

Editorials

A Tribute To Healthcare Executives

Do you realize the majority of patients or family members in hospitals or nursing homes never know who the administrator of the facility is unless there is a problem? Yes, that is true. For the most part Hospital or Nursing Home executives are invisible in their respective facilities since they primarily deal with the organizational and operational side of getting a patient well.

Unlike the clinical team (Doctors, Nurses, Physical Therapy, etc.) who prescribes a care plan, takes a patient's pulse/gives medicine or teaches them to regain basic skills, administrators keep facilities operationally strong by hiring qualified professional and support staff, by establishing high standards and sound procedures, by monitoring staff performance, by establishing and maintaining an attractive and safe environment, and by providing comprehensive and customer friendly services and programs.. They also keep their organizations financially sound and in compliance with the rules and regulations of various health codes monitored by the state government. Without the administrator, the operations of a facility would be in grave danger as the budgets would be awry, staff would be unaccountable and general chaos would be the order of the day.

With this in mind, in 1958 a visionary Associate Administrator of Long Island Jewish Hospital named Arthur Stern started an organization called Hospital Executives' Club to enable administrators to meet informally with one another. This organization's founding members were alumni from Brooklyn Jewish Hospital (now known as Interfaith) who had strategically ventured into different facilities where they found opportunities. Primarily for networking purposes, HEC's pioneering "old boys club" got together on a regular basis to exchange best practices, discuss employment opportunities and strategize about how to improve gaps in the healthcare system.

The organization grew and became quite popular. In the 1970's it grew well beyond Stern's imagination. By the almost mid-70's the club, faced a new challenge, women had become a tour de force in administration and were applying for membership. Not only were women admitted seamlessly but shortly thereafter the HEC membership elected its first female President.

In the early 80's – Skilled Nursing Home facilities were on the rise. Once again HEC went through a major change that also affected the name of the organization. As a result of the applications received the organization had to reposition itself and change its name to the Healthcare Executives' Club to encompass the various administrative titles from a policy and procedural point of view that were now members. HEC's membership by now had grown into the 5 boroughs, Long Island and Westchester.

The late 1990's through the millennium were rough in the health care field. Many of the mental health facilities have closed and various other neighborhood health care services are on lists pending closing due to state budget cuts.

In 2008, HEC will celebrate its 50th anniversary of providing a forum for quality care. HEC members are proud of their accomplishments and have remained true to their mission. Despite the obstacles of modern living, (the uninsured, the undocumented, lack of preventative education in "at risk" communities, etc) the administrator is prevailing. Administrators are doing their best to keep the lights on and striving to make all of the patients in our neighborhoods well.

— SHARON NELSON
And JOHN E. BAER, DPA

– Gov. Spitzer Teams Up With Congressional Delegation To Protect Health Insurance For NY's Children

(Continued from page 3)

a key piece of the Governor's patient-first health care reform agenda and is one of the first steps in the Governor's "Partnership for Coverage" initiative to expand access to health insurance for all New Yorkers through an incremental, building block approach.

State health officials are continuing efforts to aggressively reach out and enroll all those uninsured children who are eligible for coverage under current state and federal rules.

This event is the latest in a series of efforts the Governor has undertaken to draw attention to this issue. The Governor met with Congressman Charles Rangel to announce the Governor's intention to take le-

gal action against CMS and later met with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. He also announced a joint letter with California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to the President. Also last week, 25 members of New York State's congressional delegation, led by Congresswoman Lowey, co-signed a letter asking CMS to rescind requirements imposed on states wishing to extend health insurance to moderate-income families. In addition, four other New York congressional delegation members sent separate letters supporting New York's efforts and urging flexible approaches to child health insurance expansion.

