

# triangle times

Volume 1 | Issue 4 | Fall 2014

## 35 years of accreditation

As part of our 35th anniversary year celebration, AAAHC recognized two organizations that have been continuously accredited since 1979:

Phoenix Surgicenter, a Banner Surgery Centers facility, in Phoenix, Ariz. and Boynton Student Health Service, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.

Boynton Student Health staff, joyful at the presentation (background); proud Surgicenter staff (inset)

As often happens, each of these organizations initially sought accreditation through the advocacy of a single individual who acted as an “early adopter” and believed in the value of achieving accreditation. Below is an excerpt from an interview with David Milton, Administrator, Surgicenter, and Colleen Jahnel, Director of Quality Assurance, Compliance and HIM, Boynton Student Health.



**Triangle Times:** *Congratulations to each of you on your 35 consecutive years of AAAHC accreditation. Would you share your perspective on why this accreditation matters?*

**David Milton:** *For Surgicenter, the short answer is that the AAAHC survey validates that we are doing the right thing.*

*continued on page 2*



## A letter from the Board Chair

Welcome to the fall issue of *Triangle Times*! As we celebrate the final quarter of our 35th anniversary year, we look back at long-term relationships (see *35 Years of Accreditation*) and forward to new opportunities (see *Network Accreditation Program Launched*, page 5). I'm delighted to have this particular issue in which to introduce myself. It's a special honor to be serving as chairman of the board at this moment in our history.

Through my association with AAAHC, I've come to believe that accreditation can build powerful relationships that result in a culture of excellence. The process of preparing for an initial survey involves committing your organization to teamwork, to communication, and to practices designed to deliver superior outcomes. Within the structure of AAAHC Standards, these commitments

form a strong and flexible web of interdependency. As a surveyor, I've observed that when teams trust one another and communicate well, there is greater engagement and empowerment, attributes that are prerequisites for organizational excellence. And because accreditation is an on-going state, not a "one and done" event, these positive attitudes and behaviors—based on relationships—develop into a self-sustaining culture, becoming a virtuous cycle.

We absorb the cultural norms of our environment without much conscious effort, so it just makes sense for organizations to be deliberate in setting themselves up to succeed by choosing accreditation.

I hope you will enjoy reading about some of the people and organizations that have had sustained relationships



W. Patrick Davey

with AAAHC in this issue. Our future is bright and promises additional growth as we continue to develop new resources to support quality health care through accreditation. ▲

W. Patrick Davey, MD, MBA, FACP

### 35 years of accreditation, continued from page 1

Accreditation tells our patients that the facility in which they are having their procedure operates safely, efficiently, and with the highest quality care. For our staff, it demonstrates our commitment to consistently maintain high levels of quality and safety throughout our facility, even as health care standards change over time.

“AAAHC accreditation works as an endorsement of the excellent care we provide in a safe and comfortable environment.”

— David Milton, Administrator for The Banner Health Pheonix Surgicenter

**Colleen Jahnel:** AAAHC accreditation is like a seal of approval, and by voluntarily undergoing an in-depth, rigorous survey every three years, Boynton demonstrates its commitment to excellence and its confidence in the quality and safety of the care, treatment, and services we provide. As a patient or potential patient, accreditation provides

assurance that Boynton Health Service is engaged in continuous review and improvement of its quality, and that it meets nationally endorsed standards.

**TT:** You've each been through the survey process several times. Do you know how your facility made the original decision to seek accreditation?



Colleen Jahnel and Dr. Ferdinand Schlapper, Director of Boynton Health Services and Chief Health Officer, University of Minnesota, flanked by Carolyn Kurtz and Geoffrey Charlton-Perrin of AAAHC.

**35 years of accreditation**, *continued from page 2*

**CJ:** Dr. Paul Rupprecht was our director from 1972 to 1988. He was very involved with the American College Health Association [ACHA] which was one of the six founding members of AAAHC. Dr. Rupprecht helped develop the first quality assurance program at Boynton Health Service, and he was committed to undergoing an accreditation process to further demonstrate Boynton’s commitment to quality, accountability, and continuous improvement.

