

Leading health economist says publicly funded health care makes economic sense, as well as being fairer

In the light of current reforms to the NHS, we need to face up to a scarcity of resources but also to learn how this can be managed to achieve the best health possible for our communities. Therefore, it is important to know what economics, as the 'science of scarcity', has to say about why we need publicly funded health care, the evidence on the effectiveness of the many reforms that have been introduced in the last two decades and the possible ways forward for assuring sustainability, efficiency and equity of such systems.

In a timely new book entitled *Credit crunch health care: How economics can save our publicly funded health services*, by Cam Donaldson, to be published by The Policy Press on 16th February 2011, the author argues strongly that health services, like the NHS in the UK, should be publicly funded on the grounds of economic efficiency as well as fairness. "In fact, public funding ensures competitive advantage and best value" says Donaldson, a health economist with over 25 years' research experience, "If these arguments are accepted, that is nowhere near the end of the story. We still require frameworks for how we best manage this valuable public sector resource. "

In the book he outlines these frameworks, based on methods of cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis, and leading to the ultimate question of 'what is the value of your health?' and how members of the public might answer it.

Speaking about the book, Sir Muir Gray, CBE, Co-Director of the NHS Quality Innovation Productivity and Prevention Programme said:

"Cam Donaldson is an excellent provocative economics writer who can tell it like it is and engage people in the big issues of the day. This book is open to everyone but does not simplify the complex world that we face. Anyone who pays for or manages health services will benefit from this book, including every clinician and every citizen."

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Notes for editors

1. *Credit crunch health care: How economics can save our publicly funded health services* by Cam Donaldson is published by The Policy Press on 16 February 2011 price £16.99 paperback (ISBN 9781847427526). It is available to buy at 20% discount from:
www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781847427526
or from Marston Book Services, P O Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4YN Tel: 01235 465500 plus £2.75 postage and packing
2. Cam Donaldson holds the Yunus Chair in Social Business and Health at Glasgow Caledonian University. From 2002-10, he held the Health Foundation Chair in Health Economics at Newcastle University, where he was founding director of the Institute of Health and Society and professor in the Newcastle University Business School. He held the Svare Chair in Health Economics at the University of Calgary from 1998-2002, having first become a professor of health economics in 1996 while at the Health Economics Research Unit at the University of Aberdeen.
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4. The Policy Press (www.policypress.co.uk) is a not-for-profit social science publisher based at the University of Bristol and is committed to publishing books that make a difference.