



Who would speak for you in a medical crisis?

By Christine S. Lang, Executive Director, PATHS

I know it is a scary question, but one I had to face. We knew my husband needed a heart/lung transplant; we had 6 years of waiting on a donor list. Yet, when the donor became available and he received his long awaited operation; we were totally unprepared for the rocky road to recovery we faced. He suffered a coma, seizures, 20 surgeries, 2 organ transplants, many infections, hundreds of medical procedures, 8 months in intensive care (where he could not speak for himself). At that emotionally crippling time, I had to learn how to be his voice – his **patient advocate**. The good news is that he survived all of that and was restored to health but without an advocate that may not have happened.

All of us will be called on to advocate for a spouse, child, parent, ourselves or a friend. We owe it to our loved ones to learn how to do so as effectively as possible. The time to learn is now, before an acute episode takes you to the Emergency room or to Intensive care. Navigating a medical journey is complicated and can take you to multiple doctors in multiple locations; just how to you get them all on the same page. I have learned the crucial steps in accomplishing this and many other important tasks; how to choose medical facilities and providers, developing medical communications tools, learning how to receive maximum benefits from your insurance carrier and building a support team around the patient.

We all want to make the best informed medical decisions we can; that take some training to do so but it is empowering to learn and prepares you for what life may throw at you.

Our goal is to share our knowledge, gained in the middle of life and death decisions and prepare people well ahead of their medical challenge. The only reason to learn anything is to reach out a helping hand to others; we hope you will let us do that for you and your loved ones.

Patient Advocacy Training & Health Services Inc. (“PATHS”) is built on my 26 years of advocacy training experience, as well as the talents of many others. Our web site is a wealth of information about our services, how we have helped others, testimonies from both doctors and patient families, and how you can become involved. Please visit **PATHS** web site: www.PatientPATHS.org.

This article can also be found in its entirety at <http://www.divatoolbox.com/self/health/1539-who-would-speak-for-you-in-a-medical-crises.html> Reprinted here with permission of Diva Toolbox.com.

PATHS Seminars – Helping You Chart Your Medical Course

PATHS seminars are designed to prepare people ahead of a medical crises or acute episode to learn the 7 steps to being an empowered patient and effective advocates. Our training builds on 26 years of advocacy training experience of our Executive Director; and 20+ years of platform training and curriculum development in the corporate world. One of the most important health decisions you can make is to choose someone who will speak for you and be your patient advocate. We call them we patient teams; chances are you will be called at least 1 time to advocate for someone you love. Being effective means being prepared and that takes training.

Option # 1 – Sign up together and attend a one session seminar training (2.5 hrs.), held several times a month in Acton. You can access our training schedule at www.PatientPATHS.org and then choose the Seminar link.

Costs for the seminar are kept low – \$50 per patient team and you leave with a notebook full of tips and information. We never want financial concerns to be the reason someone does not get this training. We keep are seminars to 1 session and costs low; PATHS is supported by the donations of others.

Option # 2 – We come to you. Our training is completely mobile. If you gather a group of 10 (5 patients and their 5 advocates), we will come to your site to train. To schedule an off site training session or just ask questions about your needs, please email chris@PatientPATHS.org or call the PATHS office at 978-264-9770.

PATHS Seeks Runners & Walkers for Oktoberfest 5K

10/3/09



The Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce Oktoberfest 5K Run/Walk will be Saturday, Oct. 3, 2009. Please join consider representing PATHS, as a runner or walker for the 5K (3 miles) fundraiser.

PATHS receive a portion of your registration dollars, as well as all sponsor dollars you collect. On Friday evening, Oct. 2, all participants representing PATHS will be invited to a Spaghetti Dinner as guests of PATHS. Please visit the RUN FOR PATHS link at our web site, www.PatientPATHS.org.

First Edition of “Meet the Author Afternoon” Series, 9/20/09

We invite all to meet the #1 Female Fiction Writer Internationally for 2009, Brunonia Barry, 1st time author of The Lace Reader. Ms. Barry is a NY Times Best Selling author, and a native of Salem, MA, which is the setting for this suspenseful tale. The Lace Reader has been optioned for an upcoming film.



The date to save is **Sunday, September 9, from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.** Wyndham Andover Hotel, 123 Old River Rd., Andover, MA (easy exit off I-93 and just minutes from I-495). Its central location makes it ideal.

Our delicious Fall Desert Buffet will feature Pumpkin Cheese Cake, Warm Apple Crisp, Cranberry Pecan Torte, Apple Cider, Coffee and tea. Tickets are \$20.00 per person.

For Reservations: Donna Wagner, author@PatientPATHS.org or 978-838-0290. Email preferred, request # of tickets and we will reply with reservations instructions.

