

HCA's Annual Conference Packs Three Days of Learning, Networking and New Ideas

Positive opportunities under health reform a main Conference theme



HCA President **Joanne Cunningham** delivers her annual address to the membership at HCA's Annual Conference.

HCA's 2010 Annual Conference concluded this afternoon in Saratoga Springs, capping three packed days of learning, idea development, uplifting speakers, networking opportunities with vendors and colleagues, as well as some fun and festivity, in keeping with the circus-themed title of this year's event: *Home Care – The Greatest Show on Earth*.

Activities began on Wednesday, May 19, with two instructive pre-conference sessions: an in-depth primer on negotiation strategies alongside a panel session, moderated by HCA Vice President for Policy and Clinical Affairs **Lexi Silver**, to help providers: 1) enhance their experience with the home health Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey process and 2) to support the home care community's development of new clinical quality initiatives through HCA's pioneering Quality Improvement Collaborative.

Also on Wednesday, HCA held its quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors and Corporation where HCA Board Chair **Vicky Hines**, President and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Service of Rochester and Monroe County, HCA President **Joanne Cunningham**, HCA staff, and HCA's contract legislative affairs representative **Sam NeJame**, of Wilson Elser Moskowitz

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Special Annual Conference Edition

This week's ASAP is a special edition highlighting our 2010 Annual Conference, which concluded today in Saratoga Springs.

Next week's edition of ASAP will resume with our regular policy, legislative and advocacy updates.

Any imminent updates will be shared with the membership via E-alert.



Helping New Yorkers
Feel *Right*
At Home



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Edelman and Dicker, reviewed HCA's recent legislative and policy accomplishments, discussed new legislative proposals on the front burner, and sought further input and action from the board on emerging policy and organizational matters.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for HCA to introduce our newest board members (see p.9 story) and to thank outgoing board members for their service. Outgoing board members include: **Anne Calvo**, Administrator/Director of Patient Services for Winthrop University Hospital Home Health; **Tom Dennison** of Syracuse University's Maxwell School; and **Charles Blum**, Vice President of Legal and Government Affairs for the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, who previously served as HCA's immediate past Board Chair.

The leadership, intellect, dedication, and insight of these board members have been invaluable to HCA's organizational efforts on the state and national levels. We thank them for their service and look forward to the energy, ideas, talent, and points of view that our new board members will bring to the table.

HCA's awards dinner – a conference highlight

An organization's ideals are most reflected in the character and actions of its people.

For home care, those ideals are manifested in the thousands of individuals who carry out their mission every day to serve patients with skill and compassion, who advocate vigorously for support of our home care system, and who apply their knowledge and creativity to innovate new models of care delivery.

HCA's Annual Conference wouldn't be complete without honoring the very best examples of the people behind home care. Our annual awards reception, held on May 19, remains a major highlight of the conference, providing an opportunity for HCA to celebrate home care's heroes. (See p. 6 for stories about our award winners.)

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HCA extends our congratulations to this year's award winners and we thank them for their exceptional work on behalf of patients. They include: **Michele Quirolo**, President and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association of Hudson Valley; **Michelle Mazzacco**, Vice President/Director of Eddy Home Care; **Marilyn Lugo**, Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York; and **Joleen Rust**, Home Health Aide at the Visiting Nurse Service of Schenectady and Saratoga Counties.

Education and new opportunities

A big focus of the conference is education. Throughout yesterday's session, in particular, participants attended workshops and presentations where they gained new ideas, tools, and strategies for: productively reinventing their organizations and establishing a seamless line of leadership succession; promoting the home health option among physicians; developing new quality care initiatives and program efficiencies; and applying humor as a leadership skill for communication and morale building.

Also, setting a tone for the official start of the conference, **HCA President Joanne Cunningham** delivered her annual address to the membership on Thursday morning, chronicling the past several months of HCA's legislative advocacy work at both the state and federal levels. This included HCA's efforts to fight Medicare and Medicaid cuts, as well as our development of legislation to: offer proactive Medicaid efficiencies in place of reimbursement cuts; enhance the state's Long Term Home Health Care Program; provide for a capital investment allowance in the Medicaid rate; provide for relief under the Medicaid home health Administrative and General (A&G) cost cap; institute funding support for home telehealth; establish clearer boundaries in the state's Medicaid audit practices; reform managed care practices; and advance a comprehensive quality innovations program; among other major initiatives that were either enacted or advanced in the past year.

Ms. Cunningham also described several new initiatives spearheaded at HCA to raise home care's visibility and to reinforce our core messages through online advocacy campaigns, new data and fiscal analyses, and the use of social media.

