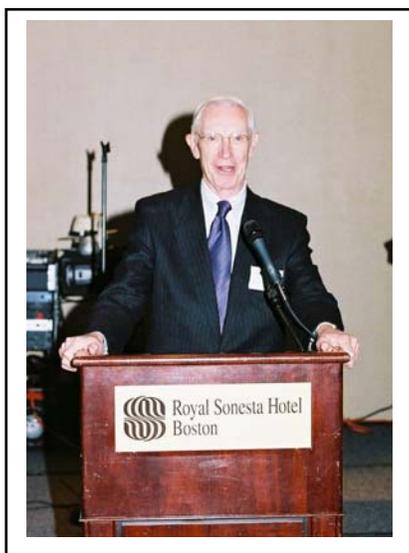




# MITSS News



## Welcome

In this edition of the MITSS Newsletter, there are highlights from the Fourth Annual Dinner and Fundraiser, plus announcement of the new MITSS Office space, and the Newton Wellesley Hospital Grant. Linda Kenney is chosen for a prestigious Patient Safety Leadership Fellowship, and keep up to date with Names in the News!

Be sure and see the special photo gallery from the fundraiser that showcases the highlights of the evening.

**Happy  
Holidays**

### *MITSS Newsletter Contributors*

- Linda Kenney
- Winifred Nee Tobin  
(Contributing editor)
- Paul Sneyd (Photography)
- Lisa Wattlely
- James Marshall

## MITSS Fourth Annual Dinner and Fundraiser

*By Winifred Nee Tobin*

The MITSS Fourth Annual Dinner and Fundraiser was held on Thursday, October 27th, 2005, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge. Serving as chairperson for the evening was Jeanette Clough, President and CEO of the Mt. Auburn Hospital. Lucian Leape, MD, of the Harvard School of Public Health provided the keynote address. Attending the event were local and national health care leaders, representatives of various professional organizations, frontline caregivers, as well as patients and family members all supporting the MITSS mission.

The evening began with a cocktail reception followed by dinner and a wonderful lineup of speakers. Winifred Tobin, MITSS Executive Director, served as emcee for the program, first introducing the Dinner Chairperson, Jeanette Clough.

Ms. Clough is a powerful advocate for patient safety and is a regular spokesperson for the role of the Chief Executive Officer in leading safer organizations. One of the highlights of her presentation was when she recalled her recent experience as a patient. She reminded the health care leadership in the audience of just how vulnerable we all become when finding ourselves as patients.

Ms. Clough then introduced Dr. Leape, an internationally recognized leader in the patient safety movement and a true visionary in the healthcare field. Dr. Leape spoke about the power of apology and the need for support following an adverse outcome. He called upon caregivers to “do the right thing” for their patients as well as themselves. Dr. Leape reminded the group that care does not end when a patient is released from the hospital, but clinicians must continue to provide support for their patients even post discharge. Dr. Rick van Pelt, newly elected Chairman of the MITSS Board of Directors, came to the podium next. He reaffirmed his commitment to MITSS and spoke of his readiness for the challenges ahead as he assumes his new role.

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He reiterated that the time is now for the MITSS message to be strengthened, and additional funding will be crucial in maintaining our organization as well as expanding our services statewide and beyond. MITSS President, Linda Kenney, finished the evening's presentations, thanking all who attended, sponsors for the event, the Annual Dinner and Fundraiser Leadership Committee, and the MITSS Board of Directors. She outlined the MITSS strategic plan for the upcoming year and welcomed collaborative efforts with those in the group in an effort to achieve our common goals.

The Dinner came to an end with the announcement of the raffle winners. Paul Mordarski, MITSS Board member, served as emcee for the raffle, assisted by MITSS volunteers, Joan Fitzmaurice and Jim Marshall. He presented some

lucky winners with assorted prizes ranging from a Thomas Dunlay print of Fenway Park, a golf outing for four, and tickets to the Broadway production of Spamalot, to name a few. It was an evening of celebration, not only looking back on this past year's accomplishments, but looking toward the future with a renewed spirit and commitment to furthering our mission. See you next year!!

