

Book Reviews

CQI and the Renovation of an American Health Care System

Sr. Mary Jean Ryan, FSM, and William P. Thompson

ASQC Quality Press, Milwaukee, 1997, 191 pp., \$27 (hardcover)

THIS BOOK IS A RECOLLECTION OF AN odyssey of an American healthcare system into the uncharted waters of continuous quality improvement (CQI). The text is not a CQI "how-to" manual; it is a compilation of valuable experiences relating to the assessment, introduction, and implementation of CQI principles and techniques.

The book explores CQI theory and teachings and does a reasonable job of relating theory and teaching to the practical experience of utilizing CQI tools and skills. The setting is the St. Louis-based SSM Health Care System, which owns, operates, and manages 26 health-care entities in six states. In 1989, despite being well positioned for the future, SSM leaders were concerned they were not seeing a constant striving for improvement. By 1990 they were ready for a new direction, and CQI theory and tools provided the compass.

The authors share their experiences as they prepared the system for a CQI transformation. The book reflects on laying the CQI foundation, identifying critical issues, understanding the role of leadership, infusing a customer focus

into the organization, transforming the culture of patient care, integrating CQI principles into clinical and functional services, and measuring quality. Valuable lessons throughout the book will help those traveling the same CQI transformation road.

The authors review how they used flowcharting, cause-and-effect diagrams, Pareto charts, run charts, histograms, and other tools. They do not address the CQI principles of when and how to use these tools. Yet the information and experience provide insight into how one organization has made use of CQI teachings.

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BOOK BRIEFS

Source Book in Bioethics: A Documentary History

Albert R. Jonsen, Robert M. Veatch, and LeRoy Walters, eds., Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 1998, 510 pp., \$95

This volume collects the important public documents in biomedical ethics of the past 50 years. Included are core legislative documents and decisions, court briefs, and reports and policy statements by professional organizations, public bodies, and governments worldwide. The book's five sections include documents on the ethics of research and human subjects, the ethics of death and dying, ethical issues in human genetics, ethical issues in reproductive technology, and ethical issues in the healthcare system.

Living a Gentle, Passionate Life

Robert J. Wicks, Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1998, 138 pp., \$14.95

This spiritual guide is intended to help readers develop a strong and healthy inner life by embracing both the gentle and the passionate. The author explains how positive change leads us to live in a fashion that allows us to be more creative and less defensive, more joyful and less needy. Chapters discuss how to discover "single-heartedness" and simplicity, appreciate "the gift of now," find in solitude a "good loneliness," learn to accept life's intertwined emotions of joy and pain, find the curative value of listening to ourselves and to others, and discover spiritual freedom and greater meaning in daily life. Questions at the end of each chapter encourage reflection.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Living Simply in an Anxious World, Robert J. Wicks, Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1998

Market-Driven Strategy: An Execu-

tive Guide to Health Care's Integrated Environment, Linda MacCracken, American Hospital Publishing, Chicago, 1998

The New Rules of Healthcare Marketing: 23 Strategies for Success, Arthur C. Sturm Jr., Health Administration Press, Chicago, 1998

Pharmacy Practice and the Law, Richard R. Abood and David B. Brushwood, Aspen Publishers, Gaithersburg, MD, 1997

Praying with the Sick, Sandra DeGidio, Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic, CT, 1998

Safety Last: The Politics of E. Coli and Other Food-Borne Killers, Center for Public Integrity, Washington, DC, 1998

Valuation of Physician Practices and Clinics, Bruce G. Krider, Aspen Publishers, Gaithersburg, MD, 1997