

2009 Annual Report to Membership



December 2009

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In short, progress on several fronts, but we were impacted by the economy (like everyone else).

We need to build on the progress we've made and proactively and entrepreneurially manage our finances.

In many ways 2009 was a great year for NESHCo. Some highlights:

- We gained 45 new members, and as we send out 2010 renewals we have a membership that is 12% larger than this time last year
- Our Spring Conference attracted the largest group of exhibitors and sponsors of any NESHCo event in at least 10 years
- We converted our **Lamplighter** contest to an on-line format, greatly reducing costs and labor for our members and other applicants, and going green
- We published and distributed a new Membership Directory
- We made a successful transition from teleconferences to webinars and are using the technology in ways that are cost effective and of greatest benefit to NESHCo membership
- We partnered with MedTouch to fill the void created by the cancellation of the 2009 fall conference with a "virtual conference" offered at a very reasonable rate, attracting over 60 viewers and earning NESHCo \$2,300 – and potentially building the foundation for similar events to come
- We successfully introduced seven new Board members who brought new ideas and fresh energy to our work and a promise of continuity as a "younger generation" of members assume leadership positions in our organization

On the other hand there were some bumps in the road.

- Given the state of the economy and its almost-universal effect of freezing travel and education budgets, we decided it would be prudent to cancel our Fall Conference which was to occur in Stowe, VT at the Stoweflake Mountain Resort and Spa. The Stoweflake graciously agreed to work with us to shift our reservation to May, and it will be the venue of our Spring Conference in 2010. The conference planning committee has a number of exciting ideas, including optional add-on educational opportunities and expanded recreational opportunities for this event. Stay tuned.
- NESHCo lost money in FY09. That loss amounted to slightly over \$14,000. The main factors in that loss:

- membership revenue was below budget by \$1,500;
- Lamplighter income down by \$9,075 as there were 100 fewer entries than expected, causing a loss of entry fee and luncheon revenue; at the same time, the on-line entry tool that is such a boon to entrants adds cost for NESHCo

Our balance sheet is healthy enough to weather this loss. But we need to reverse it and our 2010 budget includes initiatives to do just that. Among those actions are:

- a modest increase in membership dues which have remained static for almost 5 years
- increase the profits from conferences
 - modest price increases
 - reduction of some associated costs
 - pre/post conference add-ons
- do a better job marketing our sponsorship/advertising opportunities
 - webinars
 - hot-tips
 - newsletter
 - web site (we must upgrade it first)
- add membership: this is the quickest and most efficient way to improve our financial health...each new member adds incremental revenue with virtually NO incremental cost...all of the dues go straight to the bottom line

For me it was a very rewarding experience to serve NESHCo as President in 2009. I have the very good fortune to lead an organization with a talented and dedicated Board and a very capable Executive Director in Kelly Woodsum. I encourage you to read on and peruse the committee reports on their 2009 activity and their goals for the year ahead.

And let me take this opportunity to remind you – THIS IS A MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION. It takes member participation to thrive. We welcome your interest in participating on committees. Read what they're doing, and if one strikes your fancy as one you'd like to work with, let us know. Contact the chair, myself (kevinmcdonald68@gmail.com), or Kelly (kwoodsum@neshco.org).

Sincerely,

Kevin McDonald, President

Kelly Woodsum, Executive Director

2009-2010

Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Kevin McDonald, President

Lee Crouch, Dowden Custom Media, Vice President

Scott Orstad, Stamford Health System, Treasurer

Jeanne Sarnosky, VNA of Cape Cod, Secretary

Directors, Connecticut

Shawn Mawhiney, William W. Backus Hospital & Marcia Simon, APR, Marcia Simon Enterprises

Directors, Eastern Massachusetts

Jim Rattray, Southcoast Health System & Deb Chiaravalloti, Anna Jaques Hospital

Directors, New Hampshire

Tom Link, Cheshire Medical Center & Natalie Rudzinsky, LRG Healthcare

Directors, Maine

Kathy Mockler, Burgess Advertising & Jill McDonald, Eastern Maine Medical Center

Directors, Rhode Island

Karen Fler, Fler Communications & Amanda Barney, Hospital Association of Rhode Island

Directors, Vermont

Jill Jesso White, Rutland Regional Medical Center & Megan Castonguay, Vermont Association of Hospitals

Directors, Western Massachusetts

Paul Hopkins, Northern Berkshire Healthcare & Lou Davis, Market Street Research

Directors at Large

Helayne Lightstone, The Hospital of Central Connecticut & May Kernan, Care New England

Committee Reports on 2008 / 2009 Activity / Results

Marketing and Membership Committee

The bottom line says it was a good year for NESHCo's membership efforts. Year to year, we have 249 members going into the 2010 renewal period compared to 223 last year at this time. The "Corporate Membership" strategy created by the committee in 2008 – which offers a discount to those organizations with more than one member and an even steeper discount for those with more than five members -- bore fruit in 2009.

