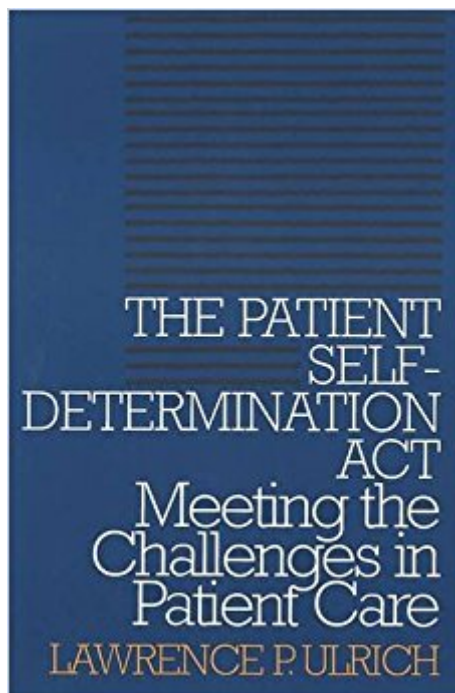




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# The Patient Self-Determination Act: Meeting The Challenges In Patient Care (Clinical Medical Ethics)



## Synopsis

The Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990 required medical facilities to provide patients with written notification of their right to refuse or consent to medical treatment. Using this Act as an important vehicle for improving the health care decisionmaking process, Lawrence P. Ulrich explains the social, legal, and ethical background to the Act by focusing on well-known cases such as those of Karen Quinlan and Nancy Cruzan, and he explores ways in which physicians and other caregivers can help patients face the complex issues in contemporary health care practices. According to Ulrich, health care facilities often address the letter of the law in a merely perfunctory way, even though the Act integrates all the major ethical issues in health care today. Ulrich argues that well-designed conversations between clinicians and patients or their surrogates will not only assist in preserving patient dignity — which is at the heart of the Act — but will also help institutions to manage the liability issues that the Act may have introduced. He particularly emphasizes developing effective advance directives. Ulrich examines related issues, such as the negative effect of managed care on patient self-determination, and concludes with a seldom-discussed issue: the importance of being a responsible patient. Showing how the Patient Self-Determination Act can be a linchpin of more meaningful and effective communication between patient and caregiver, this book provides concrete guidance to health care professionals, medical ethicists, and patient-rights advocates.

## Book Information

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"Brings some light to those lost in the darkness of properly defining the boundaries of the patient's role in the health care decision making process . . . offers a wealth of knowledge to bioethicists, caregivers, health policy makers, members of institutional ethics committees, and lawyers." — JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)

"This very complete analysis of the legal and ethical foundations of the [Patient Self-Determination] Act is a valuable guide for health care professionals, lawyers, and policy makers as well as the educated public." — Edmund D. Pellegrino, MD, chair, President's Council on Bioethics, 2005-2009, and professor emeritus of medicine and medical ethics, Center for Clinical Bioethics, Georgetown University Medical Center

"This book is a portrait of the strengths and weaknesses of the ethics of advance directives and legislation supporting it. It would be hard to image any other work matching it for comprehensiveness and insight." — David C. Thomasma, Stritch School of Medicine, Loyola University Chicago

"This timely book should be read and used by all health care professionals responsible for the care of critically ill patients, every member of institutional ethics committees, ethics consultants, senior institutional managers, and patients and their families." — Laurence B. McCullough, Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy, Baylor College of Medicine

Ulrich's treatment of the Self-Determination Act is by far the best available. I am particularly impressed by the full and very rich analysis he provides for understanding the Act." — Richard A. McCormick, SJ, University of Notre Dame

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