



# Designing Care: Aligning the Nature and Management of Health Care

*Richard M. J. Bohmer*

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Today's health-care providers face growing criticism from policy makers and patients alike. As costs continue to spiral upward and concerns about quality of care escalate, the debate has focused on how to finance health care. Yet funding solutions can't address the underlying questions: Why have costs risen in the first place? And how can we improve the quality and affordability of care? In *Designing Care*, Harvard Business School professor Richard Bohmer argues that these fundamental questions must be answered. A medical doctor himself, Bohmer explains that health-care professionals are tasked with providing two very different types of care—sequential and iterative. With sequential care, a patient can be quickly diagnosed and given predictable, reliable, and low-cost care. But in the case of iterative care, a patient's condition is unknown, and tremendous resources may be required for diagnosis and treatment, often with uncertain outcomes. Bohmer shows that to reduce costs and manage care effectively, sequential and iterative care situations require different management systems. Through stories and cases drawn from years in the field, he reveals how health-care providers can successfully manage both modes. To do so, they must reevaluate traditional roles and embrace continuous learning across the organization. The benefits of this operational redesign? The predictable, responsive, and lower-cost care today's health-care leaders—and patients—seek.

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