"Change Brings Opportunity"
~ Nido Qubein

With the new year approaching, many of us take time to consider our new year’s resolutions. While I am not overly fond of resolutions (ever purchased a gym membership only to stop using it by February? Yep, been there - done that!) I do find the time leading up to New Year’s Eve an excellent time to set long term goals and consider what aspects of myself I need to change to achieve those goals.

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A quick look tells us that HFMA is no different – discussions, planning and changes are taking place at both the National and Chapter level to improve the HFMA experience for each of you.

**National Level**

National HFMA is currently going through a review process to identify necessary changes to ensure that we are successful in a rapidly changing healthcare environment. The program is called Chapters 2.0 and includes the following:

- Assessing the current state of the chapters and identifying what is and isn’t working
- Examining current chapter boundaries
- Seeking alternatives that will reduce the administrative burden on chapter volunteers.
- Evaluating how to adapt to trends in volunteerism, membership and the healthcare profession

Several initiatives were implemented this year which include:

- Reduction in the education metric to ensure more emphasis is placed on quality over quantity.
- Financial awards to enable chapters to innovate and assist with the financial risks associated with the implementation of new programs

We will keep you updated as we see additional initiatives roll out over the next 12-18 months.

**Chapter Level**

There have been numerous changes and accomplishments this year which will provide additional opportunities for chapter members:

- The Women’s Event is in the process of branding itself with the end goal of being the go-to education and networking event for women in healthcare in Northern California
  - The chapter won a $5,000 grant to assist in the development
- Creation of the PEAK program (revamp of the early careerist program to focus on career development for all chapter members)
  - PEAK Stands for P (Professionalism), E (Education), A (Achievement), K (Knowledge)
  - Our chapter won a $5,000 grant to expand the program so watch for some exciting events coming up soon
- Return of the destination conference
  - The Fall conference will be at Squaw Creek Resort in Squaw Valley in 2017 and 2018
  - 2017 will be Sept 21-22 (Thursday/Friday)
  - Room rates will be $179 per night (perfect time of the year for a long weekend in Tahoe!)
• Expanding our healthcare partners for the major conferences
  - We are expanding our conference partners to bring in additional educational and networking opportunities for chapter members
  - Spring Conference will include ACHE/CAHL, CalCPA (we are also working with additional Hospital Councils and Rural Hospital associations
• The Region 11 Conference has now changed into the Western Region Conference and is a joint conference between Region 11 and Region 10 (Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Montana)
  - We are back in Vegas for the next three years as well
• IN PROCESS: Chapter website 2.0
  - Look for a more robust and interactive website to roll-out in January
  - Enhanced registration for both attendees and vendors
  - Increased links to various social media tools for information and education (Chapter YouTube Channel, Chapter Blog)
  - Future enhancements to the site will also allow us to live stream conference sessions, provide more interactive webinars and the chance to obtain CPE credits through on-line learning
• FUTURE: Sponsorship Enhancements
  - We are in the process of evaluating options to simplify and improve the sponsorship opportunities for our vendors
  - Our goal is to increase vendor support which in turn will allow us to enhance what the chapter offers you as a member
  - We are targeting a revised program by March 2017

What an exciting year! 2017 promises to bring even more opportunities for change and growth.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a 2017 that is everything you strive and work for.

Awards Presented to Chapter Leaders for Outstanding Achievements in Education and Collaboration

Chapter President Will McCammon presented the Yerger Awards to Ramona Hernandez (Programs Chairperson, FY2015-16 and current Chapter Treasurer) and Aubrey Straub (PEAK Team Leader and Board Member) at the chapter’s December Board Meeting in Berkeley, California. Ramona was instrumental in putting together several webinars that were offered to HFMA members belonging to the Region 11 territory. Aubrey, on the other hand, spearheaded the effort to expand the Early Careerist program (now called PEAK Event) with innovative and creative programs to reach out to healthcare professionals who are just entering the healthcare financial workforce or are in a career transition.
Four Vital Healthcare Leadership Lessons

By Carly D. Dunham and Ellen S. Montague, Freed Associates

It’s a challenge to stay healthy while working in healthcare, especially given the typical demands of most healthcare roles. Long hours, stress, limited access to healthy foods and sedentary jobs all conspire to rob healthcare employees of optimal opportunities to take better care of themselves. Clinicians face an additional level of personal health challenges as they care for those who are ill and injured.

