a convenient reference for The Older Americans Act of 1978, and National Nonprofit Resource Groups in Aging. References at the end of each chapter are another useful resource. This book will be a valuable tool for people who work with older adults and who do not want to plow through the mountain of information available from various agencies providing programs and services.

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Cardiovascular disease is the most frequent cause of hospitalization of the elderly person; forty percent of the deaths in this age group are attributed to cardiovascular disease. In this context, it is important to determine the effects of aging on the functional ability of the myocardium. An understanding of the effects of senescence on the performance of cardiac muscle and the properties of the vascular system is clinically significant in terms of the determination of age-adjusted criteria for variables of cardiac function and in the management of disease states.

Each chapter in this well written, detailed volume is authored by an expert in the area of the aging cardiovascular system. The eleven chapters explore the complexities and interrelationships of fundamental structural, metabolic, functional, and pathologic changes evident in the aging heart, as well as a definition of age-adjusted criteria for clinically important variables of cardiac function. The authors place the major scientific data into perspective by critically examining them and frequently suggesting an alternate interpretation of the findings. In their review of the current status of knowledge, the authors point out areas of inconsistency and give direction for further research of the aging cardiovascular system.

This book contains an in-depth account of the effects of the aging process upon the structural and functional features of the cardiovascular system. Changes that are an inevitable consequence of aging are distinguished from those alterations resulting from the accumulated injuries of one or more disease processes. For example, the process of atherosclerosis becomes increasingly evident with advancing age. Whether or not atherosclerosis is a precursor, an adjunct, or is unrelated to the structural changes of aging tissues continues to be an area of controversy and scientific investigation. The authors review the effect of senescence on myocardial ultrastructure, metabolism and energy production, contractile and elastic properties of cardiac muscle, and the integration of and the effect of various pharmacologic substances on the cardiovascular system.

Age-related changes in the properties of the vascular system have a profound influence on cardiac function and other organ systems. The authors review the present state of knowledge of the effects of age on both the structure and function of the pulmonic and systemic arterial trees as they affect myocardial function. The review includes the histologic changes of the vascular system, architecture of the vessel wall, and the pharmacologic responsiveness of vascular smooth muscle.

This volume was written to provide an outline of current broad concepts for the physician or investigator who deals with the problems of the aging cardiovascular system. The section dealing with pharmacology is particularly relevant for the text is more specifically geared to the needs of the geriatrician or researcher.

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The author's major thesis is that at present, there is no national policy to encourage the development of a coordinated and quality home health service. Indeed, public efforts designed to provide home health services have impeded rational development and coordination of these services across the country. The information for these statements comes from GAO reports, state and national hearings, conferences, analyses of federal funding sources, and experience.

In Section I, the need for coordination in home health services for the disabled, the sick poor, the chronically ill, and the elderly is discussed. Major obstacles in the development and utilization of resources for care in the home and in the community are found in federal/state/local approaches to home health services. These obstacles include categorically-linked funding and services, narrow service definitions, and complex implementation and service delivery methods.

The next three sections describe these obstacles, with an explanation of how they impede development of a coordinated and quality home health service. For example, when only selected services are funded, this fragments and isolates service components. In the area of professional nursing services, when defining care components, only a single aspect of nursing is selected for funding, "skilled" nursing care or the "laying on of hands." This single aspect of nursing excludes such care as professional nursing support or early intervention. According to the author (p. 17), "The benefit structure...does not view skill as inherent in professional nursing and appears to discount the ethical responsibility which is also inherent in professional nursing."

Similar limitations and confusion arise in definitions of para-professional services, e.g., the "Home Health Aide" which has various
definitions in different Federal Titles. Differences in reimbursement methods also are discussed. Such differences as the percent of federal-state matching funds may lead to state manipulation of services and the lowering of quality requirements.

In Section V, the author develops a plan for a systematic approach to resolving the problem of uncoordinated and poor quality home health services and enumerates major obstacles to the systematic approach or "capacity development." An historical account of the development of present U.S. policy when compared with some components of community health-social services in Europe provides a basis for understanding past approaches and possible future directions. Section VI outlines the author's options for change of public policy and succinctly describes recommendations for coordination of home health services.

The author has developed her major thesis well, with suggestions for policy aimed at change for better home health care. Repeatedly, the need for data in this area to determine the impact of these programs on the population is expressed. This is a book that can be read by policy experts, community health professionals, and researchers with equal interest.

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"INTO AGING"
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Therese Lemire Hoffman, RN, MSN
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