

Healthcare Advances

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What To Do For Health Books Reach 500K Milestone

What started as an idea to better serve the information needs of patients has turned into a hugely popular and successful series of books.

In 1999, IHA's President and CEO, Gloria Mayer, R.N., Ed.D., noticed that patients at IHA's Friends of Children Health Center were not able to understand the written health education materials that were presented to them. She came up with an idea to write a book for parents that would be easy to read and easy to use. The result was, *What To Do When Your Child Gets Sick*, first published in 2000, which has gone on to be the flagship book in the 5-book series. Earlier this year, book sales and distribution passed the 500,000 mark.

"We're so pleased with the success of the books, because that tells us that people who need it are getting information they can understand and use to care for their loved ones," said Dr. Mayer. "We wish to congratulate the organizations who understand the value of these books for stepping up and bringing the books to those who need them."

Among the hundreds of organizations that have purchased books for the people they serve are Molina Healthcare of California, AmeriChoice/United Healthcare, Orange County and Sacramento County First 5 California, State of South Dakota, Carolina's Healthcare System, and Molina Michigan. IHA thanks all those organizations who have recognized the value of this book.



Family Resource Center employees (from left) Gabriella Hernandez, Aracely Hernandez, and Melinda Taylor at their new home in the IHA building.

IHA Steps Up to Save Family Resource Center of La Habra

The Institute for Healthcare Advancement continues its legacy of helping families in La Habra with its support of the Family Resource Center of La Habra/Project Connections, which had lost its grant funding and was in danger of closing. IHA's Family Resource Center of La Habra/Project Connections is now in operation at IHA's headquarters, the Barnett Center, on Idaho Street in La Habra. It was relocated from its previous home at Imperial Middle School in La Habra.

Funding for the program now comes from IHA and the Children and Families Commission of Orange County.

The FRC provides health education and in-home support services for pregnant women and families. Program services include medical home visits with a healthcare advocate and public health nurse; health insurance screening and application assistance; immunization and developmental screening; health, safety and parent education in the home, identifying accessible medical attention for the entire family; case management; and referrals to community agencies and other support services. All staff are bilingual and live in the surrounding community. It is anticipated that counseling and legal services will be added to the Center.

"Research has shown that family resource centers are promising strategies for addressing community problems such as child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, family violence, juvenile crime, welfare-to-employment, and educational performance," said Anna Segura, healthcare coordinator of the Center. "We are excited with our new situation, and looking forward to serving the families of La Habra at an even higher level. The addition of legal and counseling services will greatly benefit our families, and we will continue to look for more ways to be of service."

IHA's Family Resource Center of La Habra/Project Connections is located in the Barnett Center, 501 S. Idaho St., Third Floor, La Habra, CA 90631. It can be reached at (562) 690-4001, ext. 3. Hours for the Center are Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5 pm.

Random Thoughts That Make Sense



by Albert E. Barnett, M.D.

Risky Business

"Are fried potatoes killing us? News at eleven!" The quote is typical of the nightly cacophony of dire warnings with which we are bombarded on a daily basis. Is it really necessary for us to live in fear of French fries, power lines, and brain tumors from cell phones? Shouldn't there be some way for us to quantitatively evaluate and measure the variety of risks we are told we face?

The media have learned that we are most affected by news that touches us in our personal lives. The food we eat, the items in our homes, the cars we drive – all are fair game in luring us to the evening news. There is little we can safely eat if we abide by the warnings that are frequently associated with foods. Mad Cow Disease from meat, kidney damage from sugar substitutes, all kinds of health problems from chemically fertilized fruit, are typical of the fears inflicted on us. (No warnings yet of the risks from munching the worms in organically grown produce.) Appealing to our fears apparently results in greatly improved Nielsen ratings.

From where do these warnings originate? There are hundreds of medical and scientific journals published monthly in the United States, containing thousands of articles. Some are well-researched, significant, and published by reliable authorities. But others are purely anecdotal, and some are based on flawed research – cohorts that are too small, failure to use a control group or to take important variables into account. But no matter. Media producers are able to select the most shocking item, disregard the quality or origin of the research, package it up into a short sound-bite, add a man-in-the-street commentary, and deliver it into our family rooms.

The fact is that the vast majority of the risks thrown at us by the networks are miniscule compared with the major risks of our lifestyle. For example, on a scale of 1 to 100, with pack-a-day cigarette smoking or morbid obesity as 100, the health risk of acquiring Mad

Cow Disease would be a tiny fraction of one, far less risky than crossing the street. Brain tumors from cell phones wouldn't even rate a blip on the chart.

