

## FROM THE REGIONS

## Mile-High Meeting: Recap of the 2011 Mountain West Regional Meeting

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Once again the Mountain West Region presented a lively one-day meeting. Held at Denver's safety net hospital, Denver Health and Hospital, the theme of the meeting was "Serving the Underserved." The meeting set regional attendance records with more than 50% of members and attendees coming from five of the six states in the region.

The content-packed day included oral and poster abstract presentations, four invited lectures, and six workshops. Two of the many highlights of the day included a lecture by Thomas MacKenzie, MD, chief quality officer at Denver Health, and a workshop by Rachel Swigris, MD, and Jessica Campbell, MD, titled, "Why How You Are Working Is Not Working: Manage Your Energy Not Your Time."

Dr. MacKenzie educated the group on Denver Health's adoption of Toyota production system's Lean philosophy in 2005. Driven by a goal to improve quality and remove waste, the Lean system identifies areas that need improvement and, through a series of one-week rapid improvement events, breaks the problem down into component parts, identifies the non-value added events, develops a new process, implements the process, and refines the process for greatest success. They have accomplished more than 300 rapid-improvement events ranging from preventive outpatient care to hospital DVT prophylaxis. Through this process, Denver Health has been able to save \$135 million since 2006 and ranks #1 in the country among academic centers in patient survival.

A second highlight of the meeting was the workshop Drs. Swigris and Campbell hosted. In light of the



burnout that remains very prevalent among resident and attending physicians who increase work hours at the price of personal and professional development opportunities, they provided attendees with a framework for monitoring and replenishing energy. The workshop started with an explanation of four types of energy—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual—and an exercise to self-assess our personal energy levels. Next they led us through a program to renew our energy. One method focused on main-

taining meaning in work, which may have less influence on what we do than how we do it. A final exercise helped us clarify what it means to be a physician by developing a vision statement for work-life balance. Overall, Drs. Swigris and Campbell presented an interesting workshop that explored ways of maintaining meaningful work and home lives.

Please mark your calendar for our next meeting on October 5, 2012, in Denver. I can assure you that it will be an equally enlightening day.