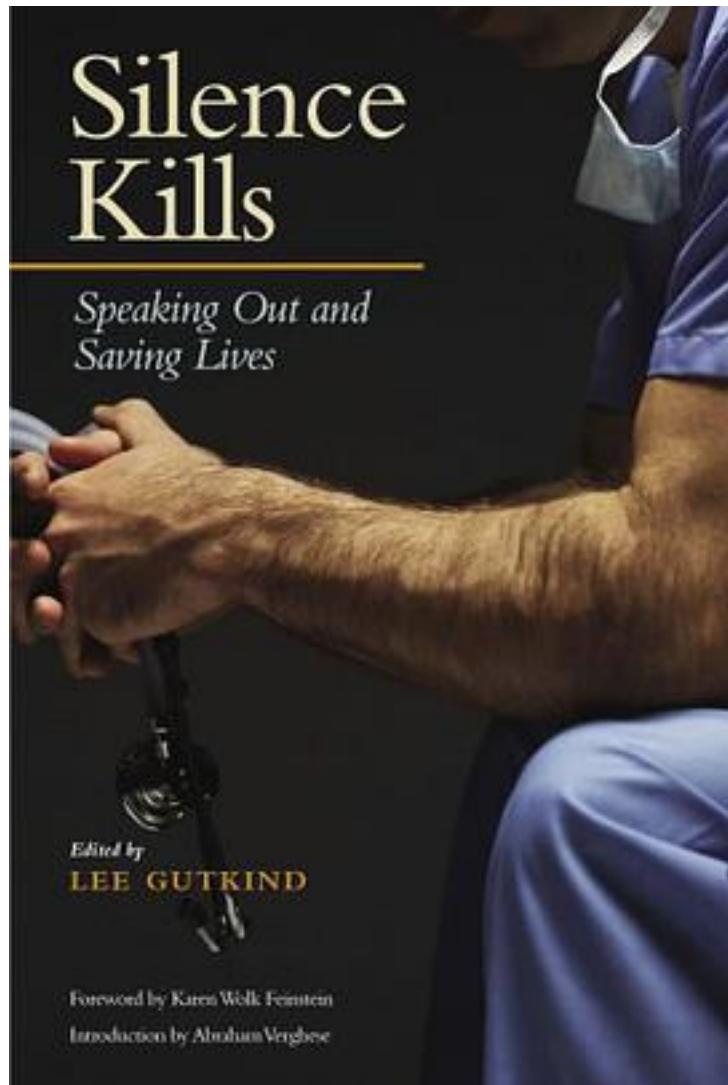


Silence Kills



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The dozen personal essays in this collection, from patients and their caregivers, nurses, social workers, and physicians, address the devastating human results that can occur from a lack of communication and understanding among those in the health care profession. Medical error--much of it traceable to simple lack of communication--costs billions of dollars each year, in addition to the less quantifiable costs of the loss of trust in doctor-patient relationships and the decline in morale among health care professionals. These powerful stories illustrate the need to find ways to break these potentially lethal silences. In "Mrs. Kelly," a doctor obeying his superior's order sends a man home from the emergency room against his better judgment, agonizes over his decision, and later calls the man's widow to apologize. In "In Praise of Osmosis," a critical-care nurse pressures a hospital's hierarchy to authorize the continuous renal replacement therapy her patient needs to prevent imminent and irreversible damage to his kidneys. In "You Have the Right to Remain Silent," an inmate's sister must fight her way through miles of red tape to get treatment for the Hepatitis-C her brother contracted in prison. Inspired by groundbreaking research by VitalSmarts, a global leader in organizational performance and leadership, and the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN), and supported by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Lee Gutkind, editor of the journal Creative Nonfiction, has collected the essays in this volume--with the hope that these voices, speaking out, taking action and risks, will inspire others to make changes that will improve communication within our troubled health care system.

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