IASIS named best of the best at Thomson Reuters Healthcare Advantage Awards

Thomas Reuters, the information company that compiles the list of The 100 Top Hospitals each year, singled out IASIS for special recognition at its recent Healthcare Advantage Conference.

After three years of implementing the Hospital Medical Management & Quality Program™ (HMMQP), IASIS had a wealth of data that showed remarkable results in a number of areas. The company submitted an application to be considered for the prestigious Thomson Reuters Award in the category of Clinical Improvement and Outcomes.

At the Orlando, Fla., ceremony, Chairman and CEO David White, VP of Quality/Case/Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance Patty Scott, and other IASIS executives were seated at a table near the stage. They were proud to be there, knowing that they had been chosen as the winner in their category. But later in the ceremony they received a very pleasant surprise.

“The winner of the Healthcare Advantage Award for Overall Performance in the Hospitals/Health Providers/Clinicians category is IASIS Healthcare,” the emcee announced.

“We weren’t expecting that,” says Scott. “But it validates what we have been doing through the HMMQP. We have come together on a standardized platform and raised the ceiling for all of our hospitals. The Thomson Reuters award means that we are recognized leaders in quality in the healthcare field.”

Recognition means far more than a night of applause and two handsome trophies to display. The point of the award is to call attention to best practices and lessons learned, sharing program results and non-proprietary strategies with Thomson Reuters clients and with the media.
Scott, along with Michael White, Quality and Risk Management Director from St. Luke’s Medical Center and Tempe St. Luke’s Hospital were featured speakers at the Healthcare Advantage conference that Thomson Reuters held for its clients. Their presentation, “Building an Infrastructure to Drive Continual Quality Improvement,” drew a big crowd, with many requests for more information on various aspects of the HMMQP. The demand was so great that Thomson Reuters asked Scott to reprise the presentation for a webinar, so that more healthcare decision makers would be able to access the information she offered.

Reaching quality goals

HMMQP dovetails perfectly with the mission of the healthcare division of Thomson Reuters, which collects best practice information to better manage the cost and quality of healthcare. IASIS uses some of the company’s clinical performance measuring tools in its ongoing efforts to identify and prioritize actions that can be taken to improve patient care and safety.

By collecting and analyzing data from all 16 IASIS hospitals, Scott’s department can spot common areas of concern and take action to address those areas.

What Will Grace Enable Us To Be?

“What will grace enable us to be?” A few years ago, the CEO of a Fortune 500 company posed this question to several members of his leadership team.

According to my friend, who was in the meeting, the group of mostly young executives became very quiet and somewhat taken aback by the question. After a few minutes of silence, it became clear that this was a real question calling for a thoughtful answer.

I have thought about this question many times as it pertains to both my personal life and my business life. And, I gained some new perspective recently as I talked with a friend who was having a serious problem with his teenage son. I attentively listened as he spoke with emotion about the rebellious, disrespectful and dangerous behaviors of his son. It quickly became clear that his heartbrokenness was intertwined with anger and judgment that was slowing his family’s ability to heal.

It was at that point that I remembered the confusing question, “What will grace enable us to be?” and realized that giving and receiving grace is a true act of emancipation. I asked the father if he had ever acted in a way that might have hurt or disappointed another person. There was no need for a response because my point was obvious.

Many of you are familiar with the story of the prodigal son found in the Book of Luke, Chapter 15; you likely even learned of the well-known parable at an early age. The more I have thought of this story, the more I have come to realize that most of us have at some point received grace for our prodigal tendencies. And had we never received that grace, there would be no way to fully understand the need to give grace to someone else in a way that conveys unmerited favor.

As this is my final message to you via this column, I honestly think the concept of grace is the most important thought I can leave with you. We live in contentious, dangerous and unsettling times, and as such, we need the freedom of peace that only grace can provide. Grace is probably the most important gift we can give to one another – and that includes our patients and their families. So I challenge you with the same question…what will grace enable you to be?