That’s why it’s so vital for those who work in healthcare to proactively take care of themselves – first – before they can effectively work with or take care of others. It’s also why the “employee first” messaging of Sherry Stewart Deutschmann proved so powerful to those who attended her keynote address at the Women’s Event of the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA).

In Deutschmann’s presentation, “The Power of NO,” she detailed the constant challenge among healthcare employees to routinely say “yes” to all work requests, leaving them potentially resentful, depleted, less effective and unhappy. Instead, according to Deutschmann, by judiciously saying “no,” healthcare employees can more likely help themselves and ultimately more effectively serve others.

Key Leadership Lessons in Healthcare

Inspired by the HFMA event presentation, here are four key leadership lessons in healthcare from Freed Associates:

1. **Emphasize that employees (not consumers/patients) come first** – In a mission-driven industry such as healthcare, it can be easy to continuously put the needs of others first ahead of your own well-being or the welfare of your colleagues. But doing so is short-sighted, as it can detrimentally affect your health and the quality of care or service you provide. The presentation emphasized that creating a habit of treating yourself and employees’ needs first will lead to doing what’s right for consumers and patients.

   It’s essentially the same employee-first counsel as contained in the best-selling 2013 book “Patients Come Second” by Paul Spiegelman and Britt Barrett, who wrote: “In order to care for and retain patients, leaders must first create exceptional teams and find ways to engage nurses, administrative staff, physicians, supervisors, and even housekeeping staff and switchboard operators.”

   **Ideas for action**: Start by sincerely asking employees about their wants and needs in the workplace. Often, employees simply want minor changes. When you hire new employees, focus on the cultural fit and a favorable attitude in addition to aptitude. For current employees, recognize and reinforce positive behaviors and actions. To the extent possible, provide employees, especially those on the front lines, with opportunities to meet customer/patient needs themselves, through their own thinking and initiative, rather than imposing volumes of top-down rules.

2. **Put people first, not “person first”** – When working as a part of a team, how often have you had one or more team members harm the team’s overall performance, due to poor work, inappropriate behavior, or some other negative reason? Many organizations allow the unsatisfactory behaviors of employees to fester and grow, negatively affecting the performance of the entire team or organization.

   **Ideas for action**: Start by explicitly defining what the “person first” behaviors are and then ensure that each team member knows how to identify and address them. For example, if a team member consistently shows up late or is rude to customers, provide them with the tools and resources they need to change their behavior. If a team member consistently underperforms, provide them with coaching and training to help them improve. If a team member consistently engages in inappropriate behavior, such as sexual harassment or violence, provide them with counseling and support services. If a team member consistently engages in repetitive and severe behavior, such as violence or theft, terminate their employment.
Healthcare employees have the highest levels of stress and workplace complaints of any industry, according to a recent CareerBuilder survey. Don’t compound potentially high levels of tension in your workplace by refusing to address performance issues of employees or teams.

**Ideas for action:** Nervous about addressing employees exhibiting sub-optimal performance or behaviors? You’re not alone. A recent survey reveals that a majority of leaders (69 percent) said they were uncomfortable communicating with their staff, and more than a third (37 percent) were uncomfortable giving direct feedback to employees who they believed would respond negatively. When discussing job performance with an employee, do so privately. Be direct, use facts, don’t blame or use hearsay and be kind. Ask questions to understand the person and their motivation. Give specific examples of desired performance or behaviors to illustrate what you wish to instill.

