



# MITSS Newsletter

## MITSS Celebrates Its 8th Annual Dinner and Fundraiser



A capacity crowd turned out on Thursday evening, November 12th, to celebrate and support the MITSS 8th Annual Dinner and Fundraiser. The newly renovated Boston Marriott Copley Place proved to be a vibrant and festive setting for this fabulous event. The Annual Dinner was generously underwritten by CRICO/RMF, and serving as this year's Co-Chairs were Corinne Broderick, EVP of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and Dale Lodge, President and CEO of Winchester Hospital.

Following a lively cocktail hour complete with our signature theme baskets and some wonderful raffle items, the group moved to the ballroom for a moving and inspirational program. Boston TV news reporter, Kelley Tuthill of WCVB, kicked off the speaking portion of the evening by sharing some very personal reflections following her recent battle with breast cancer. She spoke about her intimate interactions with the healthcare system, and she noted that, most importantly, it was the human touch which helped her to keep going throughout her difficult journey.

MITSS Executive Director, Linda Kenney, then introduced a short video created for MITSS by Jing Mu. The film featured stories from patients as well as clinicians and highlighted the organization's growth and influence over the past number of

years. Many in the hushed audience were brought to tears as patients and care providers courageously recounted their struggles following adverse medical events. Dave deBronkart, known to many as E-Patient Dave, remarked, "My wife and I were deeply moved, both seeing people deal openly with the most difficult of events, and out of that to move on to create a better world for the next person. Failures and human errors do happen. To respond openly and constructively is inspiring."

After a lovely meal, it was time for the highly anticipated live auction. Kelley Tuthill took to the podium and challenged the audience to bid on four fantastic prizes – live music with the incomparable Winiker Orchestra, a three day retreat to Martha's Vineyard, a cornucopia filled with Mass. State lottery scratch tickets, and a Red Sox package featuring a tour of Fenway Park topped off with four Green Monster seats. When the dust was settled, thousands of additional dollars were raised in support of MITSS programs.

In an interesting twist this year, voting for the Second Annual HOPE Award resulted in a tie. Sanjay Malaviya, CEO of rL Solutions – the 2009 HOPE Award Sponsor, presented the prestigious award to Patty Skolnik of Colorado Citizens for

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**MITSS**  
 Medically Induced Trauma  
 Support Services

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Accountability; and, Susan Scott, Myra McCoig, and Laura Hirschinger of the University of Missouri Health System. Ms. Skolnik was rewarded for her work in founding CCA after the tragic death of her son, Michael. CCA is a grassroots patient safety organization that has provided support and resources to thousands of individuals and families nationwide since 2005. In her acceptance speech, Ms. Skolnik dedicated the HOPE Award to Michael.

Sue Scott, Myra McCoig, and Laura Hirschinger were recognized for their important work with the forYOU Team, a comprehensive approach for providing emotional peer support to clinicians, beginning immediately after critical events. Ms. Scott spoke for the entire team at the University of Missouri Health System, graciously accepting the award and stressing the importance of supporting clinicians in cases of adverse events. (For more information on the CCA and the forYOU Program, see accompanying articles.)

Sue Sheridan was next on the agenda with a memorable keynote address. Ms. Sheridan is the President & Co-Founder of Consumers Advancing Patient Safety (CAPS). She was also recently named to *Modern Healthcare's List of Top 25 Women in Healthcare* for 2009. It was by way of this recent honor, and through a series of other coincidences, that she has finally begun a dialogue with the hospitals where her son and husband experienced devastating adverse events. She spoke eloquently of her vision of hope – hope that she and others will continue to heal. She praised “the normal people who are willing to imagine and not give up hope,” and introduced a short film highlighting the work of the WHO Patients for Patient Safety Global “Champions.”

Linda Kenney wrapped up the occasion with a vigorous call to action. In keeping with the event theme of “Awareness is the Key,” she noted that there are still many patients, family members, and clinicians suffering in silence and isolation. She called upon the audience members to do their part and take the MITSS message back to their organizations and communities. MITSS patient and family brochures were distributed to everyone in attendance as she encouraged the group to utilize MITSS as a vital resource. Finally, Linda announced the release of a white paper on clinician support entitled “*Disclosure and Apology...What's Missing? Advancing Programs that Support Clinicians,*” and everyone was provided a copy of this important report.

