2013 Annual Meeting Awards

CHA Special Edition of Update: Annual Meeting Awards

The CHA Annual Meeting, to be held June 25, is the premier annual healthcare gathering in Connecticut, bringing together nearly 600 hospital CEOs, senior hospital administrators, physicians, and other key hospital and healthcare decision makers. The meeting, open to CHA members, invited guests, and sponsors, provides an exclusive setting for the state’s most influential healthcare leaders to celebrate Connecticut hospitals’ accomplishments, discuss the challenges of the future, enjoy first-rate entertainment, and network with each other.

The meeting will feature CHA’s annual awards, including the Healthcare Heroes Awards, the Community Service Award, the John D. Thompson Award, the Grassroots Champion Award, and the Honorary Membership Award.

We invite you to read more about the CHA award winners below and through the links on each article.

WCHN to Receive the 2013 John D. Thompson Award for Excellence in the Delivery of Healthcare Through the Use of Data

CHA will present Western Connecticut Health Network with the 2013 John D. Thompson Award for Excellence in the Delivery of Healthcare Through the Use of Data for its project, A Multidisciplinary, Multi-Hospital, and Community-Based Program to Improve the Treatment of Patients with ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction.

Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, with over one quarter of the approximately one million heart attacks each year being the more severe ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI). The preferred treatment for these patients is coronary artery balloon angioplasty and stenting to open the occluded coronary artery causing the heart attack.

In 2007, Danbury Hospital, part of Western Connecticut Health Network, formed a multidisciplinary team to improve door to balloon times (D2B). This is the time from patient arrival at the emergency department “door” to the time the artery is opened in the cardiac catheterization lab. Membership included physician and nursing leadership from Cardiology, Pathology, and Emergency Medicine, and representatives from performance improvement and Emergency Medical Services. Data were collected for each step of the D2B process and included up to 23 distinct data points. It soon became apparent, as others have shown, that D2B times were shorter for patients presenting “on hours” (non-holiday weekdays from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.) with a median of 52 minutes, compared to “off hours” (all other times), with a median of 87 minutes. Patients arriving by ambulance had a trend for shorter D2B times than ambulatory patients. Patients who had electrocardiograms (ECGs) performed in the field by emergency medical responders had the shortest median times, since this allowed earlier activation of on-call staff.

These results led to changes in process in the emergency department and catheterization lab including renovation of the triage area to allow space for a dedicated ECG machine to more rapidly perform ECGs. When the data showed that certain cath lab call teams were ready more quickly to accept a patient during off hours, the teams were reconfigured based on distance from the hospital to hasten preparation. Since 2007, there has been significant improvement in median D2B times with a narrower range of variation due to a more predictable and stable process.

In September 2009 with a gift provided by two generous community donors, WCHN provided 17 EMS programs within a 25-mile radius with wireless modems to allow transmission of ECGs to a receiving station monitored by Emergency Department physicians. Written protocols were developed and shared with EMS supervisors. There was also significant education and training of area paramedics in utilization of the new technology and the importance of rapid transmission of the 12 lead ECG to the ED receiving station. With this effort, an average of 90 ECGs per month are electronically transferred to the ED for physician review. STEMI alerts are routinely initiated in the field by EMS providers.

Since 2009, this work has resulted in a significant, sustained decrease in median D2B time from 83.5 to 72 minutes for off-hour patients arriving without EMS. Patients presenting via EMS with field ECGs had a significantly better median D2B time of 61 minutes. Compared to 2007, the median D2B time for off-hour patients in 2012 improved by over 23 minutes. Since February 2011, 100 percent of patients presenting with STEMI at any time of day and eligible for data analysis have had D2B times less than the benchmark of 90 minutes.

In 2011, WCHN expanded its efforts to include its affiliated hospital, New Milford Hospital, which does not have percutaneous coronary intervention capability. ED processes were unified and additional processes put in place to reduce the time needed to transfer the patient. With these efforts, the median time spent in the referring hospital decreased from 74 minutes to 47 minutes, and the median interval from EMS transport arriving at the referral...
hospital to the patient leaving the hospital decreased from 22 minutes to 5.3 minutes. This has resulted in more than 70 percent of transfer patients achieving a D2B time of less than 120 minutes from arrival at the first hospital. WCHN’s multidisciplinary team has significantly improved the care of patients with myocardial infarction.

