

NINETEENTH CENTURY HEALTH CARE MARKETING
IN THE UNITED STATES

Kathleen R. Whitney, Central Michigan University

ABSTRACT

Marketing of professional services is said to be a "new" phenomena. This study provides ample evidence that this is not the case. Further, it proposes that a move to the medical model during the 1800s was deterministic and technology driven.

There is evidence of deliberate manipulation of each of the classic four Ps: product, place, promotion, and price. Education was used to differentiate the medical model (Billings 1893). Medical education was also used as justification for premium pricing (Billings 1893). Health care promotion incorporated the notion of moderate fees and differentiated by geographic service area (Petersen 1969). Place was also controlled by medical physicians instituting hospitals beside medical schools (Smith 1893).

Awareness of customer satisfaction was apparent in numerous advertisements which address customer concerns. One guaranteed money back if the treatment was not successful (Petersen 1969).

Non-medical services were purposefully demarketed by the American Medical Association (Petersen 1969). Later evidence of change in the legal environment began to appear. One example is Iowa in the 1860s where a Christian Scientist healer was arrested for practicing without a medical license (Petersen 1969).

Differentiation of the medical model would not have been possible without introduction of technological advances. During this century the theory of specific germ caused disease was supported. Essential tools such as the thermometer, stethoscope, and x-rays were developed in the 1800s (Haagensen and Lloyd 1943).

In summary, health care products and services were openly marketed in the 1800s. Furthermore, the medical profession used a marketing approach to position the medical model. Finally, technology was an antecedent to medical model dominance.

Billings, J. S. 1893. "Medicine as a Career", Forum, 14 February 725-734.

Haagensen, C. D. and Wyndham E. B. Lloyd. 1943. A Hundred Years of Medicine, New York: Sheridan House.

Petersen, William J. 1969. "Pioneer Doctors and Druggists." Palimpsest. (June) 305-316.

Smith, C. G. F. 1893. "Modern Hospital." Quarterly Review. 177 (October) 464-494.