

101 Ways to the Best Medical Care by Charlotte E. Thompson, M.D., 214 pages, 2006, \$14.95. Infinity Publishing, www.buybooksontheweb.com.

Charlotte Thompson, assistant clinical professor of pediatrics at the University of California Medical School in San Diego, unravels the U.S. health care system from the patient's point of view. A former MDA clinic director and author of *Raising a Child With a Neuromuscular Disease*, Thompson is an "old-style" doctor who puts patients first and shares their concerns about today's complicated, restrictive managed care health system.

Her numbered suggestions begin with "Always insist on the best medical care possible." She then proceeds to include four reasons to change physicians; questions to ask before signing up with an HMO; how to appeal insurance company decisions; how to obtain high-risk insurance; and much more. Her lists are a great primer for anyone who wants to become a savvy health care consumer, including routine procedures and who needs them, types of medical professionals, common medical terminology, advocacy Web sites, state insurance regulators and medical boards, and many other resources.

Her chapters on special needs care and home health care will be especially relevant to Quest readers. With its amazing wealth of "what-to-do" information, this guide should arm health care consumers of any age and medical condition with tools to make the health care system work for them.

Moving Over the Edge: Artists With Disabilities Take the Leap, by Pamela Kay Walker, 244 pages, 2005, \$25. Michael Horton Media, www.MHortonMedia.com.

Walker has lived with polio and a creative mind. In this lively account, she describes how her performance art career, and those of others, developed as the disability rights movement matured.

Her style is humorous and impudent, and filled with tributes to dozens of imaginative artists who communicate to each other and the larger world through theater, comedy, dance, film and all the lively arts.

The Family That Couldn't Sleep, by D.T. Max, 300 pages, 2006, \$25.95.

Random House, www.atrandom.com.

The common ground among the players in this novel and people with neuromuscular diseases is that many are adversely affected by ordinary proteins that have somehow gone wrong in their bodies.

The similarities end there. New Guinea cannibals are part of this story, as are mad cows and equally mad sheep. The main characters, though, are members of an Italian family cursed with centuries of fatal insomnia that takes its toll after a few months of increasingly debilitating sleeplessness.

The author, who has a neurological illness, is a seasoned journalist. He takes subject matter that's often been sensationalized and derives an objective neuroscientific discussion of the prion in all its various and startling guises. This book is informative, gripping and even frightening at times.

Gordon's Guide to Dude Ranch Vacations & Horseback Adventures, 132 pages, 2007, \$8.99. Gordon's Guide Adventure & Active Travel Publications, www.gordons-guide.com/publications.cfm.

This slick four-color vacation guide provides detailed information about 88 dude ranches and horseback adventures in the United States, Australia, Mexico, Chile and France.

Of the facilities listed, 15 (all in this country) are described as "handicapped-accessible" (check the "Activity Locator" in the back of the book).

Stunning photographs depict all of these outback outfits in magnificent Western environs, providing a full range of ranch-related activities. Some offer horseback options for those who normally use wheelchairs. Readers will want to examine the facilities' Web sites or contact them directly to determine their degree of accessibility.

Raymond's Room: Ending the Segregation of People With Disabilities, by Dale DiLeo, 230 pages, 2007, \$15. Training Resource Network, www.raymondsroom.com.

Working in a residential facility for children with autism in 1975, Dale DiLeo was shocked by conditions there — such as a tiny, stifling room housing three residents that was kept locked all night with no staff around. Despite changes in society, DiLeo says people with disabilities are still hidden and legally segregated in housing and employment — primarily by the service system that's meant to help them.

In this autobiography tracing his career as a disability advocate, DiLeo also analyzes the disability care system and the community integration movement, particularly their failures and abuses. Although his focus is on people with cognitive impairments, everyone should appreciate his account offering insight into solutions that didn't work and some ideas of what might work better. □

