

ISSUE THREE ■ AUGUST 2013

Momentum

Moving critical access hospitals and their rural communities forward



**What's
Inside:**

**ILLINOIS SOAR-RN
GRADUATES
HONORED FOR
ACHIEVEMENT**
PAGE 2

**RED BUD REGIONAL
AND UNION COUNTY
HOSPITALS GAIN
DESIGNATION AS
CHEST PAIN
CENTERS**
PAGE 3

**ICAHN EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
RECEIVES
NATIONAL
AWARD FOR
LEADERSHIP**
PAGE 4

**ILLINOIS CRITICAL
ACCESS HOSPITALS
MAKE DONATION
BACK TO ICAHN**
PAGE 4



Southern and Central Illinois Cohorts schedule new sessions

SOAR-RN program provides mentorship, expertise

Filling the gap between theory and practice, ICAHN's year-long SOAR-RN Program celebrated the graduation of 31 nurse residents who are now not only more proficient in their respective jobs, they are more confident in their abilities.

Following the graduation and presentation of projects at the Jump Trading Simulation and Education Center in Peoria, nurse residents shared their thoughts.

"There was a great sense of camaraderie knowing others were going through the same thing I was as a new nurse," said Mike Weldon, an RN in ICU at OSF Saint Mary Medical Center, Galesburg. "The SOAR-RN program was beneficial all the way around, something I can take back to my unit that will help me make better decisions and provide even better patient care."

The SOAR-RN (Supporting Onboarding and Retention of Rural Nurses) Nurse Residency Program was launched as a Central Illinois Cohort in Peoria, beginning in August of 2012. The evidence-based program to support newly licensed rural nurses' transition to practice is sponsored by Marquette University and funded through a federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services.

ICAHN works in collaboration with rural healthcare partners in Wisconsin and Illinois, including OSF Healthcare Systems. ICAHN is currently developing an additional partnership to provide a Southern Illinois Cohort at Rend Lake College, involving McKendree University nursing faculty.



Brett Gibson, RN, of OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center in Ottawa, with (left to right) M'Kenzee Smith, Libby Eller, Amber Robertson, and Claire Conness, present "Preventing Heart Failure Readmissions" during the SOAR-RN graduation, held at the Jump Trading Simulation and Education Center, Peoria.

"I can't speak enough good words about the SOAR-RN Program and what it has meant to rural sectors here in Illinois. I would encourage anyone to participate as it is worth every penny, especially considering the payback you get when they return home." – Alice Snyder, CNO, OSF Saint Mary Medical Center, Galesburg

"What we offer is mentorship, access to expertise in a safe and non-judgmental setting," said Mary Jane Clark, ICAHN SOAR-RN Coordinator, who added that the Central Illinois Cohort begins August 13. "By providing a means for nurse residents to partner with us and have a place of learning where the nurse residents can openly discuss their concerns among peers, a camaraderie is created and ultimately, they have more satisfaction and confidence in their roles. With that in place, we will see more retention of nurses in a rural setting."

Through training of preceptors, mentors, and a rural-specific nursing cur-

riculum delivered through monthly face-to-face seminars, the SOAR-RN program creates organizational cultures of safety that lead to quality care. Through these program elements, nurse residents are provided with the necessary psychosocial, professional development, and educational supports to meet the challenges of rural nursing practice.

"I used to be scared to communicate with physicians and now I know how to do this," said Gisele Badang, RN, of OSF Holy Family Medical Center, Monmouth. "I can also prioritize my workload better and I feel my assess-

Continued on Page 2

CENTRAL ILLINOIS COHORT: 2013 SOAR-RN PROGRAM GRADUATES



New SOAR-RN program graduates include: (second row, from left) Amanda Kriesel, Crystal Binkley, Stephanie Rusk, Danielle Haase, Ashley Samolitis, Michelle Mercado, Gisele Badang, Kylee Crist, Heidi Clevenger, and M'Kenzee Smith; (third row, from left) Anna Frakes, Jack Creager, Nikki Folk, Lisa Carlson, Brett Gibson, Marge Lewis, Libby Eller, Jonelle Schmalshof, Mike Weldon, Amber Robertson, Claire Conness, Sandra Crawley, and Cheri Fellers. Pictured in the front row are (from left) Pat Schou, ICAHN Executive Director; Lois Bentler-Lampe, MS, RN-BC, OSF HealthCare Director of Nursing Education; Mary Jane Clark, ICAHN SOAR-RN Coordinator; and Marilyn Meyer Bratt, PhD, RN, Project Director.

SOAR-RN PROGRAM GRADUATES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

ment is stronger. I'm more confident and I would recommend the program to anyone as I can now communicate to any physician without fear."

