Hospital Leaders and Staff Honored by CNA for Outstanding Contributions

At its Annual Convention last week, the Connecticut Nurses’ Association announced the recipients of the Diamond Jubilee awards for outstanding service and contributions to nursing in the state. The Jubilee Awards are the most prestigious awards the CNA bestows.

Terry Quell, PhD, RN, and president of CNA presented the Excellence in the Workplace Award to St. Vincent’s Medical Center nursing staff for their continuous efforts to improve patient safety, to support best practices in geriatric nursing, and to encourage the integration of evidence-based practice into their nursing care.

In presenting the award, Dr. Quell, who is on the faculty at Fairfield University, noted: “Every student who I have placed at St. Vincent’s has had a highly positive experience, and many of our graduates seek jobs there. I truly believe that the nursing staff serves as a model for other work settings.” Dr. Quell shared comments from some of her faculty colleagues at Fairfield University. “The first topic that comes to mind is the organization’s commitment to safety and transparency,” led by Susan Davis, RN, EdD, President and CEO, said one faculty member. “Nurses are leaders and key players in supporting all employees to work in a safe environment for patients and staff through a cultural transformation of transparency.” Another colleague said, “I started to work at St. Vincent’s in 1993. As healthcare transformed, the inner core [at St. Vincent's] never changed, but there was an empowerment among nursing that emerged. It gave nurses the ability and capacity to be a stronger voice and transform the heart of St Vincent's into what it is now, a patient-centered medical center.”

Colleen Smith, RN, MSN, NEA-BC, was honored with The Doris M. Armstrong Award for Outstanding Contributions to Nursing Administration, an award that recognizes outstanding achievement, innovation, and leadership in nursing service, healthcare delivery, or public health. This award was presented by CNA Executive Director Carole Bergeron, RN, PhD, who said it acknowledges the fact that real leadership fosters the advancement of nursing service and the nursing profession.
Under Ms. Smith's leadership as Vice President for Nursing, Middlesex Hospital first applied for Magnet designation for nursing excellence. When Middlesex Hospital achieved Magnet status in 1999, they were the 35th hospital in the country to do so. In 2009 Middlesex achieved Magnet status for the third time, one of only 29 hospitals in the country so designated.

In her remarks introducing the award, Dr. Bergeron noted comments from letters of support. “Colleen has a broad range of skills and talents that she brings to her work, but one of her most important skills is the ability to put people in roles that highlight and best utilize their natural talents—these people flourish! It is in this way that Colleen has developed a leadership team and staff nurses who are no longer on a Magnet journey—this is simply what they do and how they do it.”

The award acknowledged that Ms. Smith (pictured) has made significant contributions in a variety of leadership roles, with ONE-CT as the immediate Past President, and with the Connecticut Nursing Collaborative. Ms. Smith also has been Vice Chair and Chair of the Patient Care Executives group at CHA; has served on CHA committees on nurse staffing and the hospital work environment, and a group that explores issues and practices with the Department of Public Health.

Robert G. Kiely, former President/CEO at Middlesex Hospital and former CHA Board Chairman, commented in support of the award that "Colleen is simply one of the most outstanding healthcare executives that I have had the pleasure of working with in my 35 year career. Colleen has led the Nursing Department at Middlesex to extraordinary heights in terms of clinical quality, patient satisfaction, staff morale, and collaborative relations with physicians and other healthcare professionals. She has significantly advanced the intellectual climate of the Nursing Department at Middlesex, as is represented by the percentage of the Middlesex nurses who are certified in their clinical specialties, the number of nurses who are pursuing degrees, and the active research climate in the Department.”

Tough Economic Times Bring Challenges for Hospital Fundraising

Despite the official end of the recession, fundraising professionals at hospitals throughout Connecticut continue to face challenging times attracting and maintaining donor support. The trend in the state mirrors national statistics showing a decline in charitable giving to US healthcare facilities.

A recent report by the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy reported an 11 percent decline nationwide, totaling approximately $944 million, in donations to healthcare facilities in fiscal year 2009. Development directors at Connecticut's hospitals have witnessed a shift in donor patterns and behaviors, and have responded accordingly in their approach to fundraising.

Unrestricted gifts – donations without restriction that are often used to support the general operations of a hospital – are becoming increasingly difficult to secure. Susan Chudwick, Director of Development at Bridgeport Hospital, finds this to be true. “The donor base has become more particular about how they spend their philanthropic dollars in the past few years. Donors want to be assured of where their money is going and see the impact of their gifts,” according to Ms. Chudwick. This shift to restricted giving means more attention to fulfilling donor wishes.

