

FEATURE ARTICLE

SiCKO! A Movie Review: Part 1

By Dayna Nicholson

*Did Michael Moore's SiCKO
MAKE YOU SICK
about our broken healthcare system?*

As I left the movie theater after viewing SiCKO, I was approached by a clipboard-wielding volunteer and handed a flyer with those words at the top. My response?

Well, no, not really, but he made some good points.

Hmm. Where was the outrage, the high emotion? Why wasn't I either totally upset and defensive about Mr. Moore's lambasting of the U.S. healthcare system, or ready to take up arms in support of health care for all in the form of universal coverage? Having not seen any of Mr. Moore's other movies, I expected to be shocked, outraged, or at least moderately upset about *something*. But I wasn't.

I've since given my reaction some thought, and have concluded that I wasn't really shocked because, while the individual stories Mr. Moore tells are both graphic and compelling, the underlying claims he made weren't really original. Mr. Moore's basic theses are that (1) everyone should have access to high-quality medical care, (2) the U.S. health care system does not provide such access to its citizens, even those who are insured, and (3) in four countries with government-funded "universal" health care, the access to care is vastly superior to that in the U.S.

In developing these theses, Mr. Moore sets out his vision of the ideal, explains why he believes the U.S. system falls short, and shows why he thinks the health care systems in Canada, Britain, France and Cuba are a cut above the U.S. system. He makes his case by depicting many people who have health insurance but have nevertheless been failed by the system, and by interviewing people in the other countries to showcase the wonderful care that they receive, for "free."

While the situations and commentary portrayed in the movie work well as a catalyst for discussion, the movie as a whole tends to raise many questions and answer very few, if any. Here are just a few of the questions that SiCKO brings to mind:

- Do we have a "right" to health care?
- If so, what are the parameters of that right?
- Should the imperfect U.S. system be thrown out entirely?
- If not, how do we identify what to keep and what to toss?
- Is government-sponsored "universal" care the best option out there?

In the next issue, I will elaborate on these questions and the considerations in Part 2 of the movie review.

Meanwhile, WHA would like to hear from you. If you have an opinion on the points raised by SiCKO, or just on whether or not you enjoyed the movie, send your thoughts to whasocal@gmail.com. Messages we receive that are appropriate for publication may be included in next quarter's newsletter. ✉

EVENT SOLD OUT

WHA SPEAKER EVENT

An Evening with Cindy Ehnes

featuring

Cindy Ehnes

Director, California Dept. of Managed Health Care

SEPTEMBER 19, 2007

Special thanks to our table sponsors:

Kaiser Permanente
Fulbright & Jaworski
MD Care
Scan Health Plan

*Please join us for our Fireside Chat on
October 27th, 2007.*

More information inside the newsletter.

JULY DINNER EVENT

Getting Wired: Perspectives on the New Health Information Age

By Ada Cheng

On July 26, 2007, WHA members gathered at Granata's Italian Villa in Downey to listen to three knowledgeable speakers discuss their experiences with implementing and using health information systems within their own line of work. The diverse array of speakers included Bridget Cole, Director of Information Technology and Special Projects for the Comprehensive Community Health Centers, Inc. (CCHC) of Glendale, California; Dr. Caroline Goldzweig, Associate Chief of Staff for Clinical Informatics and for the Division of General Internal Medicine at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System; and the evening's moderator, Susan Green, President of Green Management Consulting Group Inc. This hot topic of health information encompassed everything from electronic medical records, to telemedicine, to digital radiology, and to the new age of personal health records.

According to Green, a common mistake many health organizations initially fall into is the false notion of "plug and play." In reality, the process of choosing and implementing a new health information system is a very difficult and costly process. Over 50 percent of organizations fail because they incompletely define what they want the system to accomplish and often find there is no data standardization within their own organizations.

As a model healthcare organization using health information technology, the VA has by far the most mature electronic health records system in the United States. Dr. Goldzweig explained that the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) started over 20 years ago as a local, internally developed, decentralized system at the Sepulveda VA. Due to a national VA restructuring, visionary leaders, local champions, and researchers, this system has expanded incrementally throughout the years to become what it is today: a system that enhances health information while always focusing on quality of care and is compatible throughout the VA medical centers and clinics nationally.

On the other end of the spectrum, Cole discussed her experience with starting to implement a health information exchange system within CCHC, with an emphasis on first focusing on improving and defining quality improvement, practice management, and business needs before



Moderator Sue Green (left) with speakers Caroline Goldzweig (middle), and Bridget Cole (right).

determining a vendor that can fulfill these defined needs. Her management team is taking a holistic approach by understanding how the different systems work currently and envisioning an information system that will be compatible and improve current processes.

