together: Quality of Care – As Good As It Gets?" Robin L. Smith, MD, MBA, and Neil Schlackman, MD, point to *quality of care*, not managed care, as the problem. "Physician executives will need to make a far more systematic and concerted effort than we have made to date to improve it." With *Total Care Management*, Dr. Raymond Fabius provides a valuable resource for medical managers ready to meet this challenge. His book is an excellent guide to constructing patient management systems that improve healthcare delivery for all.

***Total Care Management: A Physician Executive's Guide to Medical Management for the 21st Century* by Raymond J. Fabius, MD, CPE, FACPE**

References

1. The Harris Poll. June 29-July 5, 2000. N=1,009 adults nationwide. MoE +/-3
2. CBS News Poll. July 13-14, 1999. N=722 adults nationwide.

About the Author

Jonathan Grieb is the Duke University 2001 Summer Intern in the Office of Health Policy and Clinical Outcomes, Thomas Jefferson University.