



# MITSS NEWS

SUMMER 2004

*To Support Healing and Restore Hope*

## **JIM CONWAY TO CHAIR MITSS THIRD ANNUAL DINNER AND FUNDRAISER**

MITSS will be holding its third Annual Dinner and Fundraiser at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Thursday evening, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004, from 6 to 10 p.m. We are pleased and honored to announce that Jim Conway will be chairing this very special event. He will also be serving as a keynote speaker.

Jim Conway serves as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and is President of the hospice, Healthcare Dimensions. He holds a Master of Science degree from Lesley College, Cambridge, MA.

Jim serves as a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts Hospital Association and Chairman, Clinical Issues Advisory Council of the Massachusetts Hospital Association. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Dana-Farber / Children's Hospital Cancer Care, Board of



*James B. Conway*

Directors. Jim is the 2001 winner of the first Individual Leadership Award in Patient Safety by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). A Diplomat of the American College of Healthcare Executives, he received their 1999 Massachusetts Regents Award as Healthcare Executive of the Year.

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## **The MITSS Story: Full Disclosure, Apology, and Support**

*by Frederick van Pelt, MD*

Over the past several months, MITSS has had the opportunity to share its story with a variety of audiences. These have included presentations to national and international patient safety leaders, a presentation to the lay public, and interviews in a respected national newspaper and in a local television broadcast. All of the engagements powerfully addressed the initial adverse event, the disclosure, the apology, and the need for improved support services for those affected by medical trauma. The MITSS story is dramatic on many levels and has broad appeal to those directly affected by adverse events, the healthcare consumer, healthcare providers and patient safety leaders. The presentation venue plays a strong role in shaping the interpretation of the MITSS message, and MITSS recognizes the challenge of delivering its message to a variety of audiences in different settings while remaining focused and true to its mission. While at first pass it appears that audiences have different interpretations of the impact that MITSS has on patient safety, the common denominator for all is the need for healthcare to embrace a policy of full disclosure and apology.

Linda Kenney and Rick van Pelt presented the MITSS story at the National Patient Safety Foundation Congress in Boston on May 5, 2004 to a capacity audience of national and international patient safety leaders. As in previous presentations, the details of the adverse event and the subsequent developments leading to the creation of MITSS had a tremendous impact on the audience. Of particular interest, however, was the unsettling observation on part of a number in the audience that institutions and organizations recognized as

leaders in patient safety were just scratching the surface of the overall patient safety challenge. The presentation highlighted the chasm that remains between efforts to prevent adverse events and initiatives to disclose and to manage adverse events effectively and compassionately when they do occur.

Linda Kenney participated as a member of an expert panel with Lucian Leape and Connie Crowley Ganser at the Ford Hall Forum titled *Medical Errors and Patient Safety: Where Are We Now?*, on May 11, 2004. The audience was diverse and included those affected by medical trauma, the lay public, healthcare providers and patient safety leaders. While the discussion addressed a number of related topics, recurrent focus was placed on the challenge of consistently implementing a policy of full disclosure and apology. The audience's engagement on this topic with the panel underscored the relationship between the absence of full disclosure and apology to the destructive sense of isolation and anger on part of patients and families that can lead to legal action as their only perceived alternative.

Linda Kenney and Rick van Pelt were featured in the Wall Street Journal and on the WCVB Channel 5 News, on May 18 and 26, 2004, respectively. The coverage focused on the adverse event and the role that full disclosure and apology played in averting legal action, suggesting that adopting this type of intervention might reduce the number of malpractice suits that have hit crisis proportions of late. While MITSS intentionally separates its mission from any medical legal activity, this coverage again identified the core theme of disclosure and apology across healthcare audiences.

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## **First Volunteer Training Held**

*by Monique Morimoto-Flaherty*

Since its incorporation MITSS has served as an active advocate to promote the development and implementation of support services for patients, families and clinicians involved in adverse medical events. MITSS has traditionally focused on positioning support services to those affected after disclosure and apology have occurred, and this notion has evolved. Although it might appear that support services are distinct and subsequent to the process of full disclosure and apology, they are in fact intimately intertwined. The most difficult contact point between patient, family, clinician and institution occurs at the point of disclosing an adverse medical event. It is a critical time to be connected and supported emotionally, and it is the critical time where the relationship of trust between patient, family and provider is reinforced. To attempt full disclosure and apology in isolation, in the absence of an organized support system that captures these vital elements, is to ensure its failure. Similarly, to create an organized support system in the absence of full disclosure and apology is to guarantee its ineffectiveness as it will be limited by an insurmountable boundary of mistrust.