How I answer this question: I have lived the life of 10 men, had the adventures of 100 men and made the mistakes of 1,000 men. That said, I have known the true love of one good woman and experienced the grace of a loving God. All in all, I’d say that breaks me a little better than even as I look forward to the next chapter.
IASIS Year-Over-Year Quality Improvement Achievements

- 7 percent improvement in pneumonia prevention
- 11 percent improvement in surgical infection prevention
- 61 percent reduction in hospital-acquired vascular catheter-related bloodstream infections

“continual” performance improvement, rather than “continuous” performance improvement. In other words, rather than year-to-year number comparisons, performance improvement is measured day-to-day. This reduces the chance of slipping into habits that do not ensure optimum care. By engaging the staff and constantly looking for the most efficient and effective way to accomplish the daily tasks in a hospital environment, IASIS gives its patients the best possible care.

And as the word “continual” implies, winning the Healthcare Advantage award in 2010 is an honor, but also a standard to uphold and surpass.

“Our next goal is to push all 16 IASIS hospitals to be ranked in the Top 10 percent for CMS performance measures,” says Scott. “Then we need to aim for earning the Malcolm Baldrige Award, the nation’s top award for performance excellence, given by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.”

Setting the bar high

In giving IASIS its top award, Mike Bosswood, president and CEO of the healthcare and science business of Thomson Reuters said, “Time Warner (overall performance winner in the Employers category) and IASIS Healthcare have made an inspiring commitment to excellence. As a result, they have more efficient operations, people are receiving higher quality healthcare, and lives are being saved.”

Scott points out that IASIS strives for companywide. Areas of excellence also stand out, so processes that are effective are shared. Most importantly, each system — whether for medication dispensing, post-surgical care, admissions protocol and so on — includes accountability steps that work to reduce any room for error. Each person has a specific role and a way to clearly mark that a particular task has been done.

“Our organization’s culture is one of accountability, therefore we expect outcomes and commitment from everyone in our organization, from the nurse at the bedside to the CEO of the hospital,” says Scott. “Most everything that we set out to do, we do in teams, so the people at each hospital who do the work help drive this effort. Kudos to all of them for developing the best practices we have in place and for getting results.”

White Efforts Recognized

Ernst & Young honored IASIS Chairman and CEO David White with its regional Entrepreneur of the Year award. The award recognizes business leaders who show extraordinary innovation, financial performance and commitment to their communities. As a regional honoree, White is a finalist for the national Entrepreneur of the Year award, to be announced in November.

Congratulations and good luck.
Medicine does not stand still. Researchers constantly evaluate new treatments and medications that improve patient outcomes, and IASIS hospitals have always been encouraged to conduct clinical trials. Being part of the discovery process can be a huge benefit to patients who participate. For example, a few years ago, St. Luke’s Medical Center participated in a study, called the Prove-It trial, that looked at a new application for a cholesterol-lowering drug.

“We demonstrated that if a patient with unstable angina was treated with Lipitor at 80 mg, they have a significant reduction in cardiovascular mortality and stroke incidence compared to a gentler drug, like Pravastatin, at a lower dose,” says Dr. Richard Heuser, director of cardiology at St. Luke’s. “That’s changed the course of how we treat patients with heart attacks.”

Dr. Heuser has been conducting clinical trials for more than 30 years, and his reputation and knowledge of the research process put him in good position to participate in many interesting areas of study. Now I-CARE, the IASIS Center for the Advancement of Research and Education, is being developed to open more research doors for IASIS hospitals.

**Research benefits everyone involved**

The new program will serve as a centralized clearinghouse for physicians who are interested in finding clinical trials and study sponsors looking for patient populations that meet the criteria of a particular trial. A website accessible to both will contain all of the necessary forms and information for getting approval to move forward.

“Without I-CARE a sponsor like Pfizer would just happen to find a doctor, say in Odessa, Texas, and do one study at one IASIS facility,” says Rita Johnson, I-CARE research supervisor. “Now the sponsor will come through I-CARE and we can say, ‘Do you have all of your sites? If not, we have another doctor in Texas and another in Florida. May I send you information?’”

By expanding its involvement in clinical trials, IASIS will be able to offer more options to its patients. “St. Luke’s was the first hospital to introduce carotid artery stenting with embolic protection, a filter device,” says Dr. Heuser. “For patients who couldn’t have that therapy, the only alternative was costlier and riskier surgery. At St. Luke’s they could get the procedure done and it would be covered by Medicare.”

