

Preface

This book defines and illustrates the application of the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity criteria for evaluating healthcare system performance. It introduces and integrates the fundamental concepts and methods of health services research as a field of study and illustrates their application to policy analysis. Specific examples of the application of health services research in addressing contemporary health policy problems at the national, state, and local levels are presented.

The primary audiences for the book are practicing professionals and graduate students in public health, health administration, and the healthcare professions and federal, state, and local policymakers and program planners charged with the design and conduct of policy-relevant health services research. Professionals and students in medical sociology, the behavioral sciences, and public administration interested in conducting applied or policy-oriented health and healthcare research will also find the book of considerable interest. The authors developed and applied the perspective presented in the book in a course they have offered to master's and doctoral students in public health since 1986.

Revisions for the third edition of the book in particular draw on a growing body of research on the social and economic determinants of population health and explore the distinct and complementary roles of health services and public health research and policy in improving the health of individuals and communities. Breast cancer screening and related cancer morbidity and mortality, an important healthcare and public health problem area, is woven throughout the book in demonstrating the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity concepts in the context of these issues.

In general, the revised edition of the book is intended to encompass a broader and more integrative look at the role of both population (or public) health and personal (or medical) care services in enhancing community and individual well-being; the design of health services research to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of public health and healthcare programs; and the normative and empirical application of the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity criteria in evaluating specific health policy alternatives.

Chapter 1 presents a framework for applying health services research to policy analysis. This

framework is utilized to provide an integrative overview of the contributions of health services research to describing and evaluating the performance of the healthcare system with respect to the objectives of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. This chapter defines the relationship between health services research and the major objectives and methods of policy analysis. The review of evidence and trends within the U.S. healthcare system, based on the health policy analysis framework, is highlighted.

Chapters 2, 4, and 6 introduce the concepts and methods of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity research, and Chapters 3, 5, and 7 review the policy strategies that have emerged to accomplish these objectives, as well as the criteria and evidence regarding their success in achieving them.

The effectiveness chapters (Chapters 2 and 3) introduce and apply a conceptual framework integrating methods for assessing the effectiveness of medical and nonmedical interventions from both the population and clinical perspectives.

The efficiency discussion (Chapters 4 and 5) examines the concepts of production and allocative efficiency and the major findings regarding the performance of the United States' and other countries' healthcare systems with respect to these objectives.

The equity chapters (Chapters 6 and 7) introduce a conceptual framework of equity, grounded in emerging and expanded theoretical dimensions of deliberative, distributive, and social justice, and apply it to assessing the progress of the U.S. healthcare system in achieving equity along each of these dimensions.

Chapter 8 analyzes the interrelationships between and among the objectives of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity and the role of health services research in conceptualizing and measuring the trade-offs among them in formulating health policy. Chapter 9 discusses these trade-offs in the context of a policy analysis example evaluating mammography screening for older, Medicare-eligible women.

The unique contributions that this book makes are the following: (1) it presents and applies an organizing framework for defining health services research as a field of study, in the context of the major system performance dimensions of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity; (2) it reviews and integrates the conceptual, methodological, and empirical contributions of health services research to addressing these issues; (3) it illustrates how the perspectives and methods of effectiveness, efficiency,

and equity research can be used to anticipate and pose relevant questions to inform both current and future healthcare policy debates; and (4) it provides a primer and point of reference at a time when both the support for and demands on health services research and policy analysis are increasing.

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