All of the MITSS presentations this year have demonstrated diverse audiences grappling with different interpretations of the adverse medical event and the importance of full disclosure and apology. Whether the benefit is perceived to be a reduction in the number of medical malpractice lawsuits or the ability to improve patient care by implementing support services and by completing the patient safety improvement loop, the core challenge is to implement a policy of full disclosure and apology that is encapsulated in a robust support system. It is the foundation upon which a culture of patient safety and doing the right thing is formed, and an objective that MITSS embraces with passion.

MITSS held its first ever Hotline Volunteer Training Program on Saturday June 19<sup>th</sup> in Hopedale, MA. This pilot program, skillfully facilitated by Linda Standley, LMHC, was attended by several Board members including Dr. Rick van Pelt, Dorothy McCabe, RN, Janet Bean and Susan LaFarge, Ph.D., the MITSS Executive Committee, and a participant from the very first MITSS Support and Healing Group. Linda brought her excellent skills and experience in training volunteers for rape crisis hotlines and other intervention programs to create a dynamic, informative and experiential program. We had fun, too!

The training included information about the emotional and psychological impacts that trauma caused by adverse medical events can have on people both directly and indirectly affected by such an event. There was a lively discussion of and role-play around the use of basic listening skills needed to support a person who might be calling the MITSS hotline. Knowledge and facility with these skills is critical to ensure that MITSS hotline volunteers provide the kind of support that callers to MITSS are looking for.

Linda emphasized that each caller to MITSS has experienced an event that has been traumatic, devastating and life changing. As MITSS volunteers we must be able to create a safe, caring space where the callers feel heard and acknowledged. We also must be able to provide information about MITSS and other resources available to people who have experienced a medical error. Future training will continue to deepen the material and a resource book will provide volunteers with all the info we need to provide callers this first critical link to healing. We came away from this experience enriched and excited about the next trainings, to the vital importance of the support that only MITSS provides and to working on the MITSS hotline. Thank you to all who participated and to Linda for a job well done.

**LINDA KENNEY AND  
FREDERICK VAN PELT, MD  
PRESENT AT SIXTH ANNUAL  
NPSF CONGRESS IN BOSTON**

*by Winifred Nee Tobin*

The National Patient Safety Foundation's (NPSF) Sixth Annual Patient Safety Congress was recently held in Boston at the Hines Convention Center from May 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup>. Linda Kenney, MITSS Founder and President, Frederick van Pelt, M.D., MITSS Board of Directors, and Roxanne Goeltz, Co-founder and President of Consumers Advancing Patient Safety, presented a very special plenary session entitled Patients, Family, Clinician Partnerships that Change Culture: The MITSS Story. ”



*Linda Kenney and Dr. van Pelt*

Ms. Goeltz began the session by addressing the capacity audience of congress participants relating her own personal experience - the untimely death of her brother, her family's struggle to find answers, their frustration with the lack of support



*Frederick van Pelt, MD*

services available, and her ultimate commitment to patient safety initiatives. She then exited the stage, setting the scene for the chronological unfolding of the MITSS story.

Dr. van Pelt appeared at the podium, donned in a white laboratory coat, and began to relate the events of that fateful day in November of 1999 when Linda Kenney experienced a severe medical trauma. Interspersed with Dr. van Pelt's personal recollections of that day, Linda appeared on a large screen in silhouette speaking of her experiences from the patient's point of view. As their personal stories unfolded from the date of the event up until 6 months later when they ultimately met for coffee, congress participants were painted an intimate portrait of a patient's struggle to heal from medical trauma, both physically and emotionally, as well as a physician's commitment to "doing the right thing" and reaching out to his patient.

At the point in their stories when they finally met for coffee and began their journey of healing, Linda appeared from behind the curtain and joined Dr. van Pelt on stage in a powerfully symbolic demonstration of patient and physician unity. Together, they spoke about the formation of MITSS as an organization and the vital need for support services for patients, family members, as well as clinicians, in case of adverse events.

Their presentation was followed by a rousing standing ovation from the capacity crowd. Ms. Goeltz rejoined the discussion, and a short question and answer period followed including commentary from the diverse group of nationally represented health care workers and advocates.