Both Cole and Goldzweig agree on the benefits of having a health information system. Among the many benefits are expedited access to patient history, past providers and labs; improved quality of care with less redundancy, easier test ordering and more convenient lab results; and improved performance for specific diseases, as the clinical decision support tools can trigger providers to "do the right thing." However, some of the noted barriers with using a health information system are the possible data errors entered by staff into patient records, the initial impact of expected revenue and productivity decrease at the time of implementation, the potential lowering of provider/patient interaction with increased technology, and the difficulty in gaining buy-in from older providers unfamiliar with newer technologies.

All the speakers agreed that one-on-one tutoring, espe-

JULY EVENT (CONT'D)**... Getting Wired**

cially for physicians in medical officers, can be very effective, and that in the future organizations should plan to partner their vendors with their own project management teams so that the implementation process can roll out smoother and quicker. Cole concluded the evening best in relevance to all by stating, 20 years ago the VA was able to create their information system because it was in the midst of a “perfect storm of changes,” and now another perfect storm is about to start for the rest of us in healthcare. ❖



September 19th Dinner Event Presenting Cindy Ehnes *Speaker Bio*

Cindy Ehnes is the Director of the California Department of Managed Health Care, the only stand-alone HMO watchdog agency in the nation, touching the lives of more than 21 million enrollees. An attorney with 25 years of legal experience, primarily in the area of health insurance and regulatory law, Cindy is licensed to practice law in both Colorado and California. As the author of the Prentice Hall ADA Compliance Advisor, one of two books she has written on the rights of persons with disabilities, she brings a substantial patient rights and health care background to the Department.

She currently serves on the Board of Directors for three organizations: the California Regional Health Information Organization, a statewide collaborative effort to build a secure statewide health data exchange system, the Integrated Healthcare Association, which focuses on developing pay-for-performance measures for provider groups, and the California Health Funders Strategy Project, a collaborative planning effort for community clinics and health information technology adoption. She is also a member of the Governor's eHealth Action Forum, helping to design a road map for the state and provide leadership for any future legislative or regulatory activities.

Prior to becoming Director of the California Department of Managed Health Care, Cindy served as the Department's Deputy Director for Plan and

Provider Relations, as a liaison to HMOs, doctors, hospitals and other providers. Her prior California state service has included serving as division manager of the self-funded health plans unit at the California Public Employees' Retirement System, and as the interim executive officer at the California Board of Optometry in the Department of Consumer Affairs.

In Colorado, she served for nine years as consumer representative and chairman of Colorado's insurance plan for uninsured, high-risk individuals. As the enforcement director for the consumer affairs section at the Colorado Division of Insurance, she oversaw passage of several patients' rights initiatives, including new rules for patients with chronic conditions and for newborns. She also developed the quality assurance audit procedures for HMOs, and served as legislative affairs director for the Colorado Commission on Family Medicine.

A graduate of George Washington University and Catholic University Law School, both in Washington, D.C., she was admitted to the California bar in 2005. As a member of the US Disabled Ski Team 1974-1980, she won seven gold medals in international skiing competitions. Still an avid skier, she serves on the Board of Disabled Sports USA-Far West, encouraging others with disabilities to engage in sport activities to gain self-confidence, mobility and greater in-

FIRESIDE CHAT

June's Chat on The Successful Woman

By Dayna Nicholson

On a sunny summer day in June, the ladies of WHA gathered over lunch and pie at Marie Callender's to hear Dr. Beverly Tillman share her thoughts on "The Successful Woman – Being Empowered in Any Situation." Little did they know that they would be taking an active role in the day's presentation.

After having each attendee introduce herself, Dr. Tillman congratulated the group for passing the first test, *showing up*, and then declared that "success" is whatever you define it to be. She shared her conviction that empowerment goals can be set for any area of your life: job, relationships, health, spirituality, etc., and then listed the following empowerment secrets:

- Have a Vivid Vision of what you want to do: pick a goal and visualize yourself meeting it;
- Have a Passion for what you do: determine what concrete steps you are willing to take to reach that goal;
- Turn Obstacles into Opportunities: when you find stumbling blocks in your way, be flexible and figure out how you can use them or adjust to meet your goals;
- Pick a Support Team: find a few people who will cheer you on, will give *helpful* advice (but only when you ask for it), and won't be discouraging or try to talk you out of reaching your goals;
- Find a Mentor: identify someone who has already succeeded at a goal that is similar to yours, and ask that person to share the wisdom of experience.

Dr. Tillman then led the group in a discussion about each of these secrets of success. She had the group break up into pairs to talk about how the secret was or could be evident in their own life, then asked various people to share what they had discussed with the larger group. This resulted in lively discussion among the participants, who were happy to share their own experiences and provide encouragement to each other.

In the end, Dr. Tillman challenged each attendee to



find five areas in her life in which she wanted to be empowered, to set specific goals for those areas, and to implement the five success secrets to reach those goals.