**DM:** Our story is similar. We were the very first free-standing ambulatory surgery center in the country, founded by Dr. Wallace Reed. Dr. Reed was very clear that credentialing the organization was a way to help both patients and physicians understand that the care in an ambulatory setting was in every way equal to that of a hospital. He was part of the group of AAAHC founders, serving as its first Vice President from 1979-81 and second President from 1981-83.

**TT:** *Tell me something about your personal experience with the AAAHC survey process.*

**DM:** In my 5 years at this facility, I have been through two surveys. I have found that the survey teams are both thorough and thoughtful. They actively engage the staff in questions and answers, but in a non-threatening way. Specific surveyors who come to mind include Dr. Jack Egnatinsky, Dr. Meena Desai, and Jo Vinson. Each was very knowledgeable about our industry.

I am the immediate past-president of the Arizona Ambulatory Surgery Center Association, and I’ve had the pleasure of inviting Ray Grundman [AAAHC Vice President, External Relations and Operations] to speak at our last two annual conferences. Our membership has always found the information Ray presents to be timely and relevant.

For your 35th anniversary, Dr. John Burke and Dr. Pat Davey [AAAHC CEO and Board Chair, respectively] came out to present us with a plaque commemorating our years of accreditation. Like the other folks I mentioned, Dr. Burke and Dr. Davey were accessible and collegial. Every one of them has gone out of his or her way to share their knowledge of the industry.



David Milton, John Burke, PhD listen as W. Patrick Davey, MD, congratulated Surgicenter on 35 years of continuous accreditation.

**CJ:** I have been involved in every AAAHC survey at Boynton Health Service with the exception of the very first one in 1979 and I can attest that everyone here shares in the commitment and works very hard to help the organization maintain accreditation. We like that the AAAHC surveyors typically come from similar health care facility backgrounds — in our case, college health — so they understand how we operate.

“The AAAHC accreditation Standards are integrated into our culture, and they have provided guidance as we strive to achieve the best possible service and care for the University of Minnesota community.”

– Ferdinand Schlapper, Director for Boynton Health Service & Chief Officer for University of Minnesota

AAAHC Standards provide the framework that guides our ongoing internal review process and assessment of our organization’s structures, systems, and processes. It’s how we ensure that we’re delivering quality, up-to-date care. Beyond the Standards, we’ve participated in the performance measurement program for asthma management through the AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement. This gives us a way to benchmark our services against other college health organizations.

The recent recognition event at which Geoffrey Charlton-Perrin [Director, Marketing and Communications] and Carolyn Kurtz [General Counsel & Vice President, Government/Public Affairs] from AAAHC presented us with a plaque commemorating our years of accreditation was a great celebration for our entire staff. ▲

# Coining a tradition



Medical Director, Jack Egnatinsky, MD, shows off the AAAHC coin on display at Andrews Air Force Base.

For as long as AAAHC has been accrediting US Air Force and US Coast Guard ambulatory facilities, we've been honored to give and receive military challenge coins. Since 2009, our surveyors have carried a few special AAAHC coins while on military surveys. At the summation conference, one or more may be given to individuals who have provided exceptional service. Similarly, our surveyors are sometimes given coins to commemorate a specific survey. We display them proudly in our office.

At a recent survey at Andrews AFB, our surveyors had a opportunity to

visit the Aeromedical Staging Facility (ASF). Dr. Jack Egnatinsky was invited to place one of our AAAHC coins in the display case at the ASF. The display holds many coins brought by wounded warriors on their way home. The survey team felt that this coin demonstrates our support of their mission and their service to our country.

“Although not included in the survey, it [*touring the ASF*] was one of the highlights of the visit to the 779th MDG. There was a medevac flight coming in at 16:00 that day and they were gearing up, but took the time out to show us around.