### **Newton Wellesley Hospital/MITSS Collaboration Receives RMF/HRI Grant**

*By Winifred Nee Tobin*

Newton Wellesley Hospital in consultation with MITSS has received grant funding from the Risk Management Foundation and Healthcare Research Institute for their proposal entitled: "What You Don't Know Can Hurt You: A Demonstration Project on the Implementation of a Formal Full Disclosure of Unanticipated Outcomes and Medical Errors Program." Lynn Nuti, Risk Manager for NWH, and Linda Kenney, MITSS President, will serve as co-investigators for the project together with Leslie Selbovitz, MD, Senior Vice President for Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer, Physician Champion.

The focus of the project centers around disclosure training for clinicians, training of a peer support team, as well as providing support for patients and families in the aftermath of an adverse event.

The project will run for the next 12 months and has the capability of making a strong impact on Newton Wellesley Hospital in the area of patient safety. MITSS applauds Newton Wellesley's initiative and looks forward to

working with them over the next year in an effort to maximize the impact of this most important grant opportunity.

### **MITSS Announces Relocation of Offices**

*By Winifred Nee Tobin*

Chestnut Hill, MA - Medically Induced Trauma Support Services (MITSS) is pleased to announce that we have relocated our offices. Brigham and Women's Hospital of Boston, Massachusetts, has most graciously donated the use of our new space. MITSS would like to thank Brigham and Women's for its generosity as well as for its strong support of our mission. In our new home, MITSS will continue to operate as an independent non-profit corporation committed to *Supporting Healing and Restoring Hope* to all those impacted by adverse medical events.

Our new address is:

830 Boylston Street, Suite 206  
Chestnut Hill, MA  
New Telephone Number:  
(617) 232-0090  
Toll Free Number (same):  
1-888-36MITSS

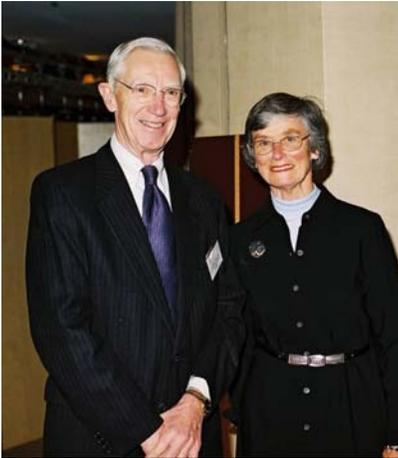
**Enjoy the  
Holiday  
Season**



# Photo Gallery

*Our sincere thanks and appreciation to Paul Sneyd for his contribution of the photography in this gallery and throughout the newsletter.*

## Honored Guests



Lucian and Martie Leape



Winnie Tobin and Jeanette Clough



Paul Mordarski and Jim Marshall



Over 200 in attendance



Linda Kenney



MITSS Volunteers, Julie Scully and Bridget Aucoin



Connie Crowley-Ganser, Geraldine Nelson, and Leslie Kirle



Paula Griswold, Linda Prince, Gina Rodgers, and John Fromson



Deb Mulloy purchasing raffle tickets from Nancy LaFarge



David Baron, Linda Kenney, and Julius Yang



Frank Fortin, Corinne Broderick, Liz Rover Bailey, and William Ryder



Jim Conway, Martie and Lucian Leape



Frank Federico and Joanne Conway



MITSS Volunteers – Joan Fitzmaurice, Janet Bean, and Nancy LaFarge



Inge and Willem van Pelt



Deirdre Murdock, Adam Welsh, and Susan Penfield



Dr. Rick van Pelt



Karen Nelson, Tom Augello, and Bob Hanscom



Karen Nelson, Maureen Connor, and Janet Barnes



**MITSS**  
"To Support Healing and Restore Hope"

## Healing and Hope

### A Patient's Story

By Lisa Wattley

It's Halloween Day, 2003. A mom dresses her two boys, ages 9 months and 3, in their costumes for a visit to Grandpa, who is in the hospital due to recent exploratory surgery. As the family enters the room, 2 hospital staff members, both with masks and gloves, are assisting Grandpa. Mom wonders aloud why the staff has masks on but receives no answer. Meanwhile, the staff makes comments about how cute the grandchildren are and

Grandpa seems pleased to see his boys.

