

Book Review

The Risk Manager's Desk Reference

Edited by Barbara J. Youngberg, JD, BSN, MSW
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35 Chapters
Illustrated
34 Contributing Authors

Editor Barbara J. Youngberg has assigned herself an enormous task of preparing a reference book on risk management. She is an attorney and nurse, and as Vice President of Insurance, Risk & Quality Management for an Illinois-based company, develops and coordinates the risk management and quality improvement activities of 62 university hospitals nationwide.

This book is broken down into 35 chapters, starting with an introduction to risk management and setting up a risk management department, to several chapters discussing risk management issues pertaining to specific hospital departments (i.e., pediatric, anesthesia, etc.). At the end of most chapters is a bibliography section directing the reader to further information on the subject matter. Throughout the text the reader will find excellent algorithms and appendixes containing various forms and statements/guidelines that may readily be applied in the hospital setting.

Unfortunately there is no discussion of risk management issues for thoracic and cardiovascular surgery; however, there are several chapters that would be of interest to perfusionists. For instance, the chapter titled "Risk Management in the Age of Clinical Cutbacks" is very timely and useful. This section contains information on how to avoid liability due to personnel shortages. Furthermore, the chapter provides information on juggling liability and insurance payer pressure for early patient discharge by detailing a list of clinical service-specific criteria used in high risk screening of discharge patients.

Another chapter, "Education as a Valuable Risk Management Resource," contains excellent information on the true definition of an informed consent, which must include an objective prediction of risk. Also within this chapter there is a concise review on what to chart and what not to chart in the medical

record. Finally, there is an informative section on HIV testing and disclosure that includes recent court case documentation.

I felt the chapter on "Computerizing Risk Management" was weak. There is little information on how to apply computers to risk management. Instead, the chapter contains outdated guidelines on purchasing computers and printers.

Other relevant information for perfusion managers is found in the chapter "The Risk Manager's Responsibility for Off Premises Locations." This section contains useful information in developing affiliation agreements, potential exposure (risk) of agency or contract personnel employed by a hospital, and finally the chapter contains a sample nursing agency agreement that appears to be adaptable for contract perfusion organizations.

The chapter titled "Preparing for the Risks of Tomorrow's Technology" details 10 different ways to control a health care institution's liability associated with advanced technology. This chapter also defines the Safe Medical Devices Act and how to comply with this federal mandate.

In conclusion, this reference book was intended to serve as a resource offering a number of concepts that can be adopted, modified or set aside for future use. The editor seems to have succeeded, with few exceptions, in providing a comprehensive reference book on risk management. Overall, the text is well organized, generously illustrated and easy to skim or read. This book serves as a valuable, single-source reference text for the perfusion manager and individuals involved with perfusion academics.

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