When I made the coin presentation (a unanimous vote of the survey team) there were several patients in the unit being readied to go on to their next stop on the way home. It was very emotional. I really felt honored to be able to put our coin amongst those brought back from the battle lines by patients who have passed through the ASF,” said Dr. Egnatinsky. ▲

## AAAHC shares the coin tradition beyond our military organizations

In honor of our 35th anniversary, we created an extra coin to commemorate surveys taking place in 2014. Each survey team carried a single “35 Years Strong” coin to present during their summation conference at the close of a survey. Should we continue the tradition for our 40th? Let us know what you think!

AAAHC displays military challenge coins given to surveyors and staff in our office.



## Achieving Accreditation is not to be missed in December

*Achieving Accreditation* in Las Vegas is always a great year-end conference. In addition to the important content and networking opportunities present at every *Achieving Accreditation* seminar, December's program has these special extras:

- Celebrate the winners of the AAAHC Institute's 2014 *Kershner Innovations in Quality Improvement Award*.
- Learn what Standards changes are in store for 2015.
- Be among the first to experience “Illuminating Quality Improvement,” a new toolkit focused on QI.

### AND... AAAHC + APIC = GREAT INFECTION PREVENTION EDUCATION

Our “Ask the APIC Expert” sessions are so lively and popular that we're expanding the partnership with APIC to offer an expanded 4-hour workshop before this *Achieving Accreditation* seminar.

**How Safe are Your Safe Practices?** is especially timely with the added attention on infection prevention resulting from the Ebola epidemic. This session provides expert advice and resources to answer these questions:

- Does your IPC program address the specific risks present in your organization?

*continued on page 8*

# News Briefs

## NETWORK ACCREDITATION PROGRAM LAUNCHED

To address the needs of non-surgical organizations that own and operate multiple sites of care, AAAHC now offers Network Accreditation. This program focuses on organizations that own, operate, and direct care for 10 or more sites. The requirements focus on the ability of the centralized system of governance and administration to maintain each site of care in an accreditable manner.

“We’ve received inquiries from organizations with many different corporate structures,” said Dorota Rakowiecki, who directs the new program, “and many of them are undergoing rapid expansion. This new program is designed to meet their needs while holding them to the highest standards of operational consistency to ensure that there is ongoing focus on quality and patient safety at individual sites.”

Director of AAAHC Accreditation Services, Michon Villanueva, explained, “Network Accreditation builds strong, on-going relationships with the organizations it serves by working closely with them throughout the accreditation cycle. While all of our accreditation programs are relationship-based, this one requires a greater degree of on-going reporting and communication. We believe it’s a program that will provide a comprehensive, but cost-effective, accreditation solution for employer-based sites, retail clinics and urgent care sites, among others.”

For additional information, contact Dorota Rakowiecki, Assistant Director, Accreditation Services at [drakowiecki@aaahc.org](mailto:drakowiecki@aaahc.org) or Rommie Johnson, Accreditation Specialist at [rjohnson@aaahc.org](mailto:rjohnson@aaahc.org).

## NATIONAL PRACTITIONER DATA BANK REDUCES QUERY FEES

Effective October 1, 2014, the new fee to query the Data Bank is \$3.00 for both Continuous and One-Time Queries and \$5.00 for Self-Queries. All other aspects of querying remain the same. For more information, please see the announcement in the Federal Register.

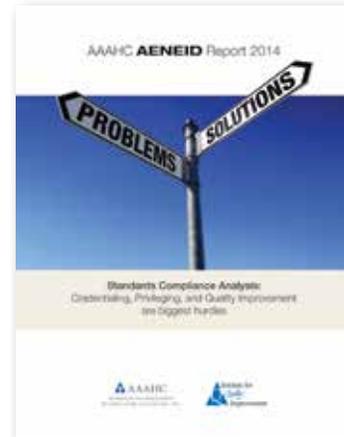


### AAAHC INSTITUTE NEWS: BENCHMARKING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Registration is still open for benchmarking studies spanning July-December 2014. Go to [aaahc.org/institute](http://aaahc.org/institute) for more information.

