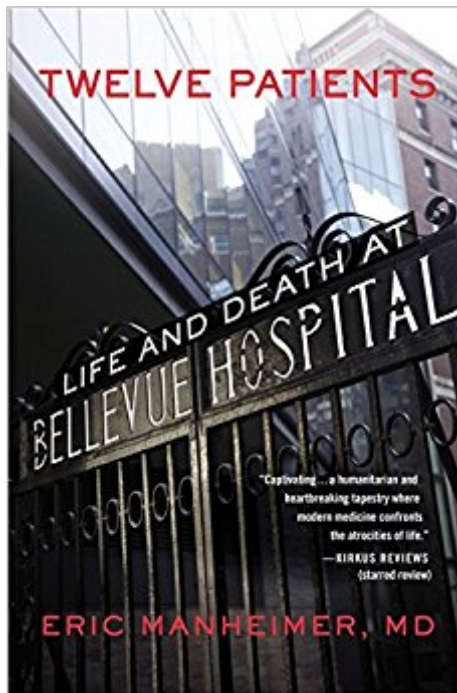




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# Twelve Patients: Life And Death At Bellevue Hospital



## Synopsis

In the spirit of Oliver Sacks *Awakenings* and the TV series *House*, Dr. Eric Manheimer's *TWELVE PATIENTS* is a memoir from the Medical Director of Bellevue Hospital that uses the plights of twelve very different patients—from dignitaries at the nearby UN, to supermax prisoners from Riker's Island, to illegal immigrants, and Wall Street tycoons—to illustrate larger societal issues. Manheimer is not only the medical director of the country's oldest public hospital, but he is also a patient. As the book unfolds, the narrator is diagnosed with cancer, and he is forced to wrestle with the end of his own life even as he struggles to save the lives of others.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For anyone seeking to understand medicine from the patient perspective, "Twelve Patients" is a must read. Dr. Manheimer eloquently describes life and experiences inside a major public hospital in twenty-first century America. Particularly poignant are the stories that highlight the complex inter-relationship between the mind and the body and how our feelings and those of our patients dramatically affect medical outcomes.--Carol A. Bernstein, MDAssociate Professor of PsychiatryI sat down to read this book and found myself still up at 3 in the morning unable to put it down. Manheimer has the gift of perspectives- from the body language and silences of a family hiding a violent past to the global economic and political forces gradually suffocating our ability to care for our patients. What are the ends of medicine? What are the ends of a society? These are the questions tackled here, and answered, too. --Diane E. Meier, MDDirector, Center to Advance

Palliative Care...a look at what it means to guide an extraordinary hospital through extraordinary times. --Perri Klass, MD, Professor of Journalism and Pediatrics, New York University, Director of Graduate Studies, Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute

Medical cases are always fascinating. These reflect the lives of people whose stories are rarely told. -- Marion Nestle PhD, MPH, Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, New York University, and author of *Food Politics* and *What to Eat*, among others.

Manheimer offers far more than remarkable medical dramas: he blends each patient's personal experiences with their social implications. --Publishers Weekly

This book is not only brilliant, it is deeply moving, and as socially and politically important as anything I have read over the past ten years. The medical literature during the past century has had a few masters of the art of communicating the current state of the art and science of medicine to the public in language that is so clear and understandable that they need no special expertise to understand it -- from Sir William Osler and Walter Cannon to Lewis Thomas and Sherwin Nuland. With this book Eric Manheimer joins their distinguished company -- and then some. -- James F. Gilligan

It is exactly the rich emotional and intellectual sweep of *Twelve Patients* that distinguishes this book from the usual tales of gallant doctors fighting disease, and makes it a perfect corrective for the massive denial of the urgent realities of illness and death that we all one day will face. --Ernest Drucker

Sampling three decades of the doctor's tenure as medical director, the book offers desperate glimpses into the unfortunate lives of the sick, the injured and the dying, yet the author never relinquishes his hold on hope, however fleeting. Manheimer's unflinching reportage of his patients, the country's fractured healthcare system, irresponsible food manufacturers and hospital politics is authoritatively written. --Kirkus Reviews

A unique foray into issues of race, poverty, immigration, politics, as they are literally inscribed into the bodies of society's most vulnerable patients. -- Dalton Conley, PhD, author of *Honky*

A panoptic view of a hospital, a city, a profession. --The New York Times

"[These] stories are as intensely involving as any scripted for a television medical drama." - The New York Daily News

"Manheimer has range as a doctor, a writer and a social commentator. This book is tough medicine. But nothing less is apt to work when it comes to curing that which is the hardest to treat, including our torn social fabric." --The Huffington Post

Eric Manheimer, M.D. has been the Medical Director at Bellevue for over thirteen years and is a Clinical Professor at the New York University School of Medicine. He is an Internist who trained at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, New York in Internal Medicine. Following his Chief Residency there, he moved to Hanover, New Hampshire where he was a member of Dartmouth Medical School and the Hitchcock Clinic for many years. He has had a long interest in international health

working in Haiti and Pakistan and in medical anthropology, history, the social sciences and literature particularly of Latin America. Along with his wife Diana Taylor, who is a University Professor at New York University, Eric travels extensively in Latin America and Mexico. He has two children and one grandchild, who was born at Bellevue.

