

# Praise for *Overcharged*

“The biggest threat to America’s prosperity, and even its solvency, is the mismatch between the amazingly and increasingly competent science of medicine and the amazingly and increasingly incompetent pricing and allocation of it. Now come Silver and Hyman to frighten us with the facts, and to point to ways the biggest player in the health care game – the government – can stop making matters worse.”

—George F. Will, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and author

“As CEO of Whole Foods, which spent more than \$250 million on health care for our team members last year, I thought I knew how inefficient health care was. *Overcharged* opened my eyes to how truly dysfunctional America’s health care system has become. This is not capitalism. Capitalism forces me to spend every day trying to provide greater value at a lower price. Silver and Hyman show that health care does not work that way — not because health care is special, but because Americans have let government and insurers control our health care dollars, and more of the same will only make things worse. Change will come, but only when consumers control their health care dollars and begin exerting massive pressure from below.”

—John Mackey, CEO, Whole Foods

“This blood-boiling book will have you ready to root for serious change in our medical system where the patient—not third parties—is in charge. “

—Steve Forbes, chairman and editor-in-chief, Forbes Media

“*Overcharged* is a detailed, useful, and timely diagnosis of what ails America’s health care system from a free-market perspective. Anyone interested in how to bring health coverage to more Americans – whether agreeing or disagreeing with the authors’ view of what ails American health care – will gain greatly from their penetrating analyses of every facet of the system.”

—Michael Hiltzik, Pulitzer Prize-winning business columnist, *Los Angeles Times*

“*Overcharged* is a compelling answer to the feeling of helplessness in health care. Charlie Silver and David Hyman take on medicine’s problems and find a solution: the voice of consumers, empowered and in charge.”

—David Cutler, Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics, Department of Economics, Harvard University

“*Overcharged* uncovers all the flaws of the American health care system, from monopolistic drug-company pricing to the self-serving actions of physician specialty organizations to the pernicious impact of a broken fee-for-service system. Anyone who believes the medical care we provide in the United States is the best in the world will be shocked to learn the truth.”

– Robert Pearl, M.D., author of *Mistreated: Why We Think We’re Getting Good Health Care and Why We’re Usually Wrong*

“*Overcharged* presents a provocative point of view and thoughtful analysis on how to control surging U.S. health care costs without resorting to ideological clichés and simplistic thinking, all in a fun-to-read style.”

—Michael L. Millenson, author of *Demanding Medical Excellence: Doctors and Accountability in the Information Age*

“Charles Silver and David Hyman’s elegant book, *Overcharged*, reveals a stark truth that every informed citizen needs to know: our health system is broken. Their book is uniquely valuable, a tour de force of the root causes behind health system malfunction. *Overcharged* is powerful and beautifully written, filled with vivid examples of how, and why, Americans are short-changed. It will transform the way scholars and the public understand health insurance. Whatever your political persuasion, we need to all start with the core reality that Americans are ill-served by our health system.”

—Lawrence O. Gostin, professor and founding O’Neill Chair in Global Health Law, Georgetown University Law Center

“Conventional wisdom says there are two things wrong with American health care: it is inefficient, ineffective, corrupt, often harmful, and overpriced—and not everyone has equal access to it. Obamacare targeted only the second criticism.

*Overcharged* takes direct and accurate aim at the first. It shows the cause of those failings is the insurance designs government creates or influences in both the public and private sectors—that the ‘cost-unconsciousness’ those designs promote also give[s] rise to ‘quality neglect’—and that solving these problems requires putting individual patient-consumers back in the driver’s seat with the incentives and information to make a difference, which requires reducing excessive government control. This point of view has never before been presented so persuasively and perceptively. *Overcharged* deserves serious attention.”

—Mark V. Pauly, Bendheim Professor, Department of Health Care Management, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

“*Overcharged* shows the outrageous prices and anti-competitive practices in U.S. health care are not the consequence of free markets, but of big government.”

