

LEGAL MEDICINE, 7th Ed., 2007

Preface

The American College of Legal Medicine (ACLM) is the foremost, established organization in the United States concerned with medical jurisprudence and forensic medicine.

The ACLM, founded in 1955, has devoted itself to addressing problems that exist at the interface of law and medicine. The ACLM serves as a natural focal point for those professionals interested in the study and advancement of legal medicine. The ACLM is composed of health care and legal professionals whose diverse education, training, and experience enable the College to promote interdisciplinary cooperation and understanding of issues where law and medicine converge. Indeed, the ACLM is a professional community of physicians, attorneys, dentists, allied health professionals, administrators, scientists, and others with a sustained interest in medical legal affairs.

The central mission of the ACLM is education in legal medicine. Through its medicolegal resources, the ACLM educates and assists health care and legal professionals, advances the administration of justice, influences health policy and improves health care, promotes research and scholarship, and facilitates peer group interaction.

The seventh edition of this text by the ACLM adheres to the objective that the more knowledge that can be available concerning the relevant legal concepts, principles, and rules, the more effective an individual can become as a medical or legal practitioner. This text has been updated and expanded. Among the new chapters included in this text are: Patient Safety; Medication Errors; Apology to Patients; Medical Malpractice Overview; Liability of Pharmacists; and No-Fault Liability.

As with the previous editions, this text attempts to highlight those areas of professional endeavor in a health care institution that constitute potential pitfalls and problems of a legal nature. The field of legal medicine is extremely broad and far-reaching, with new developments of a significant nature occurring constantly. The text is structured to explore and illustrate the legal implications of medical practice and the special legal issues attendant on organized health and medical care. The text is an excellent resource for all health care providers and attorneys. The text is also ideally suited for use to teach a course in legal medicine at medical and law schools.

On behalf of the ACLM and its membership, it is my honor and privilege to extend our deep appreciation, thanks, and gratitude to all the authors and contributors of the textbook chapters, the deputy editor, and the members of the Textbook Editorial Committee. Their contributions represent true labors of love to the ACLM and a monumental work in the field of legal medicine.

Finally, special thanks are expressed to the whole Elsevier team—including Agnes Byrne, Bryan Hayward, and Rolla Couchman—and to Alan Hunt of Keyword Group Ltd., for their tremendous help and contribution to this textbook.

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