



# **Protecting Patients from Influenza: Implementing Workforce Flu Immunization Policy**



## Today's Presenters

**Taya Briley, R.N., J.D.**

General Legal Council

Washington State Hospital Association

**John Fletcher**

Senior Vice President and Chief Executive  
Providence Health and Services –  
Washington/Montana Region

Chair, WSHA Patient Safety Committee



## Today's Presenters

### **Charleen Tachibana, R.N.**

Senior Vice President, Hospital Administrator, and  
Chief Nursing Executive  
Virginia Mason Medical Center

### **Jon Smiley**

Chief Executive Officer  
Sunnyside Community Hospital



## Today's Presenters

### **Russ Myers**

Vice President, Chief Operating Officer  
Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital

### **Sandy Dahl, R.N.**

Vice President, Chief Clinical Officer  
Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital

### **Tim Dellit, M.D.**

Medical Director, Epidemiology and Infection  
Control  
Harborview Medical Center



# Objectives

- Fundamentals of the immunization policy
- WSHA board's decision to adopt the policy
- Views from national and local organizations
- CEOs experiences
- Medical evidence for immunizations
- Strategies to engage medical staff and nurses



## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

“The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season.”



## Big Picture

- Commitment to eliminate hospital acquired infections by 2012
- Influenza vaccination rates for health care workers are low
- Hospital patients are vulnerable
- WSHA board requests legislation - defeated



## The Commitment

By September 30, 2010:

- Vaccination or mask or alternate steps
- Report employee and medical staff vaccination rates
- Temporary suspension in event of vaccine shortage
- “Healthcare worker” broadly defined
- Not a mandate



## Other Organizations

- National organizations support mandatory vaccination
- Consumers Union
- Washington State Medical Association
- Washington State's Nursing Unions
  1. Model Policy
  2. Model Declination Form



# Washington Flu Immunization Policy



**John Fletcher**

Senior Vice President and Chief Executive  
Providence Health and Services – Washington/Montana Region

Chair, WSHA Patient Safety Committee



# **Hospital Commitment to Adopt the Flu Immunization Policy**

**Virginia Mason Medical Center**

**Sunnyside Community Hospital**

**Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital**



# Virginia Mason Medical Center



**Charleen Tachibana, R.N.**

Senior Vice President, Hospital Administrator,  
and Chief Nursing Executive



# One Hospital's Journey

In 2005, Virginia Mason Medical Center became the first medical center in the country to require influenza immunization as a condition of employment for all staff.

NOTE: Policy adopted in 2004 but delayed implementation due to vaccine shortage.



## The Facts: Voluntary Efforts Ineffective

Influenza immunization by health care workers recommended by the CDC since 1981

Health care worker immunization rates:

10 percent in 1989

34 percent in 1994

40 percent in 2003

42 percent in 2004

33 percent in 2005



## What Were We Thinking?

- 2004 workshops to improve delivery of flu vaccine to patients and staff
- We looked at the facts and learned that influenza
  - Does kill
  - Is fast and easy to spread
  - Healthcare workers come to work with ILI
  - Can spread virus even when asymptomatic
  - In those most at risk, the vaccine is not as effective
  - Healthy young adults: vaccine is safe and effective



# Ethical Considerations

## **Effectiveness**

CDC states that vaccination is the single most important control measure

## **Beneficence**

Annual vaccination has a low risk of side effects and benefits for both patients and HCW

## **Necessity**

Severity of infection in hospitalized patients and prevention with immunization is well documented

## **Autonomy**

Balance of autonomy of the individual and the duty of care not to harm one's patients

Applying the Krantz, Sach, et. al ethical model



## Our Conclusions

- ✓ Influenza vaccine is safe and effective in healthy adults
- ✓ Voluntary programs to immunize health care workers have not been effective.
- ✓ **Immunizing health care workers results in a safer environment for patients**



# Masks

We concluded there was enough evidence to require unvaccinated healthcare workers to wear masks reducing the transmission of the influenza virus.



