

straight, or was there something to be learned for the future? After all, she acknowledged this story was inspired or appalled by government attempts to dismantle social programs (p.6). Is there something in this history that will provide insights on how to address child poverty or reduce homelessness? Is there something about what transpired in Canada between the 1920s and 1960s that can be applied to the culturally diverse society of the present, a society in which the mantra is "lower taxes and smaller government"? How do the supporters of private and supporters of public systems overcome their dichotomous thinking?

Contributing Citizens, even with the questions raised by this reader, is an interesting history of the developments of social welfare in Canada. It is a book I would recommend to anyone interested in the history of social welfare and it would serve well as a supplementary text to an advanced course in social welfare policy.

Women's Health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Policy.

Edited by Marina Morrow, Olena Hankivsky, and Colleen Varcoe.
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Although there has been some recognition of women and their specific health care needs, current health care strategies have failed to offer sufficient guidelines in support of their importance. Furthermore, ongoing budget constraints have often resulted in deleterious health effects, especially upon those women who have already experienced difficulty in accessing much-needed care. Many proposed health care initiatives have not been fully endorsed or implemented by both levels of government, despite the growing need to appreciate and understand women's health from different frames of reference. In addition, current ideologies have often conceptualized women's health from a very narrow perspective that has often discounted the complexity of women's lives and their specific needs.

This book is intended to offer its reader an appreciation of the current status of health care in Canada and its effects upon women. Its unique ability to critically explore the many issues that affect women in Canada provides an informative resource that can be used by academics, healthcare providers and policy leaders that have an interest in exploring health care from different perspectives. Rather than focusing upon the traditional biomedical model, the editors Olena Hankivsky, Marina Morrow, and Colleen Varcoe have included valuable contributions from

diverse researchers, whose focus upon other frameworks offers a greater understanding of health care and its effects.

The four main sections of the book provide a thorough guide to locate the history of the women's health movement, followed by the theoretical, social determinants of health and the key issues related to women's health. Each of the 20 chapters in the book provides an overview of the essential healthcare issues that specifically affect women. The diverse research accounts offer an informative appreciation of the impact of healthcare and the many challenges that women have faced over time. Issues such as migration, disability, motherhood, mental health, drugs, HIV/AIDS, violence, breast cancer, caregiving, cardiovascular disease, gender and poverty are all considered in relation to their effects upon women in Canada.

In addition, the book provides a comprehensive overview of the history of Canada's health care system and the difficulties that women have faced in the procurement of much-needed care. In the last century, although women have played an important role in the provision of health care services, their ability to contribute had initially been met with much criticism and protest. The traditional male-dominated medical society not only initially resisted their participation in the field of medicine, but even defined many illnesses and conditions relative to their occurrence in men. As a result, there has been a growing need to reform societal attitudes about health care and its effects upon women in the provision of medical care.

Although many of these issues have been explored in the past, this book offers an informative overview of the main essential issues that are extremely relevant to women. Furthermore, the concepts are conveyed in an easy to understand format. There is a logical progression that follows in every chapter, where the objective is clearly stated and key policy recommendations are cited. In addition to highlighting the social determinants of health, sex and gender, particular attention is offered to better understand government policy priorities and particular funding issues in the provision of care.

Perhaps the only chapter that would have complemented this book even further, would have been a chapter devoted towards employment and its effects upon women's health and the issue of retirement and its specific effect upon women. Nevertheless, this book is strongly recommended and is not only interesting, stimulating and appealing to its reader, but contributes greatly in the advancement of greater knowledge about health care and its effects upon women in Canada. Each chapter highlights the main essential points of the issue under consideration in an organized and logical sequence.

For example, chapter 16 highlights the difficulties that women have experienced as a result of the medicalization of health care. Menopause and its effects despite its normal biological occurrence became a medicalized phenomena in the

last century, that warranted medical intervention and eventually led to the introduction of hormone replacement therapy for women. This chapter not only captures the challenges that women have faced with respect to the medical establishment and their representation of health-related problems, but also reminds its reader of the importance for women to advocate on their behalf. Similarly, chapter 19 explores the issue of maternal care that begins with a historical overview that dates back to aboriginal traditions followed by the medicalization of the natural process of childbirth and its resultant effects.

There are several chapters in the book that are also aimed in persuading the reader, to appreciate that there are many outdated healthcare strategies that require the introduction of new policy reforms, to offer women better representation in the acquisition of much-needed care. The resultant medicalization of women's bodies is presented as only one of the many issues that need to be addressed in the provision of optimal care. Moreover, there is also a reminder of the need to appreciate the cultural considerations in the delivery of healthcare that is often neglected in the adherence to the traditional biomedical model.

This book not only offers a compelling need to consider other frameworks in the delivery of care, but also provides a glimpse into the healthcare problems that women have faced and continue to face in Canada and elsewhere in the world. This book is a must read for anyone that has an interest in health care and an interest in ensuring that all Canadians are offered optimal access to much-needed health care services. Its ability to realistically represent Canada's healthcare strategies, initiatives and challenges provides a beneficial resource guide to assist in better understanding women's health in Canada.