The Middleboro Casebook is a flexible and integrated case study that focuses on the strategy and operations of eight healthcare organizations—two hospitals, a long-term care facility, a home health agency, two physician group practices, a community mental health center, and a local health department—located in and around the community of Middleboro. The book introduces students to the community as well as its demographic, socioeconomic, political, economic, epidemiological, and environmental characteristics. Data presented in the tables enable students to analyze the community in detail, focusing on those factors that drive the need for and use of healthcare services as well as framing the strategic decisions made by healthcare organizations. The cases provide information about the primary healthcare organizations in Middleboro and the surrounding area. Each case includes the organization’s history, governance, organizational structure, programs and services, finances, and particular issues and challenges.

Concept of the Book
We developed The Middleboro Casebook to bring authentic management and policy issues into the classroom and to assist students and faculty with integrating an academic curriculum in
health administration. It provides the basis for identifying many types of problems and issues and for formulating management plans and strategies. Since its inception, it has assisted faculty with providing a robust integrating seminar between traditional academic study and professional practice.

This is a unique casebook. It is designed specifically for the field of health administration. The cases and the setting—Hillsboro County—are totally fictitious, removing “what really happened” scenarios from the solutions and strategies provided by students. Also, each healthcare organization featured here is described in detail in the context of its common community. Each case requires understanding from many fields and disciplines, not just one. The cases blend together the national forces and issues that influence the management of healthcare organizations today with the local forces and issues that make health services management unique. Sensitivity to local events, circumstances, and issues is essential; just as in professional practice, the local dimension is impossible to exclude from the management of health services.

This is a unique academic text as well. It provides student and faculty users with the freedom and flexibility to achieve many different types of learning outcomes. For example, students can be asked to define a comprehensive strategy for a specific business unit or to complete a focused analysis on a specific aspect of an organization (e.g., financial, marketing). Each case presents a detailed picture of the structure and operation of a different type of healthcare organization. Notice that no specific student assignments have been included. The reason for that is to allow the instructor to define how the book is used and decide what assignments—and, if needed, additional information—to give. The Instructor Resources include field-tested assignments for many types of graduate- and baccalaureate-level courses and select companion texts. For example, in our class, we hand out one- or two-page “Assignment Letters” that include questions and often additional information to support specific assignments.

The Second Edition

The first edition of this book—published in 2014—found its niche in many academic settings, including baccalaureate and graduate programs, schools of business, and public health and human services. It was used to support traditional study as well as executive education and online instruction. It met our original goal of helping students assess and develop their professional repertoire via practice and application.

This second edition includes all of the original cases, each of which has been revised and expanded to reflect contemporary trends and issues, and a new case about a community mental health center (case 4). Note that the data in the second edition have no relationship with the data in the first edition. Each edition is independent. We appreciate
Health Administration Press’s understanding that this type of book must be refreshed and updated regularly if it is to continue as an authentic instructional resource for health administration education.

As was true of the first edition, this edition can be used in many ways. First, it can be the stand-alone text for an integrating course or a course in strategic planning or management. Second, as some faculty members have done, it can be the course in a graduate program that introduces students to the “real world” issues in health services management and familiarizes them with the structure and function of a regional healthcare system. Third, it can be the basis for a model—such as the one developed by Dr. Gary Filerman at Georgetown University—whereby the cases are used in multiple foundation courses in which students develop strategic analyses and business plans for a specific organization featured in the casebook. This model approach, which we call “Middleboro Across the Curriculum,” provides depth, breadth, and integration to many courses. Other universities have reported using the book with a similar approach.

Helping students integrate and apply their learning is an essential component of any academic curriculum intended to prepare professionals. This casebook serves as an alternative to approaches such as directed field-based consulting and projects, which by their very nature are limited by the particular project and may not be truly integrative.

