

Conference Report

The Annual Conference and Assembly held last week September 23-24, was an excellent opportunity to update members on social media issues, evidence-based clinical concerns, new innovations in care, new roles for nurses, how music enhances care, safety issues in care, and then updates from Jeanette Klemczak, the Chief Nurse Executive for Michigan, Margherita Clark from the Board of Nursing, Carole Stacy from the Center for Nursing and Diedre Tyler from COMON (Coalition of Michigan Organizations of Nursing).

Numerous participants commented on the quality and timeliness of the presentations, and for those for you who were not able to attend, all the PowerPoint presentations that are available will be on the website within the next few days.

We would like to thank three people who went above and beyond to help with conference activities: Jennifer Paul, who works to have vendors at the conference and developing the conference brochure; Liz Galvin, who has managed the Silent Auction has brought in dollars for the organization for the past two years; and Diana LaBumbard, who completed the CEU application and developed the certificates and evaluations for the conference. Their work ensured a successful conference.

We would also like to especially thank Kathy Kacynski, who has led the organization with distinction for the past two years, and last but definitely not least, Lynne Harris, who has been the Corresponding Secretary since RN-AIM was incorporated. They have made RN-AIM and my job with the organization much more effective and enjoyable.

Susan Meeker Assumes RN-AIM Presidency and New Corresponding Secretary Elected

Susan Meeker assumed the role of President of the Board at the Annual Assembly and chaired the Board meeting on September 24, 2010. She has served as the President-elect for the past year.

Two individuals graciously agreed to have their names placed in nomination for the Corresponding Secretary role to take the place of Lynne Harris, who is leaving that role after five years of excellent service to RN-AIM. Roberta "Bobbye" Kuhlman, from Region 2 – North, and Susan Huber, from Region 7 – Detroit were on the ballot for the only office to be filled this year. Susan Huber was elected to that role, and joined the other Board members for a meeting following the conference.

Whooping Cough (Unfortunately) Makes a Come Back

If your patients, friends and/or family members have persistent hacking coughs, you might think about when or if that individual has had a Pertussis booster lately. A recent Washington Post article indicated that Whooping Cough is making a strong comeback in California and that this may spell a nationwide trend. To date, in Michigan in 2010, over 330 cases of Pertussis have been identified--this is a significant increase over previous years. So if that cough, like the old Burl Ives song says causes a

“chicken to sneeze his head and tail right off,” or a coughing spell ends in a wheezing sound, consider finding out the immune status of that individual. Pertussis may be generally forgotten, but it’s not gone.

A Disturbing Trend

Some insurance companies that provide coverage for children are ending that coverage so they will not have to cover children with pre-existing conditions as required by the new Health Care Reform law.

This may deem even fewer children eligible for coverage than are presently covered. This, along with the disturbing information that one in four children in Michigan live in poverty, puts this vulnerable population at special risk. Child poverty jumped to 22.1% in 2009 up from 19.4% in 2008. Childhood poverty in Michigan is now above the national average of 19.7%. According to new data released by the U.S. Census Bureau, this percentage translates to more than a half-million (500,000) Michigan children in Michigan.

Where Have All the Faculty Gone?

McKnight’s Long Term Care News recently reported that the vacancy rate for nurse faculty members at U.S. nursing schools has risen from 6.6% to 6.9% over the last year. According to a new survey from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, at least 92% of those vacancies are for positions requiring a doctoral degree in nursing or a related field. The age of faculty is also rising and a significant number of nursing faculty have indicated that they will retire within the next one to five years. This complicates the plans to address the nursing shortage, as faculty to teach in clinical and classroom settings will continue to decline unless additional faculty can be recruited and prepared for teaching positions. More on this in the next issue of News and Musings.

State Budget Update

Legislators have two days to complete work on the 2011 budget...and two agencies. The Departments of Transportation and Human Services are just not agreed upon. What has been done will be felt among health care providers and patients, particularly as it relates to mental health care. Among other decisions, they include:

- Community Mental Health non-Medicaid services have been cut by 5.4 million
- Community substance abuse prevention, education and treatment program line item has been reduced by \$1.5 million
- Local Public Health Operations have been cut by an additional \$1 million
- No cuts were made to Medicaid and Medicaid dental and vision coverage for adults is restored
- Requires DCH to automatically enroll a child in MICHild if they qualify for the free lunch program

For a full list of Community Health budget items, visit www.mcmch.org. Friday Notes, 9/24/2010.

For a Quick Tour...

Have you Seen the YouToons Explain the Health Reform Law?

[Health Reform Hits Main Street](#), a new animated short video from the Kaiser Family Foundation, features the YouToons explaining the health reform law to an American public still confused by how it works. Have you seen it? The short movie has three major sections: explaining problems in the current health care system, short-term



changes that will take place between now and 2014, and major provisions that will take effect in 2014. [View it online](#) and share it with colleagues, friends and family.

Written and produced by the Foundation, the animated movie features narration by Cokie Roberts, ABC News and NPR news commentator and a member of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, and is part of Kaiser's new [Health Reform Source](#), an online gateway providing easy access to new and comprehensive resources on the health reform law. Visit the Health Reform Source online at <http://healthreform.kff.org> for other new features and tools including an interactive timeline showing when health reform provisions take effect, all the latest polling data, short videos with Foundation experts answering specific questions about the law on a variety of health policy topics, links to other information resources, the latest headlines on health reform from Kaiser Health News, and FAQs about the new law.

And the Musing...

In six weeks, elections will take place that may change the direction of government in Michigan for years to come. Under the News link on the RN-AIM website is the White Paper that was developed to support the continuation of the role of the Chief Nurse Executive regardless of who wins the gubernatorial election. Each of you reading this message should send a copy of the White Paper to your legislators, and remind them how this role has served to address serious problems related to the nursing shortage in Michigan and other issues related to nursing education.

RN-AIM leadership will be sending the paper to the gubernatorial candidates and, along with COMON and other nursing organizations, indicate a need to meet with the candidates to help them understand how vital this role is to a continued focus on addressing shortage and education issues. The candidates also need to be reminded, as do all legislators, that this role is supported completely by licensing fees paid by all nurses who practice in Michigan. No tax dollars are used to support the role.

Michigan is unique in having a Chief Nurse Executive, and Jeanette Klemczak has addressed these important issues from a non-partisan stance, concerned only that patients and clients of health...and particularly...nursing care receive care of the highest quality and in the safest manner.

Your actions are crucial to maintaining this vital role. Do your part.

--Mary Scoblic, Editor