### DISEASE MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT: OBESITY

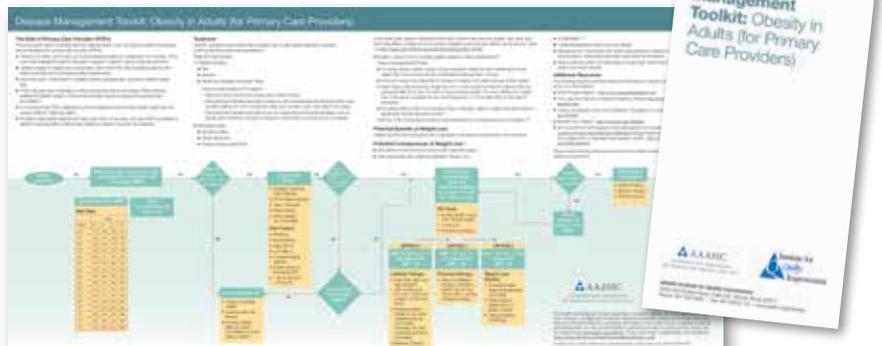
The success of our patient safety tools on OSA, VTE, preventing falls, and using checklists has led to new topics, this time in disease management. *Obesity in Adults (for Primary Care Providers)* includes a process chart for assessment and treatment options, a list of evidence-based research, and additional resources including national guidelines and policy recommendations. Copies of the tool are available for download or purchase at [www.aaahc.org/institute/patient-safety-toolkits](http://www.aaahc.org/institute/patient-safety-toolkits).



### AENEID REPORT 2014 TO BE RELEASED

The second annual report on Standards deficiencies based on surveys conducted over a one-year period will be published in November. The *AAAHC AENEID Report 2014* will highlight Standards that provide challenges to ASCs, office-based surgery and primary care settings. AAAHC and the AAAHC Institute will focus educational efforts on these Standards throughout 2015. ▲

Registration is still open for benchmarking studies spanning July-December 2014.



# Surveyor Spotlight



**LOUISE DECHESSER, RN, CNOR, MS**  
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF SURGICAL SOLUTIONS, LLC.

AAAHC recently lost a great friend and colleague with the death of Louise DeChesser, 64, on September 25, 2014.

Louise's health care career was extensive and accomplished. She was founder and president of Surgical Solutions, LLC, providing consulting services to numerous surgery and health care facilities in Connecticut, where she lived, as well as in other states. She most recently served as Administrator, Middlesex Center for Advanced Orthopedic Surgery and Director of Clinical Operations, Healthcare Venture Professions, LLC.

Prior positions include: Administrator, West Hartford Surgery Center; Director of Surgical Services, St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center; Director of Planning, Waterbury Hospital; Director of Operations, HEALTHSOUTH Corporation (Conn., Mass., and N.Y.); Administrative

Director, HEALTHSOUTH Surgery Center of Hartford and its Connecticut Surgery Center; Administrative Director, Middlesex Surgical Center; Director of Perioperative Services, former New Britain General Hospital; Director of Nursing, Connecticut Surgery Center; and, operating room nurse at University of Vermont Medical Center, Burlington. Louise began her nursing career as an OR nurse at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, later being promoted to Head Nurse.

Additional professional affiliations included: the editorial board, *Outpatient Surgery Magazine*, AORN, ASCA, and ACHE.

**MS. DECHESSER AND AAAHC**

Louise participated in her initial surveyor training in 2003, and surveyed 24 ASCs over two decades as a surveyor. As an experienced AAAHC surveyor with extensive hospital experience, she was approached to support the newly launched Accreditation Association for Hospital/Health Systems (AAHHS) in 2012, an opportunity she took on with enthusiasm.

She served on the survey team for the last of the AAHHS pilot surveys this past winter when her efforts to get to the site were stymied by weather and a subsequent flight cancellation.

She connected with another member of the team (and a personal friend), Betty Bozzuto, and together they found train transportation. Long hours on the train were passed playing cards—and they arrived as scheduled for the on-site visit.