# VMMC Fitness for Duty Policy

- Influenza immunization is a fitness for duty requirement
- Staff may request medical or religious accommodations
  - Accommodation consists of wearing a mask during influenza season
- Failure to be immunized by the deadline results in termination of employment



# Sunnyside Community Hospital



**Jon Smiley**

Chief Executive Officer



# Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital



**Russ Myers, Chief Operating Officer**



**Sandy Dahl, Chief Clinical Officer**



# **Engaging Medical Staff and Nursing: The Clinical Rationale for Flu Immunization**

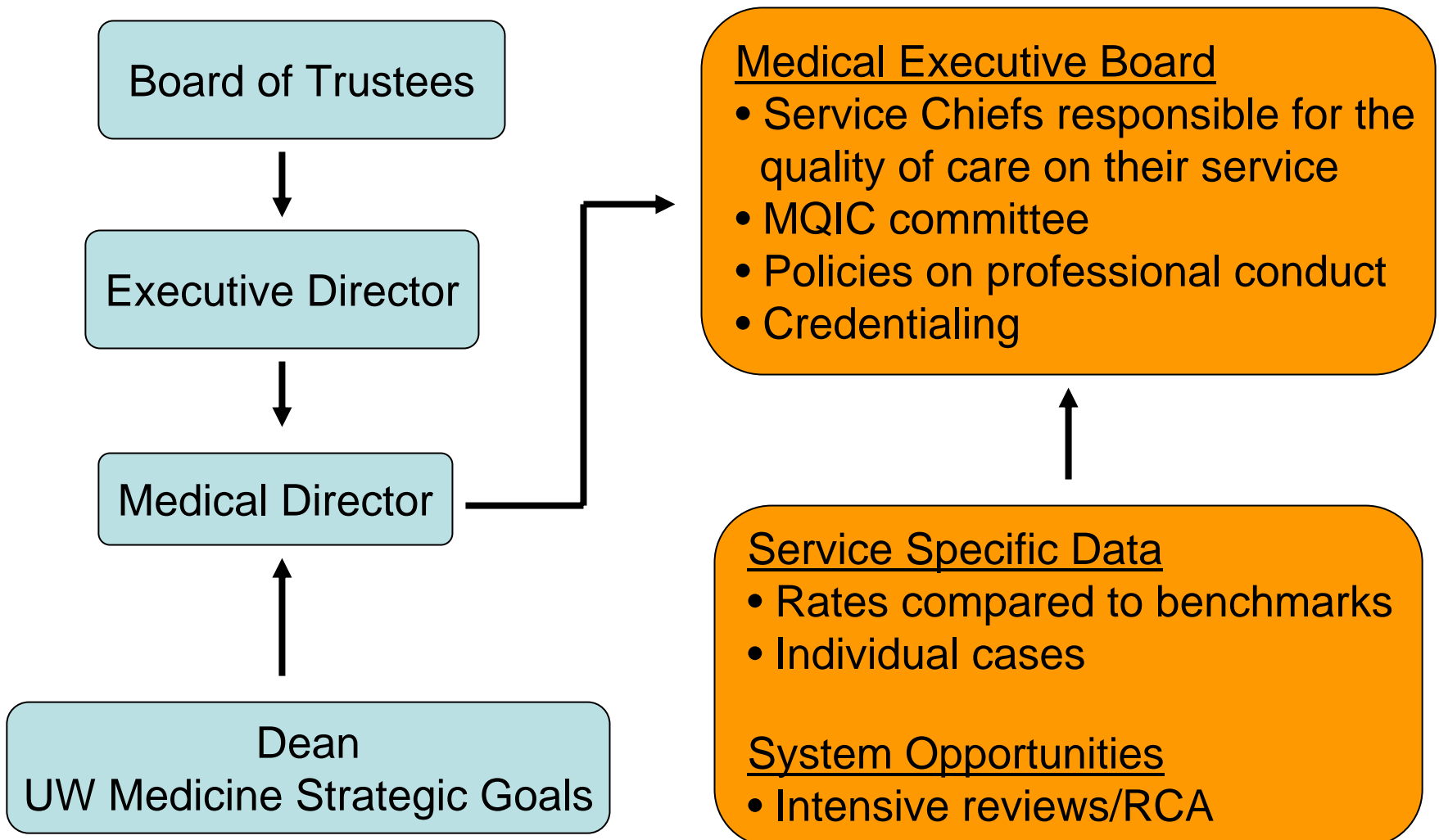
**Tim Dellit, MD**

**Medical Director, Epidemiology and Infection Control**

**Harborview Medical Center**

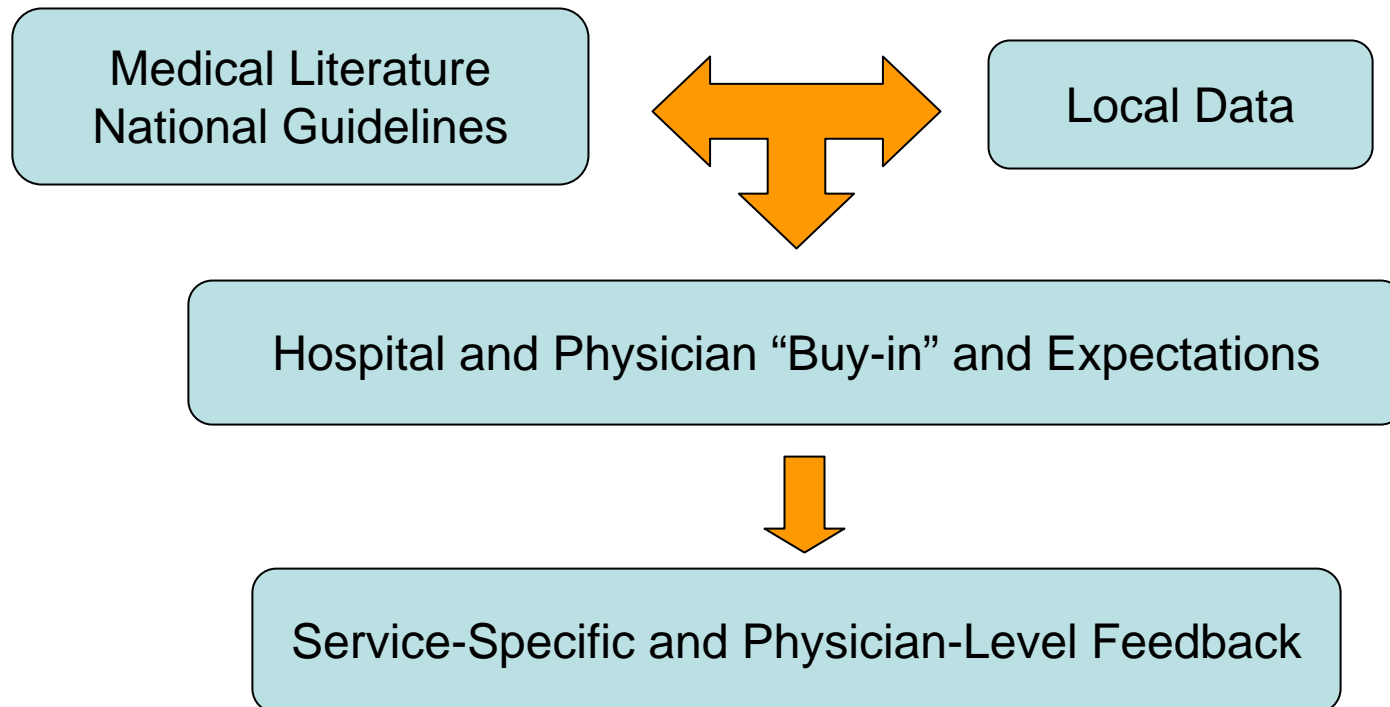


# Hospital Leadership Support and QI



# Engagement of Medical Staff

- Engage physician leadership
  - Emphasize patient safety
  - Establish credibility – physician champion
  - Set expectations
- Build into physician training/orientation

