

HEALTHCARE REFORM MUST REMAIN A TOP PRIORITY



*Anthony R. Tersigni, Ed.D.,
FACHE, President and CEO*

For the past two years, Ascension Health has advocated passionately in support of healthcare reform that achieves 100% access and 100% coverage. This work reflects our Strategic Direction commitment to Healthcare That Leaves No One Behind.

At a recent meeting of the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA), Ascension Health President and CEO Anthony R. Tersigni responded to last week's State of the Union address, saying that healthcare reform must continue to move forward, even in small steps, to ensure that everyone has access to medical care.

You may read more about his presentation to the St. Louis RCGA in a story that appeared in the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#).

A HEALING SPACE DEDICATED TO HELP PROMOTE WELL-BEING AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

As part of a celebration of Ascension Health's 10th Anniversary, St. Joseph Health System, Tawas City, Mich., dedicated a Healing Space to support a balanced life for the people who work there. This Healing Space is a quiet sanctuary where associates and physicians of any faith may spend time in quiet reflection, nourishing their spiritual growth and wholeness. The space helps to foster a spirituality of work and offers those who visit an opportunity to gain energy, better health, more harmonious personal and work relationships, and a sense of meaning, purpose and guidance in their lives and the work they do.

The Healing Space features a mural titled "Nature's Medicine," painted by artist William Fox, husband of Debra Fox, Vice President of Patient Care Services at St. Joseph Health System, and a poem he wrote to accompany it. At the dedication ceremony, Patrick Murtha, President and CEO, expressed the health system's appreciation to Mr. Fox with a desk plaque inscribed with the poem.



*William Fox, left, receives an inscribed desk
plaque from Patrick Murtha, President and CEO,
St. Joseph Health System.*

RECOVERING OUR TRADITIONS Fourth National Congress on Palliative Care – *Mark your Calendars*



The Supportive Care Coalition: Pursuing Excellence in Palliative Care will present Recovering Our Traditions: Fourth Annual Congress on Palliative Care October 28-30, 2010, at Marriott Union Station in St. Louis.

Sponsored by the Catholic Health Association of the United States, the educational conference will examine current trends, recent developments and leading practices in palliative care programs. Participants will gain knowledge and skills to optimize structures and processes that transform the delivery of palliative care and contribute to high patient and family satisfaction.

[Click here](#) for more information about this Congress.

Engage

2009 Associate Engagement Survey

Proven Practices are identified by workgroups with high associate engagement and highlighted to encourage the sharing and spread of good ideas.

Proven Practices

Simple...and Effective

Seton Family of Hospitals' Chat & Chew Gives Voice to Empowered Associates

Often, the simplest approach is the best way to tackle a challenging situation.

When the challenge is how to get staff to work together to improve support for approximately 600 cardiac patients, the approach at Seton Medical Center Austin in Austin, Texas, has been both simple and exceedingly effective.

"It always comes down to one thing — communication," said Liz Murrah, Director of the Seton Heart Specialty Care and Transplant Center. "You have to engage staff because they are the ones who are doing the work." With more than three decades of experience in the healthcare field, she should know.

Liz's approach is called Chat & Chew, a name coined — appropriately — by the associates it empowers to take ownership for providing excellence in care and creating an environment with superior access, efficiency, comfort and sensitivity. Chat & Chew involves a 90-minute meeting of all associates in the Transplant Center. The sessions take place every other Friday afternoon, perhaps the only relatively slow time in that fast-paced unit. At these meetings, associates discuss everything from the department dress code to interpersonal relationships.

"Liz has created a very casual, relaxed environment in which her team can interact in an open and transparent manner," said Charlotte Thrasher, Chief Operating Officer, Seton Medical Center Austin. "It is a collegial, very human way to inquire about what is going on, with a shared goal to improve the unit."

"We are a very tight-knit group and Liz has made it comfortable for everyone to talk about what has happened during the week," said Lisa

Anderson, a senior department administrator in the unit. "It's a lot like sitting around the dinner table and discussing what went on and what needs to be fixed."

