



Focus



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Welcome Joe Letnaunchyn: WVHA's New President and CEO



Joseph M. Letnaunchyn comes to the West Virginia Hospital Association (WVHA) as the former President and CEO of the Delaware Healthcare Association, a tenure he held for more than 12 years. In that capacity, he was responsible for all oversight activities affecting Delaware's hospitals and health systems, and hospital-affiliated long term care facilities. He also represented other provider organizations before the Delaware General Assembly and Delaware's Congressional Delegation in Wash-

ington, DC, state regulatory agencies, and the Delaware business community.

Letnaunchyn holds an undergraduate degree in accounting, cum laude, from Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and a master's of science in health services administration with academic honors from the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois.

"Joe's background includes a wealth of experience in state and federal legislative advocacy, healthcare finance, reimbursement, management consulting, and hospital quality improvement," said Immediate-Past WVHA Chairman of the Board Don Muhlenhaller, FACHE, President and CEO, Pocahontas Memorial Hospital in Buckeye. "We look forward to his leadership of the Association."

Letnaunchyn brings over 20 years of hospital association experience to WV, having worked multi-hospital health systems, specialty hospitals, and small, rural and critical access hospitals. He joins the Association as it gears up for the 2007 legislative session, and will be a guiding force as the WVHA works to promote benefits for the uninsured and underinsured; protect the Medicaid program as the state's safety net; monitor the Manchin Administration tax reforms; and maintain a strong Certificate of Need (CON) program, which ensures that high quality services are provided in West Virginia healthcare facilities.

"I'm delighted to be in West Virginia on a full-time basis working with our members and Association staff," Letnaunchyn said. "I look forward to visiting our member hospitals to learn more about the issues they face, the services they offer, and the communities they serve. We will strive to provide value-added services to our members in all that we do."

West Virginia Hospitals Fight The Flu

Autumn leaves litter the landscape and near-bare trees stand their ground. Thanksgiving has arrived and so follows flu season.

Flu is a slang term for the influenza virus. (This article does not address the topics of Pandemic Flu or Avian [Bird] Flu.) Up to one in five people in the U.S. contract flu each year. The results for some will be lost work and school days, but for those at high risk for developing complications from flu, the results can be more serious, including hospitalization or even death. Influenza is not the common cold. It is serious. The virus and its complications kill an average of 36,000 individuals in the country each year and put approximately 226,000 in the hospital. Combined with pneumonia, influenza is the nation's seventh leading cause of death.

Vaccination is the best protection against the influenza. It is critical for individuals who are most susceptible to serious health complications from flu to receive the vaccination. October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but one may still be immunized in December or even later.

Hospitals across West Virginia are offering flu clinics, health fairs and traveling to residents in order to offer vaccination protection to their communities that they serve. "We have traveled into communities on both sides of the Tug Valley," said Christine Smith, Director of Marketing at Williamson Memorial Hospital. "We've given out about



Monongalia General gives drive through flu shots during their Annual *Fight The Flu* campaign.

2,000 free shots. Within just 40 minutes, we had vaccinated 200 people!"

"Because we're so rural," said Becky Ritter, Public Relations Director for Bluefield Regional Medical Center, "we go out into different locations and vaccinate our community members. We've given 2,500 to 3,000 shots, and for those who are eligible we bill Medicare for them."

Thomas Memorial Hospital in South Charleston gave over 1,000 vaccinations, which were free to community members over 65-years-old and those with chronic illnesses. Summersville Memorial Hospital held an all-day flu clinic, alerting the public through signs and other media materials. Boone Memorial Hospital in Madison hosted a Health Fair held at the town's Civic Center, inviting other vendors to join the event. St. Mary's Medical Center in Huntington offered flu shots late this month, free to everyone 18 years old and over. Wetzel County Hospital in New Martinsville began offering flu vaccine to the community in October. The last series of shots will be held on December 1.

Monongalia General Hospital held its annual *Fight the Flu* community campaign, which ran from October through early November. "Influenza affects people of all ages, and (Cont. on Page 4)



Boone Memorial Hospital offers flu shots at Health Fair.

Wife Honors Husband's Donor

Twenty-six-year-old Toby Fridley of Philippi underwent a successful transplant at Ruby Memorial Hospital at West Virginia University (WVU) in 2005, after he was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia, a cancer of the blood and bone marrow. Tragically, however, Toby relapsed on the one-year anniversary of his transplant. He died on a September morning in 2006 at Ruby Memorial.

Hospital staff were touched by the family's courage and closeness as they rallied against Toby's illness. The couple and their two young children — seven-year-old daughter Erin and one-year-old son Little Toby — had been chosen for an all expense paid trip to the donor center in San Antonio, Texas, which supplied the stem cells necessary for the procedure. The family planned to meet Toby's donor and enjoy a day of special activities at the center. It's a trip that April and her children decided to take, albeit without Toby.