The John D. Thompson Award honors the contributions made by John D. Thompson to healthcare administration and patient care quality during his career. Winners of this prestigious award have achieved excellence in patient care through the use of data, as demonstrated by the improvement of internal operations, procedures, and outcomes.

Read the press release here.

Middlesex Hospital to Receive the 2013 Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award

CHA and the Connecticut Department of Public Health will present Middlesex Hospital with the 2013 Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award for its project, the Community Care Team. Sponsored by CHA and the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the 2013 Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award recognizes outstanding achievement in community service.

Middlesex Hospital’s last countywide community health needs assessment found a disproportionate prevalence of diagnoses related to acute alcohol/other drug use and serious mental illness for emergency department utilization compared to benchmarks. In response, the Community Care Team (CCT) formed in 2010. The CCT is a collaboration of nine community agencies that specialize in the delivery of care for people with serious mental illness and/or substance abuse in Middlesex County.

The partners – Middlesex Hospital, River Valley Services, Gilead Community Services Inc., Connecticut Valley Hospital (Merritt Hall), Rushford Center Inc., Community Health Center (Middletown), Advanced Behavioral Health, Value Options Connecticut, and St. Vincent De Paul – offer patients coordinated intervention. Team members, including the partners and a health promotion advocate, meet on a weekly basis to review cases, uncover service gaps, and develop individualized care plans.

As the patient travels through the continuum of care, he or she is linked to appropriate services.

The team expanded in 2012. Since then, a cohort of 105 highly complex patients has been managed by the CCT, with a subset managed for more than 6 months. Of this subset, there has been a 52 percent reduction in emergency department and inpatient visits (924 total visits pre-intervention, 478 total visits post-intervention).

The initiative has become an established standard of care for all involved community partners and has been fully integrated into Middlesex Hospital’s emergency department care delivery model. The CCT design requires selecting a focused population that has complex clinical and social needs, bringing key partners to the table, and earmarking staff to act as program liaisons. The benefits of the partnership have included system change, open communication, and relationship-building among multiple community agencies. Outcomes for patients include maintained sobriety, mental health stabilization, improved access to care, reduced homelessness, supportive and stable housing, workforce re-entry, reconnection with family, educational pursuits, and the feelings of self-worth and respect that come with improved quality of life.

The Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award, now in its 21st year, recognizes outstanding achievements in community service. It is sponsored jointly by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and CHA.

Read the press release here.

Congratulations to Connecticut’s 2013 Healthcare Heroes!

One Healthcare Hero has made it her life’s mission to eradicate cervical cancer globally in her lifetime, and she is working with the poorest women in Central America to see her dream realized. Another Healthcare Hero is a stroke survivor who has worked tirelessly to prevent strokes and help those who have suffered a stroke recover and thrive. A third walked through several feet of snow during a blizzard to save a life.

These are just some of the stories behind the 2013 CHA Healthcare Heroes.

Each year, CHA recognizes an inspiring and committed group of individuals from across the state who embody the best in their profession.

The following Healthcare Heroes will be acknowledged at the 95th CHA Annual Meeting on June 25:

**Lisa Bedard**, APRN-BC, ANVP, CNRN, Manager, L+M Stroke Program, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital
A stroke survivor herself, Lisa Bedard, APRN-BC, ANVP, CNRN, manager of the Lawrence + Memorial Hospital Stroke Program & Neurodiagnostics department, has worked tirelessly to bring an award-winning stroke program to Southeastern Connecticut.

**Albert DiMeo**, MD, Chief of Minimally Invasive and Robotic Surgery, St. Vincent’s Medical Center
Albert DiMeo, MD, found a way to make it to the hospital to perform lifesaving surgery during superstorm Sandy and this year’s major blizzard.

