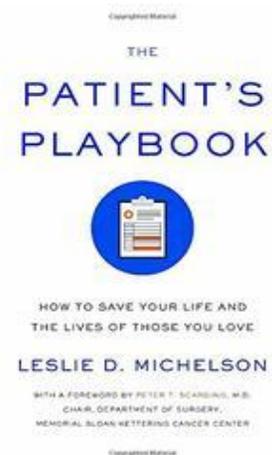


March 2nd, 2016

Spotlight on Books:

The Patient's Playbook: How to Save Your Life and the Lives of Those You Love by Leslie D. Michelson

Leslie Michelson's book about health advocacy has appeared on several 2015 lists of best science and health books and even though it references the American health system there is much in this Canadian edition of *The Patient's Playbook* that will be relevant.



The author is the founder and CEO of *Private Health Management*, a patient-focused company dedicated to helping individuals and corporate clients obtain exceptional medical care. Mr. Michelson's overarching thesis is that health care is one of the few areas where people willingly cede control to others and his useful book aims to empower patients to take a stronger role in directing treatment.

Michelson presents a lot of material but thanks to the quick guide at the end of each chapter it is never overwhelming. *The Patient's Playbook* is highly readable and the case histories that are included in illustration of the author's various points are fascinating. The author understands how overwhelming it can be to interact with the medical system and sets out a comprehensive plan designed to make readers smarter health consumers. This includes best criteria to employ when selecting a primary care physician, the importance of keeping copies of medical records for self and family as well as of plotting a family medical history.

The author does not shy away from the reality of medical errors and suggests that the best way to ensure a "no mistake zone" is to educate oneself about one's diagnosis, to ask questions and to advocate. In his preface note to the Canadian edition the author references the 2004 *Canadian Adverse Events Study* that found that one out of every fourteen patients admitted to hospitals in Canada experienced an unintended injury or complication, about thirty-seven percent of which were preventable. He believes that the challenge for Canadian patients is "under treatment or delayed treatment" and stresses the importance in our country of proactively enquiring about wait times for surgery or referrals to specialists. Michelson's message is holistic and validating and Canadian readers will appreciate the inclusion of online health-research tools.

The Patient's Playbook is available at Yellowknife Public Library in both print and e-book format.

- Review prepared by Deborah Bruser