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# Modern Healthcare

THE ONLY HEALTHCARE BUSINESS NEWS WEEKLY

APRIL 18, 2011

\$5.50

THE TOP 25 WOMEN IN HEALTHCARE FOR 2011

## BUILDING A BETTER SYSTEM

*Female executives and leaders  
take on challenge of improving  
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IHI's Maureen Bisognano says healthcare  
needs "to pick up the tempo of change."

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APRIL 15, 2011

Cover Story » *Rebecca Vesely*

## Taking it to the next level

*As reform settles in and economic woes wear on, the Top 25 Women in Healthcare keep moving forward*

### Doubling down on quality of care

Maureen Bisognano is no stranger to big challenges, like working to transform healthcare delivery worldwide. And proving she can do as good a job as her very well-known predecessor.

Last July, Bisognano took over as president and CEO at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement when Dr. Donald Berwick stepped down to become CMS administrator.

Berwick had been the face of the IHI since he co-founded the organization in 1989. Bisognano served as executive vice president and chief operating officer at IHI for 15 years before taking the helm.

Already, Bisognano is shaping the not-for-profit organization in new directions—with an increased focus on international programs and helping stateside providers adapt to the realities of health reform.

The eldest of nine children, Bisognano says she was a nurturer from early in life. Her mother was a nurse, and her father an executive at IBM Corp. She followed her mother into the nursing field, and worked in various hospital positions before being drawn to administration.

“I always had a nurturing side,” she says. “I always loved patient care but, in addition, I found that I loved innovation and management.”

In the late 1980s, while CEO of Massachusetts Respiratory Hospital, Bisognano had the opportunity to work on a national demonstration project on quality that brought together 20 hospital CEOs with 20 employers to learn about workplace improvement strategies.

“I didn’t know how to do transformational change,” she says.

Paired with Florida Power & Light Co., a statewide utility, Bisognano says she learned how to get to root causes of problems, methods to apply change, and how to implement and measure improvements. She saw that increased market share, better outcomes and lower costs could be the outcome. She also learned how methods that worked in other industries could be applied successfully to healthcare.

She moved on to the Juran Institute, where she started a healthcare consulting

## MAUREEN BISOGNANO



Maureen Bisognano has been working on healthcare safety improvement for more than 30 years. Trained as a nurse, she held hospital leadership positions until 1995, when she joined the Institute for Healthcare Improvement as executive vice president and chief operating officer. Bisognano, 58, took over as CEO at the patient-safety organization in 2010 when Dr. Donald Berwick stepped down as the top executive to become CMS administrator.

practice and developed leadership improvement tools for healthcare executives. In 1995, she was recruited to join the IHI.

“I’m still here because the need is big,” she says. “We’re always inventing new ways of working. I have the great joy of having no two days be the same. We are constantly trying to look for solutions to problems troubling the system.”

Bisognano is passionate about the IHI’s work overseas, and she says the U.S. can learn lessons from transformational changes happening in other countries. The IHI is now working on five continents. For instance, in South Africa, Ghana and Malawi, the IHI is working with local providers to improve maternal and child mortality and improving access to HIV/AIDS treatments.

In Scotland, the IHI is engaged with hospitals on patient safety. All hospitals are participating in the program, which includes medication management and instituting early-warning systems of patient deterioration.

In Malawi, the IHI has worked with local providers on village-centered care, including teaching select women to become health coaches to the village. These practices, Bisognano says, can translate to the U.S., where health reform is about to have an enormous impact on the delivery system. “I believe the way healthcare is delivered will need to be redesigned,” she says.

This includes really seeing the whole patient and where they are in the care continuum. “Once you start to look at each patient, are they in the right spot?” she asks. “These concepts are still fairly new.”

Recasting the delivery system around the patient means giving patients more opportunities to be heard. “We need to dramatically increase the voice of the patient in every design element” of healthcare, she says.

Bisognano still has a sense of urgency around healthcare. “I’m seeing the clock ticking,” she says. “We need to pick up the tempo of change.” <<

*This is an excerpt from the original article.*