**Marisol Feliciano**, Violence and Injury Prevention Program Coordinator, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center
Marisol Feliciano’s goal is to prevent harm and violence in the community through education. She runs numerous comprehensive educational programs that help individuals make smart choices and stay safe.
Carolyn Kelly, Physical Therapist, Hartford Hospital
During her 41 years as a physical therapist at Hartford Hospital, Carolyn Kelly has successfully addressed patient needs through diligence and collaboration with others. Among her many successes, she developed a cost-effective and successful volunteer program to meet patient mobility needs.

Yvette Martas, MD, Obstetrician/Gynecologist, Windham Hospital
Every year, Dr. Yvette Martas volunteers as a doctor in remote areas of impoverished Central American countries, where she and her colleagues examine and care for more than 500 women in a single week.

Wendy Martinson, RN, MSN, Quality Assurance Specialist, John Dempsey Hospital
Wendy Martinson has improved the lives of hundreds of heart failure patients by spearheading the UConn Health Center’s initiative to help heart failure patients transition from hospital to home.

Luis Mendez, Patient Care Technician, Middlesex Hospital
During his volunteer work with communities in need in Guatemala, Luis Mendez recognized a glaring need for improved transportation to local hospitals, and set out to fix this problem.

David Shapiro, MD, FACS, Director, Surgical Clinics; Director, Medical Student Surgical Clerkship; Associate Director, Surgical Critical Care, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center
David Shapiro, MD, FACS, takes a personal and holistic approach to caring for patients’ life-threatening injuries as well as their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Jennifer Siegelman, MD, MPH, CT Scan Section Chief, Diagnostic Imaging Department, The William W. Backus Hospital
Jennifer Siegelman, MD, MPH, CT Scan Section Chief of Backus Hospital’s Diagnostic Imaging Department is a steward of safety who has taken the lead at Backus Hospital to help ensure that patients scheduled for CT scans get the right test and the right dose for the right reason.

Pat Worthy, RN, Manager, Workforce Diversity, Yale-New Haven Hospital
Pat Worthy, Manager, Workforce Diversity, has developed programs, classes, and even scholarships that help YNHH create a diverse workforce, encourage employees to attain their full potential within the hospital, and ensure that they get the education they need to keep pace with the healthcare industry so they can continue to provide safe, exceptional patient care.

Healthcare Hero Team - 2012 Why Not Haiti Mission Team, Day Kimball Healthcare
In September 2012, a team of healthcare professionals from Day Kimball Healthcare conducted a medical mission trip to provide healthcare to the people of Haiti. They treated hundreds of people each day. Top row, (l-r): Greg Lutkus, APRN; Douglas Waite, MD; Steven Wexler, MD; Ralph Miro, RN; Scott Mitchell, MD; Kristine Bastura; Deirdre Foisy, PA; Cheri Sage, RN; Cindy McNamara, MD; Avery Lamb. Bottom row (l-r): Ron Medzon, MD; Andrew Waite; Aimee Eaton, RN.

CHA salutes these exemplary Healthcare Heroes!
Andrea Rynn, Director, Public & Government Relations, Western Connecticut Health Network, Recognized as Grassroots Champion

The American Hospital Association Grassroots Champion Award was created to recognize hospital leaders who effectively educate elected officials on how major issues affect the hospital’s vital role in the community, who have done an exemplary job in broadening the base of community support for the hospital, and who have been tireless advocates for their hospital and its patients. The Grassroots Champion Award is presented annually to one individual from each state. Connecticut’s 2013 Grassroots Champion is Andrea Rynn, Director of Public and Government Relations, Western Connecticut Health Network (WCHN).

Andrea Rynn has worked for WCHN for nearly nine years, assuming her current role in 2009.

Ms. Rynn has exhibited exceptional leadership in advocacy, with a single-minded focus on the welfare of people in western Connecticut, the patients of Danbury and New Milford hospitals, and the hospital community. She has worked tirelessly and creatively to educate legislators about the critical issues facing Connecticut hospitals, WCHN, and the people for whom it cares.

Innovative, determined, and dedicated to her community, she is an active participant in numerous hospital collaborations, CHA’s Committee on Government, and the Communications Executives meeting group, readily sharing ideas, information, and insight with colleagues from hospitals across the state.

In addition to her leadership role at WCHN, Ms. Rynn serves on the Board of Directors for the Women’s Business Council in Danbury, the Board of the New Milford Chamber of Commerce, and the Advisory Board of the Community Culinary School of Northwestern Connecticut.

