



# Institute for Healthcare Communication

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## **Happy spring to all of our IHC colleagues and friends!**

I am a big believer in self-care as one of the most effective and gratifying ways to stay energized, build resiliency, and cope with life's stressors and losses.

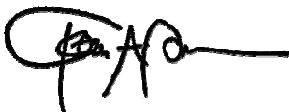
Some of you may know that I am an avid, albeit hobby, cyclist. I recently returned from a cycling trip through the Florida Keys and when I left Connecticut it was cold and damp - I left behind a dreary week of New England rain and sogginess. Arriving at our first of several Florida Keys, Key Largo, the clear turquoise blue gulf and ocean was a sight of beauty and the feel of the Caribbean breeze as we cycled was pure heaven. When I returned home to Connecticut, it was sunny and bright and everything was green and popping. Sometimes my timing is just right... a perfect backdrop for my transition back to our labor of love at IHC, where we also continue to bloom.



You will read about one of IHC's newest programs brewing and gearing up for pilot testing on the west coast this fall. We are excitedly preparing for two large veterinary train-the-trainer programs in early summer and for many other IHC faculty and training programs in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, IHC is responding to the call to address the communication challenges among clinicians with patients and families about palliative care. Such training also emphasizes the imperative of self-care, particularly for those of us who provide service to others.

We urge all of you to reflect upon what it is you do or have in your life that keeps you energized, resilient and happy. Please make time for whatever that is....and for you.

Warmly,



Kathleen

## Faculty News

### Poster, "The role of the nurse in disclosing an unexpected outcome to patients & families," draws a crowd at AACN annual conference

**Sandy Reifsteck, RN, MS Ed, FACMPE and IHC Master Trainer and Faculty Emeritus** fielded questions from participants at the recent conference of the American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing in Palm Springs, Calif.



Consistent with IHC's [Disclosing Unanticipated Medical Outcomes](#) curriculum, the poster examines various scenarios of harm: whether the standard of care was (or was not) met, and whether the harm was (or was not) preventable, and appropriate communication responses to each.

### Monica Broome quoted in blog, "Respect is like air"



*"... if you take it away, it's all people can think about. The instant people perceive disrespect in a conversation, the interaction is no longer about the original purpose - it is now about defending dignity." (Patterson et al.)*

So **Monica Broome, MD, FACP, FAACH and IHC Master Trainer**, reminded participants at the first ever MGMA/AMA *Collaborate in Practice* conference in Colorado Springs, Colo. Paul DeChant, MD, MBA, author of the blog, [Returning Joy to Patient Care through Lean Transformation](#), expanded on Monica's comments highlighting the critical role of teamwork and effective communication for creating a patient-centered culture.

### Congratulations to Fred Platt, MD, honored by the American Academy on Communication in Healthcare

IHC Master Trainer Frederic W. Platt, MD, of Denver, Colo., was selected to receive the 15th annual Lynn Payer award for "outstanding contributions to the literature on the theory, practice and teaching of effective health care communication and related skills."

In addition to his extensive teaching and clinical service, Fred has authored or co-authored numerous books and articles, including *Field Guide to the Difficult Patient Interview* with Geoffrey H. Gordon, MD. Fred has also published a poetry collection, *Was a Doctor*.



### Parkland College salutes Sandy Reifsteck!



**Sandy Reifsteck, RN, MS Ed, FACMPE and IHC Master Trainer and Faculty Emeritus** was featured among "[50 Years, 50 Notable Alumni Stories](#)" as part of Parkland College's 50th Anniversary Celebration.

We deeply appreciate Sandy's irrepressible enthusiasm and her unwavering professionalism. We echo Parkland College's celebration of her many achievements!

# New Curriculum Update



Blue Shield of California Foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Shield Association

IHC, with the support of Blue Shield of California Foundation, has engaged a diverse and highly accomplished array of external advisors to share their insights and expertise in the development of a new curriculum to build empathy-based communication skills. The new half-day workshop will be piloted at three safety net clinics in California later in the year, and a broader roll-out is planned for 2017. The new workshop is part of broad efforts to ensure high quality care for patients experiencing symptoms and conditions related to behavioral health including the impact of trauma.

