**Chapter 14: Medicine: An Anatomy of Health and Illness   
This American Life**

**Recommended Readings**

Michael Bloor, The Sociology of HIV TransmissionIn this book, Bloor examines group phenomena such as needle sharing and unprotected sex that leads to HIV transmission using sociological research methods to separate myths from reality.

Anne Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two CulturesThis book explores the story of Lia Lee, a child whose epilepsy and subsequent treatment by American doctors comes into conflict with her parents' Hmong culture.

Geyla Frank, Venus on Wheels: Two Decades of Dialogue on Disability, Biography and Being Female in AmericaFrank provides an ethnographic and life history of Diana DeVries, who was born without arms or legs and who chooses not to use prostheses. Frank also details the methodological challenges of telling DeVries' story without taking it over.

Lucy Grealy, Autobiography of a FaceGrealy explains what it is like having grown up with one-third of her jaw missing from a potentially terminal cancer. She discusses her competing desires to be accepted by her peers and to be seen as “special.”

J. Eric Oliver, Fat Politics: The Real Story behind America's Obesity Epidemic Oliver explores what he calls “the real problem,” not obesity but the panic over obesity that has led to a multi-billion dollar diet and fitness industry.

Thomas Scheff, Being Mentally Ill: A Sociological TheoryScheff examines mental illness as a violation of socio-normative behaviors. In addition, he explores the hotly contested issues of pharmaceutical intervention and even the labeling of mental illness itself.

Ichiro Kawachi and Bruce Kennedy, *The Health of Nations: Why Inequality is Harmful to your Health*

The authors look at how social class inequality influences the health and mortality of individuals in society. They also show how the stratification system influences the overall health of a nation.

Greg Critser, *Fat Land: How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World*

A journalist by trade, Crister uses the sociological imagination to show how historical and structural forces have transformed the American food industry resulting in widespread obesity.

Jill Quadagno, *One Nation, Uninsured: Why the U.S. Has No National Health Insurance*

Quadagno shows how the U.S. lacks a national health system mainly because important social forces—insurance companieis, small-businesses, and the American Medical Association—opposes it. She also shows how a cultural shift is necessary before national healthcare could be a possibility.

Robert H. Lustig. *Fat Chance: Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Processed Food, Obesity, and Disease*

Lustig documents the science and the politics that has led to the pandemic of chronic disease over the last 30 years. In the late 1970s when the government mandated we get the fat out of our food, the food industry responded by pouring more sugar in. The result has been a perfect storm, disastrously altering our biochemistry and driving our eating habits out of our control.

Lassey, Marie L., William R. Lassey, and Martin J. Jinks. *Health Care Systems around the World: Characteristics, Issues, Reforms*. A comparative look at health care delivery in 13 countries, including Canada, China, Japan, Mexico, Russia, and Sweden.