CHA congratulates Andrea on this well-deserved recognition and extends thanks for her service to Connecticut hospitals.

Retired Qualidigm CEO and Partner at Wiggin and Dana to Receive Connecticut Hospital Association Honorary Membership Awards

CHA will give Honorary Membership Awards to Bennett J. Bernblum, Partner, Wiggin and Dana, and Marcia K. Petrillo, recently retired CEO of Qualidigm. The CHA Honorary Membership award was established in 1968 to recognize certain individuals who distinguished themselves with their personal dedication and contributions to the advancement of healthcare services. Since then, 86 people have received this honor, including Mr. Bernblum and Ms. Petrillo, who will receive lifetime honorary CHA memberships.

Bennett J. Bernblum (“BJ”) is a partner in Wiggin and Dana’s Corporate Practice Department, where he practices corporate law, corporate healthcare law, construction law, and sales, use, and property taxation.
When he retires at the end of June 2013, Mr. Bernblum will conclude more than 20 years of distinguished service to CHA and a host of other healthcare clients. Over the past two decades, Mr. Bernblum has been a trusted advisor on a wide range of CHA activities, providing counsel on many key association initiatives, particularly focusing on CHA’s corporate work and business agreements. He was a key advisor in the structural work initiatives to improve quality and patient care, including a major project to establish an interpreter system for the deaf and hard of hearing populations.

His work with hospital and healthcare clients over the years has included structuring joint ventures and partnerships for hospitals, counseling complex hospital systems on governance and corporate structure, and handling asset acquisitions, mergers, affiliations, and financings for all types of healthcare providers. Mr. Bernblum has been deeply engaged in resolving property tax exemption issues for charitable healthcare providers, developing network vehicles for providers, and representing community-based and home healthcare agencies on a panoply of issues. Overall, his clients have valued and benefited from Mr. Bernblum’s acute analytical skills, his business judgment and practicality, and his wisdom.

Mr. Bernblum is a member of the American and Connecticut Bar Associations, the American Health Lawyers Association, and the Connecticut Health Lawyers Association. He has been listed in The Best Lawyers in America in the category of Health Care Law, and Chambers USA has recognized him in the Health Care category. Mr. Bernblum received his B.A. and his J.D. from New York University School of Law.

In March 2013, Marcia K. Petrillo retired from Qualidigm, the Wethersfield healthcare consulting and research organization she helped create nearly three decades ago. Ms. Petrillo joined Qualidigm in 1984. A visionary leader in quality improvement and safety, she spearheaded collaborations with CHA and many others that resulted in long-lasting improvements in quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness in care.

CHA and Qualidigm have worked hand-in-hand on numerous projects, including an initiative to decrease preventable hospital readmissions for patients with heart failure. CHA took the lead on assisting 24 hospitals with internally-focused quality improvement activities, while Qualidigm convened and provided technical assistance to 14 of these hospitals and a variety of community partners to improve transitions between settings of care. Together, the collaborating organizations brought about significant improvements in the process of caring for patients with heart failure across the continuum of care and important decreases in hospitalizations. In February 2012, this collaboration was renamed the Care Transitions Initiative and broadened to address preventable hospitalizations of all patients across Connecticut.

Under Ms. Petrillo’s leadership, Qualidigm held the federal contract as the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for Connecticut since 1984. In addition, the organization continues to work with federal and state agencies and private sector clients to support national initiatives designed to advance patient safety and quality care.

In addition to her work at Qualidigm, Ms. Petrillo was instrumental in working with the Rhode Island Medical Society to establish Quality Partners of Rhode Island (QPRI), a healthcare quality improvement organization in that state. She served as the organization’s Chief Executive Officer from 1995 – 2007, concomitant with her Qualidigm service. During that time, QPRI was recognized for its in-state initiatives as well as its national consulting program focused on the nursing home setting.

Read the press release here.

Congratulations to All Awardees

CHA salutes all of this year’s award winners – a remarkable array of healthcare heroes working in Connecticut’s hospitals and other healthcare organizations. Congratulations!