

Preface

Healthcare is an important industry that touches most, if not all of us at some time in our lives. Healthcare is noted for using leading edge technologies and embracing new scientific discoveries to enable better cures for diseases and better means to enable early detection of most life threatening diseases. However, the healthcare industry globally, and in the US specifically, has been extremely slow to adopt technologies that focus on better practice management and administrative needs. Presently, healthcare is grappling with many challenges both nationally and globally, including escalating costs, a move to a preventative care environment and a technology savvy patient with high expectations. This in turn necessitates prudent healthcare administration and management in order to realise superior healthcare delivery. A critical aspect to facilitating optimal healthcare delivery is a focus on value.

Value of healthcare operations incorporates an examination of quality over cost, but this goal has distinct aspects depending upon one's perspective, and only some of these aspects are primarily monetary. To patients, the value proposition may be enhanced by reducing time spent in obtaining healthcare, lowering stress and worry and increasing satisfaction with the experience. To physicians and clinical support personnel, value may be enhanced by the ability to remotely access medical records and monitor prescribed regimens and patient symptoms. To managers and investors, value may be enhanced by lowering costs of delivering healthcare in ways that do not compromise access or quality. Because of the rapidly decreasing cost structure of hardware, IT is now able to provide many functions that were not previously available, such as connectivity through mobile devices. Thus, IT innovations hold great potential for enhancing the value of healthcare to patients and stakeholders. When we look at healthcare, we can see that in order to enhance value we must not simply focus on clinical care but also be cognizant of education, research, and administrative needs of this industry.

It is not possible in one volume to address all the factors that can facilitate healthcare value creation. This book presents a miscellany of initiatives written by leading international scholars and practitioners aimed at addressing various aspects of enhancing value in healthcare operations and thereby enabling superior healthcare practice to ensue and prudent healthcare administration and management to be realised. The chapters are arranged into the following broad categories which are not necessarily mutually exclusive but taken together do help to underscore key enablers to facilitating appropriate healthcare administration and management; including: *Section I* Data and Decision Making, *Section II* Healthcare Process Aspects, *Section III* Information Communication Technology Issues, *Section IV* Patient-Provider Interface, *Section V* Policy Implications and *Section VI* Theoretical Considerations.

The book is intended for students, scholars, practitioners, policy makers, healthcare advocates and everyone who is interested in providing a better healthcare experience. Enjoy reading and hopefully the following pages will serve to inspire readers to also work towards designing and developing better healthcare solutions.

The Editor,

Nilmini Wickramasinghe
Epworth HealthCare, Australia & Deakin University, Australia
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