

Book: *Patient Satisfaction: Understanding and Managing the Experience of Care, Second Edition*

Book Author: Irwin Press, PhD

Publisher: Health Administration Press, Chicago, IL © 2006

ISBN: 1-56793-250-9

Reviewer: **Cynthia Jones, MHA, CFAAMA**
Director, Multi-Service Market Management Office
Columbia, SC

Book Review:

The sub-title "*Understanding and Managing the Experience of Care*" says it all. The key words "experience of care" are what this book is all about. The author, Irwin Press, specifically focuses on the experience of care and, notably, not the care itself. The experience includes not only the actual care provided, but the entire environment - from the patient's thoughts as they enter the building and the carpet in the entry way; to the interactions with every human (staff, other patients, physicians, and contractors) they encounter, the noise in the corridor, and the prick of a needle when a blood sample is drawn. In the author's own words, this book is about "... the often-missed factors that underlie patient satisfaction and its management."

Press is a cofounder of Press Ganey Associates, and has over 20 years experience consulting with hospitals. He incorporates firsthand accounts from his research and consulting work to illustrate his points. References cited and author's notes are conveniently listed at the end of each chapter. Ten of the twelve chapters close with a section titled "Action for Satisfaction," providing practical suggestions to implement the chapter's concepts. The two chapters, "Fifty Nifty Ideas for Improving Satisfaction," and the closing "Implementing Change" are essentially entire chapters of "Actions for Satisfaction."

This second edition is a true new edition containing noteworthy new material. The basic message of both editions however, is the same: "A concern for patient satisfaction is good for all constituencies." The subtitle of the first edition was "*Defining, Measuring, and Improving the Experience of Care*," and as you would expect, this edition also devotes several chapters to surveying and measuring patient satisfaction, data mining and analysis for meaningful results, and using those results as a basis for improvement strategies. Press' background in Anthropology is evident throughout the book, especially in an entirely new chapter on cultural diversity of both patients and staff. This notable addition builds on the concept that the narrowly defined clinical culture of care, clashes with the patient's more broadly defined cultures that include their expectations and hopes for the experience of care. Another new section is the chapter by consultant Mary Malone on 50 simple ideas, most of them inexpensive, that can make a difference to patients. Other new material provides insights on effective complaint management and scripting.

The opening chapters are dedicated to justifying the effort it takes to address patient satisfaction. The first ties patient satisfaction to healthcare quality, and the second ties organizational effectiveness to patient satisfaction. These chapters also include new material on the links patient satisfaction has to patient and staff safety, and to physician satisfaction. The author suggests the material in these two chapters should be mandatory reading for all. These chapters clearly articulate how every job and every department's mission are dependent on patients' evaluations of their care experience. In particular, these sections may be helpful in explaining the intricate interdependencies of health care in America today to board members.

The entire book is just over 250 pages, easy to read, and a handy reference. I have made notations and highlighted sections throughout my copy, and it is now on a shelf within easy reach of my desk.