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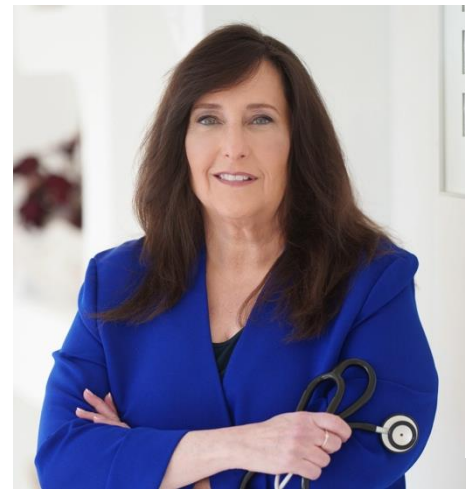
TERRY ADIRIM

Public Health Expert, Physician, Former Senior Federal Health Official, and Author

Author of [*The Prepared Patient: Your Guide to Surviving the Health Care System*](#) (Hopkins Press, August 11, 2026)

[TERRY ADIRIM](#), MD, MPH, MBA is a nationally recognized physician, public health expert, and former senior federal health official with nearly three decades of experience. A board-certified pediatric emergency physician, Dr. Adirim has spent her career working on the front lines of medicine while also shaping healthcare policy at the highest levels of the U.S. government.

Dr. Adirim's work and commentary has been featured in national media outlets such as [Associated Press](#), [MedPage](#) (syndicated on [MSN](#)), [CNN](#), [New York Post](#), [Washington Post](#), [Business Insider](#), and [U.S. Army](#), and she has appeared as a guest expert on Miami's [WPLG-TV](#), and other South Florida stations such as WPTV NBC-5, WPEC CBS 12 and [WPBF ABC 25](#). Additionally, Dr. Adirim has published extensively in leading medical and health policy journals including [BMC Public Health](#), [The American Journal of Medicine](#), [Health Affairs](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), [JAMA Pediatrics](#), [Academy Health](#), and [Journal of Emergency Nursing](#). For more, visit her website [here](#).



Credit: Matt Mendelsohn

Throughout her career, Dr. Adirim has held senior leadership roles in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security, leading initiatives in military health, emergency preparedness, pediatric care, and public health. She also served as a senior health executive appointee during the Biden-Harris administration, giving her a rare "360-degree" perspective on healthcare as both a front-line physician and policymaker. After developing award-winning emergency preparedness programs for children with complex medical needs and helping reform emergency transport policies for critically ill children, she earned an MBA and transitioned into national health policy work while continuing to care for patients. Today, her experience as a physician, policymaker, health executive, and patient advocate enables her to translate complex healthcare systems into practical guidance for everyday Americans.

In her forthcoming book *The Prepared Patient: Your Guide to Surviving the Health Care System*, Dr. Adirim makes the case that our complex health care system demands a prepared patient – one who plans ahead to safeguard both their health and their finances. She introduces readers to the "White Binder Patient"—a model inspired by caregivers of medically complex children who arrive prepared, informed, and ready to advocate. Patients who understand their insurance, organize their medical information, know their rights, and ask the right questions of their physicians consistently receive better care and, as a result, experience better outcomes. Drawing on her more than 25-year career in medicine and public service, Dr. Adirim shares real patient stories and practical tools to equip readers on how to navigate insurance, avoid medical debt, communicate effectively with physicians, understand their rights, and finally become empowered participants in their own care. You can listen to a recent interview with Dr. Adirim in a two-part episode discussing the book on the [*Carrie, It's Not That Serious*](#) show.