When the NESHCo Board authorized the marketing and Membership Committee's recommendation to institute the Corporate membership program, it felt that organizations that recognize the value of NESHCo for their staff should be rewarded for their support.

It proved to be a good strategy, resulting in the addition of 45 new members in 2009 as more than 25% of the membership took advantage of the corporate rate.

As always, we suffered some attrition among our members; in a poll of members not renewing in 2009, most cited job change or retirement as the reason for not renewing.

Goals for 2010 are:

- to recruit more junior members through the expansion of NESHCo's educational opportunities
- penetrate Eastern Massachusetts
- add members from more tertiary institution

Co-Chairs: Deb Chiaravalloti, dchiaravalloti@ajh.org, 978-463-1175 & Natalie Rudzinskyj, nrudzinskyj@lrgh.org, 603-737-1041

Committee members: Jim Rattray, Kathy Mockler, Paul Hopkins, Amanda Barney, Lynn Faria, Marcia Simon, Maria Miranda

Sponsorship Committee

Despite the economic slowdown and our decision to cancel our fall conference – and the subsequent opportunity we took to fill that void with a “virtual conference” -- sponsorship interest in NESHCo continued to be strong. Among sponsors and exhibitors NESHCo continued to be one of the most popular of the SHSMD chapters.

The Spring Conference offered attendees the largest group of exhibitors and sponsors in the last 10 years. Five new vendors expressed interest in NESHCo and exhibited at our conference for the first time. These results are a testament to the quality of the organization and its events – and the generous loyalty of our vendor partners.

The big news out of “Sponsorship” is our initiative to expand sponsorship opportunities. We have been or will be much more aggressive in selling sponsorship opportunities in:

- **web advertising**
- **webinar sponsorships**
- **sponsoring NESHCo Tips**
- **sponsoring NESHCo News**
- revised/updated conference sponsorship opportunities

This represents a departure from previous policy in that we were reluctant to push other sponsorships so as not to pull sponsors away from our conferences. But with the maturity and popularity of those conferences, NESHCo’s reputation, and our having developed multiple other opportunities to “sell,” the time is right to leverage those products. In addition, our retrenchment to only one conference this year has created both the opening and the need to pursue more sponsorship opportunities.

And this is where all of our members can help. All of us deal with vendors in our organizations...ad agencies, research firms, printers, PR agencies...you can help in several ways. You can pass along contact information for us to approach. But even more helpful would be for you to participate in the ask – helping to “sell” the opportunity to your vendor contact. It is much more effective for me to sell the sponsorship opportunity to the vendor I deal with than it is for me to give Kelly or Jeanne or Lee the name and have them do it. We’d welcome such help from all of our members.

In closing this report, we’d be remiss not to put in a note of gratitude to our loyal sponsor partners – without their support we could not provide our members with the variety and quality of events and services that we do.

Chair: Jeanne Sarnosky, jsarnosky@vnacapecod.org, 508-957-7452

Web Site Committee

At its retreat in January the Board resolved that the premier professional society for healthcare communicators should have a website that is more user-friendly and useful to members than the one we currently have. We’d also like it to be attractive to potential sponsors and advertisers, but before we can pitch it to them, we need to show higher traffic.

Given the magnitude of this project and people’s busy schedules, it proved difficult to activate this committee, but recently Karen Fler, an independent consultant for healthcare and employee communications, and Shawn

Mawhiney of The William W. Backus Hospital have agreed to co-chair this committee, which also includes Kevin Robinson of Southwestern Vermont Medical Center.

They have reviewed the current NESHCo web site and decided to redesign the site and upgrade content to make it more dynamic, current, easier to update and useful to members. The committee is also exploring the possibility of revenue sources such as flash ads on the home page or other landing pages.

An RFP has been drafted with the expectation that a NESHCo member, vendor or partner might be interested in doing the design and programming for no cost to NESHCo, as it would provide the web site developer with a valuable forum to showcase their skills and product to our membership.

For example, benefits to the agency selected would include credit on the site, no cost attendance at the Spring 2010 conference, a joint presentation at the conference, a free vendor position at one of our conferences and other targeted marketing opportunities.

The goal is to have the new site completed by April 1.

Co-Chairs: Karen Fleeer, karen@karendonohuefleeer.com, 401-293-0799 & Shawn Mawhiney, smawhiney@wwbh.org, 860-889-8331

Committee Members: Kevin Robinson, Lou Davis

Webinar Committee

NESHCo replaced teleconferencing with webinars for our membership in April of 2008. The newer technology allows participants to view slide presentations while listening on the phone. The response has been positive with five webinars offered between April 2008 and April 2009. The average attendance was 35.