"The fact is that the vast majority of the risks thrown at us by the networks are miniscule compared with the major risks of our lifestyle."

Because the evaluation of risk is so difficult, many people react to these warnings as if all risks are equally lethal. If your friendly TV newscaster brings it up, it must be important. And so Americans, in seeking self-preservation, spend billions of dollars to combat or avoid these perceived risks. Measures employed for this purpose include alternative medicine and dietary supplements, organically grown produce, and various gadgets to sterilize and protect our home environments.

Unfortunately, there are few resources

to help us in evaluating the huge variety of risks that are so often brought to our attention. There are useful Web sites for evaluating specific risks, such as the Harvard Center for Risk Evaluation – www.hcra.harvard.edu – for some of the major risks in our lives such as heart disease or cancer. But there is no simple and legitimate resource for risk evaluation of all the minor concerns with which we are routinely afflicted. Perhaps some day a reliable site will be available.

But the most insidious result of this bombardment of specious health claims on the news is that they distract us from the important responses we should be making to major and established risks. Most of these responses are cost-free and involve only lifestyle changes. These include eliminating tobacco use, eating less, and exercising more. These deserve our unwavering focus. Like the successful baseball player, we must keep our eye on the ball and ignore the noise from the screaming people in the stands.

'Book Buddies' Benefits Kids

Thanks to Molina Healthcare of California in Long Beach, children at Friends of Children Health Center and IHA's Family Resource Center of La Habra/Project Connections will be on the receiving end of 2000 kid's books over the next year. The book giveaway is part of a successful program within Molina Healthcare called "Book Buddies."

The year-old program has already distributed more than 100,000 books to children in Molina's 21 primary care clinics in California. Program administrator Kellie French of Molina tells how the program started: "Kids told us, 'I don't have a book at home.' Many patients cannot afford books and can't get to the library, so we've begun to give them away." The program soon expanded from the Molina clinics to include Head Start programs, elementary schools, and now, IHA's clinic and Family Resource Center.

IHA extends its grateful appreciation to Molina for its generosity and leadership in this effort. Anyone wishing to donate books to Molina's Book Buddies program can contact them toll-free at (866) 665-4628.





Nancy Monk Joins IHA Board of Directors

The Institute for Healthcare Advancement welcomes its newest member of the Board of Directors: Nancy J. Monk, M.P.H., M.B.A. Nancy brings a wealth of experience in healthcare systems management to the Board. She is the vice president of public and regulatory affairs at PacifiCare Health Systems in Cypress, Calif., where she has served for the past 10 years.

Nancy has drawn accolades for her work in managed care and policy development, and continues to lead with her experience in strategic planning, government relations and leadership training and development.

She earned her masters' degrees from UCLA's School of Public Health and Graduate School of Management, and remains active academically as a member of the Masters in Health Administration Advisory Board at CSU Long Beach.

"I'm looking forward to the opportunity to work with the Institute for Healthcare Advancement on its Board of Directors," she said. "I've been aware for a long time of the work IHA has done in the community and in health literacy, and look forward to helping guide their efforts from my post as a Director."

Grant Will Fund Creation of Immunization Registry



The Institute for Healthcare Advancement has received a 2-year grant from The California Endowment to work alongside the Orange County Health Care Agency in the implementation of an Immunization Registry for Orange County. The Children and Families Commission of Orange County is providing supplemental support for the launch of this vital resource.

This project is an initial step of a phased, integrated approach among community clinics, county clinics and the private sector in expanding the Southern California Regional Immunization Registry into Orange County.

An Immunization Registry is a Web-enabled information system that functions as a source of complete patient immunization histories and allows providers to view a history from any medical clinic facility. The system also assists in evaluating immunization coverage on a regional basis.

"This public-private partnership's primary goal is the prevention of childhood disease by ensuring on-time immunizations for children and reducing the incidence of over- and under-immunization," said Judith Connell, DrPH, Director of Research & Development at IHA. "As more providers come on board and more children are entered into the registry, it is anticipated that there will be a significant reduction in missed opportunities to provide timely immunizations."

The principal focus during the first 2 years will be on children of low-income families served by public and private clinics. IHA will pilot the program in three community clinics, including Laguna Beach Community Clinic, UCI Medical Center's clinic in Anaheim, and IHA's Friends of Children Health Center in La Habra.

