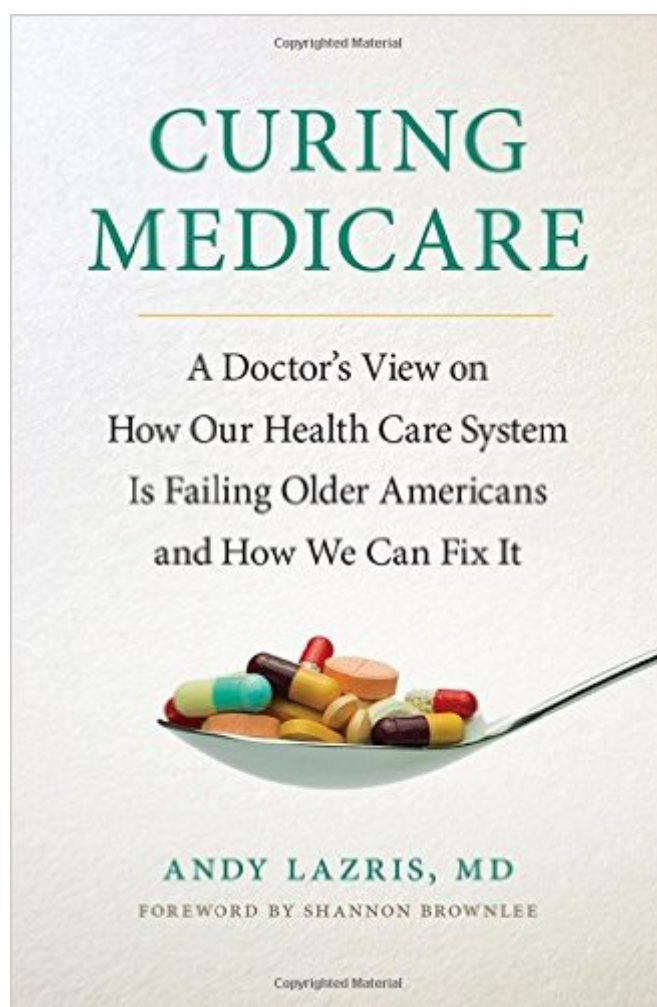


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# Curing Medicare: A Doctor's View On How Our Health Care System Is Failing Older Americans And How We Can Fix It (The Culture And Politics Of Health Care Work)



## Synopsis

Andy Lazris, MD, is a practicing primary care physician who experiences the effects of Medicare policy on a daily basis. As a result, he believes that the way we care for our elderly has taken a wrong turn and that Medicare is complicit in creating the very problems it seeks to solve. Aging is not a disease to be cured; it is a life stage to be lived. Lazris argues that aggressive treatments cannot change that fact but only get in the way and decrease quality of life. Unfortunately, Medicare's payment structure and rules deprive the elderly of the chance to pursue less aggressive care, which often yields the most humane and effective results. Medicare encourages and will pay more readily for hospitalization than for palliative and home care. It encourages and pays for high-tech assaults on disease rather than for the primary care that can make a real difference in the lives of the elderly. Lazris offers straightforward solutions to ensure Medicare's solvency through sensible cost-effective plans that do not restrict patient choice or negate the doctor-patient relationship. Using both data and personal stories, he shows how Medicare needs to change in structure and purpose as the population ages, the physician pool becomes more specialized, and new medical technology becomes available. *Curing Medicare* demonstrates which medical interventions (medicines, tests, procedures) work and which can be harmful in many common conditions in the elderly; the harms and benefits of hospitalization; the current culture of long-term care; and how Medicare often promotes care that is ineffective, expensive, and contrary to what many elderly patients and their families really want.

## Book Information

Series: The Culture and Politics of Health Care Work

Hardcover: 264 pages

Publisher: ILR Press; 2 edition (June 14, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1501702777

ISBN-13: 978-1501702778

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 0.9 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #136,066 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) [#7 in Books > Textbooks >](#)

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## Customer Reviews

First, I would recommend this book to anyone who has elderly parents or who is approaching old age themselves. The author discusses the obsessive focus of the US health care system on managing numbers rather than tailoring care to each patient. Increasingly the system rewards statistics and pours Medicare dollars into overly heroic end-of-life treatments. Lazris makes the point that we all die and, as the end approaches, it makes no sense to subject the "frail elderly" (his term) to batteries of tests, over-medication, and invasive procedures in a futile attempt to defeat death. He argues that much Medicare money would be better spent on end-of-life comfort - palliative care, home care, etc. - rather than forcing families to choose between depleting their own resources to keep a loved one at home or have them spend their final days being poked, prodded and tested in a hospital simply because Medicare will only pay for the latter. Anyway, whether you agree with his views or not, it's an informative book.

Dr. Lazris complains of many of Medicare's policies, and the negative influence they have on the practice of medicine. His complaints would be better directed to the U.S. Congress, or to our society's general attitude about health and medicine.

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