It was a glorious, poignant, and thought-provoking event. Tom Augello, Multimedia Editor and Producer at CRICO/RMF, raved, “Best MITSS Dinner yet! Great use of video and award presentations to tell compelling human stories behind the MITSS mission.”

Putting it all in perspective, Jack McCarthy, President and CEO at CRICO/RMF, noted, “The success of this year’s MITSS Dinner underscores the growing recognition of the need to support patients, families, and providers impacted by medically induced trauma. The MITSS patient and provider stories are both a call to action and inspirational. As patients and providers, we all have a stake in helping MITSS to achieve its essential mission to promote a more compassionate, people-centered healthcare system.” We couldn’t have captured the spirit of the event better ourselves. See you all next year!!!

facebook

To see exciting videos and photos from the dinner, visit our Facebook Page or YouTube Channel at [www.youtube.com/user/MITSSUtube](http://www.youtube.com/user/MITSSUtube)

YouTube



MITSS Planning Committee

“The Massachusetts Nurses Association congratulates the MITSS Annual Dinner Planning Committee on its planning and implementing of the MITSS Annual Dinner at the Marriott Copley on November 12, 2009. The timely crafting of the event from the pre-dinner functions, the actual dinner, outstanding speakers, and timely conclusion should serve as a model for all organizations. It is an honor to be associated with MITSS.”

Dorothy McCabe – MNA  
MITSS Board Member

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we enter into another holiday season, I am reminded of all that I have to be thankful for. I am extremely grateful for the individuals and organizations who give to MITSS throughout the year. Your generosity allows us to continue our work of *“Supporting Healing and Restoring Hope”* to patients, families, and clinicians following adverse medical events and/or medical errors. Our 8th Annual Dinner and Fundraiser was a smashing success due to the support and hard work of our sponsors, board members, staff, and volunteers. I cannot adequately express how grateful I am for all you have given throughout the year, but I will try anyway – THANK YOU, THANK YOU!



For those of you who were not able to attend our Annual Dinner, I acknowledged that this past November marked the 10th anniversary of the incident that nearly took my life. That event served as the catalyst for the creation of MITSS. The healthcare landscape has changed dramatically since 1999, and I am proud to say that MITSS has had a hand in some of that change. However, we still have a long way to go! This year's dinner theme was *“Awareness is the Key,”* as it has become increasingly clear that there are still many patients and family members out there suffering in silence and isolation. Many healthcare institutions, as well, are not aware of the devastation these events can cause for their clinicians. They may be unsure about how to support their staff through what can be an extraordinarily difficult time.

We pledge that this year we will work even harder than ever to raise awareness, but we cannot do it alone! We need your help to spread the word! Please pass along information about MITSS – what we do, how we do it, and who we help. We have created an 8 minute video so folks can see for themselves what we have to offer. Visit the MITSS YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/MITSSUtube> and click on *“Continuing to Support Healing.”* (We will also have it posted to our website home page in the upcoming month.) We have also released a white paper, *“Disclosure and Apology... What's Missing? Advancing Programs that Support Clinicians,”* a comprehensive report on clinician support. The paper can be downloaded from [http://www.mitss.org/MITSS\\_WhatsMissing.pdf](http://www.mitss.org/MITSS_WhatsMissing.pdf).

Help us to support the people whose lives have been forever changed by an adverse medical event by including MITSS as a resource on your website; displaying our brochures in waiting areas; and, scheduling an in-service training for your staff. If you would like a supply of brochures, a list of tips for staff on how to support patients and their families, or to schedule an in-service training with a MITSS staff member, please contact us at 617-232-0090 or email me directly at [lkenney@mitss.org](mailto:lkenney@mitss.org).

If you are still wondering how you or your organization can do more to make people aware of MITSS and the emotional impact to clinicians, patients, and families, let's talk. I have no doubt we could come up with something together, and I would love to hear from you.