Friends of Children Partners with Healthy Smiles, Expands Services



Friends of Children Health Center is now part of Healthy Smiles, a program funded by the Orange County Children and Families Commission that offers underserved preschool children free on-site dental evaluations and very low-cost follow-up treatment through referral to the six participating community clinics. The county has a severe shortage of pediatric dentists, the majority of whom do not accept patients covered by various public-assistance programs, namely Healthy Families and Medi-Cal. This program allows IHA to hire a pediatric dentist who can provide the costly repair work many young children require.

Orange County Head Start's Healthy Smiles program was selected out of hundreds of program nominations across the county to receive the National Head Start's National Youth for Alliance Award in May of 2004 for a unique and model partnership between the two organizations. Much of the credit for the success of Healthy Smiles goes to Annie Gronewald (pictured), the initial Director of the Orange County Head Start Healthy Smiles Collaborative. Annie also worked with IHA last year on its Oral Health Curriculum for Community Health Workers. IHA is delighted to announce that Annie has now joined IHA as the Project Coordinator for its new Immunization Registry project (see related story, above).

Health Literacy Conference

MAY 13-14, 2004



1) Rima Rudd, ScD, provided an overview of the Institute of Medicine's report on Health Literacy, "Prescription to End Confusion". 2) Attendees listen to a plenary session. 3) The Institute for Healthcare Advancement staff pauses prior to the opening of the conference. 4) IHA Chairman and Medical Director Albert E. Barnett, M.D., delivers his closing keynote address. 5) Darren A. DeWalt, M.D. discusses Literacy and Health Outcomes: Mitigating Disparities with Disease Management. 6) Interactive question and answer sessions are a hallmark of IHA's Health Literacy conferences. 7) Linda Shohet, Ph.D., discusses Uncovering the Problems in Doing Health Literacy.



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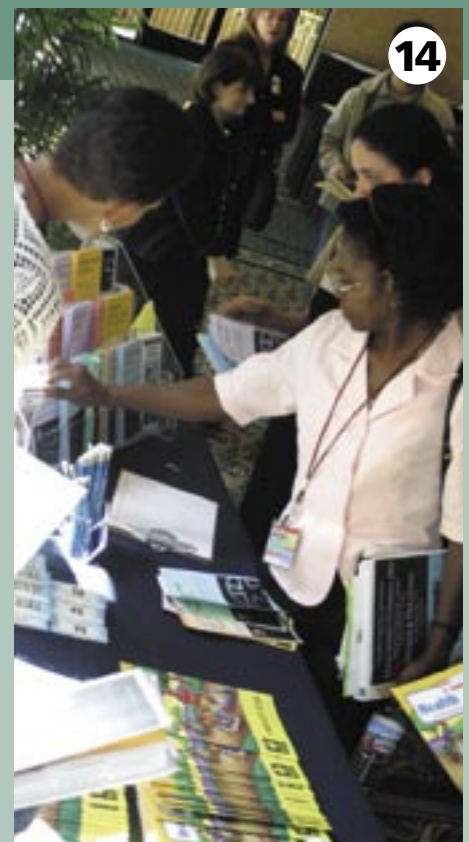
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8) Keynoter Ariella Herman, Ph.D., discusses her pilot project for Head Start/Johnson & Johnson/UCLA. 9) Flanked by Gloria Mayer, R.N., Ed.D (far left) and Albert E. Barnett, M.D. (far right) are the 2004 IHA Health Literacy Award winners, from left: Susan Howland accepting on behalf of Beth M. Wescott, MLS for Innovative Programs, Ildiko Tenyi, Anna Garcia and Donna Bell-Sanders, MPH accepted award on behalf of the California Family Health Council for Published Materials, and Michael Scott Wolf, Ph.D., M.P.H. for Research. 10) Southern California in May provides a beautiful atmosphere for the Thursday evening reception. 11) IHA principals Albert E. Barnett, M.D. and Gloria Mayer, R.N., Ed.D., address the conferees. 12) Health literacy researcher Dean Schillinger, M.D., discusses Health Literacy: Research, Education, Practice, and Policy. 13) Foundation for Health Coverage Education president Philip Leberz conducted a hands-on breakout session on an easy to use and understand tool for helping Californians obtain health insurance. The Foundation was a primary supporter of the conference. 14) Conference attendees look over information supplied by exhibitors.



Barnett Center Goes Hollywood

In July, a movie crew producing an independent feature film entitled "Partners" descended upon the Barnett Center for 17 days of filming. Portions of IHA's suite were used, as well as the lobby and first floor. Because of its unique architecture and amenities, the building is often scouted as a film or commercial location.

