

Lynne Cunningham's
Book Review

I just read a great book that I think should be added to your Service Excellence Library.

Book	<i>Health Care Co-ops in Uganda: Effectively launching micro health groups in African villages</i>
Author	George C. Halvorson
Pillar of Excellence	Community
Publisher's Book Description	Kaiser Permanente Chairman and CEO George Halvorson's new book, Health Care Co-ops in Uganda: Effectively Launching Micro Health Groups in African Villages is now available. Drawing on the same principles that make prepaid health care a success at Kaiser Permanente, Halvorson successfully implemented micro health plans in the African country of Uganda several years ago. Most of the co-ops were the only health insurance community members had access to and many still exist today. The book serves as both a memoir of this experience and a handbook for those interested in doing similar work in the developing world.
LC Review	Halvorson documents the success the team at Health Partners (the health plan he led in Minnesota before moving to Kaiser Permanente) had in establishing self-sustaining health care co-ops in Uganda. It's a remarkable story of an organization that was willing to try new things to ensure that solutions were appropriate locally and the good work could be sustained. Health Partners is certainly an organization with a true Community Pillar.
Page	<i>Lynne suggests that you pay special attention to some of these features in the book.</i>
2	The World Bank estimates that more than 30 percent of poor third world families who experience a serious illness are financially destroyed by the cost of care. The estimate might be light.
7	It was pretty obvious pretty quickly that we Americans all had a lot of learning to do before we aspired to do any teaching.
24	Goals for the Uganda Program We wanted to create a system that would: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide affordable care 2. Assure predictable/budgetable costs 3. Provide dependable/available care 4. Be as theft-proof as possible 5. Assure local governance and local member control 6. Be self-sustaining and self-perpetuating

	<p>7. Be actuarially and financially viable</p> <p>8. Be easy to administer</p> <p>9. Provide an approach people would trust</p>	
41	Totally “free” care often tends to be both undervalued and overused.	
76	<p>So that’s how you run a health plan for a dime a month. You simplify. Simplify. Simplify.</p> <p>The overall benefit design is simple. One benefit package per community. To keep administrative costs low, we use almost no paper. Cash flow and billing is paperless and delegated to the co-ops. Utilization reporting is paperless and delegated to the caregivers. Our systems allow them both to do their job cheaply and easily. Claims are eliminated with prepayment. ID cards are replaced by photos – generally taken with disposable, one-use cameras. Contracting doesn’t involve any lawyers.</p> <p>Our central staff helps get things up and then helps keep things running.</p> <p>And the local administrative cost is actually coming in at 10% of premium.</p> <p>There are learnings here for the United States.</p>	
91	<p>It’s impossible to overstate the importance of having close, effective, and mutually beneficial partnership relationships with physicians to make this model of care a success. No aspect of creating health care co-ops is more important than the relationship with the care delivery system used by the co-ops for its members.</p> <p>The most sophisticated, well-designed micro health structure will fail if it can’t create a workable, win-win relationship with an appropriate local provider of care. Care is the key factor that people want. The whole point of creating local health care cooperatives is to give people access to better, more affordable care. That can’t be done without health care providers who participate in enlightened and mutually beneficial ways with the program.</p>	
107	Without the right staff, the best plans and the best strategies are just dreams and memos.	
116	In Uganda, we needed people who could look to see what actual Ugandan opportunities and problems existed – not people looking to impose American solutions and approaches.	
Overall rating	Excellent	
Publisher and Year Published	2007	The Permanente Press
Price	\$19.95	Discounted on www.amazon.com
Recommended by	The author and his team!	

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