Capital campaigns, important initiatives designed to underwrite major programs or facilities at hospitals, presented hurdles for fundraisers, especially since many such campaigns began shortly before the economic downturn. The Hospital for Special Care’s Sheila Hogan, Foundation Vice President, is about half-way through a capital campaign she expected to be concluded by now. The hospital has been buoyed, nevertheless, by the recent receipt of several new regional and national grants in support of the campaign. Ms. Hogan counsels “immense patience” in this time of smaller gifts, and despite continued uncertainty, she senses positive feelings in the air and encourages colleagues to stay optimistic.

Ronald Bianchi, Corporate Sr. Vice President and President/CEO of St. Vincent's Medical Center's Foundation, focused on the positive while conducting an ambitious capital campaign during the depths of the recession. Mr. Bianchi said the hospital "set our requests high, utilized flexibility when needed, added staff, and sold the campaign based on its merits." As a result, the campaign to fund a master facility plan exceeded expectations, and collections are ahead of schedule.

The fundraising operations at smaller hospitals located in rural, middle income communities are perhaps most affected by the recession. Middlesex Hospital reported a 10 percent decline in donations for the fiscal year concluded in September 2010. Laura Martino, Vice President, Development, noted that the hospital’s results are consistent with national numbers, reflecting the “disappearance” of discretionary income among the middle class. She finds that past donors are “hanging on to their dollars,” but she is focusing on maintaining contact and relationships with these donors in the hope they will return when financial times improve. While the average gift to Middlesex Hospital is smaller, Ms. Martino emphasizes “treating everyone like they’re your top donor, and making everyone feel valued whether they’re able to give or not.”

Although these have been trying times for hospital fundraisers, there is a silver lining. For Backus Hospital and its surrounding community, ties were reinforced and strengthened during the recession. Genevieve Schies, Development Director, has found a greater desire among donors to keep contributions local to help friend and neighbors. The hospital’s Breast Health Initiative Circle...
Election Season: Room at the Top for a New Governor

Next Tuesday, the election season will come to its long-awaited conclusion as voters in Connecticut go to the polls and elect a new governor in what some pollsters are calling the closest gubernatorial election in recent memory.

Dan Malloy is the Democratic nominee for Governor. Mr. Malloy previously ran for Governor in 2006, but lost in the Democratic primary to New Haven mayor, John DeStefano, Jr. An attorney and the former mayor of Stamford, Mr. Malloy served as an assistant district attorney in Brooklyn, NY, from 1980-1984, served on the Stamford Board of Finance from 1983-1994, and was an attorney in private practice from 1984-1995. First elected as mayor in 1995, Malloy served four terms and was the longest-serving mayor in the history of Stamford.

As mayor, Mr. Malloy made crime reduction a priority, resulting in Stamford's being recognized for its safety. Also under Mr. Malloy's administration, the city received on three occasions, the United States Conference of Mayors "City Livability Award" for the city's focus on public education.

As a candidate for Governor, Mr. Malloy has pledged to focus on expanding access to healthcare while reducing the costs for employers to provide healthcare coverage. Additional aspects of Mr. Malloy's healthcare platform can be found here. Mr. Malloy met with hospital leaders earlier this month and discussed a wide range of issues including cost-shifting, and meaningful use of hospital technology. Click here for more information about that meeting.

Mr. Malloy was born and raised in Stamford, where he still lives. He attended Boston College and Boston College Law School.

Tom Foley is the Republican nominee for Governor. Mr. Foley is seeking to be the third consecutive Republican to hold the office since 1995. Prior to his run for the state's highest office, Mr. Foley served the US government for seven months in 2003-2004 as the Director of Private Sector Development for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, and from October 2006 to January 2009, as the US Ambassador to Ireland. In the private sector, Mr. Foley has spent most of his adult professional career in the business world working for McKinsey and Citicorp Venture Capital before founding his own company, NTC Group, in 1985.

As a candidate for Governor, Mr. Foley's focus on healthcare looks at reducing costs by reducing state mandates on coverage, promoting wellness programs, capping medical malpractice claims, moving to electronic record keeping, and permitting interstate sales of healthcare insurance. Additional information on Mr. Foley's healthcare platform can be found here. Mr. Foley met with hospital leaders last spring and discussed issues of importance to hospitals including the recently-passed healthcare reform and workforce needs. Click here for more information about that meeting.