Echoing a theme heard throughout the conference, Ms. Cunningham also explained the many opportunities, in addition to the significant challenges, that await home care providers under the newly enacted federal health reform law. Though the health reform cuts will impact providers – and will, therefore, remain a continued target of HCA's advocacy – Ms. Cunningham also noted that the new law offers incentives for agencies that are willing and prepared to adapt to the changing landscape of health care delivery through cross-sector partnerships on chronic-care management efforts, establishment of integrated care models, and other initiatives supported under the reform law.



In keeping with the circus theme of this year's Conference, attendees were treated to "big-top" entertainment in the exhibit hall where vendors were on hand to showcase the newest products and services.

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Ms. Cunningham’s message about new opportunities in home health was reiterated throughout the three-day event, most especially in the conference keynote address on Thursday by **Val Halamandaris**, President of the National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC), who stood at the forefront of the national health reform debate, fighting against payment cuts to providers and ensuring that lawmakers recognize home care’s role in efforts to reform the delivery system and provide better care.

Mr. Halamandaris, who has been NAHC’s President for almost 30 years, spoke passionately about the need to engage various communities around the idea that home care is the next civil rights concept for our age, especially in the context of an aging “baby-boom” population whose long term care needs, expectations and options will significantly differ from previous generations.

Mr. Halamandaris also voiced optimism about the new and potentially exciting opportunities afforded providers under national health care reform, including initiatives like the CLASS Act (Community Living Assistance Services and Supports), which he described as America’s first nationwide long term care benefit that supports the choice of individuals to receive needed services at home in order to “age in place.”

Conference sessions this morning and afternoon continued to relay the theme of “new opportunities,” with an in-depth look at the new health reform law, as provided by one of the top health policy officials at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Rima Cohen, Counselor to the Secretary for Health Policy at HHS, walked attendees through the intricacies of the law, with a focus not only on home health but the cross-sector opportunities for engagement in improving the health of American citizens. Her session was followed by an entertaining look at the legislative process by **Judy Schneider**, from the Government Division of the Congressional Research Office, who enriched participants’ understanding of the procedural and political dynamics that determine how a law, like federal health reform, is made. Ms. Schneider specifically told attendees that members of Congress rely greatly on constituents to inform their decisions – and if home care isn’t raising its voice, others are going to do so in its place, dominating the debate.

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Val Halamandaris, President of the National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC), and **Rima Cohen**, Counselor to the Secretary for Health Policy at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, share insights and information about federal health reform.

Hospital-Home Health Partnerships in Action

Considering the emphasis in federal health reform on chronic-care management, integrated care models, as well as payment incentives for hospitals and other providers to reduce readmission rates, the time is ripe for hospitals and home care providers to step up their collaborative efforts.

Several New York providers have already taken the lead in this area, including the Visiting Nurse Service of Rochester and Monroe County (in partnership with Strong Memorial Hospital and the University of Rochester Medical Center) as well as the Visiting Nurse Association of Hudson Valley (in partnership with the Pinnacle Healthcare system).

Today's session finished with an insightful panel discussion which paired up leaders from hospitals and home health agencies to discuss how they are working together toward common goals by collaborating on strategic plans for addressing readmission rates, integrating home care into different levels of the hospital structure, standardizing their documentation and other tools across sectors, and further developing their data collection and information-sharing capabilities.



A panel discussion on hospital-home care partnerships in action. From left: HCA Board Chair **Vicky Hines**, President and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Service of Rochester and Monroe County; **Steve Goldstein**, Vice President for the University of Rochester Medical Center, President and CEO for Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital, and President for Long Term Care for the University of Rochester Medical Center; **Helen Turchioe**, Executive Director of Pinnacle Healthcare; and **Rae Szymanski**, Executive Vice President/COO of the Visiting Nurse Association of Hudson Valley.

Providing these insights were: HCA Board Chair **Vicky Hines**, President and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Service of Rochester and Monroe County, in collaboration with **Steve Goldstein**, who is Vice President for the University of Rochester Medical Center, President and CEO for Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital, and President for Long Term Care for the University of Rochester Medical Center. Also presenting were: **Rae Szymanski**, Executive Vice President/COO of the Visiting Nurse Association of Hudson Valley, in partnership with **Helen Turchioe**, Pinnacle Healthcare's Executive Director.

The day's events closed with a post-conference session, led by HCA's Vice President for Policy and Clinical Affairs **Lexi Silver**, in which HCA's Telehealth Taskforce gathered – a great opportunity for members to learn more about best-practices from some of the leading telehealth program operators among HCA's membership.