This event is the 1st Edition of our **Meet the Author Afternoon Series**. We will be bringing the best of New England Authors to the public 3 times a year, always on a relaxing Sunday afternoon with a delicious seasonal dessert buffet and many extras. We will have opportunities to get up close and personal with each author.

At our website: www.PatientPATHS.org you can download a copy of the series brochure. These events are great outings for all of us who love books and enjoy the opportunity to meet top authors.

Speak Up Campaign introduced by JCAHO

During National Patient Safety Awareness Week the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO is the accrediting body for over 16,000 health care organizations) issued a press release highlighting their **Speak Up**TM campaign. **Speak Up** is an acronym for:

Speak up if you have questions or concerns. If you still don't understand, ask again. It's your body and you have a right to know.

Pay attention to the care you get. Always make sure you're getting the right treatments and medications by the right health care professionals. Don't assume anything.

Educate yourself about your illness. Learn about the medical tests you get, and your treatment plan.

Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate (advisor or supporter).

Know what medicines you take and why you take them. Medicine errors are the most common health care mistakes.

Use a hospital, clinic, surgery center, or other type of health care organization that has been carefully checked out. For example, The Joint Commission visits hospitals to see if they are meeting The Joint Commission's quality standards.

Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team.

All of these points are related to the role PATHS is pursuing. “A” explicitly states that patients should have an advocate working on their behalf. Released 3/14/09

SAVE THE DATE – September 1 5:00-9:00pm

Eliminate one hassle during the back-to-school shopping craze!

Pizza Night & 50:50 Raffle at Flatbread Company

Flatbread Company, 213 Burlington Road, Bedford, is hosting a benefit fundraiser for PATHS on Tuesday, September 1st, from 5:00-9:00pm.

For every large pizza sold PATHS gets \$3.50; for every small pizza sold PATHS gets \$1.75... come on, we know you want the large! You don't even have to remember to mention PATHS, and it is good for eat-in and take-out. There will also be a 50:50 raffle so there is always that chance you could walk out with more than you came in with – and I don't just mean if you are doing take-out.

PATHS volunteers will be on hand to hand out brochures, answer questions about our organization.

Call ahead for priority seating or to have your take-out ready to go when you are – (781) 275-8200.

Flatbread Company is located right on the corner of Burlington Road and Network Drive, so it is convenient to many of the office complexes and shopping. This makes it easy to conveniently grab dinner on your way home after a long hard day at the office, or to eliminate one hassle after another day of the back-to-school shopping crush.



Red Hatted Ladies Gives PATHS a “Fashionable” Helping Hand

PATHS first fundraiser was a “**Red Hatted Affair**” at the Wyndham Andover Hotel in Andover, MA. On Tuesday evening, 6/9/09 272 members of the Red Hat Society came together in full regalia (red hats and purple clothing) to support PATHS. It was quite a sight to look over an ocean of elegantly gowned red hat members. They represent 29 chapters and came from chapter near and far, throughout MA and NH. The hotel out did themselves with a lovely menu and the Ravishing Reds of Acton, MA served as hostesses. Marilyn Snow of South Dennis along with volunteer models from the Bold n Sassy Ladies of Tynsborough and the Ravishing Reds modeled Red Hat Outfits for every occasion.

Over 40 raffle prizes were won by attendees raising \$1,590.00 for PATHS. Also contributing to the fundraising were vendors: Cornerstone Books of Salem, who will also be co-hosting PATHS Meet the Author Series, Gold Party New England that raised \$603.00 and has an on going offer to donate to PATHS when party planners mention our name, and Janet Tennihan of the Purple Diamond Shop in Amesbury, who really dressed up the vendor area with her beautifully designed hats and other RHS apparel. The event was a great opportunity to meet fellow Red Hatters, while reaching out a helping hand to a new non-profit! PATHS received and is still receiving rave reviews for the event and so will make this an annual event each June! If you are a Red Hatter, please **save June 15, 2010** for next year’s gala!



The Question Box

Providing answers to your medically related questions. Please submit questions by email to info@PatientPATHS.org.

This Month’s Question: Why Is It So Difficult to Find a Primary Care Physician?

Answer: The number of primary care doctors is dwindling in United States – there are approximately 14,000 too few primary care doctors for the number of people who need them. According to the American Medical Association, the [gap will increase](#) to 25,000-30,000 by 2025. Fewer practitioners mean more difficulty finding one to help you, or making an appointment with the one you already see. You can see that the smaller numbers of primary care doctors would have an impact on your ability to find one for your care.

Question – Why are so few medical students choosing to go into primary care?

Answer- Follow the money. Ask most newly matriculated medical students why they would like to become doctors and they will reply with a certain amount of idealism. “I want to help people” is a common answer until the realities of time and money become more apparent to them.