The transformation of IHA's headquarters into a law firm for the film included (above left) draping the outside of the 3rd floor balcony to seal off natural light and create the desired artificial lighting effect in the offices used for filming; (above right) covering the corridors and office carpeting with floorboard to protect it from heavy equipment (right); and the descent of more than 40 cast, crew, and production people for the duration of the location shoot.

Despite having to squeeze past cameras, light stands and equipment handtrucks, and having to hush conversations as production assistants yelled "Rolling! Quiet, please!" in anticipation of another film take, the IHA staff worked through the process and survived relatively intact. No word yet on residuals or Academy Award nods for the Barnett Center.



Friends of Children Health Center's Judi Leonard, PNP, is the recipient of the George Rochester Professional Award for 2004.

IHA's Judi Leonard, Juan Garcia Honored

The La Habra Area Chamber of Commerce recently honored two individuals from the Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to IHA Board Member Juan Garcia for his contributions to the La Habra community as Council member, Mayor, and business leader. Juan has served as an IHA Board member for many years.

Judi Leonard, pediatric nurse practitioner, was presented with the George Rochester Professional Award for her commitment to the health of La Habra's children. Judi has been with Friends of Children Health Center since it first opened its doors 10 years ago, and has taken care of tens of thousands of La Habra's children during that time. She is very active in community outreach and education, teaching health classes for parents and MOMS meetings for new mothers.

'Culture, Language, Clinical Issues' Theme for 2005 Health Literacy Conference

Plans are under way for the Fourth Annual Health Literacy Conference, "Culture, Language and Clinical Issues: Operational Solutions to Low Health Literacy" which will take place on May 5-6, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency in Irvine, California.

Culture and language play a tremendous role in a patient's ability to understand and act on health information – a key component of most definitions of health literacy. This conference will provide attendees with a diverse roster of plenary session speakers and hands-on breakout sessions that provide usable information that attendees can take back and use in their daily work.

Among the confirmed speakers:

- Janet Ohene-Frempong, President of J. O. Frempong & Associates. Janet specializes in plain language

and cross-cultural consumer communications.

- Cathy D. Meade, professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Oncology, University of South Florida. She provides overall leadership for the Cancer, Culture and Literacy Institute. She will discuss her program which includes the use of multimedia and emerging technologies for communicating health information.
- Aracely Rosales, president of Plain Language and Culture, Inc., known nationally for her experience in cross cultural health communications and extensive efforts to bring accessible information and education to diverse communities.

The conference will be preceded by a Wednesday evening session entitled Health Literacy 101, for those who

would like an orientation to the basic information in Health Literacy. Conference attendees can choose from a number of hands-on breakout sessions, including: how to write a low literacy brochure; how to create a low-literacy questionnaire; using pictograms with low-literacy patients and the challenge of designing medication reminders; and how to evaluate patient education materials for low-health literacy.

In addition to the IHA Health Literacy Awards, IHA is sending out a Call for Posters. A Poster Session has been added to the conference agenda for 2005.

For more information about the conference, health literacy awards, call for posters, or to register, visit the IHA Web site at www.ih4health.org or call IHA at (800) 434-4633.

IHA and Molina Partner Again

Once again, the Institute for Healthcare Advancement is partnering with another organization to help improve health care quality. This time, the partner is a familiar one: Molina Healthcare of California, with whom IHA has collaborated on many occasions for different projects.

Molina Healthcare of California was awarded a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as part of its national program called *Hablamos Juntos*, Spanish for "We Speak Together." IHA is providing conference management services for the November 4-5, 2004 program. *Hablamos Juntos* focuses on healthcare quality and access by enhancing communications for Latino patients who speak little English. The conference will bring together key players to discuss ways to help English-speaking providers communicate more effectively with their Spanish-speaking patients.

Molina Healthcare of California hosted an Enhancing Language Capacity

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Friends of Children

CASE STUDY

Nurse Case Manager Makes a Difference

In April, a grant-funded, part-time Nurse Case Manager position was added at Friends of Children Health Center. The Case Manager's main service population is children ages birth to 5 years old. Jennifer Baron, R.N., hired into the position, helps parents obtain insurance authorization for their children to get specialty testing, surgeries, and other procedures, and ensures the specialty physician appointments are set up for them. She refers families to community service agencies such as Project Connections, Orange County Regional Center, and others so they can receive much-needed services.

