



THE LIGHTHOUSE

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Save the Date!

The Biennial Education Conference sponsored by MeAMSS has been scheduled for May 10 and 11, 2012, at the Residence Inn Marriott in Portland near the waterfront.

Your Education Committee, chaired by Susan Gilson, has been busy contacting speakers and sponsors to bring you one of our best conferences yet.

Stay tuned! Exciting news will be forthcoming on topics and speakers.

You won't want to miss out on this conference – so mark your calendars!

President's Message

Deb Carter, MS, CPMSM, CPCS

In one of my previous messages I spoke of the many hats that the MSP is being asked to wear – or should I say juggle. In “101 Ways to Know You are a Medical Services Professional” by Neil Shulman, MD, reasons #26 and #97 describe these hats:

#26 You wear more hats in your profession than they sell in a hat store ... politician, strategist, psychologist, caregiver, etc.

#97 You are a research analyst, database manager, project manager, private investigator, and resource expert ... all in a day's work.

Many of you can add other “hats” as your department shrinks and you alone are being asked to manage more. No longer is the medical staff coordinator the collector and verifier of provider's credentials. The medical staff coordinator (and in some instances, secretary) has advanced to become a medical services professional who also manages areas such as patient satisfaction, physician recruitment and employment, quality monitoring and performance improvement, corporate compliance, accreditation management, continuing medical education, and the list goes on. In some hospitals, the C-suite has recognized the value of the MSP and moved the professional into top management. Advanced education and certification is important in moving any professional career forward. It is also extremely important to take care of yourself.

Wearing many hats takes its toll. What we do on a day-to-day basis is stressful, it is tiring and many days we go home exhausted. Taking time to take care of ourselves actually improves our ability to perform and function in our jobs. It restores our reserves in dealing with people. What can you do to add to your “reserves”?

1. **First recognize the need** – It is not a sign of weakness or selfishness to take care of oneself. To be effective, know yourself.
2. **Care for your physical well-being** – Take the time to exercise, be sure you eat well, get plenty of sleep and pay attention to signs your body gives to you. Exercise is a stress reliever.
3. **Exercise and feed your brain** – Take the time to read, learn something new, expand your mind, and exercise your brain as well as your body.
4. **Find your Spiritual dimension** – Be aware and in touch with what calms you and gives you peace.
5. **Find that balance** of taking care of your body, your mind and your spirit and make it a part of your everyday so it becomes habit.

Whether our job or our day-to-day lives, it is not so much what we do but how we do it that leads to excellence and effectiveness in our jobs and our daily lives.

Brief Update of NAMSS Activities

Submitted by Deb Carter, MS, CPMSM, CPCS

NAMSS has been working on defining a better process for the collection and verification of credentials. This has been a top priority for NAMSS in 2011. A conceptual model has been developed and is called "The Ideal Credentialing Solution". It was derived from the identification of areas where health technology can assist MSPs in developing a process for better connectivity to the multitude of sources that provide verified data. An element of verification felt to be revolutionary to the credentialing process would be a complete and accurate affiliation and practice history. The creation of such a "registry" would require complete transparency from all hospitals. NAMSS plans to engage hospital leaders in this conversation.

NAMSS representatives have been providing medical services awareness and expertise by meeting with key policymakers such as representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Veteran Affairs, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and others such as the American Medical Association Organized Medical Staff Section. NAMSS officers have also met with several congressional offices. NAMSS has also been invited to attend a "Thought Leaders" session hosted by the National Association for Healthcare Quality, along with other national associations to discuss "Innovations in Professionalism and Ethical Issues".

NAMSS state leaders identified the top six challenges faced by the states:

- Membership growth and retention
- Leadership growth and retention
- Advocacy for the profession
- Certification achievement
- Attendance at meetings
- Legislative processes/issues



The first three were discussed in detail at the April Leadership Council and NAMSS is certainly making headway with both advocacy and legislative processes/issues by the many contacts and informative sessions that have taken place with the various health care organizations at the national level.