Free The Jena Six

By MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

The recent conviction of Black high school student Mychal Bell in the small rural town of Jena, Louisiana, demonstrates why the struggle for civil rights and equal justice must continue with renewed vigor. In a vindictive miscarriage of justice, LaSalle Parish District Attorney J. Reed Walters brought the full weight of his office as a prosecutor down on Bell, 17, who may face a 15-year prison term for aggravated second-degree battery for participating in a school fight. Five other Black students are at risk of similar convictions. These young men, known as *the Jena Six*, are victims of a double standard too common throughout America where the scales of justice are weighed against African-Americans and other people of color. It is also a disturbing reminder of the increasing criminalization of Black youths and trying them as adults.

The chain of events leading up to *the Jena Six* arrests began with an old oak known as the "white tree" in the middle of the Jena High School campus. According to news accounts, by twisted tradition, the shade of the tree's spreading branches was reserved for White students only. In September 2006, a Black freshman asked if Black students could sit under the tree. The administrators said that Black students could sit where they liked.

Shortly after the query, several Black students gathered under the tree. The following day, three hangman's nooses were looped over one of its boughs. There's no mistaking the symbolism of this act. It recalls warnings of impending violence by the Ku Klux Klan and other vicious White terrorist groups permitted to flourish in the South for more than a century.

Despite the seriousness of their act, the three White students responsible were merely suspended for three days and given a verbal reprimand. The principal's recommendation of expulsion was overruled by the superintendent of schools who thought that was too harsh a punishment for an adolescent "prank." Tensions escalated in the town of about 3,000 where the number of African-Americans is around 350. Black students tempered their outrage at the nooses and the school superintendent's lenient treatment of the offending students by staging a peaceful protest at the tree.

Somehow, District Attorney Walters perceived a danger to the public, not in the nooses, but in the protests against them. Instead of attempting to bring the parties together and calming the agitated atmosphere, he made things worse by calling a school assembly accompanied by local law enforcement officials. Directing an ominous threat toward the Black students, he said, "I can be your best friend or worst enemy. I can take away your lives with a stroke of a pen."

Walters didn't help matters by winking at White violence like the beating of a Black student attempting to attend a White Friday night party in December 2006 — the incident was very much related to the school events. The next day a White Jena graduate confronted a group of Black youths at a convenience store with a shotgun. Fortunately, they wrestled the weapon away from him without injury but were arrested for assault and stealing the gun. The gun owner was not charged with a crime.

The racial tension in the town came to a head on Monday, December 4, when Justin Barker, a White student who was vocally supportive of the noose hangers and called Black students "niggers," was beaten by some Black students. Barker went to the hospital was released the same day and attended a ring ceremony that evening. The six Black youths involved in the incident were arrested and initially charged with attempted murder. None of *the Jena Six* has a prior police record.

In a July trial that turned justice on its head, Mychal Bell was convicted as an adult of aggravated second-degree battery and conspiracy. He was found guilty by an all-White jury in a trial presided over by a White judge. District Attorney Walters argued that Bell's tennis shoes were deadly weapons because they were used to kick Barker.

On September 4, Judge J.P. Mauffray threw out the conspiracy conviction against Bell. He also granted a defense motion that trying Bell as an adult was improper and agreed that he should have been tried as a juvenile. But the judge let stand the conviction on aggravated second-degree battery, which means Bell may be condemned to a prison term of up to 15 years at his sentencing hearing on September 20.

Regrettably, what is happening in Jena reminds me of the racial injustices I witnessed as a civil rights attorney in the Deep South during the 1960s. We cannot go back to those times.

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. used to say that the arc of the universe is long but it bends toward justice. I believe that. However, those of us who love justice must take a hand in bending the arc faster. We can start by taking action today and calling LaSalle Parish District Attorney J. Reed Walters at (318) 992-8282 and demand justice for *the Jena Six*.

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Committee On Small Business And Entrepreneurship Hearing Notice

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship will hold a public hearing entitled, "Expanding Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs: The Future of Women's Small Business Programs," on Thursday, September 20, 2007, at 10:00 a.m., in room 428A Russell Senate Office Building.

This hearing will be webcast live on our website at <http://sbc.senate.gov>. For more information please call 202-224-5175.