Remembering back to her first year as a new nurse in a rural hospital in Wisconsin, Marilyn Meyer Bratt, PhD, RN, SOAR-RN Project Director at Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI, mimicked this feeling and summed up her program's hopes and goals, including the creation and maintenance of a stronger relationship between new and more experienced nurses, less turn-over of new nurses, fewer errors, and a safer environment for patients in

general. "I never want any new nurse to feel alone," said Bratt. "The SOAR-RN program is designed to provide professional role-modeling and promote positive work environments in which nurses support and encourage each other. We want to stop cultures of negativity and leave nursing in a better place."

SOAR-RN program facilitators included Mary Jane Clark, ICAHN SOAR-RN Coordinator; Angie Charlet, ICAHN Director of Quality Services; Amanda Sass, BSN, RN, Magnet Designation Coordinator of OSF Saint James-John W. Albrecht Medical Center, Pontiac; Lois Bentler-Lampe, MS, RN-

BC, OSF HealthCare Director of Nursing Education; and Marilyn Meyer Bratt, PhD, RN, Project Director.

The 2013 Southern Illinois Cohort will begin on September 3, and there is still an opportunity to register newly graduated nurses in the program. The next Central Illinois Cohort begins on August 13th; however, registrations are no longer being accepted. There is no charge to participate in this program. For registration or the full brochure about the SOAR-RN or preceptor training, contact Mary Jane Clark at (309) 331-4472 or Angie Charlet at (815) 875-2999.



First Illinois critical access hospitals to be designated as SCPC Chest Pain Centers Red Bud, Union County hospitals gain accreditation

Critical access hospitals have always been committed to leading the fight against heart disease, but now two ICAHN member hospitals have received accreditation from the internationally known Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care to prove their dedication and expertise.



Red Bud Regional Hospital in Red Bud, and Union County Hospital, Anna, received designation in July as official SCPC Chest Pain Centers.

“People tend to think it is better to go to a larger hospital if they are having chest pain, even if it is 20 or 30 minutes away, and that is a mistake because time is muscle,” said Jim Farris, CEO, Union County Hospital. “As a Chest Pain Center-accredited critical access hospital, we are able to implement the same standards of care provided at larger hospitals, but closer to home, saving precious heart muscle. Our process for treating an acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) involves a rapid sequence of evaluation, administering crucial medications, and arranging for immediate intervention to restore blood flow to dying heart muscle.

“Our experienced team of ED physicians and nurses are able to provide this level of urgent cardiac care more promptly than the national standards require,” he added. “By becoming an accredited Chest Pain Center, our hospital has enhanced the quality of care for the cardiac patient and has demonstrated its commitment to higher standards.”

Red Bud Regional Hospital and Union County Hospital are two of only six critical access hospitals throughout the nation to receive the honor – a designation not even made available to critical access hospitals until just recently. The remaining hospitals include two CAHs in Kentucky, one in Ohio, and one in New Mexico.

“Attaining this designation is a tremendous honor, and I give Sue Weber (Red Bud Regional Hospital’s Director of Emergency Services) all the credit as she choreographed this



Celebrating the achievement

Shown above, Red Bud Regional Hospital CEO Shane Watson (above, third from left) congratulates Sue Weber (holding plaque) and her team on Red Bud’s designation as a Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care Chest Pain Center designee. Shown right, Union County Hospital CEO Jim Farris celebrates his hospital’s designation as a Chest Pain Center with Pamela Akins, Interim CNO, for the Anna, IL hospital.



effort from start to finish,” said Shane Watson, CEO, Red Bud Regional Hospital. “When asked what this designation means, Sue, in the midst of being engulfed by the process, had an epiphany, saying ‘we can’t lose sight, no matter whether we get the accreditation or not, that we, today, as a facility, are taking better care of our cardiac patients than we ever have before.’ That pride in her work speaks volumes, and the designation sets us apart. I hope the community appreciates all she has done as much as we do.”

Both hospitals initiated work on the application in 2012 and spent several months meeting project goals, which included reducing the time from onset of symptoms to diagnosis and treatment; treating patients more quickly during the critical window of time when the integrity of the heart muscle can be preserved; and monitoring patients when it is not certain whether they are having a heart attack to ensure they are not sent home too quickly or needlessly admitted to the hospital.

Farris credited Pamela Akins, Interim CNO

and former ER manager, and her team with the success of the application at Union County. “She has lived and breathed this work for months, and it has been a thoroughly exhausting but incredibly important project that not only involved our hospital and our employees but collaborations with EMS, larger hospital systems, and the community at large. She has done an extraordinary job in coordinating all efforts.”

