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The transnationalization of the health care system in Argentina

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Iriart, C. The transnationalization of the health care system in Argentina. In: **Mckintosh, M; Koivusolo, M. Commercialization of health care. Global and local dynamics and policy responses.** Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 2005. p 51-65.

Objectives: To examine the role of multinational corporations in the process of health care service privatization in Argentina.

Methodology: Qualitative study using in-depth interviews and document analysis. Secondary quantitative data was analyzed to characterize the socio-economic context.

Results: This chapter begins by showing the severity of the decline in health care in Argentina during the health reforms of the 1990s. The author then shows that multilateral credit institutions effectively pressured for the reforms they wanted, which were based on the concept of health as a commodity. This represents a fundamental change in established health policy. The author shows how the reforms opened the way for international financial capital to administer social security funds under a managed health care model through insurance companies and pension and investment funds. The parallel deterioration in publicly-provided health care is also analyzed. In addition, this chapter documents how official policies continue to promote managed care in spite of its negative effects on health in the population.

Conclusions: The chapter concludes by stating the need to reform the health system, but questions whether the private financial sector should extract money from health care to earn profits in other sectors and countries. Controlling the growing costs of the individualist, commercialized, curative, biological model does not depend on administrative reforms carried out by speculative capital, but on a profound transformation of the model which would place its users' individual and collective needs foremost. A variety of social movements are searching for alternatives.