

# 2009 HOPE AWARD WINNER

## Patty Skolnik – Colorado Citizens for Accountability



Patty Skolnik

MITSS Annual  
**HOPE** Award  
Honoring Outstanding People Everywhere  
who have furthered the MITSS mission of supporting healing and restoring hope

MITSS is proud to recognize **Patty Skolnik** as the Co-Recipient of the Second Annual HOPE Award. Ms. Skolnik was rewarded for her work with the Colorado Citizens for Accountability (CCA). She founded this organization along with her husband, David, in 2005 following a 32-month medical nightmare which resulted in the death of her only son, Michael. When asked about the most important thing she has learned over the past four years, Ms. Skolnik replied, "You can suffer a great loss, but you have a choice as to how to handle it. Anger and grief has a place, but taking that and transforming it into a solution is the best healer and the best reward for everyone."

Colorado Citizens for Accountability (CCA) is a patient safety organization dedicated to providing support and resources to individuals and families nationwide. CCA has "taken off like a shot out of a canon largely due to Patty's determination," according to Judith Ham, President and CEO of CP Colorado. "Never before has Colorado seen a patient safety group that has generated the amount of momentum and performed as successfully as CCA, now listing 3,000 supporters and growing," Ms. Ham added.

Under Patty Skolnik's stewardship, CCA sets its goals as the following:

- To increase consumer education activities so they take an active role in their health, healthcare, and in the healthcare reform process.
- To convene medical professionals, consumers, lawyers, insurers, hospitals, and legislators to discuss possible solutions.
- To increase efficiency and transparency regarding the safety and quality of healthcare in the Colorado healthcare system.
- To improve navigation of the healthcare system by all Coloradans.
- To strengthen relationships with local organizations.

In pursuit of these goals, CCA plans to provide medical advocacy training; organize and conduct community presentations; produce/disperse personal patient medical journals; and, expand services offered to the public to include case management activities.

Ms. Skolnik reflected on her vision for the future when she said, "Citizens for Patient Safety and Colorado Citizens for Accountability will continue to engage patients and providers to help them heal, to continue to pass legislation for transparency nationally, and to learn from errors so that they may be shared for educational purposes."

When asked to sum up her feelings about winning the HOPE Award, Ms. Skolnik responded, "It was such an honor to receive the HOPE Award for the work I started because of the loss of my son. Now to be able to work not only with patients but with medical professionals as partners to restore hope and help fix the system for others is what Michael would have wanted. I am humbled by this award." Congratulations, Patty Skolnik, for this much deserved honor.

If you would like more information about the Colorado Citizens for Accountability, contact Patty Skolnik at (303) 226-5526 or e-mail to [patty@citizensforpatientsafety.org](mailto:patty@citizensforpatientsafety.org).

*"You can suffer a great loss, but you have a choice as to how to handle it. Anger and grief has a place, but taking that and transforming it into a solution is the best healer and the best reward for everyone."*