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To reach DARTMOUTH MEDICINE:  
U.S. Mail: 1 Medical Center Drive  
(HB 7070), Lebanon, NH 03756  
FedEx/UPS: 21 Lafayette Street,  
#303, Lebanon, NH 03766  
Phone: 603-653-0772  
Fax: 603-653-0775  
E-mail: DartMed@Dartmouth.edu  
Web: [dartmed.dartmouth.edu](http://dartmed.dartmouth.edu)

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## FEATURES

### **The State of the Nation's Health** By Maggie Mahar 26

The U.S. spends more on health care than any other nation. Does that money buy what it should? Not according to Dartmouth research on regional variations in spending and outcomes. But policy-makers are now paying attention to the DMS work—and therein may lie a solution to the money-medicine puzzle.

### **The Other Side of the Stethoscope** By Paula Hartman Cohen 36

Physicians, for all their knowledge about health, sometimes fall prey to serious illness and injury—and find themselves on the receiving end of the stethoscope. Or individuals with experience as a patient sometimes decide to enter medicine—and become the person wielding the stethoscope. In either case, their patients often benefit.

### **Encounters with the Inexplicable** By Parker A. Towle, M.D. 44

A Dartmouth physician who is also a much-published poet recently had his work featured on National Public Radio's *Writer's Almanac*.

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Medical decisions are often far from clear-cut. A DMS graduate writes about an elderly patient who was rushed to the hospital after a stroke. He had to decide whether a powerful drug would save her life . . . or kill her.



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## COVER

Did you know that the health care you get varies depending on where you live? And that the less care you get, the better off you may be? See page 26 for more on these and other paradoxical findings from Dartmouth. The cover illustration is by Meg McLean.