Putting the Rumor to Rest

Legislative Review for Access to Provider Peer Review Files



This from Randall Manning at the Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine: October 31, 2011.

The Board is NOT seeking access to peer review files. In fact, the Board is making a significant effort to avoid access to peer review, despite the fact that there are times when HR and credentialing files might be of value in an investigation. The Board representatives told that to the Public Right to Know subcommittee of the legislature, which supports such access. The Board is working on draft language this week. Gordon Smith and Andy MacLean are both involved.

Randall will inform Allison Meyer, MeAMSS legislative liaison, as soon as there is real language and some indication that it will actually be in a bill.

Ho, Ho, Ho & Bah, Humbug

Let's take a quick poll. How many of you are feeling jolly right about now? You know. Ho, ho, ho and all that stuff. My guess is that many of you would use words like rushed or exhausted to describe yourselves. Is it just possible that the thought of another crazy holiday season is something that you'd really rather avoid?

Before anyone accuses me of being a Scrooge, let me assure you that I love Christmas. It's a wonderful time of family, faith and fun. But, it wasn't always that way. Awhile back it had become a chore. A race to see if you could get all of the tasks done before the deadline. In some ways it was harder than anything we do in our jobs.

What brought the fun back into the holidays? Mostly it was a rethinking and rediscovery of what was valuable. You might find it worthwhile to consider changing the way you handle the holidays.

You can start by figuring out how much money you spent on gifts last year. Then compare that amount to your total income. If you spent more than one percent of your after tax income on holiday gifts you could have a problem. That means that if your income is \$40,000 you'd spend \$400. And that number is fairly realistic. The average family spends about \$450 for holiday gifts.

Perhaps it will help if we look at it from another angle. How much of your life are you giving up in order to buy those presents? To find out simply divide the amount you're spending by your hourly pay. That's how long you'll need to work to pay for those gifts. In reality it's about 20% longer because of taxes, but you get the idea.

For instance, if you're making \$14 per hour, it would take you 28 hours to earn enough to buy \$400 in gifts. Don't forget to add the time you spend shopping for all these goodies. That'll probably bring the total up around 35 to 40 hours of your life that's consumed by gifts.

And it's not just money. The typical schedule for the holidays is, well, overly full. Every moment seems to be filled with a party, potluck, family gathering or some chore that seems essential for holiday happiness. Taken all together it's easy to lose the joy of the season.

Now that everyone is in a 'bah, humbug' mood, let's consider some alternatives. The first step is to decide what's really important to your family. Take a little time and consider your happiest holiday memories. If you're at all

romantic, they probably include fireplaces, snow and the smiles of your loved ones.

We'll use that as a starting point. Your memories can tell you what's really important. We want to focus on that. We're going to try to identify the things that aren't important and then eliminate them so that there's more time and energy for the things that are important.

Most of you will have a schedule that's full of holiday parties. And, yes, they can be fun. But having some slack time in the schedule can be more important. At first you will be reluctant to turn down invitations without having a good excuse. But, soon you'll begin to tell people that turning down the volume on the holidays is improving your life. You'll be surprised that many will say that they understand and some will even display a little jealousy!

If, however, your fondest memories are of parties, then by all means party on! Look for something else to eliminate. The goal is to do the things that bring you joy.

The next change you might want to consider is to stop exchanging gifts with friends. To avoid embarrassment, talk with them weeks before Christmas and tell them that you want to simplify. You'll find that most will be relieved. You'll be solving a problem for them. You see, they didn't know what to buy for you, either!

You'll also discover a bonus. After the holidays you won't be completely worn out. And you won't have to work extra hard to pay for holiday binge buying. So there will be time and energy to enjoy leisurely visits with your friends after the holidays.

