



EXECUTIVE FORUM

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Looking Back at Another Stellar Year

By Judy Vaccaro

As we wrap up 2007, please join me in reflecting upon our accomplishments.

First and foremost, WHA had a year chock full of exciting and diverse events. Our events offered opportunities to learn, to network, and to just have fun. Our 2007 programming included panel discussions on health disparities and health information technology; fireside chats on leadership and empowerment; business card brunches that we will continue in 2008; a fun evening that combined networking with wine tasting; and our last event of the year that featured Cindy Ehnes, Director of the Department of Managed Health Care. I am especially proud of this latter event, which was so popular that we had to turn people away when the banquet room reached its capacity of 110 attendees.

Second, we are thrilled to continue our relationships with our corporate sponsors, which happen to be some of the preeminent players in their respective fields: Foley & Lardner LLP; Kaiser Permanente; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP; Frank Public Relations Worldwide; and Greenberg Levinson LLP. I cannot mention their names without also expressing my immense gratitude for their generous support of our organization.

Third, we continued our tradition of awarding a scholarship to a deserving full-time graduate student committed to a career in health administration. Our 2007 scholarship went to USC student Elizabeth Navarro – congratulations on all of your achievements, Elizabeth!

Last but not least, a very significant accomplishment is that a local organization such as WHA continues to thrive and bring value to its members as we march into the 21st century. We would not be in this position

without the contributions of those who served on the Board of Directors, volunteered on committees, and simply came to our events and engaged their fellow WHA members in thoughtful dialogue – a huge thanks are in order to all of you who directly contribute to our lasting success.

In closing, I would like to remind you to contact me or any member of the Board of Directors if you have any questions, comments or concerns. Your ideas and opinions are important to us. The Board's contact information can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season and I hope to see you at a WHA event in 2008! ✨

SAVE THE DATE

THE NEXT WHA SPEAKER EVENT IN 2008

featuring

Ben Chu, MD

President, Kaiser Permanente Southern California

JANUARY 30, 2008

Watch your email inbox for more information regarding this exciting event!

SEPTEMBER DINNER EVENT

Cindy Ehnes: The Radical Regulator

By Sharon L. Vickers

“Be Radical. Stay Radical!” These are not usually words one would expect to hear from a government regulator, especially one a part of a Republican administration, but then Cindy Ehnes, Director of the California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) is not your ordinary Regulator. Neither is the Governor who appointed her.

Speaking in Chinatown at the Ocean Seafood Restaurant before a sold-out crowd (100+) on September 19, 2007, Ms. Ehnes recalls the advice given to her by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger upon her appointment. In a fine parody of the Governor’s voice (and accent) Ms. Ehnes declared, “Be bold. Be bold! Action! Action!”

Director Ehnes’ background as an attorney, a mother, an author, chief regulator of DMHC, an advocate and an athlete is as diverse as the audience in attendance. Fellow regulators, health care attorneys, students, physicians, health plan employees – including the CEO of a health plan – all were on hand to hear her story and her vision.

Problems in the Licensing Division were some of the major challenges Ms. Ehnes faced upon becoming Director. “The Licensing Department was a convoluted process. Our motto might have been ‘we’ll take a year to tell you ‘no.’” To correct this, under the Director’s leadership, the Licensing Division made the following



Cindy Ehnes speaking about her experience at the DMHC.

changes:

- Moved to electronic filing.
- Moved to technical assistance guides for plans.
- Developed more template documents.
- Requiring submission of only redlined documents.

At the WHA meeting, Director Ehnes highly praised present and former members of her staff for the work they did in turning the Division around.

Another one of the solutions Director Ehnes implemented was to adopt the concept of “Regulating to the Risk” rather than the old approach that every plan must be a full financial service plan. Instead, Director Ehnes said, “We ask: what is it you are trying to accomplish, Plan? How will it benefit the consumer? Regulating to the risk means lesser standards for specialty HMOs as Knox-Keene makes no distinction between these.” Many of the requirements are not relevant to these types of plans.

