



Florida Association for Healthcare Quality, Inc.

Healthcare professionals united in advancing Florida's healthcare quality

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The Florida Association for Healthcare Quality (FAHQ) held its Annual Conference in Orlando last month. True to the Conference theme, It's All About the Patient, FAHQ made a stunning departure from traditional healthcare speakers by including presentations by two Patient Advocates, both of whom had lost a child to medical errors. These presentations served to open and close the conference, bringing the program full circle in its focus on the patient. John McCormack lost his 13 month old daughter, Taylor, to medical errors in the hospital environment, while Ilene Corina lost her three year old son, Michael, to medical errors post hospitalization. Both have worked hard since then as patient advocates, implementing laws and developing grass root groups to save others from their devastating experiences. Their presentations were emotional, inspiring and deeply touching. Their stories brought participants back to their roots, and reminded all why they entered the field of healthcare quality. In these challenging times, healthcare quality professionals, like many others, are often being asked to do more with less in a tough economy. "John and Ilene helped us to remember why we persevere in the face of such challenges, because we know that our work to ensure/improve healthcare quality might be the act that saves the next child, the next grandparent, the next life", said Conference Co-Chair Rhonda Keating.

John's message included a videotape of Taylor's short life and left not a dry eye in the audience. During the break which followed, many attendees shared information on the safeguards in place at their facilities to prevent such an occurrence. Ilene shared a video of a different sort—an MD trying to understand the language of the Post Office and his many options for mailing a letter. "Its comic approach clearly drove home the point that we, as healthcare professionals, need to simplify our message if we truly wish to gain full patient understanding and participation in their own care" said Conference Co-Chair Donna Scott. Noted Sam Elizondo, President of FAHQ, "We are grateful to parents like John and Ilene, who take the time to share their stories with us and help keep us sensitized to the issue of medical errors. They have truly inspired all who were in attendance."

The Florida Association of Healthcare Quality (FAHQ) is committed to developing, supporting and promoting professional expertise in healthcare quality. Representing the full spectrum of healthcare organizations in Florida, we are united in our goal of advancing Florida's healthcare quality. For further information, please visit our website at www.fahq.org.

John McCormack and Ilene Corina have turned their unimaginable grief into productive actions to help save others. John contributed to the book, *Fatal Care*, was instrumental in getting Taylor's Law passed in Massachusetts, and has worked to pass legislation to limit nurse to patient ratios. Ilene is President of PULSE, NY, a nonprofit, support group and organization dedicated to raising awareness about patient safety and reducing medical errors through advocacy, education, and support.