The cases reflect contemporary, plausible reality—a reality influenced by many events and forces. Since the 2010 passage of the Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148), health services providers everywhere have been facing new and ever-evolving requirements and issues. The suggested assignments in the Instructor Resources are intended to ensure that students are dealing with current issues and reality.

**Conclusion**

Middleboro, Hillsboro County, and all the organizations and people described in the book are, again, totally fictitious. Any similarity to real people, places, or events is merely an unintended consequence. (For the record, Middleboro, Jasper, and Hillsboro County are not in New Hampshire.) Also, there are no preconceived outcomes here. Management is both an art and a science. We hope health administration students use both to define and address problems, improve access and quality, and lower costs.

Remember that every case is layered, so students—and other users of the book—should peel it like an onion. Read it over—numerous times. Look for connections. Explore it. Think about it. Understand that the cases are related and integrated. For example, some of the physicians affiliated with Medical Associates (case 7) are on the medical staff of MIDCARE, Inc. (case 6). Even though an assignment may focus on one organization, relevant information can be gathered from the other cases.
The book requires students to apply their managerial repertoires to sort through the facts and issues. They must decide what is important and what is trivial. They may use the cases to integrate and broaden—as well as sharpen—their analytical and intuitive abilities as a professional manager of health services. They may “connect the dots” they deem important. For example, in Hillsboro County, the same last name may suggest people are related by birth or marriage.

One cannot become an accomplished musician merely by studying music theory. The same can be said of health administration students who merely learn management skills, insights, and principles but do not apply and test them. This book helps students mature beyond the silos of learning that characterize higher education. Remember that truly integrating learning is the student’s responsibility; faculty can only provide the opportunity, support, and general direction. Most students, regardless of their background, both love and hate this book. Some think it has too much information, while others think it offers not enough. Over many years, however, most students have agreed that—on their way to becoming proficient managers of organized health services—the book validated, changed, and sharpened their professional skills, values, and insights.

Health services management requires both educational and experiential preparation. We hope this book provides some of each. Welcome to Middleboro and Hillsboro County. It is midnight January 1, 2020. The year 2019 has just ended and 2020 has just begun.

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To ensure that all cases are realistic, we asked senior healthcare executives to review and comment on each case. Cathy, Dan, Dennis, Ellen, Eugene, Fritz, Jay, Mike, Steve, Tim, Tom, and Yousef have read these cases and given us their perspectives as successful managers in different sectors of our industry. Many others have volunteered their advice, as we continue to strive to provide our students with an effective foundation. Over the years, the cases also have benefited from the insights and suggestions by faculty members, senior healthcare executives, and students—especially the students and faculty in the Executive MBA program at the University of Colorado, Denver. Professor Errol Biggs, director of the Executive MBA in Health Administration at CU Denver, deserves our special recognition and appreciation. Errors in the many tables of data, however, are solely our responsibility.
**Instructor Resources**

This book’s Instructor Resources include the following:

- **Using Middleboro**—presents many issues and suggestions related to problem-based learning and case-method teaching applied to this case. This section includes using Assignment Letters and Case Assignments to create the “problems” for student attention.

- **Teaching Notes**—provides short essays that describe what the instructor needs to know to use these cases effectively.

- **Suggested Assignments**—recommends assignments in three categories: (1) assignments for each individual case (e.g., Webster Hospital); (2) assignments by subject (e.g., marketing); and (3) assignments for specific companion texts, including the following:


- **Other Materials**—includes references and suggested URLs for instructors and students, including references related to oral presentations and business plans.

For the most up-to-date information about this book and its Instructor Resources, go to ache.org/HAP and browse for the book’s title or author names.

This book’s Instructor Resources are available to instructors who adopt this book for use in their course. For access information, please e-mail hapbooks@ache.org.

**Student Resources**

Excel versions of select tables are available online. In the book, tables that are posted online are indicated with a and this line: On the web at ache.org/books/Middleboro2. The tables themselves and the List of Tables are marked by these indicators.