**USER INSIGHT GROUP:** The nine members are all associated with the provision of healthcare to the safety net population in California. Many work for Foundation grantees and a majority are IHC faculty members. Several bring a bilingual/bicultural perspective to their work. They have shared their priorities for communication skills training and their ideas for types of patients whose care would be especially enhanced by empathic interactions. They comprise a diverse group of active leaders in medicine, behavioral health and substance abuse, safety net clinic operations, quality improvement and staff training.

**EXPERT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Eight experts from across the U.S. are pooling their suggestions for key citations from the literature to help to frame the evidence for empathy-based care for the most vulnerable populations. They are active leaders in psychiatry, medicine and continuing medical education; physician leadership and clinical systems development; healthcare, health equity, domestic violence and trauma policy; and research and education.

Members of both groups have been asked to share brief patient vignettes from their experience that might form the basis for training video vignettes.

**MEANWHILE...** A host of related activities are underway: drafting curriculum, selecting patient vignettes, writing scripts, hiring actors for videos and more.

## News & Views

### IHC celebrates reaccreditation



The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) recently awarded IHC accreditation as a provider of continuing education for physicians. IHC's term of accreditation is through March, 2020.

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## **IHC's long-term supporter, Bayer Animal Health, announces Bayer Excellence in Communication Award and scholarships**

Bayer Animal Health released the 2016 winner of the Bayer Excellence in Communication Award (BECA). Brittany Martabano, from the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, was the national winner, selected from winners at 27 veterinary schools. A panel of judges at each school reviewed videotaped interactions between competing students and a veterinary client and chose a student to compete in the national competition. Scholarships, totaling \$70,000 in 2016, were awarded by Bayer Animal Health to winning students. The University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine will also be awarded tuition for one faculty member to participate in the 2017 Veterinary Communication Project train-the-trainer faculty course.

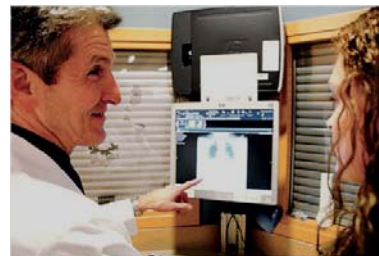
Kathleen Bonvicini, CEO of IHC, was one of the nationally-renowned experts who judged the video submissions from veterinary schools. For further information, see [Link](#).

***IHC extends its deep gratitude to Bayer Animal Health for its support from 2003 through 2015.***

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## **Keeping up with the literature on electronic health records**

IHC course managers Wayne Weston, MD, CCFP, FCFP and Michele Nanchoff, PhD, RPsych, have recently updated the bibliography for IHC's "Connected: Communicating and Computing in the Exam Room" workshop. Citations and abstracts are bolstered by helpful annotation to direct readers to particularly helpful articles and websites.



As with all IHC bibliographies, the updated annotated bibliography for [Connected: Communicating and Computing in the Exam Room](#) is available free of charge from IHC's website.

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## **IHC Board Member Recruitment**

IHC has three vacancies on its Board of Directors. What are the expectations of IHC Board members?

- Commitment to improving healthcare quality through enhanced communication
- Participation in quarterly meetings (teleconference)
- Review and approve IHC's annual budget
- Active contribution to IHC's fiscal and program development (donate to IHC and/or share connections with potential new client partners)

*For further information, contact us at [info@healthcarecomm.org](mailto:info@healthcarecomm.org).*

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*Thank you for your support!*

## **Congratulations & Welcome, New Faculty**

*Clinician-Patient Communication to Enhance Health Outcomes*  
March 20-23, 2016, Springfield, Missouri



Front (left to right): Cheryl Throgmorton (Mercy St Louis); Dena Dishman (Mercy Springfield); Kathleen Bonvicini, IHC Course Director; Krissy Bates (Mercy Springfield).  
Standing: Jennifer Wilson (Mercy Clinic Oklahoma City); Michael Reed (Mercy Hospital Jefferson, Crystal City); Sheri Travis (Mercy Clinic Oklahoma City).

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***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.***  
**May 2-4, 2016, San Marcos, California**



From left to right: Veronica Rodriguez (Molina Healthcare, Long Beach CA), Ashley Bowman (Molina Healthcare, Long Beach CA), Carla Nevarez (North County Health Services, San Marcos CA), Sara Hada (North County Health Services, San Marcos CA), Rachel Fuller (North County Health Services, San Marcos CA).