Mr. Foley has been involved with charitable causes focused on improving educational opportunities for children, serving on the board of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and as a trustee of the Kent School in Kent, CT. Mr. Foley was appointed to two Governor's Commissions, including the Governor's Commission on Divorce, Custody and Children, which he co-chaired, and the Governor's Commission on Education Finance.

Mr. Foley received a bachelor's degree in economics from Harvard and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He lives in Greenwich.

Upcoming CHA Education Programs

Laying the Quality Foundation on Thursday, November 11, 8:30-noon

With the demands of healthcare reform becoming clearer each day—now more than ever, everyone must be involved in quality improvement and patient safety. This foundational course is designed to provide all hospital administrative, operational, and new clinical staff with the practical knowledge and operational tips they need to build and sustain a culture of quality and patient safety. Participants will gain a working knowledge of common quality terms, explore how organization culture either permits or prevents errors, why being on the sharp end of healthcare delivery is difficult when a mistake happens, and how to avoid communication breakdown — cited as the number one sentinel event reported to The Joint Commission.

The presentation will review how to build PI teams, develop measures of improvement, and utilize evidence-based practices to
investigate errors and learn from defects. Concepts and methods to improve hand off communication will be introduced including briefings, rounding, huddles, and other practical tools.

This activity was approved by the National Association for Healthcare Quality for 3.25 CPHQ CE credits. The John D. Thompson Hospice Institute for Education, Training and Research, Inc. designates this educational activity for a maximum of 3.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. This program is pending approval of Category II credit through the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE.)

Click here to view the brochure; click here to register. For more information, please contact Christine Prestiano at (203) 294-7257 or prestiano@chime.org.

From Difficult to Dynamic: Engaging Our Most Challenging Employees on Friday, November 12, 8:30-2:30 p.m.

Managing staff to achieve organizational goals is a basic responsibility for all leaders. It is a particularly difficult challenge with employees who demonstrate negative, unproductive behaviors that consume hours of a supervisor’s time and energy, and prevent a team from achieving high performance. Joan Evans, a highly respected presenter in CHA’s management and leadership development series, returns to present this practical and interactive program, one of the most frequently requested programs CHA has offered. This highly interactive program will present communication methods and positive intervention techniques for turning performance problems around, and practical tools to help leaders effectively engage even the most difficult employees. Topics covered will include how to set clear expectations, how to communicate with different personality types, methods for providing constructive feedback and positive recognition, ways to minimize the negative effects of disruptive behavior, and how to coach employees toward self-correction of unacceptable behaviors.

Connecticut Hospital Association is an Approved Provider of Continuing Nursing Education by the Connecticut Nurses’ Association, an Accredited Approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation (5 contact hours). This activity has been submitted for review to the HR Certification Institute for continuing education credits. The John D. Thompson Hospice Institute for Education, Training and Research, Inc. designates this educational activity for a maximum of 5.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Click here to view the brochure; click here to register. For more information, please contact Christine Prestiano at (203) 294-7257 or prestiano@chime.org.

Nurse Preceptorship Program on Wednesday, November 17, 8:30-4 p.m.

Supporting and strengthening the work of nurse preceptors is critical to the development of new nurses and retention of highly skilled staff registered nurses who teach them at the bedside. Developed by a team of educators from hospitals and schools of nursing, this program will serve to start new nurse preceptors off with critical information and core content that is foundational for the role of the nurse preceptor.

Connecticut Hospital Association is an Approved Provider of Continuing Nursing Education by the Connecticut Nurses’ Association, an Accredited Approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation (6.0 contact hours).

Click here to view the brochure; click here to register. For more information, please contact Christine Prestiano at (203) 294-7257 or prestiano@chime.org.

Navigating DSS Financial Audits on Friday, November 19, 9 a.m.-noon.

Connecticut General Statutes authorizing the Department of Social Services (DSS) to conduct financial audits of providers who are reimbursed for Medicaid Services were amended this past July. Providers now have the right to appeal a final decision of DSS regarding financial recoupments, to the Connecticut Superior Court.

Join us for this half-day session to learn effective strategies that can potentially reduce the significant financial exposure that hospitals face – particularly now as DSS implements a more aggressive approach to recouping payments for DSS-identified violations, often based on an extrapolation process from a small sample of claims. This program will be of particular interest to patient account managers, corporate compliance officers, and risk managers.

This program is pending approval of Category II credit through the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE.) This
activity was submitted to the National Association of Healthcare Quality for CPHQ CE credit.

Click here to view the brochure; click here to register. For more information, please contact Christine Prestiano at (203) 294-7257 or prestiano@chime.org.