

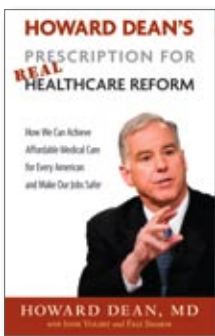


# Oncology Book Reviews

by Greg Gorgas

## Howard Dean's Prescription for Real Healthcare Reform

By Howard Dean, Igor Volsky, Faiz Shakir  
Published by Chelsea Green Publishing Company,  
2009, ISBN 978-1-60358-228-5 • 132 pages



Former Democratic presidential nominee, Howard Dean, MD, is leveraging his influence to mobilize public support for healthcare reform. In his book, *Howard Dean's Prescription for Real Healthcare Reform: How we can achieve affordable medical care for every American and make our jobs safer* (Chelsea Green Publishing, June 2009), Dean takes aim at those attempting to derail the effort led by President Obama to transform the American healthcare system.

With current escalating unemployment resulting in a loss of employer-based benefits, more Americans are embracing healthcare reform—which is not new to the national debate—however, both Republicans and Democrats have worn out well-scripted talking points to sway the American voter's opinion. Capitalizing on a convergence of political power and economic recession, the current Democratic leadership is vigorously pressing healthcare reform legislation. Moreover, Dean has also raised his voice.

Dean begins his book describing the ills of our “badly flawed” healthcare system as a crisis which is having a “devastating impact” on our economy. To fix the problem, he touts Obama's reform—which would offer Americans under 65 years of age the choice to remain in employer-based coverage or opt for a government-run plan similar to Medicare. According to him, the most important aspect of real healthcare reform is that “individual choice must not be merely preserved: it has to be expanded.” He is critical of special interest groups such as pharmaceutical companies, private insurers, and small business owners who question the value of government expansion. Extolling the socialized healthcare system of several European nations, he shows a particular affection for the French. Unlike single-payor zealots, he sides with Obama saying that the real debate is not about how large a role government should play in reform, but that all Americans should be given the choice of opting out of the private insurance system and benefit from a public health insurance plan. He suggests a new gasoline tax in order to pay for the public option.

Dean fervently argues for more than just addressing uninsured Americans and flawed insurance industry practices. However, his ideologically-based rally cry aimed at Americans “to win the debate and the most important political fight of our lifetime” disappointingly fails to constructively contribute to the healthcare discussion. Further, his incessant partisan digs at conservatives and anyone with an

alternative view may lead a segment of readers to prematurely dismiss his remedy. What America deserves now are thoughtful leaders who can intelligently address healthcare access, affordability, and quality. Academic and informed stakeholders from both sides of the aisle may codify Dean's prescription as the party-line advocacy of a passionate political strategist. What else would one expect from the former head of the DNC? **RG**

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### Of Further Interest:

**IASLC STAGING HANDBOOK IN THORACIC ONCOLOGY**

ISBN 978-0-9799274-2-3 • 104 pages

**IASLC STAGING MANUAL IN THORACIC ONCOLOGY - PRINT**

ISBN 978-0-9799274-3-0 • 164 pages

The 7th edition of the TNM classification for lung and pleural tumors was released the beginning of August 2009 providing a highly anticipated revision to the older edition introduced 12 years ago. Utilizing an international database of more than 100,000 patients, the updated staging system was based upon twenty times the number of cases relied upon for the 1997 version. Adoption of the current update is

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