3. **Enable your employees to put their colleagues and/or partners first** – Is the work you and your team provide of sufficiently high caliber and quality that it routinely assists and does not impede your colleagues and/or partners? If not, strive to consistently deliver that degree of service excellence, and allow your colleagues/partners to do their work more effectively, based on the quality and timeliness of your work.

By understanding the needs of your colleagues/partners and delivering high-quality work, you provide them with the time and opportunity to pursue other matters, and not force them to make amends because of you. It could be as simple as asking: “How can I help you do your work more effectively?” or “What do you do with the work output I give to you?”

**Ideas for action:** Seek to truly understand the needs of your colleagues and/or partners, and not be so caught up in your own thoughts or activities that you’re oblivious to the interests of others. When you ask a colleague or partner “What do you do with the work I give you?” you provide the recipients of this question the opportunity to tell you about their work preferences. Often, those who pose some form of this question are surprised to learn that they may be doing something that is not needed or wanted. Or, the questioner discovers ways of improving the work delivered.

4. **Commit to providing a joyful, fulfilling and problem-solving work culture** – Staff turnover is a huge problem in healthcare, as clinicians and employees depart for more attractive employers/opportunities, or exit the industry altogether. A third of recruiters in healthcare rank employee turnover as their top recruiting concern, according to a recent study by Health eCareers. What are you doing in your workplace to provide your employees with the resources and support they need to perform at their best – and stay with your organization?

**Ideas for action:** As with employees in any industry, healthcare employees want to know where they stand, relative to their employers’ expectations, and how they can advance in their respective roles. Recognize and reward these fundamental employee interests by regularly providing your employees with regular feedback (not waiting for a once-a-year formal meeting) and mutually charting development paths with your employees. Make sure you have sufficient staffing in high-demand areas of your organization or you will dishearten and/or burn out those who work there. Proactively work to build a sense of community and culture among your employees. Seek to match your employees with suitable mentors or role models for alternate voices of support and encouragement.

**Conclusion**

Those who work in healthcare often spend so much time and energy looking out for the interest of others that it’s difficult for them to look out for their own welfare, personally and professionally. Healthcare employers and leaders who make a point of putting their employees first, and ensuring that these people have the support and resources they need to perform their work effectively, will likely see tremendous benefits. Patients will receive superior care and the system will work better for everyone.

Others notice the difference in healthcare organizations that truly take care of their employees. As Deutschmann concluded: “If you value your employees, your employees will create value for your customers and patients.”

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Save the Date!

5th Annual Women’s Event
Friday, June 23, 2017
Palm Event Center, Pleasanton, CA
Fundraiser for UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital at the 2016 Fall Conference in Concord

HFMA strives to help others, whether through career development, education or networking. This year, HFMA also decided to raise funds for UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital with a silent and live auction during the Fall Conference. There were incredible items at the auction: a week-long stay at a condo in Mexico, wonderful paintings, a guitar, designer handbag, tickets to events, Apple Watch and much more. Through the generosity of our vendors providing these items and a little competitiveness during the live auction of everyone attending the event, we raised $4,630 which will help provide great care to children and their families.

We want to thank everyone for participating in this fun and worthwhile event!
Spotlight on a Newly Certified Member

Clive Chibaya, CHFP
Revenue Cycle Analyst, Rideout Regional Health Hospital

Brief Bio
Clive is a Revenue Cycle professional who has previously worked in the financial sector in various roles. After obtaining his BA in Accounting, he started his career as a chartered accountant intern for Barleynet and later joined an organization called TEN as a business analyst. As someone with a passion in healthcare delivery, the desire to work within the industry was always present but Clive knew from day one he wouldn’t be a clinician.