HCA would like to thank our talented and engaging presenters, our Board of Directors, as well as the many vendors who were on-hand throughout the conference to showcase their latest products and services, further supporting our program. We would also like to especially thank this year's conference sponsors who made our program possible through their much-appreciated support.

Please save the date for next year's conference, on **May 22 to 24, 2011** in Saratoga Springs.

HCA's Congratulates our 2010 Award Winners

At our Annual Conference this week, HCA presented the following awards during a special reception on May 19.

The Caring Award – Marilyn Lugo and Joleen Rust

The Caring Award recognizes a professional and a paraprofessional staff person of an agency who has exhibited the compassion, skills and service that sets their contribution apart and/or whose actions on a particular day or over a period of time exemplify caring in home care.



Caring Award Winner Marilyn Lugo
with HCA President Joanne Cunningham.

Marilyn Lugo, ACRN, MSN, CNS, has been a Clinical Nurse Specialist in the Maternity, Newborn and Pediatrics Program at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York for more than 15 years. Ms. Lugo provides skilled home care nursing services that range from short-term acute services to longer-term care for medically fragile children and their families. She is also an AIDS-certified registered nurse and an expert on HIV/AIDS care for women and children.

Since last fall, Ms. Lugo has been integrally involved with the VNS of New York's pilot program for pediatric palliative care, a union of VNS's Maternity, Newborn and Pediatrics (MNP) program with hospice services. She also serves as a valuable member of the pediatric palliative care team, offering mentorship, guidance, and direction on many levels to bring MNP and hospice staff together in their work on this project.

Ms. Lugo was drawn to nursing because she herself suffered health problems as a child, admired the nurses who treated her at a clinic in her community, and regarded them as her role models. During one especially meaningful moment in her life, Ms. Lugo was able to help grant the dying wish of a young home care AIDS patient who wanted to go home to Puerto Rico to see her family one last time.

Ms. Lugo is a nurturing, caring nurse whose passion for helping patients, students and her fellow nurses is apparent to all who have the good fortune to work with her. In working with nursing students and patients' families, she always goes the extra mile to help them progress toward reaching their goals.



Home Health Aide **Joleen Rust** has been an exemplary member of the Visiting Nurse Service of Schenectady and Saratoga Counties since 2000. She is reliable, patient and demonstrates excellent hands-on care.

One distinguishing characteristic of her work ethic is that Ms. Rust serves her patients on foot, having clocked more than 22,000 hours and countless miles of caring service to the patients she calls her own, braving storms of snow, ice, rain and hail – a true testament to her caring nature and her unflagging dedication.



Caring Award Winner Joleen Rust
with HCA President Joanne Cunningham.

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Often seen with a backpack strapped to her shoulders and a plastic kerchief protecting her head from the elements, Ms. Rust rarely lets a bad day get her down. She remains cheerful and eager to take care of individuals homebound by illness and unable to care for themselves, and she makes a tremendous difference in all whose lives she touches.

Ms. Rust is truly an example of the very broad definition of caring. Those fortunate enough to know her at the VNS of Schenectady and Saratoga Counties are not only thankful for her helping hands but are grateful beyond words for her faithful feet.

The Advocacy (Giraffe) Award – Michelle Mazzacco

The Advocacy (Giraffe) Award recognizes a provider agency or person (including both elected and appointed officials) who took risks or “stuck their neck out” to improve the home care industry, clients and workers through their advocacy efforts.

Advocating vigorously and passionately on behalf of New York State’s home care community comes naturally to **Michelle Mazzacco**, Vice President/Director of Eddy Home Care, a division of Northeast Health.

Ms. Mazzacco has the gift and talent of being able to successfully articulate a complex position or issue with great eloquence. In doing so, she comes armed with facts, figures and indisputable data to support her argument. Whether in a budget or policy discussion with federal or state officials, meetings with individual lawmakers and policymakers, discussions with peers across the state, or any forum focused on the challenges that face home care providers and patients, there is no better advocate and representative of the home care provider community than Michelle Mazzacco.

HCA is honored to count Ms. Mazzacco as a member of our Board of Directors, where she has served since 1996. In that role, she has been tapped numerous times to serve in various leadership capacities, including as Treasurer, as First Vice Chairperson, and as a longtime member of HCA’s Executive Committee.

In addition, Ms. Mazzacco has been chosen to represent HCA and New York State’s home care community on many other official occasions, including her delivery of compelling budget testimony before the New York State Legislature and, recently, in her appointment by the state Commissioner of Health to serve on the Department of Health’s Home Care Reimbursement Workgroup.

