

# MITSS Newsletter

Spring/2007

## DR. DONALD BERWICK TO PROVIDE KEYNOTE AT MITSS SIXTH ANNUAL DINNER AND FUNDRAISER



Dr. Donald Berwick

MITSS is delighted to announce that Dr. Donald Berwick has honored our organization by agreeing to provide the keynote address for our Sixth Annual Dinner and Fundraiser to be held Thursday, November 15th, 2007, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, MA, from 5:30 to 10:00 pm.

pediatric health care provider organizations. In 2002, he was given the "Award of Honor" from the American Hospital Association for outstanding leadership in improving health care quality, and in 2004 he was inducted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in London. In 2005, in recognition of his exemplary work for the National Health Service in the U.K., he was appointed honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire – the highest award given to non-British citizens. In 2006, he received from the National

# MITSS



Medically Induced Trauma  
Support Services

Donald M. Berwick, MD, MPP, is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. IHI is a not-for-profit organization leading the improvement of health care throughout the world. Founded in 1991 and based in Cambridge, MA, IHI is a catalyst for change, cultivating innovative concepts for improving patient care and implementing programs for putting those ideas into action. Thousands of health care providers participate in IHI's groundbreaking work.

Dr. Berwick is Clinical Professor of Pediatrics and Health Care Policy in the Department of Pediatrics at the Harvard Medical School and Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Harvard School of Public Health. He is also a pediatrician, Adjunct Staff in the Department of Medicine at Boston's Children's Hospital, and a Consultant in Pediatrics at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Dr. Berwick has received numerous awards and honors for his work, including the 1999 Ernest A. Codman Award, and, in 2001, the first Alfred I. DuPont Award for excellence in children's health care from Nemours, one of the nation's largest



Royal Sonesta Hotel

Quality Forum and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations the John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Award for Individual Achievement for making significant and lasting contributions to improving patient safety and health care quality.

We are extremely fortunate to have Dr. Berwick on board for our most important event of the year. In addition to his monumental

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SUPPORTING HEALING. RESTORING HOPE.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?



I've attended a couple of healthcare conferences lately, "manning" the MITSS booth, and have been somewhat surprised at how often I get asked about the name of our organization. Amazingly, at least to me, there seem to be some misconceptions, or at least some confusion, about the term "medically induced trauma." There have

even been a few people who have gone so far as to advise us to change our name!

I admit that I have absolutely no objectivity regarding this matter – eating and sleeping MITSS over the past four years has removed any shred of doubt, iota of confusion, or scintilla of uncertainty that I may have had back in 2003. But, I've decided to step back a bit and look at this issue from a fresh perspective.

The most common feedback that I get is that the term "medically induced trauma" evokes an image of some type of life-threatening physical injury like that requiring a trip to the emergency room. Thinking back, I've probably heard this mostly from nurses. My colleagues tell me that healthcare administrators, particularly risk managers, are often troubled by the term since they feel that there is "culpability" inherent in it. Some of our callers, especially those who may be angry with the healthcare system because of a bad experience, have interpreted our name to mean that we are advocates for malpractice litigation, and we can put them in touch with a good lawyer.

Those in the mental health field seem to have the best handle on the definition. For them, the word *trauma* is defined as *an experience or event that produces psychological pain*. (This is also what I found when I looked it up in the dictionary.) So, the understanding would be some sort of trauma experienced in a medical setting.

It appears that when confronted with a new term or phrase, people will color what it means by their own experiences, fears, and familiarities. That would certainly hold true for the previous scenarios.

So, here's my attempt at setting the record straight. MITSS defines medically induced trauma as an unexpected outcome that occurs during medical and/or surgical care. These events may affect the

emotional well being of the patient, family member, or clinician. It is an emotional injury resulting from a patient's care, not disease process. This may or may not be due to a medical error.

MITSS does not look to point fingers or assign blame. On the contrary, we have forged many strong partnerships and collaborations within the healthcare community and actively seek to cultivate new ones. We believe that our vitality and effectiveness in achieving our mission are directly related to the depth and strength of these partnerships.

MITSS does not involve itself in the legal issues surrounding medical errors and adverse events. We do, however, advocate strongly for disclosure, apology, and support in the aftermath of an unanticipated outcome.

As the second half of our name suggests, we are all about the *support*. As more and more hospitals begin to adopt disclosure and apology policies, they must include the support piece. Disclosure and apology are a good beginning – but not the entire solution. Support is key to the healing process for everyone involved. We provide this support by generating greater awareness about the emotional impact of adverse events, providing direct support services to those suffering, and advocating for action.

I hope that this clarifies things a bit. If not, feel free to visit our website at [www.mitss.org](http://www.mitss.org) for more information. You may also want to give us a call toll free at 1-888-36MITSS. To those of you who still think that we should change our name, I can only say this – not after the thousands of pages of letterhead, countless brochures, multitudinous business cards, and endless number of fact sheets have already been printed! Medically Induced Trauma Support Services or MITSS (if you prefer), that's who we are, and that's what we do.

