

6. **Jonathan Peck and Clement Bezold, Health Care and AIDS, Annals of the AAPSS, No. 522, 130-39, July 1992.**

The acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a harbinger for change in health care. There are many powerful forces poised to transform the industrialized health care structure of the twentieth century, and AIDS may act as either a catalyst or an amplifier for these forces. AIDS could, for example, swamp local resources and thereby help trigger national reform in a health care system that has already lost public confidence. AIDS can also hasten the paradigm shift that is occurring throughout health care.

### **New Health Care Paradigm**

Many of the twentieth century health care concepts tied to this paradigm, which place sick people in hospitals and have doctors making medical decisions, are under attack. AIDS becomes one more force applying pressure to shift from the old paradigm described in the table below to a new paradigm. Unless the old paradigm creates a dramatic cure for AIDS or an effective vaccine in fairly short order, AIDS will likely be a strong force for a paradigm shift in health.

Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Health is in the body	Health is spirit, mind, and body
Health equals absence of disease	Health equals maximum potentials and performance
Examines individuals	Examines society
Casual model	Multifactorial models
Pathogen focused	Systems view
Allopathic	Holistic
Physician dominated	Consumer oriented
Inpatient	Outpatient
Medical	Behavioral
Mass produced	Customized

AIDS has unleashed a consumer movement that seeks the power, information, and choice that was assigned to higher authorities operating under the old paradigm. AIDS activists have created patient information networks, drug-purchasing groups, and a striking example of how motivated consumers can change health care.

If future AIDS activists from the inner cities take their cue from the current groups, then pressure will continue to push toward the new health care paradigm. In part, that shift is motivated by the desire to provide a more potent response to the rising epidemic. The new paradigm enlists all human resources in the struggle to thrive. The spirit and the mind are particularly important allies for HIV-infected individuals who may see victory not as eliminating the disease but as maintaining or recovering their self-esteem and their ability to function in spite of the disease. Some people with AIDS go so far as to place all their hope in faith healing or other approaches that are completely outside the traditional medical paradigm. Most people infected with HIV, however, do not ignore the offerings of the medical establishment; they just look for more than what medicine can offer.