In all of these roles, Ms. Mazzacco is at her best as a fierce, articulate, passionate and knowledgeable representative of New York State’s home care provider community. Her persistent, unrelenting and selfless efforts to seek the greater good, advance constructive ideas, and build dialogue among diverse stakeholders all contributed to Ms. Mazzacco’s selection as HCA’s 2010 Advocacy (Giraffe) Award recipient.



Advocacy (Giraffe) Award Winner Michelle Mazzacco with HCA President Joanne Cunningham.

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The Ruth F. Wilson Award – Michele Quirolo



Ruth F. Wilson Award Winner Michele Quirolo

HCA's highest honor, the Ruth F. Wilson Award, is bestowed upon an individual who has demonstrated exceptional dedication and made a significant contribution to home care over a period of time. With this award, HCA recognizes someone whose work has had a dramatic effect on home care, reaching beyond a single agency. The recipient will have strengthened the practice of our profession, raised the standards of quality and care for patients, or advanced the level of understanding and mutual cooperation among the home care community, legislators, federal and state agencies, health care providers and the public. This prestigious award recognizes an individual who has made our services stronger and more visible and who has never wavered from his or her support of home care.

Michele Quirolo, President and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association of Hudson Valley, has been a consummate advocate for home care and holds an exemplary record of supporting the field.

Ms. Quirolo has been a voice and leader in home health care for over 31 years, making her mark both locally and nationally since the very outset of her career. In 1982, as New York State's first Home Health Intake Coordinator, she created policies and protocols which were replicated in several acute care facilities, setting the pace for other home health care agencies to follow suit. It was clear very early on that Ms. Quirolo would become one of home care's vigorous champions and leaders.

Ms. Quirolo has been active with HCA for 16 years, holding many leadership roles including Board Chairperson. A tireless advocate for home care, she is a consistent supporter of statewide and national advocacy efforts and can always be found working with legislators on behalf of home care and the patients served by New York's provider community.

More recently, Ms. Quirolo has been named Chairperson of the National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC) Board, having previously served as Vice Chairperson. Her expertise and visionary planning are well suited for this incredibly visible and influential position. For almost ten years, she has been an active participant in the leadership at NAHC, of which VNA of Hudson Valley was a founding member.

During her 16-year tenure with the VNA of Hudson Valley, Ms. Quirolo has collaborated with community leaders and health care executives to significantly transform the agency. She led the agency's affiliation with Sound Shore Health System, as well as the VNA's inclusion in the Pinnacle Healthcare Network, the largest hospital network north of New York City. Her tireless efforts have grown a small local home health care agency into the largest family of home health care organizations in Westchester County, an immediate suburb of New York City.

In keeping with the VNA's mission – *To provide quality health care to all, regardless of ability to pay* – Ms. Quirolo responded to a need in the community by providing a senior education program called Health Power to residents living in public apartment buildings, an underserved population.

Further expanding access for patients, Ms. Quirolo incorporated doctors' visits into the agency's home care services through a partnership with the Sound Shore Medical System. Very recently, a cooperative effort between the

VNA of Hudson Valley/ Hospice Care in Westchester & Putnam and Northern Westchester Hospital Center (NWHC) created palliative care beds at NWHC which can be used for hospice patients or those with chronic pain management needs, accommodating their families in an adjacent room. This configuration, the first in a hospital setting in Westchester County, is certain to be replicated.

Ms. Quirolo is an expert who eagerly shares her knowledge. She leads by example and invites a free flow of ideas in the workplace, constantly promoting education for the professional growth of her staff and the benefit of patients. She opens the agency to nursing students, hosting classes and personally mentoring graduate nursing students pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Health Administration.

Michele Quirolo has been an incredible advocate for home health care and a tireless champion of the causes faced by all providers. She continually pursues initiatives that will benefit patients, with a full appreciation for the important role that home care plays in health services delivery. She is a leader in the field and a role model to many.

For her unflagging leadership, innovativeness, flexibility, sheer tenacity, and, above all, compassionate caring that have enhanced the lives of patients and colleagues, HCA proudly presents Michele Quirolo with the 2010 Ruth F. Wilson award.

HCA Welcomes New Board Members

HCA would like to welcome the newest members of our Board of Directors, who were introduced to the membership at this week's Annual Conference.

June Castle: CEO/President, Finger Lakes Visiting Nurse Service

Ms. Castle has 13 years of extensive administrative home health care experience. She joined Finger Lakes Visiting Nurse Service in 1997 and was appointed President and CEO in 2009. That same year she also obtained her Home Care Executive Certification. Her commitment to home health care has inspired her to play an active role in advocacy efforts on the local, state and federal levels. In her new role she has developed strong relationships with key acute care providers, community leaders and local political representatives, educating and creating awareness of the benefits of home care in the communities we serve.

