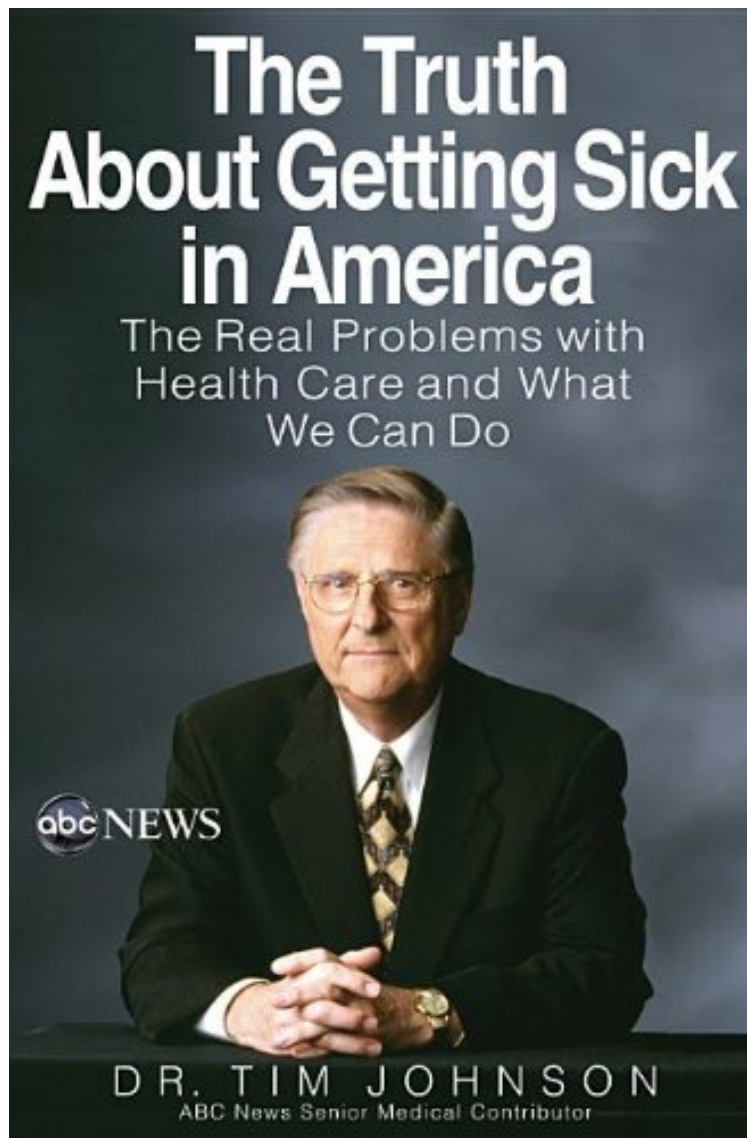


(Download pdf) The Truth About Getting Sick in America: The Real Problems with Health Care and What We Can Do

The Truth About Getting Sick in America: The Real Problems with Health Care and What We Can Do