Next start simplifying with your family. Don't stop giving gifts completely. Rather, explore giving simpler, more meaningful gifts. You'll find that grandparents would rather have a 5x7 framed picture of the kids. And it doesn't need to be a studio portrait. An enlargement of a recent snapshot will do fine.

Out of state relatives present unique problems and opportunities. When you don't see people often it's hard to know what they need or want. One thing that you can be sure that they'll enjoy is an audio or video tape of your family. It's a great way to see the kids grow up and for cousins to share the highlights of their year.



There's another option for friends and relatives that live far

away. Call them now before they go shopping for you. Agree to not send presents, but to use part of the money you'll save to call each other on a planned, regular basis in the new year. Another tie in the closet won't add much to your life. Sharing stories with your sister frequently will keep you closer together.

Perhaps these suggestions won't work in your family. But if you consider your holiday memories, you should get some clues as to what types of gifts will work for you.

Now none of these ideas is particularly earth shaking. It's all pretty commonsense. Mostly it's a question of what you want to do with your life. You can choose to do exactly what you did last year. That can mean a chaotic holiday and a credit card hangover that lasts until next summer. Or you can take control now, eliminate some non-essentials and have a much happier holiday. Hope your choice brings a wonderful holiday.

www.thelaboroflove.com/forum/dollar/24.html



Criminal Background Checks of the Organized Medical Staff

Did you know it is not an accreditation requirement or CMS Conditions of Participation to screen the medical staff for criminal or credit history? Although many consultants and surveyors recommend the medical staff office screen applicants for criminal and credit histories, this is based on a personal preference or bias and not on any accreditation standard. There are limited circumstances where checks are required by state law, but those laws are narrowly defined and often affect employees and not members of the hospital or surgery center medical staff.

“Some consulting firms and security agencies promote “passing” criminal background and even credit checks as a requirement for medical staff membership. Obtaining meaningful criminal background information would necessitate verification with federal and every state’s criminal justice systems, and may or may not be required under state law. Approximately half of the states’ licensing agencies have authority to conduct a criminal background

check as part of the medical licensing process, and some licensing agencies are required to carry out criminal background checks, making the process at the medical staff level in those states redundant.”

Not only are these checks voluntary in most cases but their scope and implementation should be carefully drawn. Borrowing from the American Medical Association’s *Physician’s Guide to Medical Staff Organization Bylaws* (Fourth Edition):

Neither the Joint Commission nor AAAHC standards require medical staffs to establish criminal or credit background requirements. NCQA does not require background checks as part of the credentialing process for provider panels. As a result, there are no standards for how background checks of this sort should be conducted. If you do perform checks, great care should be taken to comply with both federal and state law regarding notice and disclosure to the investigated person of information derived from background checks. For example, see the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, which requires obtaining the written consent of an applicant before obtaining credit history and disclosure to the applicant if an adverse decision is made based in whole or in part on a credit report.

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) provides a summary of state law and pending legislation addressing background checks by state medical licensing boards. You may view this summary of state laws at the FSMB site: www.fsmb.org/pdf/grpol_criminal_background_checks.pdf.

If you use a background search service, you are well-advised to look at what you are actually purchasing and whether the company is following the fair credit reporting laws as applicable. Your organization may be required to fulfill the FCRA as well as possible state law that further protects consumers. For example, you may need to notify the applicant about negative information revealed by a background check and provide him or her the opportunity to contest the information. Also, be prepared to outline your decision making through a policy that addresses what happens if negative information arises from a credit or criminal background check. For example, consider defining what negative information poses a potential threat to patient care or safety or other justifiable basis for disciplinary action. Consider this fact—if you take a formal action based on a negative report, you could end up in court explaining your actions.

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- Any photography submitted must identify individuals pictured, and nature of photograph.
- Provide all details regarding events or announcements, including location and exact address, date, time, contact, and applicable telephone, fax, e-mail, and Web.
- Data submitted should be concise and not exceed 250 words.
- Please make sure you get permission for any article submissions.

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