

Rural Healthcare



RHQN Newsletter, November 2008
Randy Benson, Executive Director

RHQN CEO LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

On Friday, November 7, seventeen RHQN member CEOs came together for our first CEO Leadership Conference. Ira Moscovice, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of the Division of Health Services Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota and Director of the Upper Midwest Rural Health Research Center presented. Ira's topic "**Leading During Change in Rural Healthcare: Rural Health Quality Mandates**" was a discussion of new and proposed quality and safety mandates for rural healthcare, the future of pay-for-performance at the critical access hospital level and application of the "medical home" system as a process for delivering the coordination of care that CMS and the private insurance industry are looking for as a way to provide high levels of patient care quality and cost savings.

Following his presentation, Ira facilitated a leadership discussion on the impact of the upcoming mandates on rural health quality, safety and reimbursement. Emphasis was placed on the value of statewide organizations which represent the need and interests of all rural hospitals. A DVD of Ira's presentation and the facilitated discussion is available from the RHQN. All RHQN CEO's will soon be receiving a copy of the DVD in the mail. If you would like an additional copy please contact Amy Voros, RHQN Executive Assistant at amyv@wsha.org.

INFECTION PREVENTION UPDATE

The November Members Conference Call featured Sandy Kangas, the RHQN infection prevention consultant. Sandy's presentation provided valuable information on current CDC infection prevention recommendations, encouragement and support for the newly completed and approved Washington State standardized isolation policy signage and discussion about the upcoming Department of Health mandates for hospital acquired infection reporting and submission of surveillance plans. As you can imagine, recent articles in the Seattle Times concerning multiple drug resistant organisms (MDRO's) have again brought infection prevention and control at the hospital level into the spotlight.

This spotlight shines brightly at the Department of Health, that state agency responsible for guaranteeing the safety of all residents, whether they are in restaurants, nursing homes, hospitals or wherever they gather in the state. We, as rural hospitals, must accept the fact that the DOH will be focusing extra time and effort on review of infection control policies and procedures, isolation signage and staff compliance with the signage instructions, your facility's surveillance plan, the performance improvement plans that have grown out of your surveillance plan data and, last but certainly not least, the competency of your infection preventionist.

The various forms, surveillance plan templates and sample 'best practice' policies that Sandy discussed during her conference call are available on the RHQN website. The link is: www.rhqn.org/resources/toolkits/infectioncontrolissuestoolkit.htm. If you need any assistance or would like to talk to Sandy, please contact her at sandyk@wsha.org. We would also like to remind you that Sandy has an RHQN Infection Control listserv. If you are not already on her listserv and receiving daily updates please send her an e-mail and get your name on the listserv. You will not regret having done so.

ONLY THE BEST!

Sometimes it seems like issues come flying at us so fast that we can not respond appropriately or get out of the way of them. So, there are times when it becomes necessary, if not mandatory, that we step back and take a breath. We, at times, lose sight of the big picture because we feel like we are 'majoring in the minors'. Well, just what is the 'big' picture? The answer is that we all strive for "only the best". Whether it's providing the best quality patient care, providing the best and safest environment for that care or giving our best to prevent infections, we know what that (as Ford Motor Company used to say) "quality is job 1".

It is our job at the RHQN to help you, whenever and wherever possible, to do "only the best". Whether it means:

- 1). having our external peer review physicians not only review charts, but also meet with the medical staff and Board of your facility to explain their findings and help implement a performance improvement project, or
- 2). having us conduct an environment of care safety survey in preparation for your DOH visit, or
- 3). consulting with your infection preventionist or doing a site visit to ensure the highest quality, appropriate and applicable infection control program and proper documentation of infection preventionist competence, or
- 4). assisting you with clinical quality assessments, program improvements, hospital compare data collection and conducting of root cause analyses of sentinel events.

We are here to serve you. Please feel free to contact any of your RHQN resources for assistance. It is our goal to help you provide "**Only the Best**". Contact Randy Benson, RHQN Executive Director, at randyb@wsha.org or 206 577-1821. We look forward to hearing from you.

Upcoming Member Education Calls:

- *December 9th, 10:30 AM:* Making Your Smoking Cessation Program Work - Gillian Schauer, Program Manager, Tobacco Cessation Resource Center (TCRC)
- *January 15, 10:30 AM:* Environment of Care Survey Update – Randy Benson, RHQN Executive Director

If you need assistance, additional resources, or a consultation, please contact me at 206 577-1821 or via email at: randyb@wsha.org.