

JOINT COMMISSION RELEASES BOOK EMPOWERING PATIENTS

by *Dave Gourley RRT*



Earlier this year, the Joint Commission announced the release of a new book entitled, "You: The Smart Patient: An Insider's Handbook for Getting the Best Treatment". It has been written by best-selling authors Michael F. Roizen, M.D. and Mehmet C. Oz, M.D., in collaboration with Joint Commission Resources. The book is published by Free Press, a division of Simon and Schuster. This book is markedly different from other written materials you may have obtained from the Joint Commission. The authors use humor and illustrations to provide practical information to patients on navigating the health care system.

The book urges patients to get involved in their own health care and promotes the importance and value of JCAHO accreditation. There are specific references to many of the JCAHO initiatives, including the National Patient Safety Goals, the Speak Up Campaign, Quality Check, and Universal Protocol. It also provides advice on where to seek health care outside the United States and the importance of looking for the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval when choosing a health care organization.

"You: The Smart Patient" recently received a three star rating (very good) from Doody's Book Review Service. Doody's is a comprehensive database of books and electronic media in the health sci-

ences. It is well respected world wide for its comprehensive, timely, and unbiased approach to rating publications. Doody's Expert Reviewer Paul H. Keckley, Ph.D. of Vanderbilt Medical Center wrote, "This is a well-written book on target for the consumer audience new to any understanding of the health system."

You may have seen the authors of "You: The Smart Patient" on the Oprah Winfrey Show on May 1st. It was featured during a show themed "90-Day Live Longer, Feel Younger Plan". Dr. Oz spoke with Oprah to show how every patient can take charge of their health care and get the best treatment available. You can view a clip of the show on her website at [www. Oprah.com](http://www.Oprah.com).

The book is comprised of ten chapters and three appendices. It begins with an introduction on why you need to be a smart patient and "The Smart Patient Quiz". The chapters include topics such as "Finding Dr. Right", safety in the OR, prescription drugs, "How to Case a Hospital", patient rights, the value of getting a second opinion, alternative medicine, and taking control of your health insurance. Appendix 1 is a glossary that explains medical jargon, which we all know leads to patient anxiety and confusion. Appendix 2 includes sample forms such as a living will, power of attorney, and DNR order.

The authors use a unique approach to providing this essential information to patients. They use many illustrations and cartoons to get their message out clearly. One illustration is "The Smart Patient Family Tree", which assists patients with tracking their family's health history. Another illustration is entitled "Home, Hazardous Home", and graphically identifies all the health hazards within our own homes.

Since research shows that an educated health care consumer is the safest patient, the book also includes a list of some of the best websites regarding health care, including the American Medical Association, American College of Surgeons, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Healthfinder, and Medline Plus.

The Joint Commission's acknowledgements at the end of the book recognize the dedication of the nation's health care organization leaders, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and other health care professionals who provide excellent patient care.

As both health care professionals who will encounter patients that have read this book, and as potential health care consumers ourselves, this book is essential for any respiratory therapist's personal or professional library.

Joint Commission Resources has announced that proceeds from this book will be donated to a charitable organization. Additional information regarding this book is available on Joint Commission Resources website at www.jcrrinc.com. If interested in obtaining "You: The Smart Patient: An Insider's Handbook for Getting the Best Treatment", it should be available at your favorite bookstore or you can purchase it at amazon.com.

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