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Hello IHC friends and colleagues,

As we come to the end of winter, I can't help but feel a bit cheated out of a New England snowstorm. There is something so comforting about getting snowed in: stoking the fire, making a pot of stew and bingeing Netflix. Yet, thus far our Connecticut winter has been nearly "snow-less," a novelty for New Englanders and local snow lovers. Recent abnormally mild temperatures (70F, 21C) left me and my perennials in a state of confusion and worry.

While it may be a lesson in letting go of usual expectations and rolling with what is happening, this unusual weather may be a sign that our climate is indeed changing. It motivates me to consider what part I play in keeping our environment healthy and sustainable.

As an important member of our IHC community, I ask you to **consider what role clinicians play in raising patients' awareness about the link between personal health behavior and the environment.** We know that climate change has an impact on health. Sheffield *et al.* (2014) cited "more frequent and intense heatwaves mean especially elderly, children and overweight people have to know how to protect themselves against higher temperatures. More air pollution means patients with asthma or other respiratory diseases have to be informed about how they can reduce their exposure." This is just the tip of the melting iceberg (no pun intended) of examples.

Many clinicians appreciate the importance of raising patient awareness and are in a unique position to share accurate information about the links between personal health and the environment, and to motivate patients to act in healthy as well as environment-friendly ways. As you know, cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death here in the U.S. Low physical activity is associated with cardiovascular diseases and obesity as well as climate change (Portier *et al.* 2013). Can you see a clinician weaving in an affirmation statement to a patient who shares that they are cycling to the office once a week? "*It sounds like you are really enjoying the exercise time commuting to work on the bike and it's a bonus for keeping our environment one car emission cleaner.*"

Yet, there are challenges and barriers for clinicians to try this in practice. Climate change may be viewed as a politically polarizing issue and thus to be avoided. Also, before being able to discuss climate change or environmental health-related issues, clinicians need knowledge and skills for weaving the information into personal health discussions. We all know that clinicians already have very full agendas and may first need to be convinced of the urgency of the impacts of climate change on health.

Medical schools are beginning to include in their curricula a focus on climate change as a determinant of health so that students understand the role of the changing environment as a risk factor and the part it plays in the pathophysiology of disease. For those of you interested, check out the 2019 Wellbery *et al.* article, [It's time for medical schools to introduce climate change into their curricula.](#)

All food for thought – speaking of which, I'm also trying to stay organic! The month of March is here maybe she has some weather surprises for us!

To a healthy environment!

Peace,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to be "Kathleen", written in a cursive style.

Kathleen



Portier, CJ *et al.* (2013). A human health perspective on climate change: a report outlining the research needs on the human health effects of climate's change. *J Current Issues in Globalization*, 6(4), 621.

Sheffield PE *et al.* (2014). Emerging roles of health care providers to mitigate climate change impacts: a perspective from East Harlem, New York. *Health Hum Rights*. 16(1):113-21.

Wellbery, C *et al.* (2018). It's Time for Medical Schools to Introduce Climate Change Into Their Curricula. *J Assoc Am Med Coll*, 93(12), 1774-1777.

NEWS & VIEWS

IHC Veterinary Team Tests Communication Skills Training



Does intensive communication skills training among companion animal veterinary practices affect team members' communication confidence, client satisfaction, and practice financial metrics?

A team of IHC veterinary communication skills training experts from the U.S. and Canada developed and tested a two-day training program for all members of veterinary practices to answer this question.

The research team was comprised of IHC-affiliated leaders and faculty, Karen K. Cornell, DVM, PhD; Jason B. Coe, DVM, PhD; Darcy H. Shaw, DVM, MVSC, MBA; Karen E. Felsted, MS, DVM, and

Kathleen A. Bonvicini, MPH, EdD. Their findings were published in the December 15, 2019 issue of the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*. In brief, there were measurable and significant increases in veterinary team members' communication skills confidence and initiation of client conversations regarding the value of goods and services. To learn about additional study results, see the [Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association](#).

PODCAST: *Empathic Communication Strategies*

Elizabeth Morrison, LCSW, MAC, has recorded an interview with Barbara Lewis, of DocCom. The podcast is one in a series exploring communication challenges and strategies in healthcare.

As a behavioral health clinician, consultant and IHC Senior Trainer, Elizabeth is co-principal developer of IHC's newest curriculum, *The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes*.

Elizabeth outlines the research supporting empathic communication in healthcare.

Link [here](#) for the brief (24 min.) interview, and share Elizabeth's passion for this essential element of high quality care.



Systematic review of medical training curricula for empathy and compassion cites IHC research

Sundip Patel and colleagues have published a review of the literature on the impact of training to enhance empathy and/or compassion. IHC CEO Kathleen Bonvicini, MPH, EdD was lead author of one of the 52 studies that met the inclusion criteria. The authors conclude that communication skills training can enhance physician empathy and compassion and should incorporate key behaviors such as active listening, empathy conveyance and others.

See: *PLoS ONE* 14(8): (2019) [Curricula for empathy and compassion training in medical education: A systematic review](#).

Let us know if you would be willing to speak with prospective IHC clients about your experiences with IHC. We do not share any contact information without permission. If you would like **to help spread the word about the value of IHC communication skills training**, please contact Barbara Andrews, bandrews@healthcarecomm.org, tel. (203) 772-8288. Thanks!