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***Disclosing Unanticipated Medical Outcomes***  
**February 10-12, 2016, Surrey, British Columbia**



Michelle Auger, Balwinder Chokaria, Victoria Lakusta Lambertson, Theresa Martin, Stella McKay, Dayan Muthayan, Veronica Nickerson, Sabina Sodhi, Shannon Torhjelms. Course leader: Daniel O'Connell (IHC). Facilitators: Bruce MacLeod (Calgary Health Region), Glenn McRae (Interior Health Authority).

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***Disclosing Unanticipated Medical Outcomes***  
**March 30-April 1, 2016, Bellevue, Washington**



*Unless otherwise noted, participants are with Overlake Medical Center, Bellevue, Washington.*

Barbara Berkau, Margie Bridges, Michelle Curry, Dorothy Dukes (Medical Insurance Exchange of California, Oakland, CA), Shiela Gould, Kendra Hahn, Kelan Koenig, Debora Kunka, Khin Latt, Tom Miller, Mark Robison, David Winokur. Course leader: Daniel O'Connell (IHC). Facilitators: Paula Beard (Alberta Health Services), Claire Hagan (Providence Health & Services), Bruce MacLeod (Calgary Health Region).

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# Reflections

*Reflections on the wonders – and the hierarchy – of modern hospital care.*

## **The Short Jacket: Navigating the ICU With Head and Neck Cancer**

Gregory Carroll, PhD

Four nights after a 20-hour surgery, my breathing started to fail so the hospitalist transferred me to the intensive care unit (ICU). A new doctor entered my room there the next day, all alone. The surgical team asked him to review my case, he said, to figure out why there was not enough oxygen in my blood.

It seemed odd that he had no entourage,  
no one else dressed in white coats, blue scrubs or nursing uniforms.

The reason was clear once I noticed his short white jacket.  
That explained why he worked solo, straining to deepen his voice,  
trying to appear older than he was, posing as an MD at all.  
Still muted by the trach tube and post-op swelling,  
I jotted a cryptic note to my wife: "SHORT JACKET."  
She smiled with a shrug, clueless.  
I wrote again, frantically: "MED. S."  
I had a bad feeling about this.

For the next three days he brought more questions,  
more warmth and more sensitivity.  
He was no longer pretending.  
I relaxed and opened up.  
We connected and trusted one another.  
By then I understood it was the pain medicine  
that caused my blood oxygen to fall so low.

Back on the surgical floor a few days later,  
free of pain meds, breathing normally and getting ready to leave the hospital,  
I reflected on the irony of it.  
Who figured out what was wrong with me back in the ICU?  
No one took credit, and that made me uncomfortable.  
Resting at home a week after that, as fears of the crisis fade,  
I sense my mood turning toward reflection and hope.  
My thoughts go back to the medical student.

I hope he was the one who looked it up, wrote it down,  
figured it out, and kept his cool among the real hot shots,  
the ones in the long, crisply starched lab coats.  
I hope he gets into the finest residency program on the planet.  
I hope I conveyed my sincere thanks to him,  
whose name I was too preoccupied to write down.  
I hope the people in the ICU keep figuring it out  
not just the ones dressed in jackets, lab coats and uniforms  
but especially those dressed like me, in a flimsy hospital gown, frightened and  
exhausted.

Reprinted with permission from [Cure](#).

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## Leader Profile

**“Communication important in every role”**

IHC Board of Directors Vice Chair **Sherri L. Rigby, DVM, PhD, DACT**, brings breadth and depth of experience in veterinary medicine to IHC's strategic and operational decision-making. Sherri's roles in small animal veterinary practice, equine reproduction, and industry have all provided opportunities and challenges to ensure the best possible outcomes for animals and their owners.



Sherri recently joined IDEXX Laboratories as a Professional Services Veterinarian, after 14 years at Bayer HealthCare Animal Health. During her tenure at Bayer, Sherri played a key role in advancing training around communication skills at veterinary schools.

Prior to the development of the Bayer Communication Project, (now the IHC Veterinary Communication Project), there was no formal communication skills training at veterinary schools. Today every veterinary school in North America employs IHC's communication skills training modules, and has faculty members qualified to teach the skills highlighted in IHC's 15 modules. Sherri played a key leadership role in the dissemination of communication skills training at vet schools.

