



## **RHQN Newsletter, April 2009**

### **NEWS FLASH: New RHQN Executive Assistant**

We are very pleased to announce that the RHQN has a new Executive Assistant. Lori Martinez joined us on April 1 and has assumed all the functions previously provided by Amy Voros. If you need assistance with any RHQN related issues, please feel free to contact Lori. She can be reached at (206) 216-2550 or [lorim@wsha.org](mailto:lorim@wsha.org). Watch for more next month.

### **RHQN Recognized for Cardiac Care Level One Protocol Work**

The Rural Healthcare Quality Network has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) for our work in developing and implementing the Cardiac Level One Care Protocols at Lincoln Hospital in Davenport and across the state. The AHRQ is developing an Impact Case Study on the program. AHRQ's Impact Case Studies Program tracks and documents how the Agency's research, workshops, grants, and publications impact the health care system. They are used in testimony before Congress, speeches by the agency Director, AHRQ budget documents, fact sheets, articles, and Web postings.

The RHQN received a National Demonstration Grant from AHRQ to show how the use of HIT (Health Information Technology) advances quality in rural healthcare settings. In reviewing best practices for emergency cardiac care, staff discovered the work of Abbott Northwest Hospital in Minneapolis, MN related to the implementation of cardiac level one protocols in partnership with rural hospitals. Lincoln Hospital in Davenport, WA, approached Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane about implementing the protocols in a rural-urban partnership. Dr. Myron Bloom, RHQN Medical Director, helped to develop and promote the protocol within the Lincoln Hospital medical staff and Spokane cardiologists.

Since the protocol was implemented, it has been frequently used by rural hospitals to reduce the time it takes to get AMI patients from the rural Emergency Room to the urban PCI (percutaneous cardiac intervention) center cath lab ("door to balloon" time). This project has had a tremendous effect on the treatment of AMI (anterior myocardial infarction) patients not only at Lincoln Hospital, but has also spread across the state and region. The eastern Washington Cardiac Level One Protocol system now includes twenty three rural and urban hospitals in eastern Washington and northern Idaho.

Regional Forums for implementation of Cardiac Level One Care Protocols in other areas of the state are currently underway. A south central regional forum was held March 25<sup>th</sup> in Pasco. A north central forum will be held in Wenatchee on May 14<sup>th</sup> and a south sound (southwest) forum will be held in Olympia on June 11<sup>th</sup>. These forums bring together rural hospitals and urban PCI centers to discuss the basic science, policies, protocols, and procedures for implementation of rural-urban AMI transfer partnerships. The goal of these partnerships is to reduce the "door to balloon" time to 90 minutes or less and therefore, save heart muscle and

lives. If you have questions or need assistance with this process or attendance at a regional forum, please contact Randy Benson, RHQN Executive Director at (206) 577-1821 or [randyb@wsha.org](mailto:randyb@wsha.org).

### **RHQN Hosting Statewide Stroke Care Conference**

The Rural Healthcare Quality Network, in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Chapter of the American Heart Association, and the Washington State Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Office are hosting a major stroke care conference: **“Stroke Systems of Care: Working Together to Save Time, Brain, and Lives.”** The conference will be held Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at the Cedarbrook Conference Center in SeaTac.

The conference goal is to provide the basic science, policies, protocols, and procedures for implementation of rural-urban stroke care partnerships. Be watching for more information and registration materials. If you have questions, please contact Randy Benson, RHQN Executive Director at (206) 577-1821 or [randyb@wsha.org](mailto:randyb@wsha.org)

### **Providing a Safe Environment of Care: Hazardous Chemicals in the Healthcare Setting**

The RHQN April Members Conference Call focused on how hospitals can provide an environment of care for patients, staff, physicians, and visitors that is safe from exposure to hazardous chemicals. The conference call reviewed the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Worker Right to Know program standards and especially the Hazard Communication Plan.

In Washington State, we are seeing a great increase in the number of what is often referred to as “L&I” inspections. These inspections are conducted by employees of the Department of Labor and Industries, but more specifically, employees of the Washington State Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) (the department that used to be called the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Agency, WISHA). So, whether you call it an L&I, OSHA, OSHA/WISHA or OSHA/DOSH inspection, it is significant. The surveyors have the authority to inspect, cite, and fine hospitals for failure to comply with the standards outlined in the mandated OSHA/DOSH Hazard Communication Plan.

The conference call reviewed those standards the OSHA/DOSH surveyors look at, the documentation they expect, and the type of environment of care they anticipate seeing. The conference call presentation outline and audio recording can be found on the RHQN website: [www.rhqn.org/resources/presentations.htm](http://www.rhqn.org/resources/presentations.htm). If you need help or assistance with your Hazard Communication Plan, please contact Randy Benson, RHQN Executive Director at (206) 577-1821 or [randyb@wsha.org](mailto:randyb@wsha.org).

### **Upcoming Member Conference Calls**

Our May, June, and July Member Conference Call topics include:

May 12: “In Pursuit of Excellence, When’s the Last Time You Reviewed Your Policies?”

June 9: “Fire Safety in the Hospital Setting, the Life Safety Code Revisited”

July 14: “The Hospital Safety Officer; Where Did I Put That Job Description?”

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If you have ideas, comments, questions, need additional resources or a consultation, contact Randy Benson, RHQN Executive Director, at (206) 577-1821 or [randyb@wsha.org](mailto:randyb@wsha.org).