

MONEY AND MEDICINE: DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

MONEY AND MEDICINE investigates the dangers the nation faces from runaway health care spending as well as the dangers patients face from over-diagnosis and over-treatment. 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.

Although reducing health care spending without compromising the quality or accessibility of medical care is much more easily said than done, we've adopted an approach that allows us to address this pressing medical, ethical, and financial challenge. We filmed *MONEY AND MEDICINE* at two world-renowned hospitals - UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles and Intermountain Medical Center in Utah. The dramatic doctor/patient stories that we were able to capture at these two hospitals illustrate the powerful forces driving excessive medical care as well as proven strategies that can reduce unnecessary medical spending, such as improving the coordination of patient care, facilitating shared patient decision-making, and practicing evidence-based medicine.

At both hospitals we capture 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. We also investigate the controversy surrounding diagnostic testing and screening as well as the shocking treatment variations among patients receiving a variety of elective procedures. Beyond the broad policy implications of the film, *MONEY AND MEDICINE* may also prompt viewers to alter some of their own behaviors - whether it's executing an advance directive, thinking twice about that seemingly benign screening test, or learning more about the risks, benefits, and possible outcomes of elective procedures. Simply put, I hope the film will encourage viewers to question the pervasive more-is-better attitude about medical care.

Many of my previous PBS productions have taken viewers inside our nation's health care system, including *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*. My most recent PBS health care documentary on the struggles of the uninsured, *CRITICAL CONDITION*, aired during the last major health care reform debate in 2008 and 2009. Now, as the focus of health care reform shifts from the access crisis to the cost crisis, we hope that our new film, *MONEY AND MEDICINE*, can contribute to the debate over cost containment and deficit reduction that is heating up as we approach the 2012 election.