

MONEY AND MEDICINE SYNOPSIS

As rising health care costs threaten to bankrupt the country, *MONEY AND MEDICINE* tackles the medical, ethical, and financial challenges of containing runaway health care spending. In addition to illuminating the so-called waste and overtreatment that pervade our medical system, *MONEY AND MEDICINE* explores promising ways to reduce health care expenditures and improve the overall quality of medical care.

While our embattled Congress continues to wage a divisive battle over the national debt, policy makers are turning their attention to the largest force driving the nation's budget deficit – government health care spending. Nobody wants to ration beneficial medical care, but few people would quarrel with the prospect of eliminating wasteful and potentially harmful health care spending. That's the fundamental challenge we address in *MONEY AND MEDICINE* – how can we reduce unnecessary medical spending so that we can provide affordable, high quality health care to all Americans? A number of recent studies estimate that a third of all health care expenditures are unnecessary and that eliminating those expenses would save about a trillion dollars a year, more than enough to cover the uninsured. The difficulty, of course, is achieving a consensus on what constitutes wasteful medical spending and restructuring our health care financing and delivery systems to eliminate that waste. Since every dollar of so-called unnecessary spending is a dollar of income to a health care provider, reigning in health care spending is a formidable political challenge, but it will be impossible to achieve if the public remains uninformed and continues to perpetuate the more-is-better direction of our current health care system. *MONEY AND MEDICINE* offers a unique perspective on our nation's health care cost crisis and makes a timely contribution to round two of health care reform, which will clearly focus on cost containment.

MONEY AND MEDICINE was filmed at UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles and Intermountain Medical Center in Utah. The dramatic doctor/patient stories filmed at these two world-renowned hospitals capture the powerful forces driving soaring health care costs as well as proven strategies that effectively reign in excessive medical expenses. With remarkable candor and poignancy, *MONEY AND MEDICINE* captures the painful end-of-life treatment choices made by patients and their families, ranging from very aggressive interventions in the ICU to palliative care at home. The film also investigates the controversy surrounding diagnostic testing and screening as well as the shocking treatment variations among patients receiving a variety of elective procedures.

Previous documentaries from Public Policy Productions have won over a hundred top honors including Emmy, Peabody, and duPont-Columbia awards, as well as two Academy Award nominations. Many of these productions have taken viewers inside our nation's health care system, including *CRITICAL CONDITION*, *SOUND AND FURY*, *WHAT'S AILING MEDICINE*, *OUR CHILDREN AT RISK*, *BORDERLINE MEDICINE*, *WHO LIVES - WHO DIES*, *CAN'T AFFORD TO GROW OLD*, and *HEALTH CARE ON THE CRITICAL LIST*. *MONEY AND MEDICINE* will build on this three decade body of work, putting a human face the enormous challenges currently facing American medicine.

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