

# John D. Shier RN, Ph.D.

- ThatGuyNurse -



# John Shier is a Registered Nurse with a message...

Following the 1982 cancer death of a close friend, he became a hospice volunteer. For ten years he was engaged in caring for people with terminal illnesses. It was then that he decided to pursue a third career, as a nurse. He returned to the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and graduated in 1994, at age sixty, with a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. After graduation, he joined the staff of Unity Hospice in Green Bay, Wisconsin and took a second, full-time position as a cardiac nurse at Bellin Hospital in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Working with critically ill cardiac patients and terminally ill patients in hospice, he became aware that almost all of his patients had brought their conditions upon themselves. Puzzled as to why this happened, he returned to his philosophy and academic background to study the questions of health, disease, and the American healthcare system. He reveals the results of his study and his experience as a nurse in his presentations and book.

Prior to his nursing career and his work as "ThatGuyNurse," John was an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin Madison and University of Wisconsin Green Bay for fourteen years. John also served seven years as the Executive Director of the Lake Michigan Area Agency on Aging and fourteen years as the Executive Director of the United Way of Brown County.



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**John D. Shier RN, Ph.D.**

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**John D. Shier RN, Ph.D.**

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Richard Resch, President

"Your message was well received, which was evident by applause at the end of several of the sessions."

### **Wisconsin Association of Hospital Auxiliaries:**

"His topic, 'Health and Healing' was heard by 248 people and was given a standing ovation."

### **Pacific Gas & Electric:**

"You certainly were the buzz around here on the days of our annual Northern Area Safety Kick-Off Meetings. Your keynote presentations truly set a new standard for relevance and enthusiasm at those events. Thanks for helping make them a success."

### **Wisconsin Public Service:**

"Excellent speaker. This one should be mandatory for everyone!"

References available upon request.

# Live Long, Die Healthy

For the first time in history, most of us have the chance to live the full human life span of 90 to 100 years. Our challenge is to maintain good health throughout our lives. And the first step in maintaining health is learning and understanding more about it. Just as important, we must assume personal responsibility for our health – because nobody cares about your health more than you!

In the 20th century medical science conquered many causes of human death. Some diseases are now cured, others easily treated. And yet, in the 21st century, our medical system is not a true “healthcare” system. It remains a “sickness-care” system. Few of the billions of dollars spent on medical care each year go to maintain health. We know how to prevent many of the diseases that cripple and kill us, but we direct our resources instead toward curing rather than prevention. Anyone who understands that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” must take responsibility for his own health and wellness. Our present system just isn’t going to get that job done.

This program examines the medical system and how it has extended American life expectancy from 54 in the 1930s to nearly 80 today. It emphasizes the critical fact that our medical system provides no financial incentives for maintaining health. It is a system designed to cure sickness, repair trauma and keep ill patients alive.

The challenge of living in good health, thus, falls to each individual. Through personal life-style decisions, each of us can take responsibility for preserving our health and improving our quality of life for the full human lifespan of 90 or more years.

No individual can hope to change our entire medical system. But if each of us takes more responsibility and control for our own wellness, the system will surely change. In the 21st century, more than ever before, patients and physicians must become partners, working together and sharing knowledge. Together we can transform the American “sickness-care system” into a true “health care system”. The new system will focus not only on curing the sick but also on preventing disease and maintaining health.



# The Professional Patient

It is now probable, for the first time in history, for most people to live to the full potential human life span of 90 to 100 years. The challenge is to live in good health throughout that lifetime. The primary function of the American medical system is not to keep people healthy; it is to keep them alive. Good health is an individual responsibility.

The American medical system is designed to cure illness and to repair trauma: to keep the patient alive. It is not a system that fosters health and wellness. There are virtually no financial incentives for physicians, clinics or hospitals to work for the creation of healthy patients. Insurance, private or governmental, pays only for cure and repair, not for preventive maintenance.

The American medical system can perform near miracles in the cure of disease and trauma. But it can also do great harm and even kill if its power is misdirected. To a degree never before imagine--ensuring that medical care has a good outcome is up to the patient. Unless the patient is able to participate in his or her own cure with knowledge and intelligence and in partnership with medical professionals, the potential power of medicine to restore and promote health is severely limited.

This program explores and explains the role of the patient in 21st century medical care. It stresses the active role of the patient, working in partnership with the physician, to ensure that the system achieves cure when that is necessary and promotes maximum health and wellness for every patient.

The "Professional Patient" presentation provides, beyond an explanation of how medical science has ensured living to the human life span, specific instructions on what patients and their families must know and do in order to ensure that the medical system operates with maximum efficiency and effectiveness, not only to cure and heal but to promote the achievement of health and wellness for every patient. It provides practical, every-day directions for creating patient-physician partnerships and for minimizing the risks which accompany every visit to the doctor or the hospital.



# Questions and Issues at the End of Life

This program arises from the fact that modern medicine has become so proficient in its role of prolonging life that the time and manner of death have become matters that require that patients and their families become involved with the doctor in making decisions about how and when life should end.