Dr. Eric Manheimer's book "Twelve Patients: Life and Death at Bellevue Hospital" is an amazing and very realistic view inside the most amazing health care system in the world. Bellevue Hospital is the flagship hospital of the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation covering at least 11 major medical centers in the NYC metropolitan area. I had the privilege of working for Dr. Manheimer as Director of Obstetrics at Bellevue Hospital. Reading this book took me back to some of the most exciting, stimulating and challenging years of my career. It was an amazing experience working under Dr. Manheimer's tutelage as our Medical Director. His open door policy, genuine concern for his physicians and mostly his patients is palpable in this book. Eric (as he preferred us to call him) has medicine in his genes---his father practiced internal medicine, even making house calls into his late 80s. Eric often accompanied him on house calls as a child. As you will in this book, this is where he became "imprinted" with the "art of medicine." It is really uplifting to see a Medical Director of a huge system operate with true "esprit de corps" taking care of his patients and his faculty. You will get to discover and appreciate the complete transsection of society (national and international) that receives health care at Bellevue Hospital. You will see the inside mechanics of the oldest hospital in the US and one of the largest teaching hospitals today. I bought this book and took it on a weekend get-away with my family----what a mistake!!!!!! I had to fight my family off from taking this book from me----they too were wholly engrossed in the contents having "lived" Bellevue through me during my tenure there. Subsequently we have bought many more copies. As someone who reads 2-3 novels a week, I give this book a 10/10! David Seubert, MD

There is always something very fascinating about hospitals in general, specially after one has had the misfortune to be treated at one for a malady that required that level of intervention. I, personally, have been in through the emergency room several times so far, and a few of those times I was admitted, which is another word for saying someone is in trouble, and requires immediate attention. Walking through the corridors, taking on the busy life of medical personnel, even tasting the food that it is offered, is one experience that is very hard to forget. Twelve Patients: Life and Death at Bellevue Hospital is much more of a good read, than I initially was willing to give it credit for. The excellent author, Mr. Eric Manheimer, takes the reader on a tour, that otherwise would be hard to

take. His knowledge, research, case files, and so many things more, gives this book a quality of reading well worth pursuing. Everyone knows that many end up in a hospital as they are knocking on heaven's door, and sometimes when one is roaming around the wings, and takes a look inside the rooms, never fails to be seen a person covered with all manners of medical equipment, and perhaps a visitor(s) that faithfully keeps watch over their loved one. This book has so many angles, but all of them, are as the title suggests, life at Bellevue Hospital, which in a way is quite a legend where hospitals are concerned. Heavy subject, written in a light manner, makes this book one to read and share. 4.5 Stars.

In *Twelve Patients: Life and Death at Bellevue Hospital* (Grand Central Publishing/The Hatchette Group, 2013, 349 Pages, \$9.99 Kindle edition) Dr. Eric Manheimer tells a story about the American health care system set in Bellevue Hospital, which is the oldest and largest hospital in the United States. As a public hospital it serves the needs of those populations not well-served by the huge infrastructure of America's hospital and larger medical industries. Through its vast doors come the immigrant and minority people who, for hundreds of years, have gathered in New York City for its challenging environment of work, wealth, and freedom, as well as providing a home for all who come. Riker's Island, the largest prison complex in the country provides a vast prison facility for those who commit crimes or are waiting trial for offenses ranging from simple drug arrests to the most horrendous of violent acts. The serial killer known as Son of Sam was imprisoned there for several years awaiting trial. The relationship between these two institutions and the communities surrounding them provides the context for this enormously engaging and challenging exploration of the American health care system at the nexus where it is most challenged. Using twelve patients, including himself, as examples, Manheimer explores the nooks and crannies of an over-challenged system to provide care for those most in need. In what amounts to a series of harrowing and inspiring case studies, he portrays the capacity of this system to meet the physical and emotional needs of those most in need of its powers. Skillfully using dialogue with his patients, colleagues, and family to explicate the stories he has to tell, Manheimer avoids the trap of jargon and stilted description bringing the cases to life through his own humanity and turning what might be cardboard stereotypes into people the reader cares about caught in situations that become real and compelling. Beneath each story lies the reality of grindingly difficult living conditions experienced by many who have suffered to get to the United States only to find themselves confronted by many of the same criminal elements they encountered at home, a system fragmenting to a halt under its own weight, and a country deeply divided about what to do with both criminals and immigrants. Early in

the book, Manheimer comments, “PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) was made an official disease in 1980. That is 2700 years after Homer described the effects of war on warriors in his majestic Iliad.” Read the remainder of this review on my blog. If you decide to purchase it, please use the portal you find there or go to your local independent bookstore.

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