

## Why This Book, and Why Now

The U.S. healthcare system is in crisis. Iatrogenic deaths—those caused by medical error or negligence—have soared from an estimated 80,000 in 1990 to over 400,000 annually by 2023. Behind this staggering increase is a system where cost control too often trumps patient care. Patients like the ones illustrated in the book, along with her friend June are discharged too early, receive minimal testing, and face limited treatment options—all in the name of efficiency, but at a devastating cost.

The crisis is not only about patient outcomes; it's also about who's left to care for them. In 2020 alone, more than 200,000 physicians and nurse practitioners left the profession. According to CHG Healthcare, 62% of physicians have changed careers in the past two years—up sharply from 43% in 2022. Morale is collapsing.

One driving force: managed care's dominance has replaced clinical judgment with bureaucratic micromanagement. A recent American Family Physician article calculated that to properly follow care guidelines and documentation for just the top ten chronic illnesses, a primary care doctor would need 27.3 hours per day. That's not medicine—it's burnout by design.

The fallout is visible everywhere: misdiagnosed symptoms, missed follow-ups, patients forced to interpret their own lab results, and a steep decline in physician-patient communication. These aren't isolated incidents. They're becoming the new norm.

This book exists to fight back. It gives patients the tools to protect themselves—to understand what's really happening behind the scenes, how to advocate for proper care, and when to push back. Whether it's self-advocacy or finding an outside ally, readers will learn how to navigate the system with eyes wide open.

In a healthcare environment where the cost of silence is often life itself, this book couldn't be more urgent.