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HERMES PROFILE  
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### Healthcare's Consumer Advocate

**Elizabeth Bewley '88** is the founder of Pario Health Institute, a healthcare think tank and consulting company that helps patients receive safer and more effective care.

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For **Elizabeth Bewley '88**, passion for work dates back to her harrowing experience as a scared 15-year-old in a hospital bed. Admitted after she nearly stopped breathing, Bewley almost lost her life due to hospital staff's neglectful care. "Everyone in healthcare has good intentions, but it doesn't always work out well for patients," Bewley says.

Indeed, the road to her current position as founder of Pario Health Institute has been a personal one. After starting her career in the nonprofit world, Bewley felt that earning an MBA would give her the skills she needed to make a difference on a larger scale. After graduation, she spent 20 years as an executive at Johnson & Johnson.



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This professional connection to the healthcare industry, combined with the frightening ordeal of facing brain surgery (originally misdiagnosed as an inner ear infection) while an MBA student, spurred Bewley to begin her own research on the healthcare system. She found that medical mistakes are frequently caused by a lack of patient knowledge and too little communication between doctors and patients. According to Bewley's research, approximately 12,000 people are accidentally killed by healthcare each week — usually by practitioners following their normal routines.

Bewley believes many of these deaths could be prevented if patients were better informed and doctors expanded their focus from a specific ailment to the entire trajectory of a patient's history. For example, she encourages doctors to pay more attention to potential drug interactions, but advises patients to be educated enough to recognize possible problems, too, and to speak up when they are unsure about a prescribed treatment or medication.

"The problem is that US healthcare has become too focused on delivering tests and treatments, instead of treating patients as whole human beings," Bewley says. "The purpose of healthcare should be to not just treat disease, but to help people live the lives they want."

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### **Words of Wisdom:**

"Do what you can, where you are, with what you have." — Theodore Roosevelt

### **Most Influential**

**Book:** *The Social Transformation of*

*American Medicine:*

*The Rise of a Sovereign*

*Profession and the*

*Making of a Vast*

*Industry* by Paul Starr

It was this idea that motivated Bewley to found Pario Health Institute in 2008. "I had been working for a long time," she says. "I could have retired or done other things, but when I saw there was a burning need to reduce the injuries and deaths caused by healthcare, and the issue wasn't getting massive attention, I wanted to try to do something about it."

In 2010, Bewley published her first book, *Killer Cure: Why Health Care Is the Second Leading Cause of Death in America and How to Ensure That It's Not Yours* (Dog Ear Publishing), based on her own 15 years of research on the industry. Both the book and Pario Health help patients take control of their own care and treatment.

"I'm a consumer advocate for patients across the board," Bewley says.

"They should know what questions to ask and where the danger spots are. There are simple steps that everyone can take to reduce the chance that they or someone they love will be injured or killed by healthcare."