Growing up on a farm in Missouri, Sherri was “always around horses” and, as a 4-H member, raised a beef steer. She had abundant opportunities to observe the work and community interactions of a local vet, a friend of her father's and her grandmother's employer. Over time, Sherri came to fill in as the vet's receptionist when her grandmother was on vacation, then to accompany the vet on farm visits. A career as veterinarian made perfect sense for her: She brought a love of animals and pleasure in the physical activity of the work. Beginning with small animal practice, Sherri shifted to equine work, with Board Certification in equine reproduction. Along the way, she went back to school to earn a PhD in cardiovascular physiology, which helped her pivot toward a career in industry, where she was active in new product launches, national scholarships at veterinary schools and technical support.

Reflecting on her own journey toward more effective communication, Sherri acknowledges that there were no formal training opportunities around communication skills when she was in school. She regards effective communication as the source of much career satisfaction, and an important way to help everyone in the caring professions--human and veterinary medicine--be good at their jobs.

Veterinary professionals are particularly susceptible to “compassion fatigue.” Difficult encounters with clients, euthanasias, frictions with other staff members: All of these can take their toll of people. Empathic communication and effective modeling of emotional expression can ease compassion fatigue, and help veterinary practitioners to retain their joy in practice. Sherri describes her work in communication skills development and dissemination as both “humbling and rewarding.” IHC is pleased and honored to have received a generous donation from Ms. Maja Kristin, a California-based philanthropist and retired attorney. Ms. Kristin has donated to IHC in 2013 and 2014. We are very grateful for her steadfast commitment to IHC and her continued generosity.



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## Upcoming Courses

### Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.

**August 2-4, 2016, Port Townsend, Washington**

Open-enrollment train-the-trainer faculty course prepares participants to lead [Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.](#) workshops. This intensive 2.5-day training provides an evidence-based conceptual model and ample opportunities to practice specific techniques for enhancing the patient experience and building effective partnerships with



patients. This 2.5-day course is designed for everyone whose work can impact patients' and family members' impressions of the care organization.

Port Townsend, Washington's "Victorian Seaport and Arts Community" is on the Olympic Peninsula, a 2-1/2 hour drive from Seattle.



Further information and application are available [online](#).

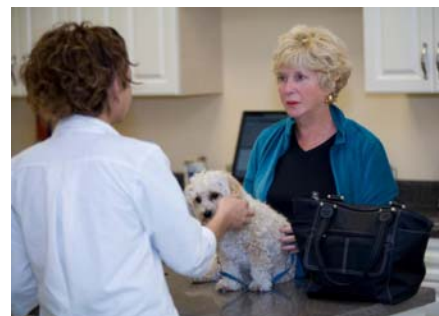
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### Veterinary Communication Project

**June 27-July 1, 2016, New Haven, Connecticut**

**July 11-15, 2016, Gainesville, Florida**

IHC's Veterinary Communication Project has been training veterinary medicine faculty members since 2003. Learners, representing all of the veterinary medicine programs in North America (and some beyond), rave about the intensive, interactive faculty course. Faculty members enhance their skills and confidence teaching IHC's 15 communication skills training modules.



Capacity for both programs is limited; to inquire about possible vacancies and the application process, please contact Laurie Mansfield ([lmansfield@healthcarecomm.org](mailto:lmansfield@healthcarecomm.org)).

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# IHC Team



**Kathleen Bonvicini, MPH, EdD**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Barbara Andrews, MPPM, MPH**  
Director of Grants and Projects



**Mary Beth Dennehy**  
Business Operations Manager



**Katheryne Stewart, BSc**  
Director, Outreach and Quality Outcomes



**Laurie Mansfield**  
Program Coordinator



**Mary Barrett**  
Project Coordinator & Administrator



**Wendy Petruff**  
CE Assistant



**Teresa Durbin**  
Project Coordinator  
Office of Outreach and Quality Outcomes

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Institute for Healthcare Communication  
[info@healthcarecomm.org](mailto:info@healthcarecomm.org) | <http://healthcarecomm.org>  
171 Orange Street, 2R, New Haven, CT 06510  
(800) 800-5907

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