"It will be a bittersweet trip, but April wants to personally thank the donor for giving Toby one more precious year with his family," said Londia Goff, R.N., Blood and Marrow Transplant Nurse Coordinator at the cancer center.

Since the National Marrow Donor Program (NMD) began, 25,000 transplants have been performed.

"While it is wonderful to know that many people have had this life-saving procedure, the demand for more donors remains extremely great," said Solveig Ericson, M.D., director of WVU's Blood and Marrow Transplant Hematologic Malignancy Program. "Only 30 percent of pa-



tients in need of transplants have matching donors in their families. Yet, just one to two percent of the population in the U.S. is registered as a potential donor. I would encourage everyone who can to consider becoming a volunteer donor."

Following are some statistics from the NMD Program:

- One of every 20 Americans will need blood at some point in their lives.
- Each year, over 30,000 new patients are diagnosed with a life-threatening disease that may be cured with a marrow transplant.
- An average of 17 people die daily waiting for an organ.
- Over 77 organs and tissues are transplantable.
- There are currently 87,000 people awaiting a life-saving organ transplant.

For more information about joining the registry as a stem cell donor, go to the NMD Program Web site at www.marrow.org.

Sign Up for WV Organ Donation License Plates!

The Center for Organ Recovery (CORE), one of West Virginia's four Organ Procurement Organizations, is offering an organ donation awareness license plate.



The license plate reads *Organ Donation Saves Lives* and includes the Donate Life logo. The license plates will be offered free for the first 250 applicants — a value of \$55. As with all specialty plates, the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles requires that at least 250 people pre-register for plates before production may begin. Registration deadline is December 12, 2006. Currently, 116 orders have been placed. For more information on the organ donor license plates and to place an order, please call CORE at 1-800-DONORS-7 or visit www.core.org, click Programs, and then click the West Virginia license plate.

Coalition for Quality Health Care Stroke Pilot Project

Imagine a world in which all patients receive optimal stroke treatment using identified best practices in the most appropriate environment of care. The West Virginia Coalition for Quality Health Care, under the administration of the West Virginia Hospital Association (WVHA), is working to make this vision a reality by partnering with Mountain State hospitals and key stakeholders. Goals include:

- Creating a system where a single phone call allows healthcare practitioners in rural areas to access neurology and/or neurosurgery consults regardless of issues of time, weather, and location.
- Designing a healthcare system that consistently utilizes the best available quality of care.
- Lowering stroke care costs by reducing the number of unnecessary, expensive transfers through the creation of statewide transfer criteria.
- Developing a hospital survey process to define the level of stroke care at each West Virginia hospital, and making recommendations to the state Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Medical Director to facilitate the best environment of care for each acute

stroke patient.

- Educating the public on signs, symptoms and risk factors for acute stroke, and to call 911 stat through a collaborative EMS project.

The Stroke Pilot Project includes the following nine hospitals, as well as key stroke care stakeholders: Charleston Area Medical Center; Boone Memorial Hospital, Madison; Ohio Valley Medical Center, Wheeling; Pleasant Valley Hospital, Pt. Pleasant; St. Mary's Medical Center, Huntington; Logan Regional Medical Center; Wheeling Hospital; West Virginia University Hospitals, Morgantown; and Jefferson Memorial Hospital, Ranson.

Several important objectives are currently underway, including the development of an electronic statewide stroke registry. This registry contains aggregated data for statewide analysis of stroke and identifies processes that need improvement. The Coalition has also created a Stroke Care Web site, www.wvstroke.org, and an online stroke educational course especially for LPNs and RNs working in Emergency Departments, as well as paramedics and emergency medical technicians.

For more information on the Stroke Pilot Project, please call Director Debbie Ruppert, RN, at 304/344-9744.

(Cont. from Page 2) can cause fever, muscle aches, cough, headache, and chills," said Monongalia General Community Health Coordinator Karol Koast. "The good news is that an influenza vaccine can prevent the flu or reduce its severity. Protection develops one to two weeks after the shot and lasts up to a year."

For more information on who and who shouldn't get a flu vaccination (in rare instances some people should not take the flue vaccination), visit the CDC Web site at www.cdc.gov, the American Lung Association at www.lungusa.org, or the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health at www.wvdhhr.org/bph.

Simple Steps To Help Prevent The Flu

- *Get vaccinated each year.*
- *Avoid close contact with people who are sick.*
- *Stay at home when you are sick.*
- *Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze.*
- *Wash your hands vigorously and often with warm, soapy water.*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.*
- *Get plenty of sleep, exercise, eat nutritious foods, drink plenty of fluids to keep hydrated, and manage your stress.*