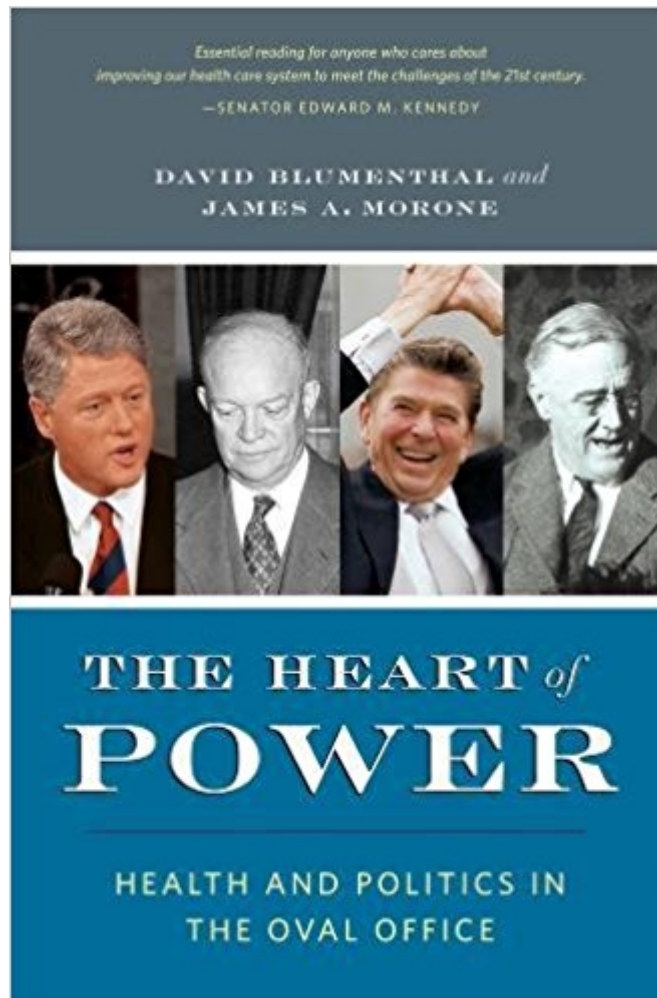




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# The Heart Of Power: Health And Politics In The Oval Office



## Synopsis

Even the most powerful men in the world are human—they get sick, take dubious drugs, drink too much, contemplate suicide, fret about ailing parents, and bury people they love. Young Richard Nixon watched two brothers die of tuberculosis, even while doctors monitored a suspicious shadow on his own lungs. John Kennedy received last rites four times as an adult, and Lyndon Johnson suffered a "belly buster" of a heart attack. David Blumenthal and James A. Morone explore how modern presidents have wrestled with their own mortality—and how they have taken this most human experience to heart as they faced the difficult politics of health care. Drawing on a trove of newly released White House tapes, on extensive interviews with White House staff, and on dramatic archival material that has only recently come to light, *The Heart of Power* explores the hidden ways in which presidents shape our destinies through their own experiences. Taking a close look at Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush, the book shows what history can teach us as we confront the health care challenges of the twenty-first century.

## Book Information

Paperback: 500 pages

Publisher: University of California Press; With a New Preface edition (September 21, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520268091

ISBN-13: 978-0520268098

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #306,050 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #129 in [Books > Textbooks >](#)

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. In this engrossing text, the history of American health-care policy, from the New Deal to the Medicare Modernization Act of George W. Bush, becomes a frame through which the authors illuminate the leadership qualities of late-20th-century presidents in the arena of domestic

affairs. The authors present biographies of presidents from FDR on, investigating potential influences (e.g., heart attacks, abusive parents, deceased siblings) on their attitudes toward health policy. Blumenthal, a Harvard Medical School professor, and Brown University political scientist Morone (*The Democratic Wish*) draw on White House telephone tapes and memos in a laudatory chapter on Johnson's role in passing Medicare, and reserve their harshest criticism for Jimmy Carter, whose administration unwittingly killed the late effort at health reform. The authors offer evenhanded critiques and conclude with lessons for future chief executives about the importance of political savvy, economic flexibility and popular appeal in determining the success of health-care initiatives. More than an excellent primer on American health policy, the book offers a thorough, incisive look at the presidency as an institution and the men who have occupied the office. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“A riveting history of health-care politics.” (Atul Gawande *New Yorker* 2010-04-05)  
“A book that sets a standard for the study of the presidency and of health policy.” (Congress & The Presidency 2012-07-27)  
“This timely and insightful book puts Barack Obama’s current quest for universal health insurance in historical context and gives new meaning to the audacity of hope.” (Robert B. Reich *New York Times Book Review* 2009-09-06)  
“More than an excellent primer on American health policy, the book offers a thorough, incisive look at the presidency as an institution and the men who have occupied the office.” **STARRED REVIEW** (*Publishers Weekly* 2009-06-08)  
“A masterpiece and a valuable primer for future presidents as they wrestle with the dragon of health reform.” (Jeff Goldsmith *Health Affairs* 2009-09-01)

From Roosevelt to H.Bush had active rolls in the development of National Health Insurance. How did their childhood and adulthood backgrounds influence their presidential decisions to maintain a 70 year development of Health Insurance? Blumenthal gives a concise biography of each president as well as the individual managerial style to navigate the governmental complexities of politics and policy development. Tune up your highlighter!

Easy-to-read, thorough account of health insurance legislation, from FDR to W. It provides much needed historical, leadership perspective to our current health care mess. A must if you're serious about national policy, & enjoy politics. I went through it in two nights. Very well written.

I ordered this book for a Health politics course and it is an interesting read. It really delves into the Hermeneutics of Health Care Policy.

David Blumenthal's and Jame's Morone's extremely readable history of healthcare reform from FDR forward is a must-read even if only for the wonderful stories told that were drawn from an immense amount of research into Presidential archives. Beyond that, it provides a well-constructed analysis of the reasons why health care reform is such a difficult nut to crack and the skills needed for reform to go forward. While they stay away from specific policy recommendations, for very good reasons, it is clear that they support reform that will insure that good health is in reach for all and no individual is wasted.

This book as a great inside look not only at the evolution of healthcare policy in the US, but a fascinating look at how Presidents have exercised the power of their office.

This is an invaluable book for anyone interested in the making of health policy in the US government. Very well researched and written by two experts in the field. I recommend it most highly.

The quality of this book was very good and it arrived within the promised time limit. Other suppliers seem to be able to deliver their books more quickly.

Wonderful and insightful review of the approach to national health insurance since the 1930's by different presidents, from Franklin D. Roosevelt through G.Bush. In the process, we are made to understand what makes each man tick, his flaws and strengths. We are also left to wonder some big what if's of national health policy as well as of possible second terms (particularly Lyndon Johnson's). As the authors mention in the introduction, our current president would be well served if he used this book as a road map for promoting his plan. Essential text to understand our current quandary.

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