

empowered **P A T I E N T**

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'Empowered' heroes' hard lessons now help others

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Empowered Patient salutes heroes who embody the spirit of health empowerment
- Personal struggles inspired them to create foundations, Web sites to help others
- Dr. Andrew Weil: "It is the 'difficult' patients who often have the best outcomes"

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'Empowered Patient' heroes

In Empowered Patient, we share information to help you take charge of your health care. This week, as we reflect on American heroes, we're saluting a few "patient empowerment" heroes, whose experiences with the health system have inspired them to help others.

- The Nahums
- Torrey
- Ferguson
- Duron
- Frydman
- Cohen

Victoria and Armando Nahum

A skydiving accident put Victoria and Armando Nahum on the path of patient empowerment. In 2006, their son Josh, 27, fractured his femur and skull after parachuting from a plane. After six weeks in the intensive care unit, he slowly started to improve. Doctors thought he would fully recover. Suddenly, things changed. He developed a bacterial infection in the hospital. Two weeks later, Josh was dead. In the throes of grief, Victoria Nahum sent a [letter to the hospital](#). While it praised the doctors and nurses, she told hospital administrators they weren't doing enough to stop the spread of hospital infections.



COURTESY VICTORIA NAHUM

The Nahums were determined to use Josh's death as a rallying cry. They started the [Safe Care Campaign](#). Their message: Patients can help hospital employees do a better job with infection control. The Nahums also travel around the world talking with patients and hospital workers about how to lower the risks of hospital infections. The Nahums recently partnered with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to produce a [patient-admission video on hand hygiene](#), which they hope becomes a standard.

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