An example of the services by the Case Manager involves a Friends of Children patient, a young girl with multiple medical needs along with her chronic diagnosed conditions. This summer the mother had to take her to three different specialists. The girl needed surgery, so Baron and the mother had to carefully schedule that around a cardiac procedure with its own special considerations. The mother was somewhat overwhelmed, and let her California Children's Services (CCS) lapse in the midst of all these activities. (CCS is a statewide program that treats children with certain physical limitations and chronic health conditions or diseases.) The mother needed a lot of encouragement with some help in reapplying for CCS, which the Case Manager provided.

Baron also referred and set up the mother to go to a specialized dental clinic that would accept her daughter for extensive needed dental work, because the other clinic to which she had been previously referred was not taking new patients. The mother appreciated the help and having an advocate work with her through each step of the process to ensure that appointments were made and kept, insurance coverage obtained, and follow-up care delivered.

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Summit in the Inland Empire in March 2003, attended by community members, providers and community based organizations in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. This conference was also planned and managed by IHA.

Conference meeting and event planning are examples of services offered by the Institute for Healthcare Advancement. IHA also has low literacy evaluation, rewrite, and translation services, for healthcare providers wishing to ensure their patient education materials are readable and usable by those who receive them. Anyone interested in contracting IHA's services can contact IHA at (562) 690-4001.

Nurse Case Manager

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"I know we made a difference in her and her child's life that she will never forget," says Baron. "The Nurse Case Manager role is very challenging, working with systems that are overtaxed in significant ways and also developing new systems for tracking all the children and families helped. I really do enjoy working directly with the staff at FOC and IHA to provide ongoing, quality care services to our children and families."

Coordinator Beefs Up Volunteer Corps at Friends of Children

The number of volunteers at Friends of Children Health Center has seen an increase in the past few months, thanks to the addition of a grant-funded Volunteer Coordinator position.

Miriam Escovar, who was hired into the position in April, notes that there are many areas in which volunteers can help. "Volunteers learn to help register patients, assist medical and dental staff, read to children, perform outreach, and most importantly, to care about the well being of our patients. The purpose of the volunteer program is to utilize voluntary help in such a way that is beneficial to the community and the participant's individual growth."

For high school students, being a volunteer provides an opportunity, through the Mentor Program, to work in a healthcare setting before making a career decision. The volunteer coordinator connects the student with an experienced clinical mentor who provides basic orientation and guidance, shares experiences, and discusses challenges.

Friends of Children Health Center volunteers exemplify the spirit of citizenship in the neighborhood. Marcella Hopps is an example of a dedicated clinic volunteer. With 5 years of volunteer service to the clinic, Marcella helps carry out the clinic's mission to ensure that all children receive quality healthcare.

Those interested in volunteering at the clinic must be at least 14 years old. Contact Miriam Escovar at (714) 447-3460, ext. 203.



Clinic volunteer Marcella Hopps, left, with volunteer coordinator Miriam Escovar.

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IHAHA0904

Persistence Pays Off in Helping Mother and Family

A 22-year-old single mother, with two girls ages 4 and 5 years, was referred by a former client of the program to Project Connections needing health insurance assistance.

A *promotora* (community-based health worker) met with the mother to assess the family's needs and found that she needed help transferring her children's Medi-Cal cases from Los Angeles County to Orange County. The *promotora* then requested certain documents necessary to proceed. Because the mother did not have the necessary documents with her, a home visit was scheduled for a later date.

While at the home visit, the *promotora* conducted an assessment of the family's needs and observed that the family not only needed health insurance assistance but also food and other basic needs. Project Connections staff provided referrals to community resources, including the food bank, community support groups, and rental and clothing assistance. Referrals were also provided to Friends of Children Health Center for the uninsured children, and to the St. Jude Van and low-cost clinics for the mother's health needs. The *promotora* assisted the mother with transferring the children's Medi-Cal cases to Orange County, helped them find a medical home in the area, and made sure that the children were up to date on their immunizations.

Once the health team was ready to close the case, the mother discovered she was pregnant. The Project Connections team helped get emergency Medi-Cal coverage for her and the new baby, referred her to the Public Health Nurse, and facilitated her access to obtaining prenatal care. The public health nurse and *promotora* followed up with the mother to ensure she was keeping up with her prenatal care, until six months later when a healthy baby girl was born. The *promotora* then helped transfer the mother's and the baby's emergency Medi-Cal to permanent status, and helped identify a medical home for the new baby. All the children are currently up to date on immunizations, healthy, and happy.