

Book Review

Specialty Care in the Era of Managed Care: Cleveland Clinic Versus University Hospitals of Cleveland

Written by John A. Kastor, MD

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A review by Joseph W. Burnett, MD

Have you ever wondered how the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals of Cleveland, both in Ohio, coexist a few blocks apart in the same metropolis? What is happening with outside groups probing the ethics of physicians participating in venture capital and surgical patents in this Ohio academic medical center? How can a prominent group clinical practice meld with an academic research hospital unit containing basic science facilities? How will a medical education institution handle 2 groups of students based at 2 different medical centers without friction when they will receive the same Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, diploma? How did such a system arise and what is the history of high-powered Cleveland medical institutions?

These questions are examined in the book written by John A. Kastor, MD. The specialty care mentioned in the title of the book is predominately cardiac care, which is immense, prominent, and proficient at the Cleveland Clinic. The University Hospitals of Cleveland may be more inclusive, as they have embraced pediatrics and fostered more basic science teaching and research. Both institutions are trying to meld.

Dr. Kastor follows the developmental history of these 2 institutions and enables us to gain a better understanding of the players involved. Throughout the book, there is a clear message that good leaders are essential. The fatigue factor seen in some executives also is evident.

This is the third book Dr. Kastor has published that studies the organization, function, and culture of academic medical centers. He has written

about the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston–Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston, merger; New York Hospital, New York–Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, New York, merger; and the Stanford University, California–University of California, San Francisco, merger. Another volume compared and contrasted the medical units of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland. Currently, he is assessing the Washington, DC, groups and the sale of their hospitals to for-profit commercial enterprises.

A graduate of New York University Medical School, New York, Dr. Kastor received postgraduate training in internal medicine at Bellevue Hospital Center, New York, and New York University Medical Center, and cardiology at Massachusetts General Hospital. He has held academic posts at Harvard Medical School, Boston; University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; and University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, where he was a professor and chairman in the Department of Medicine. Dr. Kastor now retains a professorship at the University of Maryland.

The Johns Hopkins University Press has done an admirable job in the publication of this book. It has 229 pages of text and is well-referenced, with an 11-page listing of interviewees and 23 pages of references, indicating an immense research effort. The phraseology is excellent, making the book a good read.

Specialty Care in the Era of Managed Care is highly recommended for those interested in medical history or Cleveland medicine, or those curious about the evolution and survival of academic medical centers.