Meg Gravesmill, Vice President/General Manager, AAHHS, said, "Lou was not a person who would ever say no when confronted with a challenging situation. She would just find a way to make things work, and a way to have fun along the way."

Meg Kerr, Senior Director, Education and Surveyor Services, said, "Whenever Louise was around, the sun was shining and people were smiling. She was one of those rare souls who truly know how to enjoy life, and she shared that joy with those around her."

**LIFE BEYOND WORK**

Beyond her work in health care, Louise DeChesser had a rich history of participation in theatrical work and was featured soloist with the Bristol and West Hartford Symphonies. She took great pride in mentoring young performers.

We share just a few of Louise DeChesser's many accomplishments here. She epitomized the smart, engaged individual that makes an ideal surveyor and she will be greatly missed by all of us who knew her. ▲

## Welcome to our newly accredited organizations

Congratulations to these 44 new organizations accredited between July 1 and September 30, 2014.

**ARIZONA**

Surgery Center of Scottsdale, LLC

**CALIFORNIA**

Modern Institute of Surgery

Reginald Sampson M.D., A Professional Corporation

Aesthetic Surgery & Laser Medical Center, Inc.

Summit Surgery Center, LLC

Physicians Surgery Center at Glendale Adventist, LLC

Interventional Spine Center, Inc.

Delta Bay Surgery Center, LLC

Specialists Surgery Center of Del Mar, LLC

Temecula Pain Management Center, Inc. Hermosa Beach Surgery Center

**COLORADO**

Redlands Mesa Surgery Center

**CONNECTICUT**

Surgical Center of Connecticut, LLC

**FLORIDA**

Surgery Center of Viera, LLC

Baptist Surgery and Endoscopy Centers, LLC

**GEORGIA**

North Atlanta Vascular Clinic, PC

Center for Pain and Spine, LLC

GA Pain Management Center LLC

Lane Dermatologic Surgery Center, LLC

**INDIANA**

Surgery Center of Munster LLC

**KANSAS**

Eye Surgery Center of Wichita

**MARYLAND**

Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc.

**MONTANA**

Hope Pregnancy Ministries

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Pioneer Ambulatory Surgery Center

**NEBRASKA**

Kearney Pain Treatment Center, LLC

**NEW JERSEY**

Pilgrim Medical Center Mine Hill Surgical Center

**NEW YORK**

Aesthetic Physicians of Massachusetts, PC - Sono Bello Long Island

Ulster Endoscopy Care

**OREGON**

Kaiser Foundation Hospital (DBA Skyline)

**PENNSYLVANIA**

The Ambulatory Surgery Center at St. Mary, LLC

**PUERTO RICO**

Advanced Endoscopy Center, PSC

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

York County Outpatient Endoscopy Center, LLC

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

Sioux Falls Specialty Hospital, LLP

**TENNESSEE**

Hope Resource Center

**TEXAS**

Dallas IVF Surgery Center

Ambulatory Surgical Institute of Dallas, LLC

GCSA Ambulatory Surgery Center, LLC

**UTAH**

Northpointe Surgical Center, LLC

**VIRGINIA**

Martha Jefferson Outpatient Surgery Center

**WASHINGTON**

Northwest Neurosciences PLLC

Eastside Medical Group, LLC

International Community Health Services

Alex Sobel PLLC

# Meet the AAAHC Staff



**MARY WEI**  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ACCREDITATION SERVICES, SURGICAL SERVICES

Don't mess with Mary Wei – she's a first degree black belt in Seido Karate, a martial art form that she has practiced for over 9 years.

Mary's path to the study of karate was somewhat accidental. A friend of hers wanted to sign up for a beginning class but wanted to go with a buddy.

"She doesn't practice anymore," Mary laughed, "but I do. There was

something there that piqued my interest from the beginning. I think it had to do with a focus on the integration of mind, body and spirit. I liked the idea that by training my body, I would also train my mind."