Later that night, Mom receives one of those phone calls you hear about in magazine stories - one of those calls that change everything. Nana is on the line saying that Grandpa has something contagious called MRSA and that Mom should probably wash her hands after she visits with Grandpa in the future.

That mom, of course, was me. My name is Lisa Wattley and I live with my husband and two sons in Plantation, Florida, just west of

Fort Lauderdale. Grandpa was my father, William Cosentino. The episode above marked the beginning of a long and as of yet incomplete journey into the shadowy world of patient safety and infection control. I say shadowy because that's how patient safety appears to me - some nebulous, secretive issue that is often dismissed by both the medical profession, patients and their loved ones.

To continue with our story, I spent several frantic hours that evening trying to find out about MRSA in

the hopes that my two sons were safe. A nurse friend, who refused to give specifics about what MRSA could do, suggested that I call my pediatrician. The hospital nurse assigned to my father that evening also would give me little information. She did mention a small sign posted the window of my father's room. Hadn't we seen that?

I did eventually get the information I needed. MRSA is short for Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus. This bacteria is sometimes called a super bug because of its resistance to certain types of antibiotics. Highly contagious, it can be transmitted on clothing, medical and other equipment, and can live outside the body for three hours. If this bacteria, which can remain on the skin without causing harm, somehow travels into a patient's body (such as through a catheter or other tube), it can lead to such complications as pneumonia, blood poisoning, and bone infections. Although many healthcare providers point out that MRSA is usually only a danger to patients with a weakened immune system, MRSA has been known to infect infants, healthy adults, and even NFL football players. According to the Centers for Disease Control information sheet on MRSA for healthcare workers,

*"The main mode of transmission of MRSA is via hands (especially health care workers' hands) which may become contaminated by contact with a) colonized or infected patients, b) colonized or infected body sites of the personnel themselves, or c) devices, items, or environmental surfaces contaminated with body fluids containing MRSA."*

In other words, a patient is infected with MRSA most often

because healthcare workers do not wash their hands when they are supposed to.

As for our family, MRSA had a devastating impact. The surgery, my father had before our fateful Halloween visit, revealed lung cancer. Our plan was to have our father at home, surrounded by those he loved, enjoying his Dunkin' Donuts and his boxing on tv with as much comfort and love until the cancer took him from us. Instead, MRSA led to pneumonia, which led to the use of a ventilator, a tracheotomy, and a gastric feeding tube. My father never again got to hold any of his grandchildren on his lap as he sat in his recliner. He never saw his own home again. On December 21, 2003, our family made the decision to end life support for my father. The cause of death on the certificate read cancer.

Throughout the two months between my father's initial diagnosis with MRSA and his death, I repeatedly requested information from the hospital staff without satisfactory results. I could not get beyond the cursory hand patting. "No, there was not a forum to share my experiences. We're going to do some training in a few months. Yes, it's tough getting staff to wash their hands." I also observed the staff caring for my father using varying levels of infection precautions. (That's "med speak" for what you wear and what you do to prevent carrying infection with you to other patients. Gloves, masks, hand washing would be included.) Some staff came in looking like they are from the set of that movie, "Andromeda Strain." Others were bare handed and some even drew blood without gloves.

The information I learned on my own about infection precautions was a bit of a shock to say the least. Here are a few tidbits:

- Healthcare providers only wash their hands about 50% of the time
- Doctors are worse at this than nurses
- It's cheaper to prevent infections than to treat them
- 80,000 people die annually in the US from hospital acquired infections
- Most states do not require hospitals to report infection rates

Armed with this information and what I learned on my own about MRSA, I wrote a letter to the hospital infection control specialist and copied it to the hospital board of directors, state department of health, and (JCAHO) Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization, which accredits the hospital.

