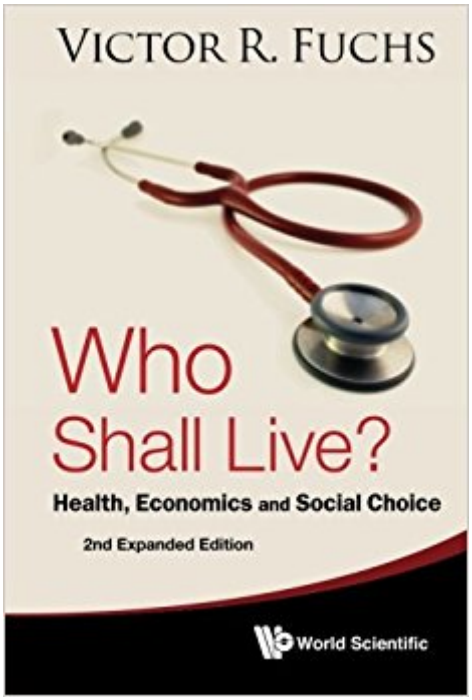
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Who Shall Live? Health, Economics And Social Choice (2Nd Expanded Edition)



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Synopsis

Since the first edition of Who Shall Live? (1974) over 100,000 students, teachers, physicians, and general readers from more than a dozen fields have found this book to be a reader-friendly, authoritative introduction to economic concepts applied to health and medical care. Fuchs provides clear explanations and memorable examples of the importance of the non-medical determinants of health, the dominant role of physicians in health care expenditures, the necessity of choices about health at the individual and societal levels, and many other compelling themes. Now, in a new introduction of some 8,000 words including new tables and figures, Fuchs, often called the “Dean of health economists”, concisely summarizes the major changes of the past 37 years in health, medical care, and health policy. He focuses primarily on the United States but includes remarks about health policy in other countries, and addresses the question of whether national health care systems are becoming more alike. In addition to reviewing changes, the introduction explains why health expenditures grow so rapidly, why health spending in the United States is so much greater than in other countries, and what physicians need in order to practice cost-effective medicine. This second expanded edition also includes recent papers by Fuchs on the economics of aging, the socio-economic correlates of health, the future of health economics, and his policy recommendations for the United States to secure universal coverage, control of costs, and improvement in the quality of care. As was true of the first expanded edition (1998), this book will be welcomed by current students and life-long learners in economics, other social and behavioral sciences, medicine, public health, law, business, public policy, and other fields who want to understand the relation between health, economics, and social choice.

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Customer Reviews

Fuchs returns to and expands on themes that have earned him a well-deserved reputation as both a great health economist and the most insightful health policy analyst on the current scene... His proposal for health care reform remains the most attractive solution. --Michael Grossman, CUNY Graduate CenterThis is simply the best book there is to introduce students and others to the issues about health services viewed from an economics perspective... It is accessible...rigorous analysis...[and] beautifully written--rare for an economist. --Robinson Hollister, Swarthmore CollegeThis is deservedly a classic book...Its analysis, accessibility, and lucidity of exposition are as fresh as four decades ago...There is a spiffy new introduction that gives Fuchs' reflections on the events of the intervening years. --Joseph P. Newhouse, Harvard University[This] comes at a critical time when the nation is anxious about the direction of health care. [Fuchs] has deftly re-established the context in which health policy decisions should be made. Policy experts and decision makers should pay attention to Fuchs' new edition. --Leonard D. Schaeffer, University of Southern California[T]he issues Fuchs revisits...are even more salient today...he remains one of the wisest health policy thinkers as is apparent in new discussions of health care spending. I gave the first edition to medical students...Today, I'll do the same. --Steven A. Schroeder, M.D., UC San FranciscoVictor Fuchs is the most perspicacious, prolific, influential--and durable--of the small cadre of economists who founded the field of health economics...his analysis of health ...should be required reading for every state and federal legislator. --Kenneth E. Warner, University of MichiganThirty-seven years ago, Vic Fuchs offered common sense, keen insights, and incisive data...about American health and health care...Every doctor, policy maker, and concerned citizen should listen...Vic Fuchs' Who Shall Live? Is for you. --Richard Zeckhauser, Harvard University