As the only heart transplant center in Central Texas, the Seton Transplant Center provides and coordinates services for patients with chronic

heart failure who may need a heart transplant or who have already received a transplant. The goals of the clinic are to promote optimal health, optimize

quality of life and provide comprehensive outpatient services. Since the program began in 1986, Seton has transplanted close to 300 hearts. The transplant team performs up to 10-12 heart transplants annually, with more than 85 percent of adult patients surviving a year or more after their surgeries.

Liz developed the Chat & Chew approach after years of studying the teachings of management gurus such as Jim Collins (*From Good to Great*) and Craig Hickman, Tom Smith, and Roger Connors (*The Oz Principle*).

"It always comes down to one thing — communication."



Liz Murrah, Director of the Seton Heart Specialty Care and Transplant Center

"It's a good mechanism to get people together to talk and exchange ideas," Liz said. As an example, she pointed to a situation when the hospital made changes that reduced or eliminated services to some heart patients. "There was a lot of unresolved anger at first," she said. "Chat & Chew gave us a vehicle for letting everyone express their concerns and gain a better understanding of why certain decisions were necessary."

Associates dictate what issues will be discussed at the session by

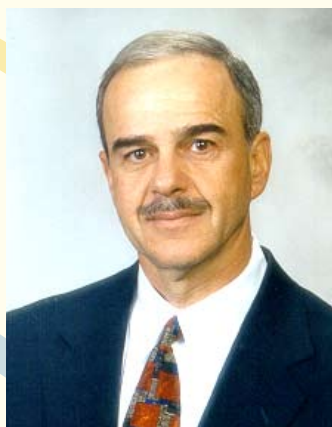
logging on to a group calendar and adding items to the week's agenda. Laura Bostic, an office supervisor in the unit, noted that Chat & Chew has enabled the department to identify and resolve issues that might not otherwise be obvious. "Clinical associates may see where things are getting bogged down and can add those issues to the bi-weekly agenda," she explained. "Then we can all come together to try to solve them. It gives everyone more ownership over their own jobs and for the overall success of the group."

- [Sacred Heart](#) (Pensacola, Fla.) Dedicates New Cancer Center
- [St. Vincent Health](#) (Indianapolis) Earns National Recognition for Exemplary Community Service
- [St. Mary's](#) (Evansville, Ind.) Launches High-Powered 3.0 Tesla MRI Scanner Equipped with Cinemavision

**At Ascension Health, we are called to:
Service of the Poor...Reverence...Integrity...Wisdom...Creativity...and Dedication.**

Carrying out these Values in the work we do every day is an “inside out” process. It challenges each of us, individually, to dedicate time and energy to reflecting on the Values and what they mean in terms of how we do our jobs, how we relate to one another, and how we relate to those we serve.

In e.news, we periodically will feature the insights and reflections of associates as we work to deepen our integration of the Values within Ascension Health.



Dedication

Anthony J. Speranzo, Chief Financial Officer

While driving recently, I was listening to a sports news broadcast on the radio. The broadcaster was commenting on some recent events that had tarnished public opinion of those who participate in a particular sport. He said that “we [organizations] have a mission statement not only for times of prosperity, but also for times of crisis. The mission statement reminds us of our values, our goals and who we are.”

As I thought about this, I reflected on the difficult and unprecedented economic environment Ascension Health and our associates have experienced over the past 18 months. I also reflected on Ascension Health’s Mission statement and our Values of Service of the Poor, Reverence, Integrity, Wisdom, Creativity and Dedication. Our Mission statement and Values remind us of who we are and affirm our commitment to the individuals we serve, impelling us to continue our work, in good times as well as in challenging times.

When we experience difficulties in our work, our Mission and our Value of Dedication remind us of the hope and joy of our ministry. They give us the strength and courage to manage through what at times may seem to be an impossible environment, where the solutions and outcomes seem more uncertain than ever. For those of us who are not directly involved in patient care or who are not physically located in one of our Health Ministry hospitals, clinics or other entities, our dedication enables us to remain connected with our purpose and reminds us that our work supports the delivery of high-quality care to those who are poor and vulnerable, improving the communities which Ascension Health serves.

As you attend to your daily work responsibilities, remember that Ascension Health’s Mission and our Values, especially dedication to those we serve, inspire all of us and give us the strength to face our challenges with courage so that we may continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.