The program examines the importance of every person having one or more advanced directives: the durable power of attorney, the living will and the “do not resuscitate” order. Without these documents the patient and his family lose control over the kind and extent of medical care that will be provided. The result can shorten and make bearable be the long, often painful and expensive, process of dying.

There is emphasis on understanding how and when to seek the care of a hospice and on the role of the family and friends in working with the hospice staff.

The program stresses the importance of the patient and the family remaining in control of the kind and extent of the medical care which will be provided.



## You Are The CEO of Your Life!

### “You Are the CEO of Your Life...Are You Up to It?”

In his program, “Live Long, Die Healthy,” Dr. Shier explores the role of modern medicine and extending life expectancy undulate almost reaches the life span of 90 to 100 years. He stresses and explains the role of lifestyle and allowing us to live the full human life span in good health.

In his program, “The Professional Patient,” he sets forth the requirements for fully utilizing the health care system in ways that maximize its benefits and minimize its dangers. In this program, “You Are the CEO of Your Life...Are You Up to It?” he brings together the basics of the first two programs and explores the ever more important questions that almost everybody is going to have to deal with as they, members of their families or friends approach the end of life.

Among all the other consequences of the growth in medical and pharmaceutical knowledge and technology that has occurred in the last half century, death itself has been transformed from being a short-term event to a process that can take months or even years. It is a process that can lead to family disruption and even bankruptcy as well as pain and suffering for the patient, family and friends. John will address these crucial issues out of this 23 years of experience in hospice care.

The program will include discussion of living wills, hospice care, palliative care, the durable power of attorney for healthcare, as well as related topics focused on the kinds of issues that most often arise at the end of life.

“You Are the CEO of Your Life...Are You Up to It?” brings together for review and discussion all of the basic issues and questions regarding health, the medical system and the end of life.



Due to John's high regard, here is one article that voices that John talks passionately about in his book, *Notes from "ThatGuyNurse: Choose Today Live Tomorrow"*, and in his presentations to companies and organizations.



**John D. Shier RN, Ph.D.**

## Health care, not medical care, should be focus

John Shier is not your typical registered nurse. How many nurses do you know who served time as a naval intelligence officer, a university philosophy professor, a non-profit executive director and a hospice volunteer — all prior to entering nursing school?

But it's precisely this breadth of experiences that equips Shier with very special insights into the state of America's health care system. Recently, he has compiled his perspectives on this subject into a book, *Notes from ThatGuyNurse: Choose Today, Live Tomorrow* (2011, 9th Street Publishing, Green Bay)

Based on his experiences with the sick and dying, Shier believes America lacks a true health care system focused on helping us live healthy lives, and instead, has built an extensive medical system focused on fixing our diseases and traumas. Shier explains how medical science has gotten quite effective at "saving" people from dying. In fact, he suggests that within today's system, it is hard to die. We have so many diagnostic and life-extending technologies that many of us alive today will likely live well into our 90s.

What we might not enjoy, however, is good health during that long, extended life. Those who ignore their health risk live out their years tied to life-support measures, confined to assisted-living environments, and requiring intensive nursing care. And all of that medical intervention is extremely expensive. A hundred years ago, most medical tools were carried in the black bag that the doctor brought on his visit to the patient's house. If the tools in the bag couldn't extend life, the patient died. Harsh, certainly. Inexpensive, definitely.

Today we have massive institutions equipped with a mind-boggling array of technology to keep a patient alive. But today we also have an average cost of medical care exceeding \$8,000 per person per year.

Shier suggests that if you want to enjoy good health until you die, you must do two things: (1) commit to a lifestyle aimed at long-term health, and (2) take charge and become the CEO managing your own health and medical care. *Notes from ThatGuyNurse* offers five rules for long-term health, and solid information on how to manage

your interactions with the medical system.

*Notes* concludes with Shier's vision of what a true health care system should look like in America. Shier believes that:

- The focal point of our system should be primary care providers who get to know their patients and focus on wellness and prevention. Compensation of primary care givers should be tied to the health and wellness of their patient base, instead of referrals to expensive procedures within their corporate medical organizations.

- Patients should pay for their own primary care so they take ownership in their personal health and in decisions about that health.

- Some sort of single payer system should be established for the pooling of major medical costs.

- Patients should contribute to the costs of care based on their ability to pay and the degree to which their personal choices necessitated that care in the first place.

- Employers should be removed from the loop of medical care payment.

- Decisions to forsake expensive treatments aimed at questionable cures should be made by physician panels, with patients and families having the ability to appeal those decisions or assume the costs of treatments.

Even if you don't completely agree with all of Shier's suggestions, these are definitely the kinds of thoughtful ideas that need to shape our dialog of what kind of health care system we want in this country. A new, innovative, health care system will only emerge when enough of us take the time to explore the options and create a groundswell of grass roots support for a system built on personal responsibility. Reading *Notes from ThatGuyNurse* will certainly get you engaged in the process.

