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TITLE INFORMATION

THE BRAVEWELL STORY

How a Small Community of Philanthropists Made a Big Difference in Healthcare

Bonnie Horrigan

Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health (200 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

A book examines the pioneering evolution of a health care initiative centered on mind-body medicine.

Editor and former executive director of The Bravewell Collaborative, Horrigan (*Voices of Integrative Medicine: Conversations and Encounters*, 2003) elaborates on the good work of the philanthropic collective whose success was based on a compassionate model of integrative medicine connecting care providers with patients. In accessible language, she surveys Bravewell's rich history from its inception in 2002, when a group of philanthropists, visionaries, industry leaders, and health care professionals networked, became inspired, and joined forces in a valiant effort to "make healthcare more responsive to the complete needs and well-being of the patient." The collaborative was also envisioned through the experiences of Penny George, the daughter of a physician, who underwent grueling breast cancer treatment and visualized a more comfortable, calmativ, and humanistic alternative approach. Once the collaborative was formed, its brainstorming strategy involved incrementally reshaping and transforming modern American medicine through concepts incorporating the mind, body, and spirit into one's health management, and championing prevention and wellness initiatives. Also included are the sensible, effective communication strategies, key behaviors, and principles responsible for making the group the success it became in later years. Training fellowships and a clinical network of like-minded physicians (including international allies) soon followed, alongside community-building projects and integrative-medicine awards programs for pioneering leaders. With their principal strategies completed, Bravewell members in 2015 "decided that the time was right to sunset the organization." The challenge now, Horrigan relates in this absorbing volume, is how to retain all of the collaborative's proactive work, keep the health care system a patient-focused one, and not lapse into the "broken and unsustainable" condition that made Bravewell such a necessary movement. Complementing the details of Bravewell's esteemed legacy, the book deftly describes the many ways readers can partake in alternative therapeutic and holistic approaches and methods of healing. Horrigan's convincing, easy-to-read account, primarily aimed at health care administrations and philanthropic leaders, may even inspire others to begin their own cooperatives and carry forward Bravewell's honorable spadework. The author writes lucidly about Bravewell's integral role in "changing how Americans think about health and medicine."

A comprehensive, erudite narrative that traces the history of a group dedicated to exploring alternative and effective patient care delivery.

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