

**VOLUME 18 | ISSUE 2 | SUMMER 2022**

## **RECENT EVENTS: 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference – Moving Forward in 2022**

### **The Grassroots Movement to Re-Design Healthcare: Preparing for the Future of Medicine (May 11, 2022)**

Almost all stakeholders have a voice in the U.S. health care system, and most of them have the resources to influence elected officials, except the everyday worker, said Marty Makary, MD, MPH, Johns Hopkins University, and New York Times bestselling author.

Many experts talk about the cost of health care in terms of its percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or the government's total budget. While these estimates are high, Dr. Makary asserts that when including hidden costs, health care's price tag is even greater, as much as half of the government's budget. When considering a pie chart of government spending, the defense budget contains health care coverage and services provided to military personnel. Also, social security recipients use a large portion of their monthly checks to pay for healthcare-related costs.

Because taxes fund the budget, everyday workers are footing the bill, he said. For a family with an annual household income of \$120,000, Dr. Makary estimates that about \$40,000 – one-third of total revenue – supports health care. This includes the family's share of their health care coverage, deductibles and co-pays paid, taxes to support government spending on healthcare, and reduced wages because of their employer's health plan costs.

Despite these outlays, about half of cancer patients report medical debt and about half admit delaying or avoiding care because of the costs, he said. This is not surprising considering the average American works paycheck to paycheck and has only about \$500 in savings.

Meanwhile, politicians are failing to address the problem. They focus on ways to fund the system rather than fixing its failings. Dr. Makary suggests that they correct pricing failures, require transparency, and address the appropriateness of care. To reduce costs, health care providers need to take a more targeted approach rather than use broad indications. For example, studies have shown that antibiotics effectively treat appendicitis, and two-thirds of patients do not need surgery. Similarly, roughly half of spine surgery is unnecessary.

Transparency also helps to cut costs. He asked if one obstetrician has a Caesarean section rate of 19%, and the other 61%, where would you direct your employees?

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In regard to COVID-19, Dr. Makary said that the pharmacy industry controlled the narrative. The government failed to provide studies on natural immunity and was late in coming out with mask guidelines.

**MARTY MAKARY, MD, MPH – New York Times Bestselling Author & Health Care Futurist**



Dr. Marty Makary is a New York Times bestselling author and health care expert at Johns Hopkins University. He writes for The Wall Street Journal and served in leadership at the World Health Organization. He is the recipient of the 2020 Business Book of the Year Award for his most recent book, *The Price We Pay*, which has been described by Steve Forbes as “A must-read for every American”. A public health researcher, he leads efforts to improve the health of populations and focuses on the “re-design of health care” to make the health care more reliable, more holistic, and more coordinated. He leads national efforts to cut the waste in the system and lower health care costs for everyday businesses and consumers. Clinically, he is the chief of Islet Transplant Surgery at Johns Hopkins and is the recipient of the Nobility in Science Award from the National Pancreas Foundation. He has been a visiting professor at over 25 medical schools, has published over 250 peer-reviewed scientific articles, and has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine. A graduate of Bucknell, Thomas Jefferson, and Harvard Universities, he completed his surgical residency at Georgetown University and his specialty training at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

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