Once again, thank you for your continued support! We couldn't do our work without it.

Happy Holidays,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda".

Linda K. Kenney



Nancy Ridley  
Director (ret.), Betsy Lehman Center



Kelley Tuthill  
WCVB- TV Channel 5



MITSS Hope Award Recipients with rL  
Solutions' Sanjay Malaviya

# HOPE AWARD WINNER

## University of Missouri Health System forYOU Team



forYOU Team Members  
Myra McCoig, Sue Scott, and Laura Hirschinger

MITSS Annual  
**HOPE** Award  
Honoring Outstanding People Everywhere  
who have furthered the MITSS mission of supporting healing and restoring hope

MITSS congratulates the **forYOU Team** from the University of Missouri Health System in Columbia, Missouri, as our Co-Recipient of the Second Annual HOPE Award. The forYOU Team is a peer to peer support network designed to address the unique needs of healthcare second victims experiencing the emotional aftermath of adverse medical events.

In 2006, in response to several clinical events, the University of Missouri Health System (MUHS) began to take a closer look at the plight of the “second victim”; that is, the healthcare provider involved in an adverse event who is emotionally traumatized. An experienced physician at MUHS actually referred to the period following an adverse event as “the darkest hour of my clinical career.” Clinical interviews with 31 self-proclaimed “second victims” were conducted, and, based on their feedback, the forYOU Team was launched. Junior team members have the training to meet the unique needs of each provider and support them through the beginning stages of healing. Team mentors are individuals with formal crisis training, such as chaplains, Employee Assistance Programs, clinical psychologists, patient safety and risk management experts.

Susan Scott, forYOU Team Coordinator; Myra McCoig, Mentor; and Laura Hirschinger, Facility Lead, accepted the HOPE Award on behalf of the entire team at the MITSS Annual Dinner. We later spoke with Sue Scott and asked her to expand on a couple of things about their groundbreaking program.

**MITSS:** *What are your thoughts on winning the HOPE Award?*

**Sue Scott:** *It is truly an honor to be recognized by MITSS, the world’s pioneer of patient, family and clinician support, in this manner. Winning the HOPE Award means so much to our 51 member peer support group, the forYOU team. It provides us with a momentum to keep moving forward in understanding the second victim phenomenon and designing effective institutional interventional strategies to mitigate the silent suffering that second victims are experiencing.*

**MITSS:** *What is the most important thing that you have learned along your journey?*

**Sue Scott:** *There are actually two key points that we identified in our research that have been significant ‘lessons learned’ for the deployment of the forYOU team. First, each individual second victim will have their own unique needs for support and guidance (even when an entire team is involved in an unanticipated clinical event). The second intriguing finding is that second victims seem to follow a predictable recovery trajectory of six distinct stages. Understanding these stages and possible interventional strategies for each stage allows the peer supporter to individualize an interventional strategy.*

**MITSS:** *What do you envision for your program for the future?*

**Sue Scott:** *It is critically important that we ensure that our institutional support strategies are effective. In the spirit of performance improvement, an important step will be to continually monitor the impact and effectiveness of our designed interventions to ensure that they are meeting the needs of our second victims as intended and also monitor for any unintended consequences. One way to evaluate program effectiveness is to deploy similar support programs in numerous healthcare organizations across the country and perhaps in other countries by formalizing a learning collaborative. We could then monitor second victim feedback as well as other forms of performance measures, such as staff satisfaction, retention rates, etc. in different hospital settings and environments from a broader perspective.*

Congratulations again to Ms. Scott, Ms. McCoig, Ms. Hirschinger, and the entire forYOU Team on this hard earned recognition!

If you would like more information about the forYOU team, please contact Sue Scott at (573) 882-1974 or visit [www.muhealth.org/secondvictim](http://www.muhealth.org/secondvictim).