—Eamonn Butler, director, Adam Smith Institute

“The sheer complexity of health care can lead otherwise sensible people to abandon their confidence in basic economics. In this comprehensive yet impressively accessible book, Charles Silver and David Hyman call us back to basics and demonstrate that only genuine consumer pressure acting from below to demand value can fix American health care.”

— Yuval Levin, editor of *National Affairs*

“Whether you are right, left, or center you’ll find something in this book to make you happy, something to make you angry, and (because the writing is so good) something to make you laugh—ruefully. And whoever you are, there is a lot to learn from this book and its clear analysis of the mess that is our health care system. Different people will have different views of the authors’ proposals, but no one will come away without new insight.

— Timothy M. Westmoreland, visiting professor of law, Georgetown University

“Americans lead the world in health care spending, and we are less healthy than others in comparably wealthy countries who spend much less. *Overcharged*

shines light on every corner of the system, employing insights from the latest research to illuminate the numerous reasons behind our excessive spending. The book offers a number of proposals radically different from our latest attempts to bend the cost curve. Silver and Hyman provide a roadmap for the major overhaul our healthcare system desperately needs.”

– Kathryn Zeiler, professor of law, Boston University

“Apologists dismiss each heartrending failure of the National Health Service as what you get from trying to do socialized medicine on the cheap. *Overcharged* reminds us that profligate socialism is no better.”

– Daniel Hannan, member of the European Parliament

“Silver and Hyman powerfully demonstrate how the misguided incentives in our system – especially those generated by the third-party-payment – push up the price of everything in health care and even distort the nature of care itself. Their examination of the unintended consequences of government efforts to control costs are a strong rejoinder to those hoping for the magic bullet solution of a single payer system.”

– David Goldhill, author of *Catastrophic Care*

“Read this insightful and witty book! If you’re concerned about equitable access to medical care, you may be outraged – but you’ll learn about profound failures of our health care system that you weren’t aware of. And you’ll be better prepared to offer compassionate solutions to our system’s crises of cost and value.”

– Gregg Bloche, professor of law, Georgetown University

“There are only three ways to pay for healthcare - tax, insurance or cash. All countries use a mix with politicians telling you that your system is the best. This fantastic book looks at the major faults of the free market US system. Markets are supposed to drive competition. But the decision makers in healthcare are often not the customer who may not actually care about cost. As an oncologist in Britain's NHS, I have struggled for decades with the mega inflation of cancer care costs. How can any system spend half a million dollars for a drug to keep an 80 year old alive for another year? And even in tax based systems like ours the rich and educated know how to get better care simply by demanding it. Clearly written and fun to read this book explains the conundrum of delivering optimal care. It is essential reading for everybody in the business as ageing, demanding

populations consult Dr Google and seek out their perceived best option. There is no good universal solution but understanding the problems can help to make things better. This is a landmark publication of tremendous significance. What a great book!"

– Dr. Karol Sikora, Dean, University of Buckingham Medical School, U.K.

"Wow! The stories in this book are so unbelievable, you will wish that they had been made up. Buy a copy and read it now – to find out all the ways in which things have gone wrong with the American health care system. It's just unreal."

– Luke M. Froeb, William C. Oehmig Chair of Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, Owen Graduate School of Management, Vanderbilt University.

"In Europe and the United Kingdom, the US healthcare system is often held out as an example of market mechanisms gone mad. We are asked to believe that insufficient state intervention is responsible for wealthy Americans receiving highly expensive, sub-standard treatment and for poorer Americans receiving no meaningful access to healthcare at all. Overcharged demolishes this myth. The unpalatable, social Darwinist tendencies of US healthcare are frequently a direct consequence of government intervention, however well intentioned. In contrast, where the market is able to thrive – for example in competition in retail medicines – we see deprivation swiftly eliminated and universal access guaranteed. The case and analysis put forward in Overcharged have the power to change the healthcare debate on both sides of the Atlantic. It is a really important and illuminating contribution to the debate."

– Mark Littlewood, Director General, Institute of Economic Affairs, U.K.

"A devastating description of the U.S. health care system and its pathologies. Anyone reading it would be stupid not to do their best to stay healthy."

—Ronen Avraham, University of Texas Law School