Since the first edition of Who Shall Live? (1974) over 100,000 students, teachers, physicians, and general readers from more than a dozen fields have found this book to be a reader-friendly, authoritative introduction to economic concepts applied to health and medical care. Fuchs provides clear explanations and memorable examples of the importance of the non-medical determinants of health, the dominant role of physicians in health care expenditures, the necessity of choices about health at the individual and societal levels, and many other compelling themes. Now, in a new introduction of some 8,000 words including new tables and figures, Fuchs, often called the "Dean of

health economists," concisely summarizes the major changes of the past 37 years in health, medical care, and health policy. He focuses primarily on the United States but includes remarks about health policy in other countries, and addresses the question of whether national health care systems are becoming more alike. In addition to reviewing changes, the introduction explains why health expenditures grow so rapidly, why health spending in the United States is so much greater than in other countries, and what physicians need in order to practice cost-effective medicine. This second expanded edition also includes recent papers by Fuchs on the economics of aging, the socio-economic correlates of health, the future of health economics, and his policy recommendations for the United States to secure universal coverage, control of costs, and improvement in the quality of care. As was true of the first expanded edition (1998), this book will be welcomed by current students and life-long learners in economics, other social and behavioral sciences, medicine, public health, law, business, public policy, and other fields who want to understand the relation between health, economics, and social choice.

Best analysis currently available.

Brilliant, and timely, framework of the US healthcare industry by the 'Dean of HC economics' Fuchs

arrived as described. Thank you.

good

Victor Fuchs is the father of health care economics and this is a classic book, updated to 2011. It should be used in college courses and read by anyone interested in health care. Fuchs has been one of the most important people in this field for many years and this book is a great example of what a scholar can accomplish.Midwest Independent Research, educational websites. Improving health, mwir-improvinghealth.blogspot. There is a book list here.

In an effort to get up to speed on healthcare economics, I purchase Victor Fuchs' _Who Shall Live?_ and Arnold Kling's _Crisis of Abundance: Rethinking How We Pay for Health Care_ together in hopes of obtaining a balanced view of the subject. I was not disappointed in either book.Fuchs' book was originally published in 1975, but now contains new material added in the wake of the Clinton era attempt at creating universal health care. Regardless, the original material is just as valid

now as then. Fuchs outlines the roles of patients, doctors, hospitals, drugs, and financing in contributing to the costs of health care. It is written by an accomplished health care economist, but for the laymen, so mathematics does not show up frequently. In clear terms, Fuchs goes through a number of standard arguments, providing data to back up the arguments that show that some standard arguments are correct and some are wrong. After reading this, the most rabid pro-universal health care enthusiast should have their expectations tempered. I don't know if the most rabid enthusiast against universal health care will be won over by his arguments in favor of some type of system. Yes, he is in favor of something; though it is not clear that he would support any of the current proposals, it seems very clear that he is against some of the arguments used to support those proposals.Kling's book was written much more recently. Kling's approach requires a great deal more understanding by his audience of some of the mathematical and economic arguments offered. Kling offers more specifics in the way of policy proposals, but I'm not sure how realistic they are.One thing that both men seem to agree on is that the current system is far to prone to apply too much expensive technology for too little return. We are nearly to the point where doctors will order an MRI scan for a hangnail on the basis that we don't want to overlook something (and besides, "someone else" is paying for it). Insurance against catastrophic, unexpected, high expenses has given way to a system in which everyone wants insurance to pay for band-aids for their boo-boos. Doctors are unusually resistant to scientific management (including standard practices and checklists) and more likely to "go with their gut", follow tradition, or make moral cases for heroic efforts for every case no matter how slight the effect on outcome. Because of this, there is as much variation in costs and life expectancy between regions in the US as there is between the US and European countries (and there is as much difference in infant mortality and life expectancy between income groups in Great Britain as in the US). So both seem skeptical about the influence of finance or maintaining a commitment to insulating the average person from cost, both seem to emphasize that we should concentrate more on helping the very poor and very sick, and both seem to think that a health care plan should include some commitment to a research body that endorses (not mandates) standard approaches to diagnosis. I was surprised that neither put any emphasis on tort reform.I enjoyed both books and found something to think about in each, but if I had to pick one to recommend to people to come up to speed on the issue, it would be the Fuchs book.

On reading this book I kept experiencing the urge to wave it in the face of my well-meaning friends and wider acquaintance and force them to read it under duress. Quite simply, it makes perfect sense. Content-wise, I think the review under the hardback edition will fill you in more objectively

than I could hope to.What I do want to do is recommend this book to any med students struggling to cope with their seemingly-freakish interest in health economics and policy. The med school fare is almost totally devoid of any discussion of such issues, which I may consider criminal considering doctors work as part of a system and not in isolation, but is hardly surprising given the near-universal lack of interest amongst the students. Stop trying to bully your friends into arguing with you and put the energy into getting your library to buy a copy of this book. Then consider selling off your anatomy textbook to pay for your own.

I use this to teach graduate level health economics. Pay attention to Fuchs - he knows how to assess health care policy at the root of the problem.

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