

Preface

After years of interviewing potential pharmacy students, I've found that the most common reason stated for choosing a career in pharmacy is an interest in science combined with a desire to help people. This seems to contrast with the study of pharmacoeconomics. Why should a caring health care professional who is an expert in choosing the optimal drug therapy consider studying the financial implications of the choice of treatment? The truth is that there are limited resources available. Whether maximizing the value of new equipment, drugs, and personnel in a hospital; providing service to the most people to provide the best outcomes in a community or clinic setting; or decreasing costs while ensuring optimal treatment for patients in a managed care organization, it is important to find the best value in health care. Pharmacists can help patients and other health care providers choose the therapies with the most value.

Given unlimited resources, the choice of therapy would always be that which provides the very best clinical outcome. However, because resources are limited, it is necessary to choose which treatment provides the best outcome for the available funds. By understanding pharmacoeconomic analysis, pharmacists can help choose the best value for a patient or organization by understanding the needs and perspective of that person or organization. Pharmacoeconomics does not always provide one correct answer. Rather, it helps make all aspects of a decision transparent so that the decision-maker can make the best choice given all the alternatives and resources available.

This book is an attempt to take some of the mystery out of combining financial and comparative effectiveness data to make choices that provide the best value for health care decision-makers, whether they are patients, providers, or payers. Ideal solutions will cross lines between departmental and professional budgets to maximize patient outcomes. The need for teamwork and elimination of silos in health care decision-making is evident. However, the focus of this book, intended for pharmacists and pharmacy students, is on medications.