Foreword

CARMEN HOOKER ODOM, *President, Milbank Memorial Fund*

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The Milbank Memorial Fund is an endowed operating foundation that works to improve health by helping decision makers in the public and private sectors acquire and use the best available evidence to inform policy for health care and population health. The Fund has engaged in nonpartisan analysis, study, research, and communication since its inception in 1905.

Inside National Health Reform by John E. McDonough is the twenty-second book of the series of California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public. The publishing partnership between the Fund and the University of California Press encourages the synthesis and communication of findings from research and experience that could contribute to more effective health policy.

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act (ACA), following seventy-five years of efforts by U.S. Presidents and Congresses to establish a national health insurance framework. Experienced as a state legislator, legislative advisor, professor of public health and social policy, and consumer health advocate, McDonough writes about the twenty-two-month process that led to the passage of the ACA and provides readers with a comprehensive analysis of the law itself in *Inside National Health Reform*, his second book in the California/Milbank series.

As Senior Advisor on National Health Reform for the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, McDonough was deeply involved in the legislative process leading to the passage of the ACA. In the first section of his book he provides readers with an overview of prior health reform efforts over the years and then an insider's account of the complex and challenging road leading to this landmark law, detailing the thousands of hours of meetings, debates, negotiations, compromises, and sacrifices made by Democrats and Republicans alike as well as the many

outside stakeholders involved. In the second section, McDonough explains in detail the ten titles comprising the ACA that affect almost every aspect of the U.S. health care system, and anticipates the challenges in implementing the ACA and how it will be revisited and revised repeatedly in the years to come.

A confessed Democrat, McDonough has successfully represented both sides of the legislative aisle in writing his book, having written extensive notes throughout the process, conducted more than 125 interviews with both congressional and administration staffers, and pored through the copious literature on the health reform process and the complex U.S. health care system itself.

Those interested in learning in depth about the history behind and contents of the ACA and about the U.S. lawmaking process will be well rewarded in reading *Inside National Health Reform*.