

Member News

Appointments

Susan Goodwin, MSN RN CPHQ FNAHQ FACHE, was reelected to serve another 2-year term as chair of the Joint Commission's Hospital Professional and Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC). William Bornstein, MD PhD, of the American Hospital Association, is PTAC's new vice chair.

Lenard L. Parisi, MA RN CPHQ FNAHQ, vice president, quality management and performance improvement, Metropolitan Jewish Health System, Brooklyn, NY, has been elected as the vice chair of the Joint Commission's Homecare PTAC. In this role, he will also represent the PTAC on the Joint Commission Standards and Survey Procedures Committee. Parisi's appointment took effect January 1, 2008.

Don't Take Your Personal Life for Granted

Sandra Jones, MSM BSN CPHQ CPHRM LNCC

Each year, NAHQ awards a number of grants to assist its members, including some that help cover the costs of education. This year I applied for—and received—the HQF Career Development Grant, which allowed me to attend NAHQ's annual conference in Boston. I was thrilled; attending NAHQ conferences always renews my commitment to facilitate change and improve healthcare in my region.

As 2008 president of the Texas Association for Healthcare Quality and past president of the local North Texas Association for Healthcare Quality, I know that attending board meetings and annual meetings is costly. Moreover, there's the current economic climate to contend with. My hospital continues to cut funding for travel and continuing education because of rising utility costs and increased costs associated with uninsured and underinsured patients. Although my budget allows me to attend local and state quality meetings, it doesn't always cover the cost of attending the NAHQ meeting.

NAHQ members should be aware that the career development grant is aimed at members who are certified and have practiced healthcare quality for at least 5 years. Apply by April 26, 2008, by visiting www.nahq.org/awards/grants.htm.

And now, allow me to share my experience at the 2007 annual NAHQ conference. Attending the conference was a wonderful experience of education, networking, and rejuvenation. I use the term *rejuvenation* because I feel renewed and excited about my commitment to improve patient safety and care. This year I not only learned a great deal to help me in my job but also personally learned some things. As a Type-A, "high red" person, I spend many hours concentrating on my professional career and passion for healthcare quality. Unfortunately, many of us often place our careers before our personal lives. When we don't balance our lives well, it can lead to frustration, stress, and exhaustion.

A presentation by Mitzi Weinman—"Blending and Balancing Your Personal and Professional Lives"—was particularly meaningful to me. Using templates, she provided an organized approach to identifying and balancing life's priorities. She further encouraged quality professionals to assess our life activities for 1 week, 24 hours a day, and she stressed the importance of placing ourselves at the top of the list so we can take

care of other priorities such as family, God, and work. Her message hit home with me because I feel I do not take time on a regular basis to really rejuvenate myself.

The speaker also provided a checklist of things that can drain us personally, in areas such as relationships, environment, work, money, body, mind, and spirit. On the plane ride home, I reviewed the material, worked on my plan to balance my life better, and identified things that drain me of energy and time. When I got home, I put my plan into action. I reorganized my closet and gave away unused clothes. I now take more hot baths, go on walks, and read books just for fun. There are many more steps to take to improve my life, but as the speaker said, it is all about making a plan and taking small steps to improve your life.

As I was relaxing last night, I realized that my personal plan was really a performance improvement plan, just like the one I use at work. I am feeling better already. I hope each of you looks for ways to balance your life so that you can achieve the best quality, in *all* areas of your life.

Sandra Jones is director of quality management at Texoma Medical Center in Denison, TX.