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## **When It Comes to Health Records "IT" Can Mean Impaired Technology Medical mistakes already on the rise with Health Information Software**

With the new health care IT technology already in use, preparation for the accompanying consequences should be on every family's mind, advises Martine Ehrenclou, author of the multiple award-winning, self-help guide *Critical Conditions: The Essential Hospital Guide To Get Your Loved One Out Alive* (Lemon Grove Press)

The FDA has received 260 reports in the last two years submitted voluntarily about health IT malfunctions that had the potential to cause harm to patients, including reports of 44 injuries and six deaths. The problems include accessing the wrong patient's record; overwriting one patient's information with another; loss, corruption or errors in vital patient data; errors in data analysis, such as listing of medications at incorrect doses; and incompatibility in vendor software systems.

As the system moves towards a paperless state, errors will result from medical professionals having to scan multiple pages of electronic data instead of going directly to the area in question, according to a Wellsphere study. Currently, the FDA has authority to regulate health IT software as a medical device but has not fully exercised that authority. "To date, FDA has largely refrained from enforcing our regulatory requirements with respect to health IT devices," said Jeffrey Shuren, director of the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health.

New technology brings new problems and although the solution is complex, prevention is readily available in Ms. Ehrenclou's award winning book. In its fact-filled pages, you learn how become an advocate for the hospital-bound family member or friend and not only diminish the chance of needless medical mistakes, but assure yourself and them that they will not only enter the hospital confident, but return home safely after their stay.

Among the quarter million annual medical mistakes Ehrenclou's book will help you avoid are: redundant care, patient name mistakes, wrong-site surgery, medication errors, and the spread of hospital-acquired infectious diseases. You'll also learn the secrets that hospitals never reveal such as when staffs are low, times when doctors are generally not available and how to be certain you can reach physicians when you need to.

The new decade will bring health care to millions more needy Americans and with the addition of *Critical Conditions* to your arsenal of health care tools, you'll make sure that whatever the final form of the health care bill is, your loved ones are protected.

This alert is provided in conjunction with National Patient Safety Awareness week, March 7-13. For more information on The National Patient Safety Foundation please visit [www.npsf.org](http://www.npsf.org).

*Critical Conditions* is available in better bookstores, on all online booksellers, and is now available as an e-book for Kindle and Nook, and at [criticalconditions.com](http://criticalconditions.com).