

THE MESSENGER

NEWS OF THE RIGHTCARE MOVEMENT



February 3, 2017

Join us for the **5th Annual Lown Institute Conference, May 5-7 in Boston, MA**. Hear inspiring keynotes from health leaders, researchers, and activists; learn about the latest original research on overuse and underuse; participate in workshops created by RCA members; and meet and strategize with hundreds of others like you, who are advocating for right care. **Early bird registration closes February 10, so Register Now!**

People power in action: Right Care Alliance leadership training

On January 21, the nation witnessed the power of the people in full force, as more than three million in cities across the U.S. marched for women's rights, racial justice, economic equality, and the right to health care. One week prior, members of the Right Care Alliance attended an intensive training, led by Lown Institute staff member **Stephanie Aines** and organizer **Pedja Stojicic** to learn how to harness that power to bring us closer to right care. The training gathered 36 clinicians, patients, former health professionals, and advocates from 12 RCA councils, growing chapters, and 15 states.

The first day of training, participants were tasked with creating their "Story of Self," a practice developed by many movements and advanced by organizing pioneer **Marshall Ganz**, who stood with the Farm Workers Movement in California and was the architect of President Obama's first campaign. The Story of Self offered a structured way for attendees to share the reasons they



Adrienne Draper kicks off the morning with a poem

feel called to leadership in the Right Care Alliance. After hearing stories from the organizing coaches, participants broke into small groups to practice telling their own stories and giving feedback to others. This was a huge shift for some participants, especially health professionals who are used to using clinical rather than personal language. "A lot of clinicians, we rely on numbers, but emotion can be more powerful than any statistic," said **Jane Zhu, MD, MPP**, co-founder of the Clinicians Action Network. Participants would return to these stories again and again throughout the weekend, connecting their experiences with shared values of the right care movement to motivate people to action.



Participants share their "stories of self" in small groups

Another skill taught at the training was relationship building, a key tool for developing leadership, community, and power. While it can be more comfortable to stay within your existing network of colleagues and friends, engaging others outside of your network can expand the reach of your message and give you different perspectives. "It's about allying with people not only who think like you but who think differently from you," said **Maia Dorsett, MD**.



Maia Dorsett and Andy Lazris practice having a one-on-one meeting



Group photo of leadership training participants, coaches, and staff

Participants practiced having one-on-one meetings with colleagues or acquaintances, in which they explored each other's experiences and values, and exchanged information and interest in collaborating. The training culminated in a 30-minute phone bank session, in which participants made 165 phone calls, left 80 voicemails, and scheduled 76 follow-up meetings connecting new people to the RCA. Some were reluctant to call, but realized that people were willing to listen. "I learned that it doesn't hurt for me to step outside my comfort zone," said **Mykol Larvie, MD**.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the training was having the opportunity to meet with RCA members from across the country. Working and strategizing in small groups, sharing personal experiences, and chatting over meals helped bring participants together in trust and motivation for collective action. "After this weekend, I feel really bonded with these people!" said **Poppy Arford**, patient partner and advocate. Participants left the training exhausted but fulfilled, fired up, and ready to advocate for right care. "We're preparing a war of love, kindness, and compassion," said **Francisco Irby, MD**, senior organizing fellow at the Lown Institute.

Have you been making calls and having one-on-ones? We want to hear about it! Email organize@lowninstitute.org with your organizing accomplishments to get a shout-out in the next issue of *The Messenger*.

Organizing Tips – Storytelling

Storytelling is a cornerstone of organizing. Through stories, we communicate our values and our passion to work with others and call them to action. "Stories can take us from paralysis to participation, from fear to hope," says **Stephanie Aines**, organizing manager at the Lown Institute.

At the leadership training, participants learned how to weave together their Story of Self (why we are called to leadership), Story of Us (the shared values that bring us together as a collective), and the Story of Now (why we have to take immediate action) into a cohesive narrative. Here are some tips from the training for effective storytelling:

- When looking for a topic, think about a key point in your life that brought you where you are now. For example, when did you first experience an injustice? When did you realize that you had to act? *Everyone* has a compelling story to tell.
- Your story of self should include a challenge, choice, and outcome in that key point. What was the challenge? How did you address it? What was the outcome?
- Include sensory details to bring the reader into the setting of the story. What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel?
- Be brave! Often the most powerful story comes from being vulnerable and showing emotion.
- Keep it short! You can tell a moving story in two minutes if you focus on a key point.

Right Care in the News

People Profile: Randi Oster



Randi Redmond Oster likes to say that safety is part of her DNA. When she worked at General Electric designing new parts for aircraft engines, she was obsessed with safety – and for good

reason. “I used to lose sleep over a *millimeter* change in a part redesign of an aircraft engine, because I felt I had the weight of peoples’ lives on my shoulders,” she said. Through rigorous training in management and leadership, Oster became confident in her ability to work with teams to build new products and businesses by thinking of the customer first. Having spent over a decade in the corporate world, she assumed that all organizations designed their processes with the customer in mind and provided training for employees just like as GE did.