The webinars offered to date have included:

- **Beyond Patient Satisfaction... What lies ahead?** - Catherine Baumgardner, Corporate Health Group
- **Social Media Rules. What you are doing isn't working anymore.** - Brian Reich
- **Yellow Pages Rx- Prescription for Savings** - Cynthia Newton, HCCG, Inc.
- **Search Engine Optimization-How Universal & Blended Search is Changing the Search Game.** - Amanda Watlington, PhD, APR of Searching for Profit
- **Marketing Your Marketing and PR Effort** - Dan Dunlop, President & CEO, Jennings & Co.

The advances we made in making a successful transition from teleconferences to webinars proved to be a precursor and enabling factor in our ability to pull off a very successful **NESHCo Virtual Fall Conference** in late October. Our Executive Director, Kelly Woodsum, has been key to this successful transition and has been able to use the technology in ways that are cost effective and of greatest benefit to our members.

We would love to have member feedback: what topics would you like future webinars to cover? What presenters would you like us to pursue? Tell our chair, Tom Link (TLink@cheshire-med.com) or Kelly Woodsum (kwoodsum@neshco.org)

Chair: Tom Link, tlink@cheshire-med.com, 603-354-5403

Lamplighter Committee

In 2009, the Lamplighters Award entries became completely electronic. While investing in the new online entry system was not inexpensive, doing so added value for members, saving entrants significant time and money, and relieving them of the labor-intensive process of printing out materials or carefully assembling binders of information. This allowed everyone to spend more time on the content of their entry and less time on the assembly and presentation. Best of all, together, we reduced our collective environmental footprint by minimizing the use of paper and other materials.

The committee conducted a review of the “Call for Entries” for the 2010 awards. Where categories did not produce a significant number of entries, we made changes to eliminate or merge them. In addition, we changed the PR Project and Marketing Total Effort categories to reflect a budget split rather than basing it on agency vs. in house. The goal was to make the competition a fairer comparison of campaigns.

While the new electronic system was met by enthusiasm from members, the economic climate impacted the number of entries submitted. In 2009, there were 250 entries submitted, down 100 from the previous year. We are hopeful that the new online system, a somewhat stabilized economy and more lead time will generate more entries in 2010. To further facilitate that, promotion of the 2010 awards began a month earlier (in October) to allow entrants more time to review and prepare potential entries.

Co-Chairs: Scott Orstad, sorstad@stamhealth.org, 203-276-5933 & Deb Chiaravalloti, dchiaravalloti@ajh.org, 978-463-1175

Committee Members: Karen Fler, Roxanne Jones, Shawn Mawhiney, Christina Trincherro

Evan Houghton Committee

NESHCo’s prestigious Evans Houghton Award is the highest form of recognition bestowed by the organization. With NESHCo deciding to skip the fall institute due to the economic tightening impacting all hospitals, the Board decided to postpone the awarding of the Evans Houghton Award until the spring conference.

Nominations can be submitted any time before April 2, 2010. Nominations should be emailed to kwoodsum@neshco.org (preferred), faxed into the NESHCo office at 978-948-2709 or mailed to NESHCo Evans Houghton Nominations, PO Box 336, Rowley, MA 01969. The Evans Houghton criteria and nomination form that can be found at: <http://www.NESHCo.org/content/69/default.aspx>.

Chair: Jim Rattray, rattrayj@southcoast.org, 508-961-5278

Committee Members: Wayne Clark, Gina Balkus, Keith O'Connor

Spring Conference 2009 Committee

The Annual Spring Conference in Providence, RI was a tremendous success, particularly in light of the financial climate we faced. We built the conference around these economic considerations, with the theme “Make Lemonade:

Squeezing the Most Out of Smaller Budgets.” The keynote, Daniel Miers, presented data on the dynamics of marketing in economic downturns and break outs addressed creative communication solutions, low cost-high yield strategies, and making the most of the marketing dollars you have.

To enhance attendance in a tight economy we trialed a split conference fee approach, (two day or one day) allowing people who might come for the Lamplighter Awards to get some extra value out of their trip. This did bring about six extra attendees in. It’s worth trying it again, since one try may not give us the full result we had expected.

We also offered a pre-conference workshop on writing, which brought in a few people early—though not as many as we had hoped. Our recommendation is to try this again to add to the value to the long distance some conference goers must travel to get to a conference from far flung locations in New England.

Attendance at the conference was high with close to 100 attendees. Overall the presentations earned stellar reviews with the key themes being social media, creativity and marketing in a recession.

Sponsorship was the strongest of any NESHCo event in the last ten years, pulling in five new sponsors. We continue to receive feedback from our sponsors that the New England conference is one of their favorites and that we continue to offer them good opportunities to meet with our members and share their products and services.

Co-Chairs: Jill McDonald, APR, jmcdonald@emh.org, 207-973-7742 & Lou Davis, ldavis@marketstreetresearch.com, 413-582-1206

Committee Members: May Kernan, Amanda Barney, Patricia Giramma