Two days later I was called by the chief nursing officer from the hospital and a meeting was scheduled during which our experiences were reviewed. The hospital did not deny what occurred. A committee was formed to revolutionize the hand hygiene practices and mindset of the staff. (Hand hygiene is more "med speak" for cleaning your hands). This was no small project. We have been working nearing two years on what I consider to be progressive changes. I was even invited to video tape a message detailing my father's case so that employee's could hear from an actual victim.

I would so much like to report that things have changed, that the day to day practices of the hospital system that allowed my

father to contract his infection have changed. Sadly, we recently had a family member enter the same hospital. When visiting her, I was dismayed (okay, stunned is a better word). Why didn't healthcare workers wash their hands consistently (even after I repeatedly spoke with the charge nurses)? Where were the patient information brochures on hand washing? Where was the language in the admission papers that clearly informed the patient of her right to have all staff wash their hands? And finally, sadly, was my two years of work with the hospital in vain?

As I write this, I am awaiting a meeting with the original hospital staff regarding these issues.

I was privileged to speak with Linda Kenney recently. Thanks to hearing her shared experiences in attempting institutional change in

the hospital, I was able to sleep again. (Have two years of heart wrenching work invalidated sometime and see how you cope.) Linda Kenney encouraged me to continue to work for change in the culture of the hospital in an effort to prevent future pain and grief for patients and their families.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to Linda and MITSS for being a sane, rational voice for patients and their family. Who said, the longest journey begins with a single step... Thanks to Linda, I am continuing this journey. With help from God and an understanding family, I hope to be able to look back on this time as one that I hope would make my father proud.

### **Patient Support Group**

**Are you a patient or have a family member who is suffering from a medical trauma?**

If you are a patient or have a family member who has suffered a medical trauma (negative emotional toll resulting from a medical error or otherwise adverse event), help is available. MITSS sponsors ongoing patient and family educational support groups to assist individuals in processing the event, educate regarding the effects of post traumatic stress often associated with a medical trauma, and promote the healing process for participating group members. Susan LaFarge, Psy.D., Clinical Psychologist, will lead this group.

Sign-up for the group is ongoing. Dates and times will be determined based on consensus. If you would like to enroll or have any questions, please give us a call at (617) 232-0090. Call us today and begin your journey of healing.

## *Progress and Recognition*

### **Linda Kenney Chosen HRET/AHA Patient Safety Leadership Fellow**

*By Winifred Nee Tobin*

Linda Kenney, MITSS President, has been chosen as a Fellow for the 2005 - 2006 Patient Safety Leadership Fellowship sponsored by the Health Research & Educational Trust in partnership with the American Hospital Association. She has the further distinction of being the first Patient/Consumer to participate in the Fellowship. The objective of Ms. Kenney's Action Learning Project is to expand the services of MITSS beyond the greater Boston area and to other regions of Massachusetts, while simultaneously creating a blueprint for

other states to develop similar supports using the MITSS Model.

MITSS is pleased and proud that Linda is participating in this prestigious Fellowship, and we look forward to the results of her Action Learning Project when the program concludes in the summer of 2006.

### **Dr. van Pelt Named Chairman, MITSS Board of Directors**

MITSS is pleased to announce that Frederick A. van Pelt, MD, MBA, has been named Chairman of its Board of Directors. Rick attended Amherst College and the University of Massachusetts Medical School. After spending a year as a research fellow at the National Institute of Health, he

spent two years as a surgical resident before transitioning into and finishing a residency and fellowship in anesthesiology at the Brigham and Women's Hospital. Throughout his medical training, Dr. van Pelt developed an interest in improving patient care and service. Dr. van Pelt went on to attend Harvard Business School to develop the further skills necessary to serve as an effective leader at the institutional and industry levels. Since completing his MBA in 1999, Dr. van Pelt has been actively involved in health improvement initiatives, including patient safety, in academic and private healthcare settings as well as in the healthcare industry. He is currently on staff at the Brigham and Women's Hospital serving

both clinical and administrative functions.