One example of ‘regulating to the risk’ is in the area of discount health plans, which pose no financial risk be-



The audience at the sold out event listening raptly to Ms. Ehnes during her presentation.

SEPTEMBER EVENT (CONT'D)

... Cindy Ehnes

cause they do not take risk. “Therefore, DMHC is going to regulate them, but the focus will be on preventing and detecting fraud rather than on risk,” she said.

Director Ehnes’ advice to students interested in health administration: “Thinking holistically and focusing on how to develop solutions to problems. It is extremely important to learn the nuts and bolts, but take your time. You represent deep policy backgrounds. You add a tremendous asset. You must continue to be radical in your thinking and radical in your approach.”

And when asked about the role of women in health care in California, Ms. Ehnes’ response was “Women Rock! This is great work for women. It is the Lord’s work.... Privilege, passion and opportunity!”

Interestingly enough, this was a WHA event that had a number of male attendees as well as female! ☒



WHA audience members:
the group at the Kaiser Permanente table.



WHA audience members:
the group at the Wellpoint table.

Q: Why is there a “Kaiser Permanente” table and a “Well-Point” table at this event?

A: Some of the WHA events offer the opportunity for an organization or individual to sponsor a table. Table sponsorship typically includes a table with a number of reserved spots and special recognition at the event.

***WHA wishes you
Happy Holidays
and
a Wonderful New
Year in 2008!***

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:

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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!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Zan Dubin Scott

By Nina Niu-Ok and Zan Dubin Scott

This issue's Member Spotlight features Zan Dubin Scott, an accomplished WHA Member who developed her media and public relations expertise largely as a staff writer for The Los Angeles Times, where she wrote features and breaking news stories. She founded her company, ZDS Communications, after 15 years with The Times, for whom she continues to write. She developed an expertise in healthcare public relations and marketing by working with large metropolitan hospitals, such as USC University Hospital and Centinela Freeman Regional Medical Center, and physician groups. She most recently worked to promote the sixth annual Sisters Staying Healthy, a wellness conference for midlife African American women.

When asked why she embarked on a career in healthcare, Zan responds, "Because I was attracted to healthcare, despite its many challenges, from the moment I first worked in a hospital. Many of us like to think we're making a difference in the world or dealing with important issues. Well, the men and women working in healthcare are literally dealing with life and death, but they don't go around pretending they're trying to save the world. I like that! It's all about getting the job done."

In addition to being a member of WHA, Zan is also a charter member of Plug in America, a nonprofit clean-car support organization. She sits on the board of Green Depot, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising public awareness and use of all renewable energy sources including biodiesel, solar and wind power. Zan is the recipient of a Vesta Award, which honors women who have made significant contributions to the arts in Southern California.

As an environmentalist, Zan has used her media and marketing expertise to help promote clean transportation and alternative energy use, most notably in the documentary film, "Who Killed the Electric Car." She is one of many grassroots activists in the film and helped to organize and execute some of its key media events and other activities.

Zan lives in Los Angeles with her husband, Paul Scott, a proud five-year-plus cancer warrior. Their home is equipped with a solar thermal system for hot water and a 3.0 kW solar photovoltaic array, which supplies electricity for their home, their fully electric car, their two



cats, and assorted rescue animals when fosters are needed.

Regarding her membership in WHA, what Zan likes the most is interaction with other WHA members. "I really enjoy the people--my fellow members--who have so much experience and wisdom to share and are so generous about sharing it. They genuinely want to see their colleagues succeed." ❀

ABOUT ZDS COMMUNICATIONS:

ZDS Communications is a public relations, marketing and writing agency specializing in sustainable issues and enterprises, healthcare, the arts and entertainment.

Zan Dubin Scott launched the agency after a 15-year career as an award-winning Los Angeles Times reporter, which equipped her with an insider's grasp of what media gatekeepers are looking for. As a result, ZDS Communications' clients appear on or in some of America's major media outlets, from *Good Morning America* to *Nurse Week* to the Discovery Channel. ZDS Communications clients benefit equally from the company's keen ability to deliver effective, integrated marketing campaigns that draw upon 25 years of experience in one of the world's most competitive markets. "Our goal is to raise awareness of your product, service or campaign in order to make the world, and your corner of it, a better place."

