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## Preface and Acknowledgments

Acquaintances occasionally ask how I ended up working on the philosophy of medicine after writing a dissertation on the history of eighteenth-century philosophy, and are surprised to hear that my work on health arose directly from my work on David Hume's theory of belief. To argue that Hume valued certain beliefs because of their status as components of the mental life of healthy, well-functioning humans, I began to think about what it means to be a healthy individual. I eventually drafted a short paper on concepts of health for a conference and sent it to some of the more philosophically minded physicians I know. Andrew Budson, an old friend from our undergraduate days at Haverford, where philosophy seems to matter more than at most places, telephoned full of questions and objections. Always thinking, my wife Leslie suggested the collaboration that resulted in what I call the Richman–Budson theory of health.

This theory is developed, expanded, and defended in part I of this book. The remaining parts explore its practical and ethical implications. The topics covered range from the philosophy of science to Kantian ethics to knee surgery. Although the treatment is technical, academic philosophy, I hope to have shown something of the contribution that the more theoretical aspects of philosophy can make to the daily lives of individuals and communities.

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