## **MITSS Video Project Underway**

*By Winifred Nee Tobin*

MITSS is currently wrapping up production of its video project. The video is being underwritten by the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital of Boston. The video and accompanying literature will serve to stimulate discussion of the difficulties for organizations and individuals surrounding the issues of full disclosure, apology, and support following unanticipated outcomes and medical errors. We are very excited about the project and hope to have it available for distribution some time in the spring of 2006.

## **MITSS President Recipient of 2005 Bank of America Local Heroes Award**

*By Winifred Nee Tobin*

Linda K. Kenney, Founder and President of Medically Induced Trauma Support Services (MITSS), has been chosen a recipient of the 2005 Bank of America Local Heroes Awards! The Neighborhood Excellence Initiative (NEI) Awards Ceremony was held on Monday, November 21st, 2005, at Bank of America's Federal Street location in Boston. Ms. Kenney was recognized for her dedication and support in making Greater Boston a great place to live and work.

When asked by a Bank of America representative, "What does it mean to be acknowledged as a local hero, and what will the \$5,000.00 mean to your non-profit?" Ms. Kenney replied, "None of what I have been doing would be possible without the support I've received from family,

friends, and colleagues. The \$5,000.00 will help us to continue the work that we've already begun. More importantly, it will be validation for the hard work of all those involved with MITSS."

MITSS is pleased and proud that Linda Kenney has received this prestigious award, and we applaud her dedication, hard work, and commitment to furthering our mission of "Supporting Healing and Restoring Hope" to all those impacted by medical errors and adverse medical events.

## **Nurses Support Group**

**Are you a nurse experiencing personal and/or professional difficulty as a result of an adverse medical event?**

MITSS sponsors ongoing Educational Support Groups for nurses who have been affected by an adverse medical event, either directly or indirectly. The group is designed to help nursing professionals struggling with the emotional fallout, both personally and/or professionally, from a medical error or negative medical outcome. Linda A. Standley, MA, LMHC, a Licensed Mental Health Counselor with 15 years of experience specializing in trauma will be facilitating the group. Participation will include sharing with other nursing colleagues in an effort to offset the long-term effects of a medical trauma. Registration is ongoing with dates and times to be determined.

If you are a nurse who is having difficulty dealing with the emotional aftermath brought on by an adverse medical event, we urge you to give us a call at (617) 232-0090 or toll free at 888-36MITSS. All contact will be kept strictly confidential. Call us today and begin your journey of healing.

## **MITSS Collaboration with Booz Allen Hamilton/Babson College**

*By Winifred Nee Tobin*

MITSS has had the great privilege of working with Booz Allen Hamilton during this past year. Booz Allen is a global strategy and technology consulting firm, and they have assisted us in developing a strategic plan that will map out the future of our organization. Booz Allen has also sponsored a partnership between MITSS and students from Babson College's MCFE Program. MBA students from Babson are currently in the process of defining those tactical approaches that will need to be undertaken in order to meet our strategic goals. We look forward to the final project as developed by the MCFE Fellows as well as to our continued collaboration with Booz Allen.

## **Names in the News**

*By Winifred Nee Tobin*

**Rick van Pelt, M.D.**, Chairman of MITSS Board of Directors has been named one of the five finalists in the Kenneth B. Schwartz Foundation's 6th Annual Compassionate Caregiver Award. The Compassionate Caregiver Award recognizes caregivers who make exceptional efforts to connect with their patients, listening to their needs, respecting their values and culture, and imparting strength and hope especially in times of crisis.

**John A. Fromson, M.D.**, MITSS Board of Directors has accepted a new position as the Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Director of Behavioral Medicine at MetroWest Medical Center.



MITSS  
830 Boylston Street, Suite 206  
Chestnut Hill, MA

## Medically Induced Trauma Support Services (MITSS)

<b>President and Founder</b> Linda K. Kenney	<b>Executive Director</b> Winifred N. Tobin	<b>Chairman of the Board</b> Frederick A. van Pelt, MD, MBA
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	Susan LaFarge, Psy.D.	