As Americans, we’ve traditionally considered our health care the best in the world. In recent decades, however, this perception has been turned on its head. An ever-lengthening series of studies, books, and articles suggest that not only is the U.S. not the best in the world, but also that it is bloated, wasteful, and among the worst when compared with other industrialized nations.

It is a grim portrait. In the U.S., we spend more per person than any country in the world, and there is evidence that too much of that money is wasted on overuse and administrative inefficiencies. Certainly, it is true that the existing care-delivery system is fragmented, sometimes dysfunctional, and nearly always complex.

However, authors Michael J. Dowling and Charles Kenney have a different perspective, arguing that this “decline narrative” is both outdated and overstated. Instead, they suggest American health care is on a positive pathway and that the decline narrative’s negativity makes it more difficult to discern innovations and improvements.

“Yes, health care has many problems” says, Dowling. “But there has been significant progress and new developments hold the promise of better, more affordable care.”

Dowling and Kenney’s new book, Health Care Reboot - Megatrends Energizing American Medicine injects a much-needed dose of optimism into the national health care debate. The book makes a compelling case that a series of powerful trends are leading the nation’s health care system toward greater quality, safety, access, and affordability. These trends include:

- Historic breakthroughs in treatments for heart disease and cancer
- Integration of behavioral health services into primary care
- Recognizing and acting upon the broad effect of social determinants of health
- Consumer empowerment focused on measures and outcomes that matter most to patients
- Paying for value rather than volume causing doctors and hospitals to shift to a newly aggressive proactive approach to caring for patients

“We call upon providers, employers, consumers, government regulators, and insurers, as well as elected officials, to take two affirmative steps” says, Dowling. “First, recognize the reality on the ground today—that the decline narrative is outdated and that the megatrends are leading U.S. healthcare in a positive direction. Second, embrace the reform agenda for the benefit of the health and financial well-being of the nation by plunging into the cultural, economic, and political fray and arguing for the reform megatrend-based agenda.”

Together with co-author, Kenney, Dowling focuses on the progress that U.S. health care has seen in recent decades; offering numerous examples that reflect the major advances made in quality, safety, access, and performance measurement. By exploring major transformative trends, readers will have a better understanding of the improvement being made in health care and the positive future ahead.
MICHAEL J. DOWLING is president and chief executive officer of Northwell Health, New York’s largest health care provider and private employer, with 23 hospitals, more than 665 outpatient locations, $11 billion in annual revenue and 66,000+ employees. One of health care’s most-influential executives, Mr. Dowling has received numerous awards, including the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, an honorary degree from the prestigious Queen’s University Belfast and his selection as the Grand Marshal of the 2017 St. Patrick’s Day Parade in NYC. He also serves as chair of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

Prior to joining Northwell in 1995, he served in New York State government for 12 years as the chief health and human services advisor to former Governor Mario Cuomo. Earlier, he was a professor of social policy and an assistant dean of the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Services. He started his career as a caseworker in the New York City schools.

“Refreshing, readable, conscientious, and encouraging examination of American health care. Makes a cogent, credible case that despite problems and flaws, which are discussed and dissected, the overall trend is hearteningly positive.”

Steve Forbes — Chairman & Editor-in-Chief, Forbes

“Health Care Reboot is a brilliant contribution which synthesizes key ideas from top thought leaders with observations from the front lines of care. The result is a uniquely positive perspective which is based not upon optimism that things will get better, but hope that they can get better if we can collectively rise to the occasion.”

Thomas Lee, MD — Press Ganey and NEJM Catalyst

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