



## INFECTION CONTROL ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE)

### **The Energy of Many**

Report on the 19th Annual National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care, 9-12  
December 2007, Orlando, Florida, USA

Dr Ling Moi Lin, President, Infection Control Association, Singapore

This year's forum was well attended by 6,000 people from around the world and many more via satellite broadcast. Much has been accomplished through the Save 100,000 Lives Campaign 2 years ago. The "Protect 5 Million Lives" Campaign was launched in December 2006. To date, over 3,700 hospitals have enrolled in this campaign to avoid 5 million patient injuries over a 2-year period. Publications have been made on the many successes gleaned from this campaign. Moving forward, IHI's CEO, Don Berwick shared the concept that the synergistic efforts of many will light a light bulb – the energy of many. We are truly living in a most exciting era with many of our hospitals bearing the mantle of leadership for change, The very large presence of delegates from various countries testify to the existence of such a powerful movement worldwide. Although there is still a very long way to go to get the quality, safety and efficiency, we can and should have in healthcare, if numbers matter, then perhaps "if we focus our brain waves on getting the care system we really want... who knows?"

The minicourse, "The Incredible Improvement Advisor", led by Sandra K Murray and Cliff Norman, gave useful tips on being one. Using the Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI), delegates identified their strengths and learnt how to use these in improving their relationship with others.

Both Robert C Lloyd and Lindsay A Martin led the insightful sessions on "Back to the Basics: Building Essential Skills for Quality and Patient Safety". An overview of quality models, tools and techniques, and team management essentials, as well as suggestions on how to test, implement and spread strategies to improve quality and patient safety.

Sarah Jones, a Tony Award winning playwright, actress and poet, raised the delegates' awareness of social inequalities through soliloquy at her presentation, "A Right to Care". Even as we strive towards quality and patient safety, there are still other obstacles yet to be addressed e.g. racial prejudice, class status, etc.

The conference ended with Atul A Gawande's presentation on the next WHO Global Challenge for Patient Safety in Surgery. As the Director of this initiative, we can expect to hear more from him at various platforms in the next 2 years championing this cause with the same passion as Didier Pittet who led the "Clean Care is Safer Care" program in 2005-2006. For 2007-2008, the Global Patient Safety Challenge will focus on the topic of safer surgery with the theme "Safe Surgery Saves Lives", a campaign that can potentially affect the lives of millions of people worldwide. By defining a core set of minimum standards that can be applied universally across borders and settings, the Safe Surgery Saves Lives Challenge hopes to create an environment of safety that will help improve both access to and care of surgical patients. Gawande shared on the coming release of the Surgical Safety Checklist that can be used by practitioners interested in promoting safety and improving quality of surgical services. The checklist is designed to be simple and widely applicable. It aims to reinforce established safety practices, and many of the steps are already accepted as routine in facilities around the world. It also aims to foster better communication and teamwork among clinical disciplines. The checklist is intended as a tool for use by clinicians interested in improving the safety of their operations and reducing unnecessary surgical deaths and complications.