

*Who Owns Your Health? Medical Professionalism and the Market State* by Thomas Faunce, B. Med, Ph.D. utilizes the author's knowledge of history, ethics, law, philosophy, and literature to explore the conflicts between privatizing health care and the medical professional's contract with society. He starts with the Hippocratic Oath and narrates a brief history of all the "legends in the history of medicine." The reader will note the irony that we have not learned from history. An example that struck me as a faculty member in a school undergoing an accreditation review is that concerns about medical education that were identified by Flexner in 1908 are still the same today. The health care provider consistently grapples with the conflicting dual goals of private income and social standing versus an ethical and moral responsibility to patient care. Examples of this can be seen throughout history in all cultures, countries, and religions.

The author is Australian and provides an interesting perspective on the shortcomings of the United States Health Care System, especially its basis in a free market system and the role of a free market economy in driving pharmaceutical drug prices. He discusses the conflict of caring for the patient with drug patents and managed care. He feels that instruction in medical professionalism should include policymakers and legal students, along with clinical mentors, and the focus should always be on human suffering. Medical education should explore the legal system, health care management, and policymaking, in addition to medical ethics and clinical decision making. He sees medical professionalism sitting on a pyramidal base of loyalty to relieving suffering, then moving through various ethical perspectives and culminating in law and managerial principles. The market state, both locally and globally, must be acknowledged along with the pressures that it puts on health care management. According to the author, it is a system that increases wealth for the wealthy and encourages greed. Dr. Faunce argues that our current system of medical malpractice and reimbursement for health care does not work and provides arguments for moving beyond privatized health care towards a universal health care system. The market state puts undue pressure on companies to produce innovative research and new drug formulations, and then the companies require monopoly protection to recoup their costs. Government involvement in a market state has tended to worsen the problem instead of ameliorating it.

Dr. Faunce feels that reimbursement to patients who are injured should be a no-fault system and should include both medical professionals, health care administrators, and legal experts. Medical professionals upholding a patient's right to be autonomous and to maintain the confidential nature of their medical information are critical tenets of medical professionalism. Dr. Faunce feels that the market state encourages breach of confidentiality by providing a number of loopholes and a lack of judicial protection of the patient-physician relationship. In the next several chapters he uses examples from criminal law, public health and nations at war to illustrate the contradiction between the requirements of a market state and the requirements to provide medical care in a caring and professional manner. Dr. Faunce feels that a market state drives corporate greed and moves medical professionals' focus away from professional, altruistic medical care towards an employee, career mindset.

The solution put forth by the author sounds like a universal health care system paid for by taxes in which everyone has an equal right to treatment for no-fault injuries and illnesses. He proposes that the ill and disabled get "credits" to pay for transportation and copays. Corporations should consult health care professionals to guide them in decreasing human suffering both medically and in terms of global sustainability. Health care professionals should be everyday "heroes," according to Dr. Faunce, by providing the best medical care, investigating poor outcomes, apologizing for errors, and alleviating

human suffering. He concludes by saying that the age of the market state will be "looked back on with a mixture of curiosity and disgust."

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