TIMELY NEWS STORIES THAT DR. ADIRIM CAN COMMENT ON:

- Elections change access to and affordability of healthcare. The impact of H.R. 1 ("The One Big Beautiful Bill") on health insurance coverage and what Americans need to know
- Prior authorizations: what they are, why they're increasing, and how patients can advocate for timely care
- Drug shortages and fragile medical supply chains and why America isn't prepared for the next public health emergency
- AI in healthcare: balancing innovation with patient protections and the guardrails policymakers must implement
- Why cuts to medical research funding and changes at NIH will affect patient care and innovation for decades to come
- FDA reform: regulatory gaps that leave patients vulnerable, from emerging therapies to consumer health products
- The future of public health investment and what the next Congress or administration should prioritize
- Medicare and Medicaid policy changes and their impact on patients and caregivers
- Women's health, menopause, and the need for credible, evidence-based medical information

THEMES AND IDEAS THAT DR. ADIRIM CAN DISCUSS:

- Americans can no longer wait for healthcare reform to save them and why self-advocacy is essential in our health care system
- Why only a small percentage of Americans are fully health literate and how to improve it
- Why patients who come prepared consistently receive better healthcare outcomes
- How to navigate patient rights, health insurance, avoid costly mistakes, and prevent medical debt
- The growing crisis of prior authorizations and insurance barriers
- Military medicine, emergency preparedness, and lessons from national health leadership
- Why improving the patient experience requires both individual empowerment and systemic reform

DATA INSIGHTS THAT SUPPORT DR. ADIRIM'S WORK:

- "Good insurance" is a myth for many Americans. [Medical debt exceeds \\$220 billion](#), contributes to more than 66% of U.S. bankruptcies, and affects 44% of insured adults.
- [Medical crowdfunding has become commonplace](#). More than 83,000 active medical fundraisers on GoFundMe are collectively seeking approximately \$650 million, yet less than 12% reach their fundraising goals.
- Insurers are increasingly using AI and algorithms to make coverage decisions. Lawsuits have alleged that algorithms used by [major insurers carried error rates as high as 90%](#), while approximately 18% of in-network claims are denied, and fewer than 0.2% are appealed.
- With [only 12% of Americans fully health literate](#), the U.S. is facing a health information literacy crisis that costs up to \$238 billion annually in avoidable healthcare spending.
- [Medical knowledge is doubling approximately every 73 days](#), making it increasingly difficult for patients to understand their care, coverage, and treatment options.

A Conversation with Dr. Terry Adirim about *THE PREPARED PATIENT*

Q: Why is your new book *The Prepared Patient* so timely?

A: Healthcare costs and paperwork keep growing, and even educated, resourceful patients struggle to get the care and coverage they need. *The Prepared Patient* gives readers practical tools to handle that complexity right when they need them most.

Q: What inspired you to write this book?

A: After decades as a physician and health policy leader, I kept seeing patients and families struggle with the same system in the same ways. I wanted to give every patient the tools I wish they had before they walked through the door.

Q: What does it mean to be a "prepared patient"?

A: A prepared patient understands their insurance, keeps organized records, and knows how to ask the right questions at the right time. I call this the "White Binder Patient," a model built on how caregivers of medically complex children learn to advocate for care for their children.

Q: You have worked as both a physician and a senior federal health official. How has that shaped your perspective?

A: As a physician, I saw firsthand how patients get lost in the system, and as Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs overseeing the military health system and the TRICARE health plan, I saw those same problems play out across millions of patients. That dual view showed me both the daily obstacles patients face, and the systemic changes needed to fix them.

Q: Healthcare policy is changing constantly. Will this book remain relevant?

A: Policies and programs will keep changing, but organizing records, understanding coverage, and knowing how to advocate stay useful no matter what changes. *The Prepared Patient* focuses on building those lasting skills rather than tracking any single policy.

Q: What is the biggest takeaway from *The Prepared Patient*?

A: Being organized and informed is the most effective tool patients have to protect both their health outcomes and their finances. Preparation, not luck, determines how well people fare in today's health care system.

TO BE IN TOUCH WITH DR. ADIRIM:

Contact Poppy Hatrick: poppy@page1m.com

The Prepared Patient: Your Guide to Surviving the Health Care System

by Dr. Terry Adirim, will be published in paperback by Hopkins Press
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