Winnie Tobin, Communications Director

## MITSS FORMS COMMUNITY OUTREACH TASK FORCE

Since this past February, the MITSS Community Outreach Task Force has been hard at work, meeting monthly and developing strategies to make it easier for patients and family members to access MITSS services. This mission of the Task Force as adopted by its members is "To find and implement strategies that will increase awareness of MITSS services among potential clients and increase their participation in programs."

The Task Force is comprised of consumers/patients, family members, representatives with healthcare and business expertise, and MITSS staff members. Consumer participants include Beth Conlin, Jane Martin, Julie Millette, Jennifer Tosca, Jamie Stevenson, and Linda Klein. Beth Conlin was elected Chairperson of the Committee at its first meeting. A wealth of healthcare and business guidance is being provided by Paula Griswold of the Mass. Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors; Gina Cravedi of Triad Advertising; Deb Wachenheim of Health Care for All of Massachusetts; and Deb Washington of the Massachusetts General Hospital. MITSS staff members participating on the Task Force are Linda Kenney, Dr. Susan LaFarge (licensed clinical psychologist), Erin O'Donnell (practicum student from the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology), and Winnie Tobin.

The enthusiasm in the room when this group gets together is palpable. Each member of the Task Force brings energy, creativity,

and compassion. We hope that with the emergence of the Community Outreach Task Force, patients and their families will find it much easier to access the support they need. This group is dedicated to getting the word out about MITSS from the grassroots and up. Some avenues that the Task Force is exploring involve expanding patient accessibility to MITSS via the Internet, educating local mental health professionals regarding MITSS services, and continuing to build close ties to the healthcare community. "This Task Force fills a void that existed within MITSS. So many people ask me, 'What can I do to help others find out about MITSS?' I finally have an answer for them. It's just so exciting to be a part of this great group," said Erin O'Donnell, Task Force participant.

We are very excited about the work of this important committee. The goal of the Community Outreach Task Force is to find new and innovative ways of "getting the word out" about MITSS services and to reach members of the Greater Boston community more effectively. The Task Force meets the fourth Thursday of every month.

**If you are interested in joining this committee or would like further information, please give us a call at (617) 232-0090.**

## PEOPLE AND PLACES IN THE NEWS

The National Patient Safety Foundation's Annual Congress will be held in Washington, DC, May 2nd through the 4th, 2007. **Linda Kenney**, MITSS Executive Director, and **Frank Federico**, MITSS Board Member, have served on this year's Congress Planning Committee. **James B. Conway** and **Dr. Lucian Leape**, also MITSS Board Members, will be participating in the Distinguished Advisors Annual "Town Meeting" Plenary session scheduled for Thursday afternoon, May 3rd. This is the first year that MITSS will be sponsoring a booth in the Exhibit Hall, so, if you will be at the Congress, don't forget to stop by and visit us!

**Karen O. Moore RN, MS, FACHE**, MITSS Board Member, was featured along with other colleagues on the cover of the April 2007 issue of **Nursing Spectrum**. The Massachusetts Organization of Nurse Executives (MONE) was being recognized for their breakthrough work of convening the nursing and education communities within Massachusetts to plan curriculum for the nurse of the future -- a trained professional who must adequately prepare to care for increasingly complex patients and be ready to collaborate with colleagues as well as participate in quality and safety initiatives. The approach of developing a competency based curriculum comes from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommendations on education of health care professions to include safety and quality competencies in the training of future health care professionals.

# MITSS OFFERING EXTENDED GROUPS TO PATIENTS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED BY MEDICALLY INDUCED TRAUMA

MITSS is offering therapeutic educational support groups (10 week sessions) for patients and families impacted by unanticipated medical outcomes. Since the fall of 2006, patients and families have had further flexibility, as groups are now being held at the MITSS offices in Chestnut Hill as well as at South Shore Hospital in Weymouth. These groups are intended to help patients and family members process these events in a supportive

environment and will be held under the direction of Susan LaFarge, Psy.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist. If you would like further information or would like to make a referral to MITSS, please give us a call at (617) 232-0090 or toll free at 1-888-36MITSS.

## **Dr. Donald Berwick Continued from page 1**

accomplishments, he is legendary for his speaking prowess. It promises not only to be an exciting and fun-filled evening, but thought-provoking and inspirational as well, as we feature a true pioneer in the patient safety and health care quality movement. So don't forget to mark your calendar – November 15th, 2007, at the

beautiful Royal Sonesta Hotel on the banks of the historic Charles River. Visit our website at [www.mitss.org](http://www.mitss.org) for further details as they unfold. Hope to see you there!

Thank you  
for supporting  
MITSS

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