

FOREWORD

Almost 25 years ago a small group of us were planning to publish a relatively innovative textbook that would serve as a condensed compendium of current surgical knowledge in a problem-oriented fashion. Our plan was to produce a collection of chapters with a rigid and consistent approach that could be used as a quick and comprehensive reference for physicians and a study guide for students. Despite our good intentions, we lacked the necessary discipline and commitment to make this goal a reality.

Now, more than two decades later, Dr. Galandiuk and colleagues have successfully put together what we failed to achieve. *When to Refer to a Surgeon* is a much needed information source that clearly presents the steps involved in the initial evaluation of a patient, specific laboratory tests and x-ray films that are needed, and when to seek a consultation or make a referral. I regret that I did not have access to such a reference when I was in training.

Dr. Galandiuk and several of her enthusiastic supporters searched for a descriptive, yet catchy title that would appropriately reflect the content of the book; “Gatekeeper’s Manual” was one such half-jestful suggestion. I mentioned this book to a family practice resident on rotation to my service using the word “gatekeeper” to describe its audience. Quite tactfully, yet with firm conviction, she reminded me that “we are a referral source, not gatekeepers, Dr. Stone. You must always remember that!”

This book is designed so that it can be easily accessed when seeking an immediate and pressing answer rapidly. *When to Refer to a Surgeon* is truly a gem that will be useful not only for primary care providers but medical specialists as well. This practice companion should be kept close at hand.

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