In her tenure as the CEO, she has helped to position Finger Lakes VNS for future changes and challenges. Her previous role as the Director of Finance prepared her with a clear understanding of reimbursement mechanisms and budgeting. She has been an active member of HCA and values the support and leadership that the Association gives to New York State home health care providers.

Ilaina Edison: Senior Vice President, Operations Visiting Nurse Service of New York

Ms. Edison has over 25 years of experience in health care and health care management. She joined Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) in May 2001 as Vice President, Performance Improvement and was promoted to Vice President, Operations for VNSNY Specialized Service in June 2005.

In her current position, Ms. Edison is responsible for oversight of the Behavioral Health program, Children and Family Services, Long Term Home Health Care, Community Mental Health Services, Infusion, Visiting Physicians' Program and Rehabilitation Services.

Prior to joining VNSNY, Ms. Edison held a succession of positions at Deloitte and Touche where she provided consulting services to senior management of leading health care organizations. Other past positions include Home Care Nurse Coordinator for Long Island Jewish Medical Center and Staff Nurse and Assistant Nurse Manager at New England Medical Center in Boston.

Ms. Edison earned her B.S. in nursing from Binghamton University and her MBA in health care management from Baruch College/Mount

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Sinai School of Medicine. In May 2009, Ms. Edison completed The Practice Change Fellows program, a two-year fellowship program funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and the Hartford Foundation, designed to build leadership capacity among nurses, physicians, and social workers who have operational responsibility for aging programs and geriatric service lines.

Mary Jane Gigatti: CEO/President, VNR Home Care Services

Ms. Gigatti is CEO/President of VNR Home Care Services, (parent company to the Visiting Nurse Association of Brooklyn, Empire State Home Care Services) and has over 30 years experience in all aspects of the health care industry. She has worked to stabilize and grow the agency so that it can continue with its mission – since 1888 – of community home care. While she is a keen financial executive, and contributes her insight and expertise to the policies and regulations that impact the home care industry on a daily basis, it is the quality of care and overall concern for the patient that remains her first priority.

Russell Lusak, LNHA: Vice President, Administration, Selfhelp Community Services

Mr. Lusak, LNHA has over 12 years of experience in the health care field. He brings unparalleled experience as an Administrator, with a strong knowledge of organization dynamics and systems analysis; he has also proven to successfully reengineer programs with exceptional results.

Mr. Lusak has been at Selfhelp Community Services for over two years and has implemented several changes within the home care programs that have led to positive financial gains. He was also instrumental in developing the new website and marketing materials.

Mr. Lusak was recently given responsibility over Senior Source, Selfhelp's private geriatric care management program, where his talents will be utilized to grow the census. Prior to joining Selfhelp, Mr. Lusak served as Director of Marketing for Jefferson's Ferry Lifecare Retirement Community, where, in addition to his many accomplishments, his

coordination of marketing efforts for an independent living program resulted in a 5 percent census increase and yielded a 99 percent occupancy rate.

Mr. Lusak spent four years as Assistant Vice President of Administration for Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation, overseeing Food Services, Information Services, Medical Records and Quality Management. As a result of his leadership, a \$3 million Information Technology strategic plan was developed and implemented.

He has also administered a Long Term Home Health Care Program, Medical Model Adult Day Care, Social Model Adult Day Care, Hospice Care, and a Diagnostic and Treatment Center. While much of his career has been in service to the elderly, Mr. Lusak's background also includes service to children with disabilities and special health care needs as well as acute care. Mr. Lusak holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Long Island University, a Bachelor's of Business Administration from St. Bonaventure University and is a licensed Nursing Home Administrator in New York State.

Mary Kate Rolf: Executive Director, Home Care Services of Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare

Ms. Rolf is the Executive Director of Home Care Services of Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare, which consists of a Certified Home Health Agency, a Long Term Home Health Care Program, a Managed Long Term Care Plan, and a licensed agency with a home medical equipment company.

Over the past eighteen months, Ms. Rolf strategically aligned these separate organizations under one management structure for the Mohawk Valley's largest health care organization. She has over 15 years experience in health care management, with 10 years in long term and community based care. Ms. Rolf is very active in her community and participates on several committees and not-for-profit boards, including the Leadership Mohawk Valley Board of Directors, the Rome Chamber Professional Development Committee, and the Oneida County Public Health Professional Advisory Committee. Ms. Rolf has an MBA and a Master's Degree in Health Service Administration from the SUNY Institute of Technology, and is a New York State Licensed Nursing Home Administrator.