My Voice, My Vote Campaign Emphasizes Voter Education, Registration

Thanks to the efforts of market-based organizations throughout Catholic Health Initiatives, new voters are registering in time for this fall’s presidential election; established voters are learning more about candidates and issues; and excitement is spreading about exercising the American right to vote.

Catholic Health Initiatives’ My Voice, My Vote campaign provides market-based organizations with tools that encourage voter education and participation in the democratic process. “The My Voice, My Vote effort is entirely voluntary, and we are thrilled with all of the activity we are seeing at our market-based organizations and national offices,” said Marcia Desmond, director of public policy for Catholic Health Initiatives.

Volunteers key to Memorial’s registration success

At Memorial Health Care System in Chattanooga, Tenn., registration efforts have already created more than 60 new voters. “We held a voter registration event in all of our 14 locations,” said Howard Roddy, vice president of healthy community initiatives and advocacy for Memorial. “We had a group of volunteers specially trained to help employees and visitors fill out voter registration forms on the spot. The volunteers did a fantastic job and were really key to the success of the event.”

Because Memorial draws employees and patients from Georgia and Alabama as well as Tennessee, volunteers had registration forms for all three states on hand. “We collected 55 registrations for Tennessee alone,” said Roddy. “We had no idea if that was an impressive number or not, but the state election commission was absolutely thrilled.”

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New Resource Kits Distributed to Market-Based Mission Leaders

Market-based mission leaders have received copies of Catholic Health Initiatives’ new Mission Resource Kit, a portable file box that stores and organizes printed resources designed to help mission leaders perform their jobs more effectively.

“Through the years, the Mission Group has developed many resources to help mission leaders to successfully foster and promote Catholic Health Initiatives’ mission and core values in each market-based organization,” said Diane Traffas, OP, vice president of mission integration for Catholic Health Initiatives. “We needed a way to bring these resources together to be readily accessible and easy to maintain. Having all of these assets in one place allows mission leaders to develop a better understanding of how the materials work together to reinforce the various aspects of a mission program and to better integrate mission as a core business process.”

The kit includes some general resources, such as Catholic Health Initiatives’ foundational documents, strategic plan and sponsorship model. It also categorizes mission-specific resources into ten areas designated as mission’s scope of work. These include leadership and culture; spiritual care and spirituality of the workplace; ethics; healthy communities; and international missions.

The kit is also designed to make it easy for mission leaders to add new materials. “Everything changes, and we’ll be able to send our mission leaders new or revised tools with specifics on where they belong in the resource kit,” Sister Diane said.

Sister Diane said the kits have been well-received by mission leaders. “In addition to serving as an orientation kit for new hires, the kit can be used to re-orient more seasoned mission leaders to the resources available to them,” she said. “The mission leaders are very enthusiastic about having all of these tools at their fingertips to help them serve their organizations.”

For more information on the kit, contact Sister Diane at dianetraffas@catholichealth.net.

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As in many other states, voters in Tennessee must be registered at least 30 days prior to casting a vote. Memorial plans to hold another registration event in September to ensure that new registrants can participate in the November presidential election. The market-based organization has also added voter registration forms to its information packages for newly hired employees.

An all-American team: ice cream and voter education

At the Northern Kentucky office of Catholic Health Initiatives, 22 employees recently attended an ice cream social to learn more about voter registration and resources available through the My Voice, My Vote Web site.

“We had registration forms available for the three states from which we draw employees — Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana — complete with pre-printed mailing labels,” said Carol Keenan, director of human resources for Catholic Health Initiatives. “We also demonstrated the Web site,
St. Francis in Breckenridge Recognized for Contributions to National Nursing Home Collaborative

As an active member of the National Nursing Home Improvement Collaborative (NNHIC), St. Francis Home, Breckenridge, Minn., contributes to and benefits from an exchange of ideas for prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers. At a NNHIC Learning Session in July, a storyboard on pressure ulcer initiatives at St. Francis took second place in a peer-judged contest. The NNHIC is sponsored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

“We and the 50 other member facilities of NNHIC do quality improvement, but with a twist,” said Ann Hower, RN, quality coordinator for St. Francis. “Rather than focus on extended research, we seek to make small, practical and rapid changes that add up to positive results.”