# HOPE AWARD WINNER

## Patty Skolnik – Colorado Citizens for Accountability



Patty Skolnik

MITSS Annual  
**HOPE** Award  
Honoring Outstanding People Everywhere  
who have furthered the MITSS mission of supporting healing and restoring hope

MITSS is proud to recognize **Patty Skolnik** as the Co-Recipient of the Second Annual HOPE Award. Ms. Skolnik was rewarded for her work with the Colorado Citizens for Accountability (CCA). She founded this organization along with her husband, David, in 2005 following a 32-month medical nightmare which resulted in the death of her only son, Michael. When asked about the most important thing she has learned over the past four years, Ms. Skolnik replied, “You can suffer a great loss, but you have a choice as to how to handle it. Anger and grief has a place, but taking that and transforming it into a solution is the best healer and the best reward for everyone.”

Colorado Citizens for Accountability (CCA) is a patient safety organization dedicated to providing support and resources to individuals and families nationwide. CCA has “taken off like a shot out of a canon largely due to Patty’s determination,” according to Judith Ham, President and CEO of CP Colorado. “Never before has Colorado seen a patient safety group that has generated the amount of momentum and performed as successfully as CCA, now listing 3,000 supporters and growing,” Ms. Ham added.

Under Patty Skolnik’s stewardship, CCA sets its goals as the following:

- To increase consumer education activities so they take an active role in their health, healthcare, and in the healthcare reform process.
- To convene medical professionals, consumers, lawyers, insurers, hospitals, and legislators to discuss possible solutions.
- To increase efficiency and transparency regarding the safety and quality of healthcare in the Colorado healthcare system.
- To improve navigation of the healthcare system by all Coloradans.
- To strengthen relationships with local organizations.

In pursuit of these goals, CCA plans to provide medical advocacy training; organize and conduct community presentations; produce/disperse personal patient medical journals; and, expand services offered to the public to include case management activities.

Ms. Skolnik reflected on her vision for the future when she said, “Citizens for Patient Safety and Colorado Citizens for Accountability will continue to engage patients and providers to help them heal, to continue to pass legislation for transparency nationally, and to learn from errors so that they may be shared for educational purposes.”

When asked to sum up her feelings about winning the HOPE Award, Ms. Skolnik responded, “It was such an honor to receive the HOPE Award for the work I started because of the loss of my son. Now to be able to work not only with patients but with medical professionals as partners to restore hope and help fix the system for others is what Michael would have wanted. I am humbled by this award.” Congratulations, Patty Skolnik, for this much deserved honor.

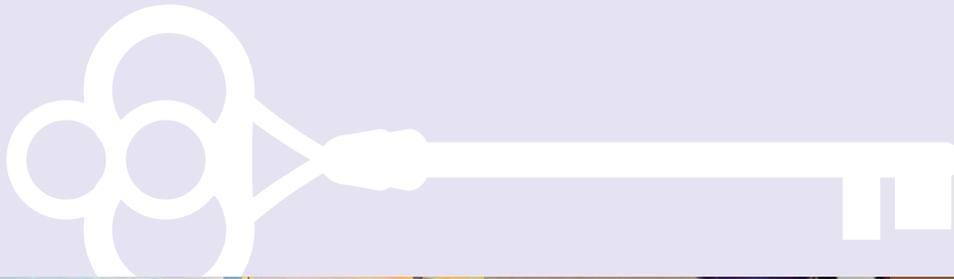
If you would like more information about the Colorado Citizens for Accountability, contact Patty Skolnik at (303) 226-5526 or e-mail to [patty@citizensforpatientsafety.org](mailto:patty@citizensforpatientsafety.org).

*“You can suffer a great loss, but you have a choice as to how to handle it. Anger and grief has a place, but taking that and transforming it into a solution is the best healer and the best reward for everyone.”*

# MITSS LENDING LIBRARY

Over the years, we have accumulated quite a few interesting books on our shelves, so we have decided to set up a Lending Library for patients, families, clinicians, and anyone else who may be interested in borrowing a book. The titles are too numerous to list here, but general categories include patient safety (*Putting Patients First, Understanding Patient Safety*); personal stories (*Josie's Story, Mom's Marijuana*); dealing with trauma (*On Grief and Grieving, Working it Through*);

leadership (*On Leadership, Moments in Leadership*); self-help guides (*How to Survive a Doctor's Care, You the Smart Patient*); and, non-profit management (*Good to Great in the Social Sector*), just to name a few. If you would like to take out a book, or are interested in a specific topic, just give us a call at (617) 232-0090. Or, the next time you are in the office, feel free to peruse our resource library.



