

A priority for this issue is addressing Donaghue's take on the idea of priority. According to a standard dictionary, a priority is something that is given or deserves attention ahead of competing alternatives. When resources are limited, it's important to identify which alternative uses merit preferential treatment — to focus on the ball one should be keeping one's eye on. A pretty fundamental question is, "Whose priority are we talking about?" This is so because different folks will surely have different ideas about how best to apply the same resources.

For the Foundation trustees, Miss Donaghue's intent, as expressed in her will, is always Priority One. And the trustees' reading of that intent — the application of her resources to promoting useful health knowledge through research — becomes our oft-recited mantra: "Practical Benefit." Recognizing that priorities differ among people and organizations, Donaghue often places a priority on just those things others relegate to a back seat. Hence our "but for" test, which focuses our attention on worthy projects that without our support might not move forward because they're not high on someone else's list of priorities. ▣