FAQ: It's great that IHC provides alternative agendas for the workshops. If we decide to use an alternative agenda, do we have to use it all the time? What if we have an idea for a new alternative format?

We're glad you like the option of alternative agendas—the impetus for them came from IHC faculty, and we are pleased to be able to respond to such requests. You are not limited to using one format or another for workshops you conduct over time. We have just one request:

Whenever you use a workshop agenda that is not the standard half-day format, please attach a copy of the agenda you used (from the Faculty Workshop Guide) to the Workshop Cover Form when you submit your post-workshop paperwork to IHC (hard copy or digital).

We welcome your ideas about new alternative agendas. Our accrediting bodies require that we approve all such variants, in advance of their use. Please submit your suggested new agenda to the course manager(s). Not sure whom to contact? In a hurry? Other questions? Contact the IHC office and we will help, Tel. (203) 772-8280, Toll-free (800) 800-5907, or email: info@healthcarecomm.org.

We welcome your questions, comments and responses; please contact Barbara Andrews, bandrews@healthcarecomm.org.

Best wishes to Teresa!

Teresa Durbin-Reifsteck, a member of IHC's home-office staff since 2011, recently announced her departure for a full-time position managing association conferences.

IHC has benefitted from Teresa's skills and cheery demeanor. We will miss her, and we wish her all the best!



Reduce printing costs, save trees



IHC's annotated bibliographies are rich resources for learners! If your organization holds a print license for one or more IHC courses, you can share access to the bibliographies electronically. One client organization is making the *Clinician-Patient Communication to Enhance Health Outcomes (CPC)* bibliography available to workshop learners via an organization-wide shared drive. Another option: sharing—and mentioning to workshop learners—that IHC [bibliographies are available free of charge online](#).

CONGRATULATIONS NEW FACULTY

Clinician-Patient Communication to Enhance Health Outcomes
January 27-30, 2020, Rockford, Illinois



Front row, left to right: Michele Nanchoff, Jen Muchow, Alysa Hartman. Back row, left to right: Nikki McIntosh, Jim Schmidt, Richard Bryan, MaryAnne Miller, Gerry Greenfield, Monica Broome, Jason Welch, Peter Rainey.

Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.
February 25-27, 2020, Auburn, California



From left to right: Meghan Nousaine, Hosam Alraqiq, Brittany Jinks-Nolen, Marysol Jiminez, Karina Mount, Michele Nanchoff, Araksi Simidyan.

Upcoming COURSES

Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance

March 24-26, 2020

Rockford, Illinois

Skills reinforcement makes all the difference—and one-on-one coaching is an ideal way to reinforce effective communication.



Healthcare professionals who wish to take their communication training skills to the next level can do so through IHC's unique clinician coach development program. [Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance](#) (CCEP) is designed for individuals with training and experience leading one or more IHC curricula (or equivalent). Through this intensive 20-hour course, learners gain insights into the theory and practice of coaching, with extensive opportunities to practice techniques for assessing learners, articulating behavioral goals, coaching and sharing feedback.

CCEP skills practice uses extensive small group formats; space is limited. Application is available [online](#). For further information please contact Laurie Mansfield, lmansfield@healthcarecomm.org, tel. (800) 800-5907.



WORKSHOP!

The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes

April 7, 2020

Flemington, New Jersey

Interested in experiencing IHC's newest communication skills curriculum? A small number of seats are available to learners from organizations contemplating adopting *The Empathy Effect*. This evidence-based workshop is designed for all members of the healthcare team.

Learners share their responses to *The Empathy Effect*:

- "Excellent presenter, materials, presentation and exercises. It was a great experience to be part of."
- "Even for those of us to whom empathy comes very naturally, this was great!"
- "Everybody working as a healthcare professional should take this training."

A complete workshop description is [online](#). For further information and enrollment, please contact Laurie Mansfield at (800) 800-5907 or e-mail lmansfield@healthcarecomm.org.

Veterinary Communication Project

July 13-17, 2020

**Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas**

Faculty and staff at schools of veterinary medicine and veterinary hospitals are invited to apply for seats in IHC's 2020 Veterinary Communication Project. Successful applicants will join a worldwide cadre of faculty trained to use IHC's unique—and uniquely valuable—16 educational modules on key communication topics.

To date, nearly 500 veterinary faculty from 54 schools and hospitals throughout North America, Australia, Portugal, Japan and several countries in South America are active users of IHC's skills development tools.

For further information and an [application](#) packet, please contact Laurie Mansfield at (800) 800-5907 or e-mail lmansfield@healthcarecomm.org



IHC Team



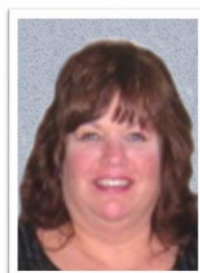
Kathleen Bonvicini, MPH, EdD
Chief Executive Officer



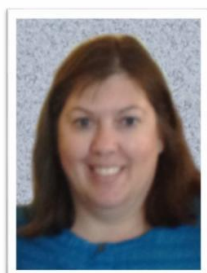
Barbara Andrews, MPPM, MPH
Director of Grants and Projects



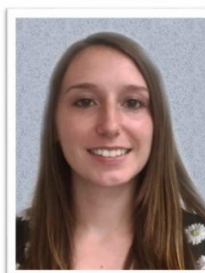
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