Tim Johnson

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Tim Johnson : The Truth About Getting Sick in America: The Real Problems with Health Care and What We Can Do before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Truth About Getting Sick in America: The Real Problems with Health Care and What We Can Do:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Brief but Powerful
By Keith Noren
You have seen him for years on TV reporting on Medicine. Now in early retirement, he gives a well thought out and passionate plea for changes in our medical system. He directly faces the fact that in the US, medical costs are twice that of the average of all other OECD countries while receiving less than average outcomes (so many deny this simple fact with all kinds of contortions/anecdotes). He gives much data throughout the book. Did you know that the US ranks last among the OECD countries in preventable deaths avoided once a serious threat to life is identified? Other "outcome" statistics the US is more middle of the road. The major culprit is that of overtesting and overtreatment that comes about because of our unregulated "fee-for-service" approach in doctoring and hospitalization. Doctors are incentivized to order too many unwarranted tests/treatments for two reasons - 1) they get a piece of the profits whether or not the test/treatment is effective and 2) (to a lesser degree in his estimation) they cover themselves from malpractice suits. These motivations are both "conflict of interests" and reinforce each other (a doctor or medical staff may not even be able to distinguish between these motivations). This explains the twice the cost at about the same level of outcomes. Solution is to have independent health officials establish rules (protocols- but he did not use this term) for cost-effective tests/treatments that must be followed. He goes into details how Germany does this. He also suggests "no-fault" tort reform with standardized compensation for bad medicine when it happens with some criminal provisions for malicious bad practice over and above. Both incentives to overtest/overtreat need addressing. He also proposes more standardized pay with more incentive for doctors to go into general family practice and drastic cuts to health care insurance CEOs. He notes that in the current system, health care insurance administrative costs are 11.7% of all costs. For Medicare the administrative costs are 1.3%. But he has sympathy for the American health insurance industry (operating at small profit margin currently) recognizing that transition to more effective health care will displace many - but sometimes that is necessary. An overhaul of the chaotic state of administration is necessary now and we could learn from Medicare, VA and nations abroad. So his solutions include protocols, pay regulation, administrative streamlining. His chapter "Big Fear" anticipates the hue and cry about "big government" and "socialized medicine" inevitably "screws things up" as the smokescreen it is, promulgated by the huge medical lobbyist machine and those that believe them. He believes in privately delivered medicine (i.e. not the UK way of doctor employed by the government). He does not think the new health care plan does anything substantial to reduce costs (although he holds out hope that the insurance exchanges that the states will administer will incorporate sound controls of overtest/overtreatment). As an ordained minister he speaks eloquently of the ethical commands to heal the sick and care for the poor (his "Big Sermon" chapter). I would have liked to see more discussion of nurse practitioners (which he mentions briefly) and reducing the cost of pharmaceuticals as other means to control costs. But these omissions do not warrant a 4 star rating.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Real Problems with Health Care in the US
By bob
This is a very well written and informative book that will help you understand some of the important, but less talked points that are lost in the normal daily barrage of our everyday news and talk shows. The rising cost of Health Care in the US is real. The recent rates of rising costs are unsustainable. We need to identify problems and make constructive changes in the US Health Care industry. It's important for the public to do some homework and study the options in more depth than the brief coverage in the news and talk shows. The common person is more likely to effect changes that are more beneficial to society by taking a more proactive role in the process. History shows that relying on the good will of our congressmen, lobbyists, special interest groups, health insurance providers and health care providers more often results in lining their pockets. Their primary focus appears to be gaming the system for huge profits. Health Care insurance for the masses is key to providing more fair and better health care for everyone in the US. I think the Affordable Health Care Act is step in the right direction.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must read!
By msapers
Tim has obviously spent the time researching the issue of health care in America and has some interesting ideas on how we can resolve the problems. This is a must read for all members of Congress and our President (as well as any stakeholder in the health care industry).

In today's world, there are many hot-button topics that generate equal parts debate and confusion. At the top of that list is healthcare. For most Americans, finding out "the truth" about current problems or possible fixes is virtually impossible amidst all the emotionally charged rhetoric. Dr. Tim Johnson has been reporting on health matters for ABC since the mid-seventies, but in recent years he has spent an increasing amount of time studying our system of healthcare—or lack thereof. Many Americans fall between the cracks and do not receive any care—or receive care that is either inferior or too costly or both. Over the years, he has learned some important lessons, and in *The Truth About Getting Sick in America*, he shares those lessons and looks to the future of American healthcare.

About the Author
In 1975, Dr. Timothy Johnson M.D. joined ABC News as the medical reporter and later became the "Medical Editor" of Good Morning America when the program premiered. In over three decades at ABC News, he has reported for World News Tonight, Nightline, and 20/20. He is now the ABC News Senior Medical Contributor. Dr. Johnson is the founding editor of the Harvard Medical School Health Letter and co-editor of the Harvard Medical

School Health Letter Book. He is also co-editor of the book *Your Good Health*, co-author of *Let's Talk* and author of *Dr. Timothy Johnson's On-Call Guide to Men's Health* and *Finding God in the Questions: A Personal Journey*. Dr. Johnson is married with two children and three grandchildren.