NEXT FIRESIDE CHAT

Understanding Conservatorships: What you should know to prepare for the care of others

Come join us at our next Fireside Chat, featuring Margaret (Meg) Lodise, Esq. of Sacks, Glazier, Franklin & Lodise LLP.

Saturday, October 27, 2007
11:15am - 1:30pm

Parker's Lighthouse Restaurant
Long Beach

Please note that this event is for WHA members and their guests.

Please check your email inbox for notices regarding this event, or contact us: mtui@ca.rr.com.

WHA ANNOUNCEMENTS

WHA 2007 Scholarship Award

By Judy Vaccaro

Each year WHA awards a scholarship to a deserving graduate student in health administration. WHA awarded its 2007 scholarship to Elizabeth Navarro. In May, Elizabeth completed an administrative residency at Kaiser Permanente and earned her Master's Degree in Health Administration from USC.

Elizabeth obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychobiology from Occidental College. She then went on to get a Certificate in Health from California State University Los Angeles. Two short years later, she had her Master's under her belt.

Elizabeth's analytical and scientific side is evidenced by the research projects she participated in at Occidental College and Huntington Medical Research Institute, as well as employment as a lab assistant at Caltech. For the last two years, Elizabeth has also served as a substitute teacher in the El Monte City School District, teaching a variety of subjects to children in kindergarten through the eighth grade.

Elizabeth's goal is to hone her skills by working her way up through a health care organization and ultimately landing a top leadership position. If her past achievements are any indication, Elizabeth will undoubtedly achieve this goal. Please join us in congratulating Elizabeth on her accomplishments to date and wishing her all the best in her future career path. ✎



WHA President Judy Vaccaro with 2007 Scholarship winner, USC student Elizabeth Navarro.

New Board Members

WHA is pleased to present two new additions to the 2007 Board:

Ling Kung, Member-At-Large

Ling is a Postgraduate Administrative Fellow at Kaiser Permanente. She received her MBA at The McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin.

Brandy Oliver, Member-At-Large

Brandy is a Senior Business Analyst at Wellpoint, Inc. She is currently a candidate for Master of Health Administration (Fall 2008) at the University of Southern California.

Members in the News

Rhoda Weiss, WHA Past President, appeared in the June 11-17, 2007 issue of the *Los Angeles Business Journal* in a Q&A article regarding her perspective on the field of public relations. She is president of Rhoda Weiss & Associates in Santa Monica and the current chairwoman of the Public Relations Society of America, a trade group with 32,000 members.

Executive Forum is published four times a year by Women In Health Administration of Southern California. We welcome your comments, suggestions and article submissions. Please contact:

Editor:
Nina Niu-Ok
(818) 368-4917
nina@theoks.com

WHA would love to hear from you! Please let us know of any important news in your lives, ideas for events and activities, book reviews, articles, etc. Better yet, get involved and lend your talent and ideas by joining one of the WHA committees!

WHA recognizes our generous sponsors

TITANIUM

Foley & Lardner LLP

Kaiser Permanente

PricewaterhouseCoopers

BRONZE

Greenberg Levinson LLP

WHA 2007 BOARDPresident

Judy Vaccaro judyvaccaro@socal.rr.com

Secretary

Ruthie Goldberg Ruthie.A.Goldberg@kp.org

Acting Finance Chair

Judy Vaccaro judyvaccaro@socal.rr.com

Membership Chair

Krisianna Bock krisianna@hotmail.com

Events Chairs

Vicky Tai vickytai@gmail.com

Diane Ung diane.ung@foley.com

Communication Chairs

Dayna Nicholson dnicholson@fulbright.com

Nina Niu-Ok nina@theoks.com

Members-at-Large

Trudi Carter, MD tcarter@caloptima.org

Ling Kung ling.kung@kp.org

Brandy Oliver brandy.oliver@wellpoint.com

Immediate Past President

Sue Brilliant SLBrilliant@yahoo.com

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE & NEW MEMBERS**New Members:**

Sandar Aung is a CSULB MHA Student and an Executive Assistant at Memorial Health Care IPA

Yvette Chen is a Decision Support Analyst at Facey Medical Foundation

Jasmen Dorian is a student at Cal State Northridge

Deborah Hearne is a student at Cal State Long Beach

Amanda L. Hauser is a MPH Student at UCLA

Erica Huntzinger is a Project Leader at Kaiser Permanente

Jessica Louie is a Project Manager III at Southern California Permanente Medical Group

Janet Marcus, CPC is a Senior Consultant at Sinaiko Healthcare Consulting

Wajeheh Mazhar is a Epidemiologist student at Loma Linda University

Members on the Move:

Eleanor Morales is now Strategic Planning & Consulting Capital Planning at Kaiser Foundation Health Plan

Lisa Saldana is now Senior Business Performance Consultant at Kaiser Permanente

Kimberly Yang is now Administrative Director at League of Women Voters of Los Angeles



P.O. Box 77932
Corona, CA 92877-0131