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Nursing Homes: Working, Living, And Dying In Long Term Care

Nursing Homes

Working, Living, and Dying in Long Term Care

M. L. Wagner, M.D.



Synopsis

A physician with half a century experience reveals what it's really like to work, live, and die in a nursing home. His stories are of real people in an unnatural environment of diminished freedom and little personal privacy, and those who care for them. Through them, he shows how our system of nursing home care fails, and the reasons why. You will learn about over-regulation, laws and their consequences, fear-based management obsessed with compliance, managerial isolation, minimum standards condoning mediocrity, counterproductive inspections called surveys, misleading ratings, meaningless deficiencies, artificial prolongation of life and death, polypharmacy, under-funding, over-funding, the bizarre Prospective Payment System, the subacute-care co-dependence of hospitals and nursing homes, physician extenders, auditors called consultants, intrusive committees, gaming the system, and much more. It is a flawed system that can be changed.

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Customer Reviews

A year after his suicide attempt, comedian Artie Lange was asked how his life was going. His

answer "you haven't lived until you have played Scrabble in 3 rehabs and 2 'looney bins' like I have over the past year!" Read this book to see what the Scrabble game is like in the long term care business. Doctor Wagner shows us what it is like, how we got there, and where we would not want to be. VRE, HIPAA, the life of a CNA, and all the other acronyms give a picture that is not nice. The insanity and inanity of the system are clearly pointed out. Simple solutions to evident problems are provided. I finished the book in 1 sitting.

A MUST read for the baby boomers and their appointed health care proxy. Dr. Wagner provides the reader with an inside perspective that would otherwise remain unknown. Perhaps the owners should reside in the "HOME" for a week to realize how homey it is not. Imagine having all your basic daily needs of eating, bathing, sleeping or relaxing with a good book being dictated by procedure. Even more alarming is not being a participant in your treatment plan. Being a senior citizen should not be like traveling into a dark tunnel.

Having worked in long-term care for 40 years, from staff nurse to administrator and consultant, this book paints a very real picture. The chapter on solutions gives a very practical description of how to view government ratings with a grain of salt. All long-term care facilities are required to make their survey findings in detail and what they plan to do about any deficiencies. Unannounced visits especially during MEAL times, and on weekends, talking with residents and staff who provide the care is your best bet.

Dr Wagner gives a soberingly accurate account of life in residential care. As a doctor who works in nursing homes in New Zealand I was surprised at how similar the industry and its problems are in countries so far apart. The book is engaging and pleasant to read and I congratulate Dr Wagner on his honest portrayal of his work environment. Well done!

For those wondering why the system has run amok and the daily and nightly challenges in every long term care facility. It makes me want to turn the managers administrators and owners and inspectors into actual nurses aides and patients.

It gives a detailed behind the scenes look at LTC from a physicians perspective. It touches on every aspect of nursing home care and discusses the business side as well. I've worked in LTC for many years and I learned a lot from this book.

All you should need to know about this very important subject. Dr. Wagner's point of view is both poignant with a touch of humor. REQUIRED reading when you need to make such an important life decision.

The book mirrors my experience with a loved one residing in a nursing home. Kudos to Dr. Wagner!
Julie Mullins

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