When Oster took on the role of patient advocate for her teenage son in 2009, she received a rude awakening. Bringing her son to the ER for the first time, Oster instantly knew that something was wrong. Her son was bleeding and was in terrible pain, but no one came over to ask if he was alright. Once he was admitted, Oster was overwhelmed by the number of machines, tubes, medications, and tests her son was being subjected to, without her understanding why. More disturbingly, the transfer of knowledge and teamwork Randi was used to at GE was missing. Wasn’t her son a critical part of the team? Randi and her son were being left out of conversations about his care by default – they felt neglected, confused, and worried.

“Those of us who work in the aerospace industry know that it takes well-designed processes to build a safe product,” said Oster. In that hospital, she didn’t see the processes in place needed to manage such a complex system. Doctors were focused on their part of her son’s body. Who was the system engineer looking at him as a whole person? “There would

Rogers heads new Chicago trauma center

In his career as a trauma surgeon, **Selwyn Rogers, Jr, MD, MPH, FACS** has seen firsthand the devastating effects of violence on families and communities. In Boston, he watched a mother say goodbye to her second son to die of a gunshot wound. During his fellowship at Vanderbilt University, Rogers treated a high school student who luckily survived a gunshot wound, only to come back two months later with another injury from gunfire. These experiences have motivated Rogers to treat violence not only with medicine, but with community health initiatives that go beyond the hospital. “We have to address the larger issues that lead to this intentional violence and treat it as what it is,” said Rogers, quoted in the [Chicago Tribune](#), “It’s a disease.”

Rogers’ mission to address violence through community health is taking him to the South Side of Chicago, where gun violence has increased drastically this past year. Rogers will be the first head of the neighborhood’s only Level 1 adult trauma center, opening in 2018. “I saw what was going on within the context of intentional violence on the South Side of Chicago,” said Rogers, “I actually was very struck by the opportunity and calling to make a difference.” Before the center opens, Rogers is moving to Chicago and planning a listening tour to get to know the community.

Rocha does prevention for heart health



Just in time for Valentine’s Day, Right Care Boston member **Michael Rocha, MD** is bringing the “Love Your Heart” movement to the East Coast. On February 12, communities across New Bedford, MA, will provide residents with free blood pressure screenings and information specific to their current reading. There will also be educational materials and guidance on how to improve or maintain optimal heart health.

Rocha, a cardiologist at Hawthorn Medical Associates and Director of the New Bedford Wellness Initiative, says, “We can empower patients to be their own best doctors by helping them to realize that food is medicine, exercise is medicine, and a community that cares for one another is medicine for their heart.” The event will take place on Sunday, February 12th from 8-4 at participating sites. All locations can be found at <https://www.nbewell.com/love-your-heart>.

be planes falling out of the sky if we did things like this!” said Oster, referring to her days at GE.

And she wasn’t quiet about the problems she saw in the hospital. As a person who loves improving processes, Oster took notes throughout her time with her son in the hospital, which later became an award-winning book, [Questioning Protocol](#). Recording her experience was not only therapeutic for Oster, but became a stepping stone for the next phase in her career. As president of [Help Me Health](#), Oster works to increase engagement among health care workers and, most importantly, improve the patient experience. Her mission is to make patient experience “part of the hospital’s DNA,” just as safety was hers at GE.

This will take significant changes in leadership training and culture. For example, hospital leaders have to look beyond cost cutting and increasing volume to meet financial targets, tactics that increase clinician burnout. “In healthcare, just like flying a plane, we need our front line at peak performance,” said Oster. What encourages Oster is that the gap in leadership is a solvable problem. “There are best practices that are easily transferable to health care if people are willing to listen,” she said.

The tools Oster learned at the RCA leadership training have been helpful in working toward her mission. She started using the two-minute public narrative – the story of self, the story of us, the story of now – in every phone call with potential RCA members. “Within two minutes, by telling your story you can build a closer relationship with a person and, with a common goal, energize them,” said Oster.

Clinicians march against immigration ban

In response to President Trump’s executive order temporarily banning immigrants and refugees from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S., a group of physicians joined a protest in downtown Boston. Seven physicians, including Right Care Boston member **Aaron Stupple, MD**, donned their white coats in solidarity with their Muslim patients and fellow doctors. “We took an oath to take care of vulnerable people and support their health and well-being,” said Stupple, quoted in [The Boston Globe](#), “This policy and this ban is an affront to that oath.”

Announcements

- The Lown Institute is proud to announce the third national [Right Care Vignette Competition](#). We are seeking clinical vignettes written by students or trainees in the health professions, describing harm or near-harm caused by medical overuse. The deadline to submit a vignette is **February 28**, so [apply now!](#)
- If you read *The Messenger* regularly, you see stories about clinicians and advocates doing exceptional work for right care. If you have a colleague or teammate who deserves to be recognized for their passion and dedication to right care, nominate them for a [Right Care Alliance Award](#)! Award winners will be honored at the [Lown Institute Conference](#).