The hospital also builds its reputation when it conducts trials. Patients with chronic or terminal conditions seek out clinical trials and will come to a facility specifically to participate. The sponsors looking for participants advertise the study and guide interested parties to the hospital. As IASIS facilities become more involved in research with positive results, more researchers will hear about the physicians, staff and I-CARE program and turn to IASIS for other studies.
Last quarter, IASIS hospitals administered 53,878 doses of aspirin.

That will help put IASIS on the cutting edge in healthcare.

Finally, IASIS employees who are interested in research will have the opportunity to get training through I-CARE. In addition to the physicians who oversee the trials, a study may require the services of a nurse or an administrator. Participation can often result in a new perspective on healthcare.

“One of the advantages of doing research is that it allows you to experience what many of us went into medicine for — because we enjoy science and look at things in a scientific manner,” says Dr. Heuser. “The ideal study is one where you really don’t know what the effect will be. Every once in a while we’ll compare one therapy to another and find that our prejudices were wrong. That is something that is really exciting.”

We asked for the three “nevers” in your life, and your answers were positive, empowering and compassionate. Congratulations to Roy Tolson, RN at Memorial Hospital of Tampa, who will receive $100 for his answer.

1. Never use the word hate. It is a terrible word.
2. Never go to sleep at night without telling the one you love that you love them.
3. Never pass up the opportunity to help others, even in simple ways. It makes you feel good about yourself.

Win $100 in cash!

It’s your turn! Your answers are always interesting. How about your questions? What question should we ask in this column in future issues?

We’ll feature the winning answer in the next issue of Forum and give that lucky employee $100. Please email your response to forum@iasishealthcare.com or fax it to (615) 627-2197. Include your name, title, hospital and phone number.
Leading the Way

Constructive Advice

BuildingTrust, Inc. helps IASIS maintain and upgrade its facilities

Anyone who has ever renovated part of their home knows how much time and energy working with a contractor can take. Just keeping a house in working order requires diligence. So imagine the effort required for construction and maintenance at a hospital, where the well-being of hundreds of patients is a paramount concern and there are federal regulations that must be met.

With 16 hospitals to maintain and update periodically, IASIS turned to expert help. It has partnered with a company called BuildingTrust, Inc. that supplies construction and maintenance management, with specific expertise in healthcare. If a facility has an expansion project, IASIS calls on BuildingTrust.

“They are available when the company needs them on a per-project basis, working as our representatives throughout the entire construction process,” says Jim Moake, operations CFO for IASIS. “Their expertise in the field leads to efficiencies that save the company money while still getting needed work done. Since they have partnered with IASIS they have been on the road constantly and are going above and beyond what might be expected.”

The two men behind BuildingTrust, Kenny Beam and Larry Ward, visited all IASIS facilities in their first three months on the job. They have taken on advisory roles on a number of construction projects in different stages of progress, including operating room expansions at Davis Hospital and Medical Center and Mountain Vista Medical Center, a new geropsych unit at Pioneer Valley Hospital, a NICU expansion at Odessa Regional Medical Center and more.

Their backgrounds in architecture and construction put them in position to assist a hospital in understanding the scope and cost of a project from the start. They have long-standing relationships with architects and contractors, so they can help hire the best team for a specific job at the best price. That takes the burden of supervision off an operations staff that is already dealing with day-to-day issues.

In addition to shepherding projects through to completion, BuildingTrust provides support for long-term facility management, using both technology and the wisdom that comes from years of experience.

“When we get requests to replace a boiler or chiller, we always want to know if we really need to replace the equipment or if we can fix it,” says Moake. “That’s where Larry Ward’s experience in the maintenance side of facility operations is so valuable. He can come in with a solution for keeping the equipment going. He’s also there to tell us when we need to replace something like a roof or a boiler.”

Good preventive maintenance reduces replacement intervals, lowers repair costs and reduces the risk of an important piece of equipment failing and being out of service unexpectedly.

“The administrative staff of a hospital has an incentive to spend money on equipment that will generate revenue,” says Ward. “Our involvement helps to give a balance to including maintenance needs too. We also work with the facility to make sure that we are maximizing the life of each piece of equipment, so that it is reliable and there is limited unscheduled down time.”

But keeping equipment in peak condition is more than a cost consideration. Just as hospital staff must be in compliance with regulatory standards, the building and equipment must meet CMS requirements for maintenance, and upkeep must be documented.