MITSS Annual Dinner Leadership Committee



Gina Cravedi & Bo Winiker



Sue Sheridan & Jeff Cooper

## LINDA KENNEY TO SERVE AS CO-CHAIR OF NPSF PRE-CONGRESS DAY

### Community Engagement from the Patient and Family Perspective

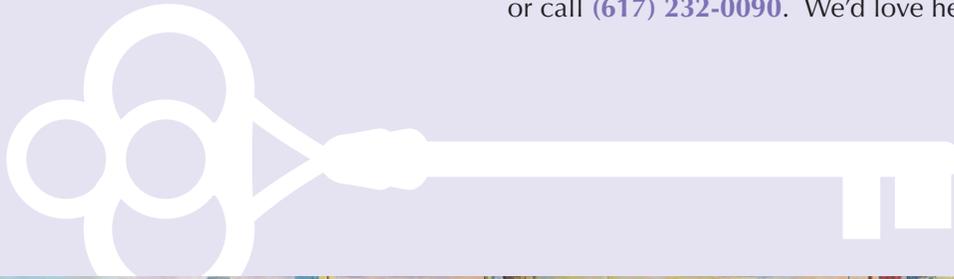
MITSS Executive Director, **Linda Kenney**, and Kathy Leonhardt, Patient Safety Officer, Medical Director, Care Management at Aurora Health Care in Michigan, will be serving as Co-Chairs for the National Patient Safety Foundation's **Community Engagement from the Patient and Family Perspective Day** on **May 17th, 2010**. This full day of learning is a pre-congress program developed to provide models for partnership for the community, patient and family

representatives, and healthcare workers. The NPSF full Congress will follow from May 18 through the 19th, 2010. This year's congress, entitled **Getting Results: Solutions that Work**, will be held in Orlando, Florida, at the Gaylord Palms Hotel & Convention Center. For more information, visit [www.npsf.org](http://www.npsf.org). Hope to see you in sunny Florida in the spring!

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

MITSS has a couple of slots open for **patients and family members** on our **Community Outreach Committee**. This is a volunteer committee whose purpose is to help implement programs to increase the presence of MITSS in the greater community and draw more clients into our programs. This is also the Committee that oversees our Annual HOPE Award.

The Committee meets on the fourth Thursday of the month from 6 to 8 pm. The ideal candidate(s) would have a strong interest in the MITSS mission and be an active member of his or her community. This is an important committee – the work is rewarding, but we also have a great deal of fun! If you'd like to hear more, contact Winnie Tobin at ([wtobin@mitss.org](mailto:wtobin@mitss.org)) or call **(617) 232-0090**. We'd love hear from you!



MITSS Board of Directors

Dr. Anthony Whittemore (second from right) with Members of Brigham & Women's Social Work Dept.

## PATIENT AND FAMILY GROUP

Our Patient and Family Therapeutic Educational Groups deal with multiple issues commonly experienced by patients and families following unanticipated medical outcomes and medical error. Some of the themes include:

- Trauma and Trauma Response
- Guilt and Shame
- Dealing with the Medical Community
- Dealing with Family and Friends
- Anger
- Meaning Making
- The Healing Process and Self Care

If you are a patient or family member struggling with the emotional impact following a medical error or adverse medical event, please call our **confidential** toll free support line at 1-888-36MITSS (1-888-366-4877). The next Patient and Family Group will be starting up in **January of 2010** – so, give us a call today if you're interested in joining.

## SUPPORT FOR CLINICIANS

If you are a physician, nurse, pharmacist, or other clinician having a difficult time following a bad medical outcome, call our **confidential** toll free support line at 1-888-36MITSS (1-888-366-4877). We're here to listen and support you during what can be a very difficult and painful experience.