For example, St. Francis implemented a multi-disciplinary approach to pressure ulcer prevention and treatment. Now, nursing assistants and therapists, as well as nurses, check residents for signs of ulcer formation. Dietitians join treatment efforts, providing special protein drinks that help treat skin breakdowns. “We’ve made our entire staff more aware of skin issues, which leads to earlier intervention and treatment,” said Hower.

St. Francis also introduced objective assessments to gauge residents’ risk for pressure ulcers and evaluate healing. “We assign numerical values to risk or healing, which helps us take appropriate action for each resident,” Hower said.

Using software provided by the NNHIC, St. Francis’ shares ideas with others in the collaborative and uploads data on healing rates and other important indicators. NNHIC will aggregate the data for a National Outcomes Congress to be held in October. St. Francis is also in the process of compiling its own outcomes data.

“The NNHIC is composed of long-term care facilities trying various techniques to prevent and treat pressure ulcers, and that makes a great exchange of knowledge about what works and what doesn’t,” said Hower. “Our staff is very open to trying ideas that we get from the collaborative, because they know it is for the good of our residents.”

For more information on pressure ulcer prevention and treatment initiatives at St. Francis, contact Ann Hower at annhower@catholichealth.net.

Helping inpatients cast their votes

Memorial’s My Voice, My Vote committee is now considering ways to help inpatients exercise their right to vote during the November elections. “We are discussing ways to determine in advance which patients wish to vote and the best way to enable them vote from their beds,” said Roddy. “Our state election commission volunteered to work with us to provide this service to our patients so they can contribute to the democratic process.”

Desmond said she is impressed by the initiative market-based organizations have taken to implement the My Voice, My Vote campaign. “The market-based organizations are going beyond the suggestions in the My Voice, My Vote Action Guide and coming up with great ideas of their own.”

Catholic Health Initiatives has scheduled conference calls during which market-based organization representatives can share their ideas and successes regarding My Voice, My Vote. For more information on the calls or any other aspect of My Voice, My Vote, contact Marcia Desmond at marciadesmond@catholichealth.net; Peg O’Keefe, director of communications for Catholic Health Initiatives at pegokeefe@catholichealth.net; or visit www.catholichealthinit.org and click on the My Voice, My Vote icon.
NEWS BRIEFS

Centura Health Receives International Spirit at Work Award

Centura Health, Denver, Colo., is one of only 10 organizations worldwide to be selected for the third annual International Spirit at Work Award. Centura will receive the award because of its long-term commitment to sustainable spiritual initiatives in the workplace. The award is presented annually by the Association for Spirit at Work, the Spirit in Business Institute, the World Business Academy and the European Baha’i Business Forum. Centura will receive the award at the Spirit in Business Conference on October 1.

Good Samaritan in Kearney, Saint Francis in Grand Island and TriHealth in Cincinnati Receive “Most Wired” Honors

TriHealth, Cincinnati, Ohio; Saint Francis Medical Center, Grand Island, Neb.; and Good Samaritan Health Systems, Kearney, Neb., have all been recognized by the annual survey of “most wired” hospitals conducted by Hospitals & Health Networks, the journal of the American Hospital Association. The survey and benchmarking study measures the nation’s hospitals on their use of Internet technologies for quality, customer service, public health and safety, business processes and workforce issues.

Good Samaritan and TriHealth were named to the list of the 100 Most Wired Hospitals; Saint Francis was named to the list of the 25 Most Improved Hospitals.

Corrections

There were two errors in the list of 2004 Mission and Ministry Fund Grants published in the August 2004 issue of Initiatives. The grant for Healthy Williston, Healthy Youth was given to Mercy Medical Center of Williston, N.D., not Nampa, Idaho; and grant presented to St. Joseph Community Health Services of Albuquerque, N.M., for Vecinos y Vacunas was in the amount of $617,333, not $648,833, as previously published. Initiatives regrets the errors.