“Every piece of equipment from the elevator to the CT Scanner requires routine maintenance,” says Beam. “We help manage that with a web-based program that tracks maintenance needs for every piece of equipment in a hospital. We can also see which hospitals are most successful in completing the maintenance required in a timely way, and share their best practices with other facilities.”

By partnering with BuildingTrust, IASIS can efficiently and effectively keep its hospital buildings and contents running at top condition, no matter if they are old or new.
Nobody wants to miss a deadline. Yet almost everyone has had that forehead-smacking moment of realizing that something they put aside to work on later is now past due. In an effort to help keep track of some of these of these deadlines, IASIS is using the NXT Communicator system to update staff on important information, such as employee survey dates and benefit enrollment deadlines.

IASIS has mainly used NXT for updates regarding natural disasters affecting our facilities, but enhancements have evolved the system into an easy-to-use and reliable tool for nearly any type of employee communication.

“We have had such success with this automated notification system during hurricanes and floods that we also began using it for a variety of other types of important information,” said Lloyd Price, vice president of human resources for IASIS.

Thousands of individuals can be contacted in a matter of minutes which makes the efficiency of the NXT Communicator unmatched by all other communication methods. It allows IASIS to effectively communicate with its employees, giving them the information they need - at the time they need it.

When disaster does strike, confusion comes right along with it. The NXT system has helped IASIS keep that confusion to a minimum.

“When Port Arthur, Texas, was hit by Hurricane Rita, IASIS used the NXT Communicator notification system to blast out information asking employees to check in by calling into a phone bank that we had set up nearby,” says Michael Orr, enterprise systems manager for IASIS. “Though there were power outages and spotty cell service, we had a very good success rate in reaching individuals and accounting for the members of our staff.”

Communicator also went into action in early May, when Tennessee was hit by record-breaking torrential rains that led to severe flooding in many areas. Nearly 250 employees at the corporate office, data center and call center were all reached in 15 minutes by the system, which delivered the message that the office would be closed due to flooding. They also got word when the offices opened back up, but were advised to use their own discretion when it came to travel, since many roads were still closed for days after the flooding.

“During Port Arthur and Franklin disasters, we were fortunate that we only had to use the system for basic information needs that were communicated to the masses,” says Orr. “However, we also have the ability to create specific notification groups that are directly tied to patient care. For example, if we ever have a crisis affecting one of our emergency departments, we could alert all ER nurses with instructions on immediate next steps.”

Having the NXT Communicator system in place offers the IASIS leadership a tremendous amount of comfort. Knowing that – no matter the situation – the company can effectively and in a timely manner communicate with its employees is a benefit to all.
Edith Lucero, charge nurse in the Med/Surg unit at Salt Lake Regional Medical Center, is known to colleagues as a patient advocate who wants the best job done at all times. But she’s also an advocate for the clinicians surrounding her and for the nursing profession in general.

Demanding the highest quality of work, she is quick to jump in and help a coworker get back in the groove if she sees him or her start to slip. She knows each person’s strengths and weaknesses, and works to help them reach a place where they can do the best job possible.

“She’s very devoted to her profession as an RN,” says Director of Inpatient Services Bart Knaphus. “She knows when other people are overwhelmed, so she’ll take on more work herself and never complain.”

Lucero, born Edita, arrived in Utah from the Philippines in 1973, armed with a degree in education. Her grandfather lived in the state and she wanted to be close to her family. Her dedication to helping people and working to better people’s lives inspired her to become a nurse. She began working as a clerk in radiology at Salt Lake Regional Medical Center while putting herself through school.

When she finished nursing school, she stayed at Salt Lake Regional as a devoted employee and two years later, brought her sister, Nemia, also a nurse, over from the Philippines. Both have been working at Salt Lake Regional for more than 30 years.

“Now my whole family works in the medical field,” Lucero says proudly. “My sister, daughter and nephew are all nurses. My brother is a physician and my niece is a nurse’s aide applying to nursing school.”

Director of Business Development Tammy Clark expresses the thought of many of Lucero’s colleagues at Salt Lake Regional, noting, “She is a superstar among stars, but she’s very humble.”

Lucero says that all she is doing is her job, and that she puts her heart into it.

“It is very rewarding dealing with people,” says Lucero. “My compensation is watching people get better.”