Dan Linsen of Green Bay advocates for personal responsibility and thinking outside the box. His book "What's to Blame?" is available at [www.whostoblame.net](http://www.whostoblame.net) and other online sources.

Dan Linsen  
Commentary



**Get the Book!**

# John Shier is a Registered Nurse with a message...

John Shier's powerful presentations are available to the public in book form!

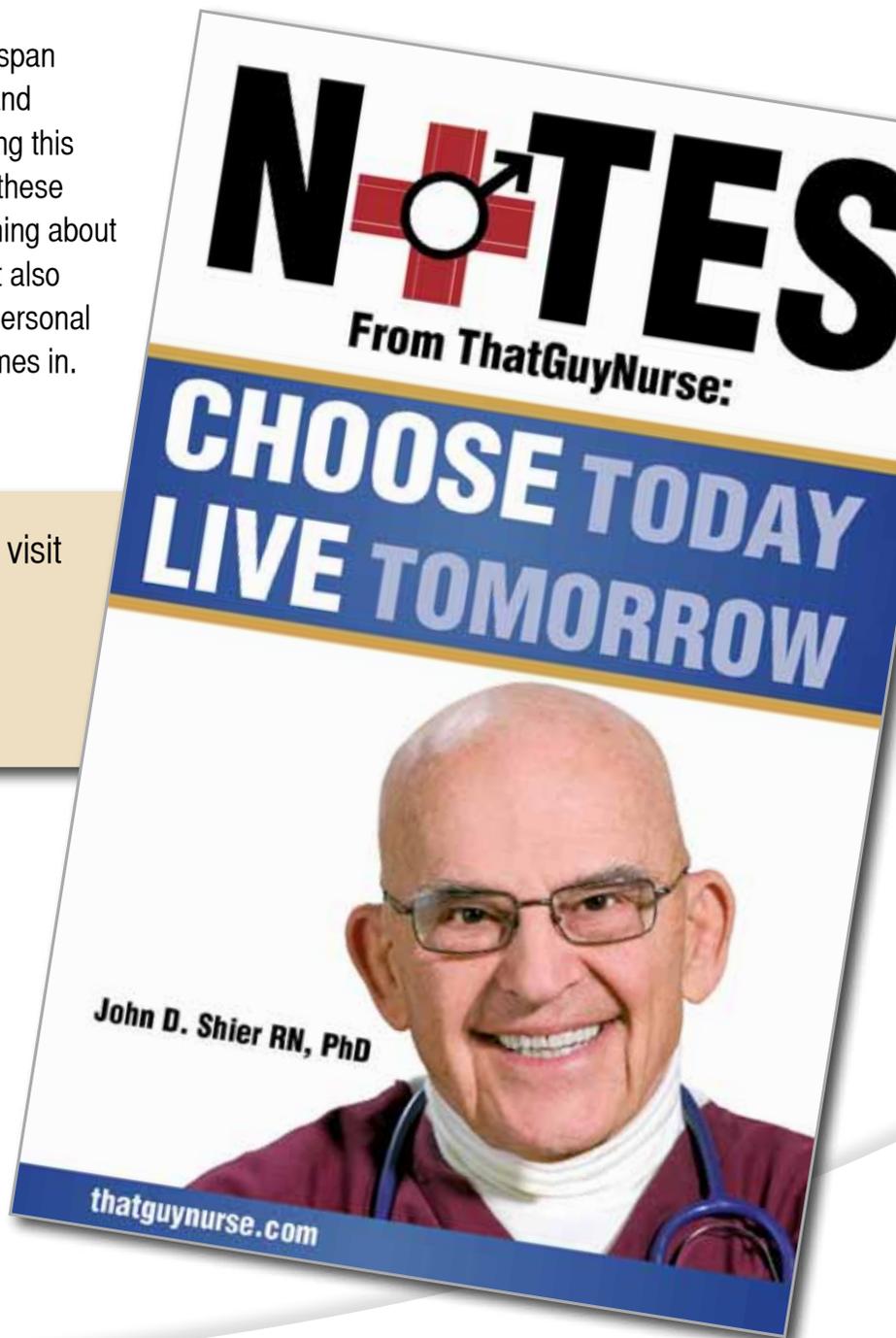
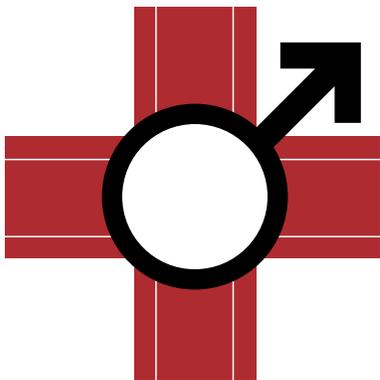
How do you ensure that your lifetime, the full span of your lifetime, is time spent healthy, active and engaged in the activities of the world? Reading this book and applying the basic principles within these covers is an excellent start. This means learning about and understanding the conditions of health. It also means assuming a whole new dimension of personal responsibility—and that's where this book comes in.

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