*Dr. van Pelt, Roxanne Goeltz,  
and Linda Kenney*

MITSS has received much positive feedback from the NPSF congress, and, as a result, our commitment to support healing and restore hope has been further strengthened.

## **MITSS Third Annual Dinner Jim Conway to Chair**

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He serves as an Adjunct Lecturer on Health Care Management at the Harvard School of Public Health. Jim is also the recipient of the 1999 Lesley College Graduate School of Management Alumni Community Service Award. Jim serves as an Advisor to the Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors and also serves as a Distinguished Advisor to the National Patient Safety Foundation and is a past member of the NPSF Board of Directors. He Chairs the AHA Quest for Quality Award Committee and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay Fund Raising Campaign for the Health Care Industry and serves on the JCAHO Sentinel Event Alert Advisory Group. He is also a Member of the Executive Committee of MASCO (Medical, Academic & Scientific Community Organization), and a longtime Board member of the Boston Ronald McDonald House.

We are proud that Jim Conway will be joining us for this major fundraiser. If you would like further information regarding the MITSS Annual Dinner, would like to become a sponsor, or would like to order tickets, contact Linda Kenney or Winnie Tobin at 1-888-36MITSS or visit our website at [www.mitss.org](http://www.mitss.org). We look forward to seeing you on October 21<sup>st</sup>!!!

## MITSS THERAPEUTIC EDUCATION GROUP

MITSS will be holding another Therapeutic Education Group for patients and family members who are experiencing the emotional fallout from a medically induced trauma scheduled to begin in the fall. This group is intended to assist affected individuals in processing their experiences in a positive manner and allowing themselves the freedom to move forward. This group will be led by Dr. Jean Bellows, a psychologist with thirty years of experience in trauma. Dr. Bellows has also facilitated our other therapeutic education groups.

### **What is Medically Induced Trauma?**

Medically Induced Trauma is an unexpected outcome due to a medical/surgical procedure, medical/Systems error and other medical circumstances that affect the overall well being of an individual and/or family members.

This group will be held on Tuesdays for six consecutive weeks.

**DATE:** Tuesday, September 28, 2004

**TIME:** 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** TBA

For enrollment in this group or if you would like more information, please call MITSS at 1-888-36MITSS.



## ***MITSS Board of Directors***

*Janet G. Bean, MBA*

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# Meet Our New Board Members

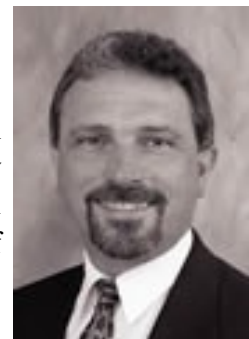


## **JANET BEAN, MBA**

Janet Bean is a Finance and Compliance Manager for a division of Bank of America. She has been employed in various management positions within Bank of America and its predecessors for more than 10 years. Janet graduated with a BA in Math and Economics from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester and earned her MBA from Babson College in Wellesley. Prior to joining our Board, Janet has been a tireless volunteer for MITSS since the winter of 2003.

## **FRANK FEDERICO, R.Ph.**

Frank Federico is a Loss Prevention and Patient Safety Specialist and manages the Office Practice Evaluation Program at Risk Management Foundation (RMF) of the Harvard Affiliated Institutions in Cambridge. Frank has worked in numerous and varied capacities in the areas of pharmacy and related patient safety issues. He is a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions and the Wharton Executive Program for Directors of Pharmacy.



## **JOHN A. FROMSON, M.D.**

Dr. Fromson is Vice President for Medical Affairs of the Massachusetts Medical Society and Physician Editor of the New England Journal of Medicine's online CareerCenter Resource Center. His primary clinical and research activities have centered on issues relating to physician health and patient safety. A graduate of New York Medical College, Dr. Fromson interned at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and completed a residency in psychiatry and a fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry in the Dept. of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School. He is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

## **DOROTHY UPSON McCABE, RN, MS, M.Ed**

Dorothy McCabe currently serves as the Director of Nursing and Career Services at the Massachusetts Nurses Association. Dorothy is an experienced nurse educator and manager, having worked for many years in the areas of quality improvement and education of registered nurses in the acute care setting. Dorothy received a Masters Degree of Medical-Surgical Nursing from Boston University, a Masters of Education in Counseling from Rhode Island College, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Boston College.