An opportunity came up and he joined Rideout Regional Health Hospital as a revenue integrity analyst responsible for Chargemaster Standardization, Payer Variance Analysis and coordinated Defense Audits. He later progressed into the role of senior revenue cycle analyst in charge of Expected Reimbursements, Contract Interpretations, Charge Capture Reconciliation, Pricing and Systems Administration. Clive is a keen gardener who also enjoys playing and watching tennis. He currently resides in Sacramento.

What was the biggest hurdle when going through the process of taking the CHFP exam?
When I decided to get certified as a healthcare financial professional, the emphasis was on getting certified and having the credentials after my name. However, I soon realized that acquiring in-depth understanding of the healthcare business and operational models were more important. It was sometimes challenging to be able to find the right balance between work, studying and a reasonable social life. I had to readjust my targets and come up with a more realistic approach. Otherwise it seemed like I was drowning. CHFP is a very manageable course if you’re willing to try and put in effort.

What was your motive behind obtaining the certification?
As a healthcare financial professional who is constantly looking for opportunities for self-improvement, I am always looking for courses that add value to myself and my organization. After my boss advised me of the benefits of this certification and after I attended one of the HFMA Northern California events, I was even more convinced of the advantages of this course. I soon discovered that the CHFP certification was the gold standard in the industry and I couldn’t wait to enroll. What I also discovered was this certification was tailored to give an understanding of healthcare finance regardless of professional background. I am now working towards certification for managed care through HFMA and this time I will ensure I allow plenty of time within my schedule for course work, recommended reading, etc. I would encourage, without hesitation, all healthcare professionals and non-professionals to get this certification as it broadens knowledge on current healthcare industry trends.
Remembering Gail Margolis

As a volunteer organization, HFMA Northern California has been blessed to work and collaborate with members who've shared their time to advance the organization’s mission. In this issue, we honor and pay tribute to Gail Margolis, an ardent supporter of HFMA and a friend to many.

Gail L. Margolis, Esq., passed away on September 10, 2016, following a brief illness. Ms. Margolis was born in the New York City area and maintained strong loyalties to the Big Apple throughout her life. She was a life-long die-hard fan of the New York Yankees. On the personal side, Gail had an unequaled flair for jewelry, laughter and friendship.

Ms. Margolis attended UCLA as an undergrad and subsequently earned a bachelor’s degree from St. Mary’s College, California and a MBA from the University of Dallas. She received a JD degree from the University of West Los Angeles School of Law. Throughout her distinguished career, Ms. Margolis was dedicated to improving access to high quality healthcare for vulnerable residents, especially children and low-income families.

From 1981-1995, Ms. Margolis was an executive and general counsel at Daniel Freeman Hospital. For the next five years, she headed The Margolis Law Firm. In 2000, Governor Gray Davis appointed Ms. Margolis to direct the state’s Medi-Cal program, providing healthcare coverage to more than six million Californians. Ms. Margolis returned to hospitals, her true calling, serving the past 12 years as Vice President, Government/Business/Community Relations at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, a position she held until her death.

Ms. Margolis was active in many community organizations, professional associations and public agencies. Recognized by Governors Pete Wilson and Gray Davis, the California Legislature, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles City Council, professional organizations and community groups for her outstanding service and contributions, Ms. Margolis was a pillar of professionalism, dedication and leadership.

Ms. Margolis is survived by her nephew, Robert Margolis of, Tallahassee, Florida and brother Richard Margolis (Lisa Holly) of Philadelphia.

Gail Margolis will be missed by many people, whose lives she touched. Gail’s legacy of caring and giving will be carried forward by those who knew and loved her.

PEAK: A Platform for Mentors, Mentees and Industry Resources

The PEAK program is designed to offer resources and inspiration to those who are on their career journey in the Healthcare Industry. Through Professionalism, Engagement, Achievement and Knowledge, we provide access to a variety of learning tools, including mentors! If you know of anyone who would benefit from being a part of this program, either as a Mentor, or looking for career-enriching resources, please refer them to our PEAK program. Contact Aubrey Straub, Team Leader, at astraub@hrgpros.com.