



New Episode of “Prescriptions for Health Reform” Available At BlueCrossFoundation.org

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AUGUST 7, 2009 — Journalist Julie Salamon, who spent a year shadowing employees at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn for her book *Hospital: Man, Woman, Birth, Death Infinity. Plus Red Tape, Bad Behavior, Money, God, and Diversity on Sterioids*, talks about the business pressures on hospitals and how they impact the delivery of care, the complexity of running a 700-bed facility, and the need for community-based services.

- **Salamon on the impact of fiscal pressure on hospitals:** “[I]t’s a business, even a not-for-profit hospital is a business, and because there’s so much pressure to move patients through this system. ... What it does is it just puts enormous pressure on everybody to keep the patients moving through the system, and give them good care at the same time. What gets lost? I would hear doctors constantly talk about just the time to sit around and have a cup of coffee and discuss a case.”
- **Salamon on what hospitals are doing to improve care delivery:** “[T]here’s constant effort by the parts of people working in the hospital to improve the system. So the big system is in such a dire situation, and the amounts of money involved in it and the vested interests are huge. However, hospital by hospital, floor by floor in a hospital, things can change mightily just by looking at what works and doesn’t work and being very methodical about fixing systems.”
- **Salamon on the individual mandate requirement of Massachusetts health reform:** “I think it’s a good idea. I think short term, I think I know that it’s going to increase the pressure on hospitals and physicians, because all of a sudden, you have a huge group of people that couldn’t go for medical care, lining up. There aren’t the resources available to give them expedient care. I think like any new program, everything has to work the wrinkles out of the system, but I think at least you’re working out the wrinkles of availability as opposed to unavailability.”

A transcript of the podcast interview is available here:

<http://bluecrossfoundation.org/~media/Files/Podcast/Podcast%20Transcripts/090807SalamonTranscriptFIN.pdf>

Listen to the podcast here: <http://bluecrossfoundation.org/Multimedia/Podcasts/Prescriptions.aspx>

New episodes of “Prescriptions for Health Reform” are uploaded every two weeks at BlueCrossFoundation.org; they are also available via free subscription from iTunes. Past episodes of “Prescriptions for Health Reform” feature interviews with Shannon Brownlee, author of *Overtreated: Why Too Much Medicine is Making Americans Sicker and Poorer*, Dr. Jerome Groopman, author of *How Doctors Think*, and Melody Petersen, author of *Our Daily Meds*.

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More About The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation

The mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation is to expand access to health care. Through grants and policy initiatives, the Foundation works with public and private organizations to broaden health coverage and reduce barriers to care. It focuses on developing measurable and sustainable solutions that benefit uninsured, vulnerable and low-income individuals and families in the Commonwealth, and served as a catalyst for the pioneering Massachusetts health care reform law passed in 2006. The Foundation was founded in 2001 with an initial endowment of \$55 million from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The Foundation operates separately from the company and is governed by its own 18-member Board of Directors. It is one of the largest private health philanthropies in New England and in 2007 was awarded the Paul Ylvisaker Award for Public Policy Engagement by the Council on Foundations.