

CONNECTIONS

orthwestern memorial

June 20, 1997

TOPS Winners Are Praised

"I wish the Joint Commission reviewers were here to see the creativity of these projects," said Larry Michaelis, MD, vice president, Medical Affairs, in honoring the 1997 TOPS (Tactical and Operational Problem Solving) Quality Day award winners.

"Each of the projects displays outcomes that show they actually have had an impact, and they demonstrate the enthusiasm and respect you have for your patients and your colleagues."

Each of the 34 posters submitted by quality improvement teams throughout Northwestern Memorial was rated on its sound use of TOPS methodology and data, innovative solutions, focus on an important opportunity or problem and evidence of teamwork.



Dr. Michaelis and Cynthia Bamard, director, Quality Strategies, presented awards in each of the functional categories defined by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

The single project with the highest score was given the award for "best overall project," while the project that received the most votes from the more than 350 people who attended TOPS Quality Day received the "colleagues' choice" award.

This year's overall winner was "Conquering the Crunch," a project led by Pamela Mruvic, interim director, Cardiac/Vascular Nursing, and Stephanie Kitt, director, Orthopaedics, Neurosciences and Surgical Nursing, which addressed the challenge of managing patient volume in the intensive care units.

To date, results include improved collaboration, better communication on bed status, a reduction in the time before patients can be transferred into intensive care and improved utilization of resources.

Team members included Robin Oakley, interim clinical nurse manager, Cardiac Care Unit; Karen O'Heath, clinical nurse manager, Surgical Intensive Care Unit; Karen Potocki, clinical nurse manager, Neurological Intensive Care Unit; Angie Stautzenbach, clinical nurse manager, Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care Unit; and Laura Tondo, clinical nurse manager, Spinal Cord Intensive Care Unit.

The colleagues' choice award went to "Diabetes Demand Management," for its poster featuring Dorothy from the "Wizard of Oz." The team included Joy Springer, RN, and Mazy Miller, RN, of Diabetes Education, Lori Mathis and Sue Sanabria of Health Promotion, and was led by Sharon O'Brien, Health Promotion. The team looked at the needs of patients with diabetes, then developed, promoted and implemented a series of classes to help patients understand how to manage their disease.

Parent Workshop Focuses on Children's Self-esteem

Parents are invited to learn about "The Importance of Positive Self-esteem for Children in Today's World" at the Bernice E. Lavin Children's Care Center's first parent education workshop. The workshop is 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday, June 30, at the center in the 240 Building.

The speaker will be Judy Oliva, director of Operations for the midwest region of CorporateFamily Solutions, Northwestern Memorial's corporate partner in the management of the center. The former director of the child care center at Argonne National Laboratory and mother of two, Oliva will discuss the importance of fostering self-esteem at an early age and provide guidelines for helping children learn to solve problems, gain independence and develop skills for coping in today's world.

Rose Coppola-Conroy, director of the center, says she is planning a series of educational workshops for all parents — not just those with children at the center — that will offer expert advice, ideas and support in their most demanding and rewarding job.

Refreshments will be provided. Call 312/908-KIDS (5437) by Thursday, June 26, to make reservations.

Heather Markel Plans a Career in Medicine After She Receives World's First Stem Cell Transplant for Lupus



Richard Burt, MD, head of Northwestern Memorial's Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplantation Program, gives patient Heather Markel a hug as her mother looks on. After a 13-year fight against systemic lupus, a disease that attacked her lungs, kidneys, blood and central nervous system, Markel found relief at Northwestern Memorial. She is the world's first patient to successfully receive a stem cell transplant to treat lupus.

After a 13-year battle against a life-threatening disease that attacked her lungs, kidneys, blood and central nervous system, Heather Markel is back home in the rolling hills of east central Ohio, enjoying the summer and making plans to become a physician. She is the world's first patient to successfully receive a stem cell transplant to treat systemic lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease in which the immune system becomes hyperactive and attacks normal tissue.

Richard Burt, MD, head of Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplantation Program, says the procedure was possible due to the hospital's participation in the country's first comprehensive research program to

treat autoimmune disease using stem cell transplantation.

The procedure involves collecting healthy stem cells — which produce all other blood cells — on an outpatient basis. The patient then is admitted to the hospital where the immune system is destroyed with chemotherapy. The collected stem cells, meanwhile, are purified and reinfused into the patient in a procedure similar to a blood transfusion. In Markel's case, the purified stem cells were transplanted to her on April 9, and began multiplying 10 days later.

Markel, 24, says she feared lupus eventually would ruin her life. "Now I'm getting my strength back, and I'm

starting to make plans for my future again," she said with a smile during a press conference earlier this month.

"The results of the transplant we're seeing with Heather are very promising. For the first time since onset of her disease, her blood is testing normal," says Dr. Burt, the first investigator in the United States to show that bone marrow transplantation may induce remission in animal models of multiple sclerosis.

"Right now there are no clinical signs of lupus in her system. We will continue to evaluate her progress to determine how durable the remission will be," Dr. Burt says.

Surgeons Use Freezing Technique To Kill Internal Tumors

When George Urbanowicz's liver cancer came back, he was told removing more of his liver could be dangerous. His physician, Steven J. Stryker, MD, General Surgery, presented him with another option: cryosurgery.

Cryosurgery uses extreme cold temperatures to destroy cancer cells. Dermatologists have used it for years to remove tumors or other lesions on the skin. New technology now is enabling surgeons to use this method to treat internal tumors.

"Mr. Urbanowicz is Northwestern Memorial's first patient to undergo this state-of-the-art procedure," says Dr. Stryker.

The procedure involves inserting liquid nitrogen directly into the tumor and freezing it to about -100 degrees Fahrenheit. The tumor is allowed to thaw and then is frozen again, damaging tumor cell tissue, rupturing cell membranes and, ultimately, causing cell death.

"Cryosurgery is safer, and patients have a smoother recovery than with conventional surgery," Dr. Stryker says. "In Mr. Urbanowicz's case, he went home five days follow-

ing the procedure. When he had the earlier liver resection, he was in the hospital and rehabilitation for 30 days."

"Cryosurgery is not a cure-all for all patients with liver cancer. However, it does offer patients advantages over conventional surgery," says Mark Talamonti, MD, director, Clinical Gastrointestinal Oncology Program. "We can freeze tumors that are too big, too deep or located where we would not be able to surgically remove them. We also can treat multiple tumors with less possibility of liver failure because nothing is removed and no blood is lost."

Urbanowicz, 74, of Chicago, says he's feeling very well and attributes his health to his caregivers at Northwestern Memorial. "From the top doctors to the residents to the nurses, my treatment was super. Each and every one of them are my lifesavers. I give them all As."

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