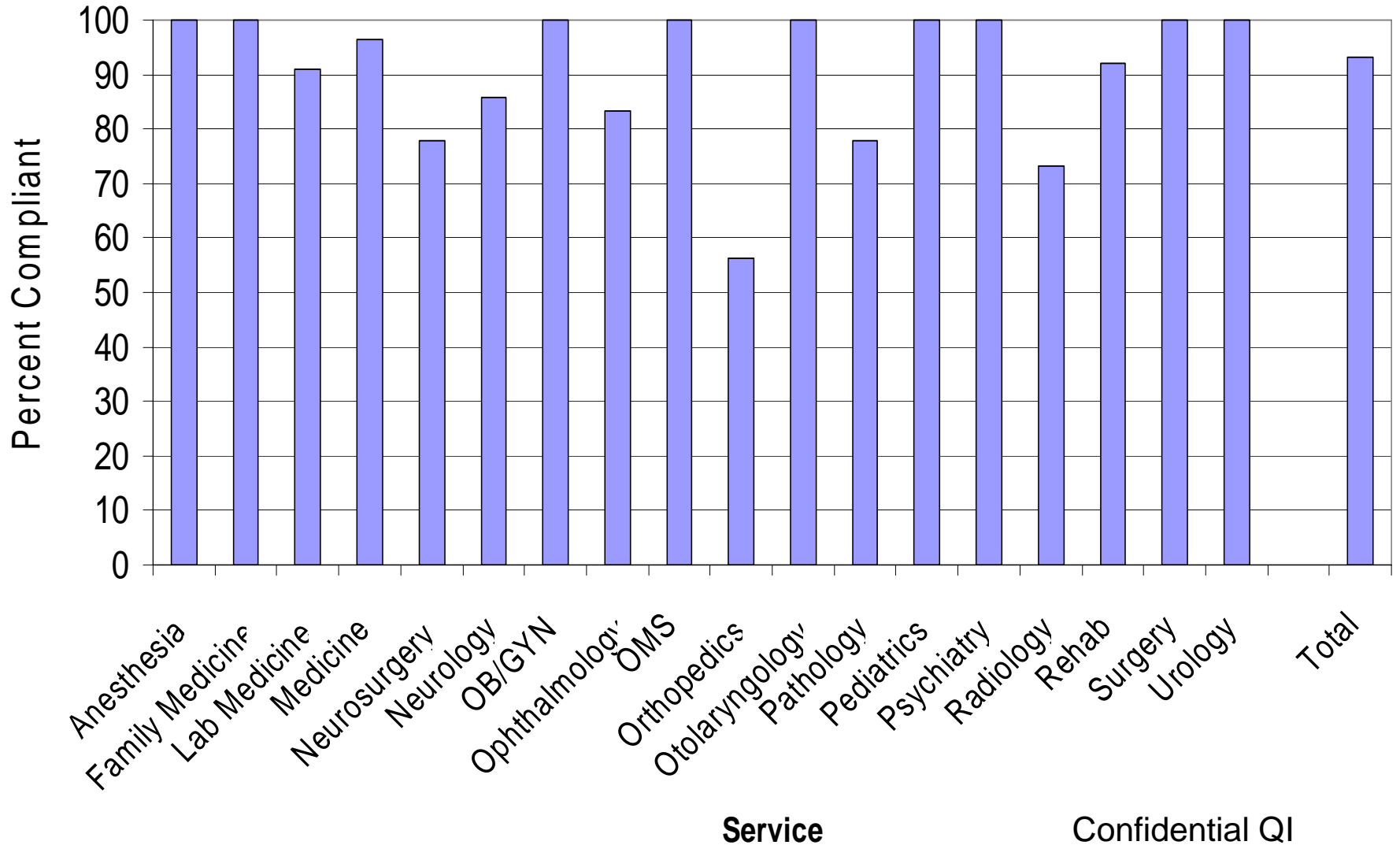


# Vaccination and Patient Safety

- Vaccination rates among HCW nationally 45-62%
  - Up to 23% of unvaccinated healthcare workers may acquire influenza infection
  - Mild or subclinical illness, but can be transmitted to our very vulnerable patients
- Impact on patients
  - Morbidity and mortality (50% reduction in LTCF)
  - Nosocomial transmission
- Impact on HCW
  - Illness for themselves and family
  - Absenteeism

# HMC Seasonal Influenza Vaccination or Declination Compliance by Service

Overall Faculty: 93%



# Implementation Support

## *Effective Strategies for Implementing a Healthcare Worker Flu Immunization Policy*

### *Web Conference*

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

For connection information, contact Janet Van Dyke at  
[janetv@wsha.org](mailto:janetv@wsha.org) or (206) 577-1839

## **Flu Immunization Policy Implementation Toolkit:**

<http://www.wsha.org/page.cfm?ID=fluimmunization>



## Contact Information

### **Taya Briley**

General Legal Council

Washington State Hospital Association

[tayab@wsha.org](mailto:tayab@wsha.org) -- (206) 216-2554

### **Carol Wagner**

Vice President Patient Safety

Washington State Hospital Association

[carolw@wsha.org](mailto:carolw@wsha.org) -- (206) 577-1831

