



# Mama Might Be Better Off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in Urban America

By Laurie Kaye Abraham

University of Chicago Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 289 pages. Dimensions: 8.9in. x 6.0in. x 0.9in. Mama Might Be Better Off Dead is an unsettling, profound look at the human face of health care. Both disturbing and illuminating, it immerses readers in the lives of four generations of a poor, African-American family beset with the devastating illnesses that are all too common in America's inner-cities. The story takes place in North Lawndale, a neighborhood that lies in the shadows of Chicago's Loop. Although surrounded by some of the city's finest medical facilities, North Lawndale is one of the sickest, most medically underserved communities in the country. Headed by Jackie Banes, who oversees the care of a diabetic grandmother, a husband on kidney dialysis, an ailing father, and three children, the Banes family contends with countless medical crises. From visits to emergency rooms and dialysis units, to trials with home care, to struggles for Medicaid eligibility, Abraham chronicles their access (or lack of access) to medical care. Told sympathetically but without sentimentality, their story reveals an inadequate health care system that is further undermined by the direct and indirect effects of poverty. When people are poor, they become sick easily. When...



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