When asked if her study of karate has an impact on how she approaches her work at AAAHC, Mary said, "It has an impact on how I live my life. I think karate has changed how I address problems and how I receive feedback.

"I've learned to be smarter in my reactions. We do a lot of partner work at my dojo and that experience



helps me see my own strengths and limitations, as well as those of others. You're constantly making adjustments and problem-solving in a changing situation. Those skills translate pretty directly to my daily work with regulatory agencies and customers at AAAHC."

"My job usually involves big projects, like working on how to improve and streamline the process for our Medicare Deemed Status organizations. With karate, you practice a series of forms; they're like individual pieces of choreography. Then, in a tournament, or when you're sparring, you get to

*continued on page 8*

## October 2014

■ = education ■ = outreach ■ = deadlines

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## November 2014

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## December 2014

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### October

- Triangle Times* published
- 10** New Jersey Association of Ambulatory Surgery Centers (NJAASC), New Brunswick (conference exhibit)
- 11-13** Plastic Surgery – The Meeting, Chicago (conference exhibit)
- 14-17** OR Excellence, New Orleans (conference exhibit)
- 20-22** California Association of Health Plans, Huntington Beach (conference exhibit)
- 23-25** Becker's ASC Conference, Chicago (conference presentation & exhibit)
- 26-28** Medicaid Health Plans of America (conference exhibit)
- 26-29** MGMA, Las Vegas (conference exhibit)

### November

- Connection* published
- 3-5** Texas Association of Health Plans (TAHP), Dallas (conference exhibit)
- 5** webinar: Top Deficiencies for ASCs and OBS (visit [www.aaahc.org/education](http://www.aaahc.org/education) to register)
- 6** webinar: Top Deficiencies for Primary Care (visit [www.aaahc.org/education](http://www.aaahc.org/education) to register)
- 6-7** Texas Ambulatory Surgery Center Society (TASCS), San Antonio (conference presentation & exhibit)
- 6-8** American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS), San Diego (conference exhibit)
- 12** Achieving Accreditation early bird registration deadline
- 12-14** Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaboration (PCPCC), Washington (executive committee meetings & conference exhibit)

### December

- 2-3** The Society of Federal Health Professionals (AMSUS), Washington (conference exhibit)
- 5-6** *Achieving Accreditation*, Las Vegas

## AAAHC Staff, *continued from page 7*

“I break my work into smaller, discrete targets and goals – the individual moves.”

engage a creative process in how you put those moves together to be most effective.

“I break my work into smaller, discrete targets and goals – the individual moves. Then I can measure my progress toward the larger project, making adjustments as I go.”

As Mary approaches her 10 year anniversary with AAAHC, she has developed acknowledged expertise in several specialized programs. She began in accreditation services as a manager with responsibility for the

post-survey process and as a staff liaison to the Accreditation Committee. Later, she was tasked with supporting the early stages of AAAHC International, now known as Acreditas Global.

“I think someone in AAAHC leadership intuited that I’d be interested in working on building a program based on our existing accreditation Standards and process, but adaptable to a different culture.”

Mary is now staff liaison to Acreditas Global’s board of directors and works closely with the international surveyors. She also was instrumental in the creation of a dedicated cadre of surveyors focused on the Life Safety Code elements of Medicare Deemed Status surveys. She speaks on the accreditation process for Medicare Deemed Status organizations at conferences and is the AAAHC liaison to CMS.

Mary is a busy contributor to life at AAAHC, but she maintains a sense of balance through discipline and commitment. ▲

## Achieving Accreditation, *continued from page 4*

- Do your surveillance efforts match your risks? Will you identify potential issues before they become real problems?
- What are the current best practices for IPC in organizations like yours?
- How do you convince others in your organization that a specific practice needs to change?

Find more information and register at [www.aaahc.org/education/](http://www.aaahc.org/education/). ▲



**In this issue:**  
Celebrating our 35-year organizations  
Coining a tradition  
Remembering Louise DeChesser  
Staff profile: Mary Wei

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