The average medical student finishes their education almost \$150,000 in debt. They can pay off their debt earning less than \$200,000 per year as a family practitioner, or they can pay their debt earning a specialist’s salary which will be twice that amount or more. Which would you choose?

Their work day is different too. Primary care physicians often face work days far in excess of 10 hours. They may be regularly on call 24/7 and work weekends. While specialists may work extended hours, they won’t do so as often. Put another way, if you had your choice of being a dermatologist working a 50-hour week for \$400,000 a year, or a family practitioner who put in 80-hour weeks for half that amount of money, which would you choose?

Even the primary’s day looks different. Because [insurance reimbursements](#) work the way they do, a primary care doctor is paid much less per patient visit or procedure than a specialist is. Therefore, a PCP must fit that many more patients into his day. The lower reimbursements go, the less time the doctor can spend with each patient because he must see that many more patients just to keep the lights turned on.

Now add all that up: Fewer students choose to be primary care physicians, meaning the ones that do exist are already squeezed for income and time, meaning then even fewer students will choose to become PCPs. It’s a vicious cycle.

Gold Party New England – A Sparkling Supporter of PATHS



At the Fashion Dinner held on June 9, ladies brought unwanted or broken gold jewelry and turned them into checks on the spot.

Based on totals collected that evening, Gold Party New

England donated \$603.00 to PATHS. They have signed up to be a n on-going PATHS Sponsor. When you call to book a gold party for you and your friends or your local club, mention PATHS and PATHS will receive a referral bonus each time.

All details can be accessed on our web site at www.PatientPATHS.org, under Fundraisers choose **Gold Party**. Other groups have seen totals at their home party of \$3,000, \$5,000, even \$7,500.00. You will find Dayna McCarthy a peach to work with!

PATHS Collecting Recipes

Do your friends always compliment you on your special salad? Is everyone always asking you for that delicious casserole that you make for gatherings? Well we are calling on all area cooks to share those special recipes with PATHS. We invite you to submit up to two of your special recipes to “**Heaven Sent**” a cookbook exclusively featuring recipes from area churches and temples. Each recipe will include its contributor and their church/temple. When we collect enough recipes, we will go to press! This would make a great gift item. All cooks will be invited to participate in a special tasting event as well.

To submit recipes, go to www.PatientPATHS.org and click on the “PATHS Cookbook” link.

Many Doors are opening to PATHS

News & Announcements

- **FEFC**—It is with great pleasure that we share that God is continuing to bless us and open doors for us as we share the PATHS message. The Elders of FEFC, Acton has been sponsoring us in our first months but on 7/30/09, we filed our application with the US Treasury for PATHS to be granted independent 501(c)(3), making us an official charity organization. The process will take a few months and the close relationship between PATHS and FEFC will always remain. Without their support our start would have been impossible. Thank you for believing in us and this ministry.
- **New Relationships** – We continue to meet with area churches and medical groups inviting them to come along side PATHS and share in our work. We are getting positive reactions and are pursuing these working relationships.
- **Grants:** **Acton Boxborough United Way** and **Bay State Charitable Foundation** have each approved grants or donations to PATHS.
- **In-Kind Donations:** A sincere thank you to: Nestle Waters for donating two laptop computers to be used for seminar training. Thank you to Steve Meister, of New Life Church for the laptop. Thank you to Eric Peterson (logo) and Max Stevens (Event posters) for their graphic talents. Thank you to Maria Rosa of <http://www.mariabarbaradesigns.com/> for our new and very professional web site. Each has shared their talents or possessions with us and we say God bless you.
- **Speaking Engagement** – Our Executive Director has been invited to be a featured speaker, 11/8 as part of West Acton Baptist Church’s Conference on Dealing with Affliction, focusing on Caring & Support.
- **Donation Blessings** – We want to thank all of those individuals and families who made private donations to us over the past few months. As you know, those first dollars are critical and have helped us get this far in our journey. For more information on donating to PATHS, please go to donation page at www.PatientPATHS.org.
- **Our Partners** – Thank you to the Board of Directors for rolling up their sleeves and joining me in this work and to our volunteers for helping plan and execute all the exciting Special Event Fundraisers on our calendar. Thank you to a group of Acton/Boxborough High Schoolers who has assisted with many tasks – thanks Natalie, Anushya and Helen. We are also excited about the additional students that will soon be joining them in volunteering.

Attention: This is the premier edition of Journeys, PATHS monthly newsletter. We hope you found it informative. We pledge to never sell your name to any one. To submit articles or comments please email: info@patientpaths.org. If at any time you wish to unsubscribe, e-mail info@patientpaths.org and include “unsubscribe” in the subject line. If this e-mail was forwarded to you rather than being sent directly your e-mail, to insure you get every edition as soon as it is available send an e-mail to info@patientpaths.org with the word “Subscribe” in the subject line. Thank you!