

Book review

New face of the NHS

*Edited by Peter Spurgeon,
London: Royal Society of Medicine Press Ltd, 1998,
2nd edition, 306 pp,
ISBN 0 443 05969 1*

This book is aimed at anyone who wishes to have an idea of the current status of the NHS and indications about its future development. The extensive changes in the NHS in recent years, and the election a few years ago of the Labour Government, explain why it is in its third edition in seven years.

Used as a reference book it provides an up-to-date survey of the present state of the NHS.

There are seventeen chapters to the book covering the following:

- Population centred and patient focused purchasing: the UK experience
- A public health perspective
- Planning and internal markets
- The changing NHS and the finance function
- Assessing efficiency in the NHS: a case of unfulfilled potential?
- Managing information and information technology in the NHS
- Proving and improving the quality of national health services: past, present and future
- Managed care: a route map for exploring health policy changes

- Human Resource Management in the NHS-AD2001
- Developing managers for the late 1990s
- Of confidence and identity: the doctor in management
- Managing stress in health care organisations
- Future patterns of primary health care
- General practice: natural building block for a population-focused NHS
- Care in the community
- Evidence-based practice: a new era in health care?
- Public involvement in the NHS

The emphasis on the economic and financial aspects of the NHS is clearly brought out.

It is more a reference book than one that is intended to be read from beginning to end. Indeed the way the book has been put together makes it difficult to read right through.

A different expert has written each chapter. This has its advantages and its disadvantages. Of particular merit is the possibility to read a given chapter and gain a clear understanding of the various elements pertaining to a particular subject. Against this, when reading the book from beginning to end there is a certain amount of duplication and a lack of flow from one chapter to another that can only be resolved by considerable editing.

Bill Hunter