Coinciding with the forthcoming presidential 2008 election and the ongoing debates about health care coverage, financing, and administration, the release of Health Care Regulation in America: Complexity, Confrontation, and Compromise could not be timelier. Robert I. Field takes on the seemingly insurmountable task of breaking down and describing the most complicated health care system in the world. Yet he takes us gracefully and vigilantly beyond the known problems of quality, access, and cost to examine the intricate web of health care regulation, oversight, and research. He steps out of the bounds of many of the traditional books on health care management to discuss concerns that influence not only clinical care but also population health and public health, and the pharmaceutical industry, as well as scientific research and funding—all of which stand to influence the delivery and quality of care.

Dr. Field does not pass judgment on the system; instead, he lays out, in a straightforward manner, the organizations, agencies, and offices that influence and control the respective health care stakeholders—physicians, hospitals, public health administrators, researchers, and others. He concludes each chapter by identifying the ongoing conflicts in health policy and regulations, highlighting policy gaps and suggesting opportunities for reform.

This book can serve as a companion to other literature that focuses more specifically on the policy-making process, the challenges in health care delivery and management, and the difficulties in health care financing. Readers will be able to glean the essentials to navigate the network of often conflicting and convoluted rules and regulations that limit access to patients, that contribute to rising costs, and that compromise quality.

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