Community education in early heart attack care, including a focus on emergency response, were key elements in attaining the designation for all hospitals applying for the accreditation.

“We’ve put an enormous amount of work into department integration with EMS, emergency assessment, process improvement, personnel competencies and training, our organizational structure and even functional facility design,” said Akins. “It has definitely been a long and sometimes difficult process

Continued on Page 4

Take note...
**Upcoming
Events**



AUGUST 2013

- **8/6:** "The Smart Summary Plan Description Benefits and Insurance Webinar" from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.
- **8/12-13:** Practice Management Boot Camp at the Northfield Inn, Springfield, IL, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on Monday and from 7:30 a.m. to noon on Tuesday
- **8/13:** SOAR-RN Rural Nurse Residency Program (Central Illinois Cohort) at the Pioneer Park Building, Peoria, IL, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **8/22: ANNUAL VENDOR FAIR** at the Crowne Plaza, Springfield, IL, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

FALL 2013

- **9/3:** SOAR-RN Rural Nurse Residency Program (Southern Illinois Cohort) at the Rend Lake Marketplace, Mt. Vernon, IL, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **11/6-7: FALL CAH CONFERENCE** at the Crowne Plaza, Springfield, IL

ICAHN recognizes five CAHs for their donations

ICAHN wishes to acknowledge the generous donations from five member hospitals for use in current and/or future Quality Health Indicators (QHi), HCAHPS, and ICD-10 projects.

Those hospitals include Mercy Harvard Hospital and Valley West Community Hospital for the donation of their FY 2012-2013 SHIP funds back to ICAHN; and Fairfield Memorial Hospital, Hoopston Regional Health Center, and Mendota Community Hospital for the donation of their FY 2013-2014 SHIP funds back to ICAHN.

ICAHN administers the SHIP grant program on behalf of the State Office of Rural Health, Illinois Department of Public Health's Center for Rural Health. ICAHN is responsible for the individual hospital application process and the submission of the state application

Longtime Flex program champion receives Calico Leadership Award

BETHESDA, MD – Pat Schou, ICAHN Executive Director and Illinois Flex Coordinator, received the 2013 Calico Leadership Award at the National Conference of State Flex Programs, held July 23-24 in Bethesda, MD.

The Calico Leadership Award is presented annually by the Technical Assistance and Services Center (TASC), a program of the National Rural Health Resource Center, to an outstanding rural health leader. The Calico Award was created in honor of long-time rural health leader, Dr. Forest Calico, for his life-long commitment to improving the quality of rural health. This year's award was presented to Schou for her leadership with the Illinois State Flex Program and critical access hospitals throughout the state.

"A promoter of doing the right thing, accountability, leadership, networking, and tying activities back to impact in rural communities, Pat has been quoted saying, 'If the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network can help rural health clinics and other partners find medical providers to keep rural health care facilities viable, we have done our part to keep rural whole during health care change,'" said Mike McNeeley, Deputy Director, for the Hospital State Division of the Office of Rural Health Policy during the event.

"We are honored to present the Calico Award

"If ICAHN can help rural health clinics and other partners find medical providers to keep rural health care facilities viable, we have done our part to keep rural whole during health care change." –



Pat Schou, ICAHN Executive Director

to Pat for her numerous contributions, leadership and dedication to rural communities and the Flex program in her state and nationally," he added.

Schou has been involved with the Flex program since its inception and brings over 35 years of clinical and rural hospital administrative experience to the role. She was appointed as a co-chair to the State Health Improvement Plan Implantation Coordinating Council and is the current chair of the TASC Advisory Committee. Schou was also recently appointed to the Board of Accreditation Association for Hospital/Health Systems and is the past president of the Illinois Rural Health Association. ICAHN supports all CAHs in Illinois to improve quality, finances, operations, and health system development.

CHEST PAIN CENTER DESIGNATIONS

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but achieving this designation is certainly a proud moment for all of us."

Hospitals that have received SCPC accreditation have achieved a higher level of expertise in dealing with patients who arrive with symptoms of a heart attack. They emphasize the importance of standardized diagnostic and treatment programs that provide more efficient and effective evaluation, as well as more appropriate and rapid treatment of patients with chest pain and other heart attack symptoms. They also serve as a point of entry into the healthcare system to evaluate and treat other medical problems in addition

to helping promote a healthier lifestyle in an attempt to reduce the risk factors for heart attack.

"Forming a committee to focus on enhanced policies and protocols, stepping up community education efforts, working in even closer concert with our EMS personnel, and providing specialized training to our physicians, staff, and others are all measures taken as a result of this process that only better our service and our quality of care to the patients and communities we serve," concluded Watson. "Across the board, this was the right thing to do."