SEPTEMBER FEATURE ARTICLE**SiCKO Movie Review: Part 2***By Dayna Nicholson*

Dayna Nicholson's review of the documentary film "SiCKO" was the Jul-Sep 2007 issue's feature article. In this issue, Dayna elaborates on the questions raised by the movie.

While the situations and commentary portrayed in the movie SiCKO 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 and considerations that arise from watching SiCKO:

Is there a "right" to health care?

While in the abstract it is unlikely that anyone would disagree with the principle that every American (indeed, the citizens of all countries) should have access to high-quality medical care, the question of whether such access is an inalienable human right has been under debate for quite some time. Of the three contentions listed above, this one receives the least attention in the movie, although it may be the most important because it is must be resolved before there can be any conversation about how health care should be provided. Rather than making a case for the principle of health care as an entitlement, Mr. Moore simply sets it out as gospel truth and goes on from there.

Even if everyone were to agree that there is a right to health care, an immediate question that follows is: To what level of care are people entitled? Again, in the abstract we might be able to answer this question (i.e. "the basic care needed to maintain good health"), but the specific services that are encompassed by that level will be much more difficult to define. Unfortunately, SiCKO does not address this issue in any meaningful way.

Should the imperfect U.S. system be thrown out entirely?

If Mr. Moore got his way, insurance companies would be a thing of the past, and the federal government would pay for and administer the delivery of health care to all Americans. While it is clear that there are many deficiencies in the provision of health care in this country, I find it difficult to support the assertion that the system is so flawed that it needs to be dismantled entirely. It is true that the individual stories Mr. Moore told were heart-wrenching, but it is also true that mil-

lions of insured Americans are able to access that care they need. It seems to me, then, that a more targeted approach to health care reform is in order.

Is government-sponsored "universal" care the best option out there?

The portion of the movie dedicated to showing how terrific the care is in Canada, Britain, France and Cuba required more willing-suspension-of-disbelief than I was able to muster. Mr. Moore depicts those systems as providing all of the health care a person could possibly need, with never a delay...and it's free! As I am certain that there are positive aspects to the U.S. health care system, I am also quite sure that there are problems in those other systems. Thus, Mr. Moore's portrayal of the seemingly-unlimited access to care rang hollow. In addition, the movie's attempt to debunk the idea that government-sponsored care leads to exorbitant taxes (by interviewing a French couple who own a beautiful apartment, take long vacations, and are blissfully happy with the many social services their government provides - one of which is health care), was too shiny and happy to be believed.

If you work in health care and you haven't seen SiCKO, you really should. Not because it's an objective documentary that gives both sides of every argument. It isn't and it doesn't, but that's to be expected. The movie does, however, raise a number of important questions, and adds dimension to the typical American perspective on how health care is delivered in the rest of the world. Oh yeah, and it made me laugh.

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. ✉

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

Hayley Buchbinder is a Staff Analyst, Health at County Dept of Health Services, Los Angeles.

Linda Carl is an Attorney.

Christine Guison is a Network Administrator at United Healthcare and a Student at Cal State Long Beach.

Julie Kakuda is a Senior Consultant, Patient Safety Walnut Center at Kaiser Permanente.

Ling Kung is an Administrative Fellow at Kaiser Permanente.

Mukosolu N.C. Onwughalu is an MPH Student at UCLA and works at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Elizabeth Santos is a Student at CSULB.

Julie Straus is Project Manager at So. Cal Permanente Medical Group.

Stephanie Velarde is a Student and a Monitor Tech at Downey Regional Medical Center.

Members on the Move:

Melissa Biel is now a Consultant (Research/Program Management/Evaluation)

Joanne Chiu is now an Analyst at Cedars Sinai Medical Center and a USC Health Services Student.

Zan Dubin Scott is now Principal at ZDS Communications.

Martha Shenkenberg is now President of MAS Healthcare Consulting.



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