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### The Foundry

#### [In the Green Room: David Goldhill on How American Health Care Killed His Father](#)

-  Posted October 6th, 2009 at 2.04pm in [Health Care](#).



David Goldhill is President and CEO of the [Game Show Network](#) and has run numerous businesses during his career. When his father died of a hospital-borne infection two years ago [he began researching the entire U.S. health care system, analyzing it with the keen eye of a businessman](#). What he learned is that intermediaries like insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid distort a system that is supposed to provide health care to individuals into one that serves faceless and, largely, uncaring bureaucracies. Case in point: 100,000 people die every year in America of infections received in hospitals. *100, 000 people*. Why?


“This hospital saw someone other than my father as their customer,” said Goldhill at a Cato institute event in the Rayburn House office building last week. “The role we’ve let intermediaries...play in our health care is not just about money, it’s also about who the providers really report to, what customer they’re really servicing.”

Goldhill’s advice is to put the consumers of health care - individuals, not government and/or intermediaries - in the driver’s seat. Consumers of products in other industries (cell phones, TVs, cars, etc.) demand things like accountability, low prices and high quality. They can do this because there are other companies that make better or safer cars or TVs at a lower price, thereby forcing

companies to compete for customers. Why should we treat health care any differently?

The closing paragraph of Mr. Goldhill's [outstanding Atlantic piece](#) explains why programs like Medicare, the [largest spender of health care dollars in the U.S.](#), should not be the most important customer in our health care system:

Before we further remove ourselves as direct consumers of health care—with all of our beneficial influence on quality, service, and price—let me ask you to consider one more question. Imagine my father's hospital had to present the bill for his 'care' not to a government bureaucracy, but to my grieving mother. Do you really believe that the hospital—forced to face the victim of its poor-quality service, forced to collect the bill from the real customer—wouldn't have figured out how to make its doctors wash their hands?

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