



## Vantage® Names Hunter Chief Operating Officer



Mary Jo Hunter, Chief Operating Officer

*In November 2008, Mary Jo Hunter was named Chief Operating Officer for the Vantage® Healthcare Network. Mary Jo's ascent to this vital and central role – in hindsight – was almost predetermined.*

Ms. Hunter has always been fascinated with the scientific process and the field of healthcare seemed a natural fit. Mary Jo earned her Pharm. D. and began her professional career as a pharmacist with the Meadville Medical Center. Her leadership, vision and curiosity, combined with the genuine desire to be challenged facilitated her advance into a management role, eventually adding the title and duties of Clinical Director. While her responsibilities were many, she took the most pride in raising the profile of the hospital pharmacist to a partner in the clinical care team, working closely with the physicians on the ultimate goal of positive patient outcomes.

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 Quality and Latest  
 Technology.**




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 The Leader in Institutional Pharmacy Services



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- ✓ **Studies Available 7 Nights a Week!**
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 Specializing in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Sleep Disorders

*The Vantage® Care Apothecary, Meadville location, services over 40 nursing homes and institutions specializing in Long Term Care, Personal Care, Adult Day Centers, Drug and Alcohol, and Mental Health, covering Western Pennsylvania*

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## Vantage® Acquires the County Exchange Building in Franklin PA

Vantage® Real Estate Investment Company, LTD, a division of Vantage® Holding Company, LLC has purchased the landmark County Exchange Building along with a two story structure adjacent to the main building. The main facility is located on the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> street and Liberty Avenue and has been a landmark since its reconstruction in 1925.



As a brief historical note, Fort Franklin, was built in 1787, on a large tract of land reserved by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Andrew Ellicott, who had surveyed and planned the site of Washington, D.C., also planned and laid out the city of Franklin.

Franklin became a center for world-wide oil production following Colonel Edwin Drake's discovery of oil in nearby Titusville. Unique to this valley, "Franklin Heavy Crude" was sold at a premium price.

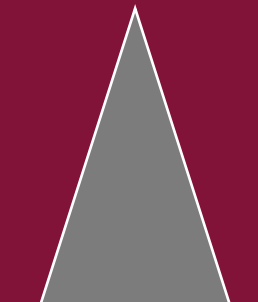
The wealth from the oil boom has left a permanent architectural mark in Franklin. Every major architectural style used in western Pennsylvania from 1830 to 1930 can be found here. From Federal Hill to the stately homes in Miller Park, the Historic District, registered in the National Registry of Historic Places, Franklin provides delight and surprises with each new turn along tree-lined streets.

Vantage®, a partnership among 13 non-profit hospitals has been expanding and developing its services across the state of Pennsylvania as well as fourteen additional states. The Vantage® strategy,

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**Vantage® Celebrating its 25th Anniversary**  
 1984 ~ 2009

**[www.vantagehealthcare.com](http://www.vantagehealthcare.com)**

  
 Quarterly  
**The Vantage® Point**

## What's News



### Julie K. Hamilton

Assistant to the COO, Marketing Coordinator

Julie Hamilton began her career at Vantage® in 1991 as receptionist then moved to Business Development for several years. Since then she has worked in many aspects of Vantage® including Administration, Consulting, Human Resources, PPO/Provider Relations, Sales, and Mobile Services as well as Director of Marketing. Julie recently accepted the position as the Assistant to Mary Jo Hunter, Vantage's® Chief Operating Officer, who stated "Over the years Julie has lived by the five Vantage® Values admirably and has been a true asset to the Vantage® Culture."

Julie graduated from Cochranton High School and has continued her education throughout her 17-year career with Vantage® participating in many training courses including Microsoft Office, Adobe Suite, and numerous courses on Management skills. Julie lives in Meadville with her husband and four children.



### Ralph Babarsky

Regional Account Manager - DuBois

Ralph Babarsky is the Regional Account Manager for the Vantage® location in DuBois. In this role, Ralph Babarsky looks to grow the business across all Vantage® lines that will significantly impact Vantage's® bottom line.

Ralph Babarsky is no stranger to introducing a company and its products or services to a new market. He has spent over five years in the medical field as an account manager. Most of them as a Pharmaceutical representative, where he helped launch Avelox IV. He was most notably recognized as one of the top ten representatives in the company for increasing market share annually. Ralph plans to use the same work ethic that has made him successful to make Vantage® the number one choice within the medical community.



### Deborah Szitas

Compliance Officer

Deborah Szitas started working with Vantage® June 2006 as a Human Resource Assistant and one year ago was moved to Staff Associate of Salary and Benefit Administration. Recently Deborah was appointed as the new Compliance Officer. Her past work history was as a Manager at Citizens Bank for 3 years and held many positions at National City Bank for 20 years from Employee Benefits, Management, and Teller. Deb also worked in an Accounting Department for 5 years at Sipco Technology, Inc. and has a two year associates degree in business from Jamestown Business College.



### Michelle Kaste

Vice President of Finance / Controller

Michelle Kaste, Vice President of Finance/Controller has been with Vantage® for 10 years. Michelle graduated from Edinboro University with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Business Administration/Accounting. Michelle resides in Cochranton with husband, Steve and two boys, Nicholas, 4, and Matthew, 3. She previously worked at McMahon, O'Polka, Guelcher and Associates. She also served on the Board of Directors for the Miss Crawford County Scholarship Pageant, a part of the Miss America Organization and the Crawford County READ Program which promotes literacy throughout Crawford County.



What's News continued on page 8



## Vantage® Home Infusion Therapy Services

Expert Care from the Regional Leader in Home Infusion and Specialty Pharmacy Services

...servicing the Northwestern Pennsylvania blood disorder community to assure quality care stays close to home.



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Disorders  
Management  
(800) 548-5463

- Full-Time Patient Advocate
- Personal training on insurance plans
- Specialized bleeding disorder nursing team
- CRNIs
- Member of the National Hemophilia Foundation

Personally assuring all your needs are met.

**Values...** An honest, fair and truthful employee is a company's most important asset.

### Vantage® Values:

**Creativity...** Relating to or characterized by imagination; having a lively imagination in looking at ways to improve the organization. An employee who creatively makes suggestions and recommendations promoting the growth of our company.

**Mutual Respect...** Someone who is respectful and treats everyone the same. They consistently have a positive and non self-serving attitude. Mutual respect indicates sensitivity and helpful attitude toward fellow employees.

**Flexibility...** Characterized by a ready capability to adapt to new, different, or changing requirements. A flexible employee is one who helps with a rush order late Friday afternoon and still finds ways to finish their own work, even if it means staying late.

**Customer Service...** Pride in contributing to the welfare of others while performing a service. The success of every organization depends directly upon how its customers, clients, and patients are treated. Listening carefully to the needs and complaints, and taking charge in providing a solution, and doing so with a positive attitude.

**Truth...** Sincerity in action and character: fairness and straightforwardness of conduct. An honest, fair, and truthful employee is a company's most important asset. Mistakes are made: however, truth speaks its loudest when you can admit an error, solve the problem and move on. These abilities make an employee the leader, trustworthy and reliable.



THE VANTAGE® HEALTHCARE OWNER HOSPITALS:



Armstrong County Memorial Hospital  
Kittanning



Corry Memorial Hospital (CMH)  
Corry



DuBois Regional Medical Center  
DuBois



Elk Regional Health Center  
St. Marys



Kane Community Hospital (KCH)  
Kane



Meadville Medical Center (MMC)  
Meadville



Millcreek Community Hospital (MCH)  
Erie



Saint Vincent Health System (SVHS)  
Erie



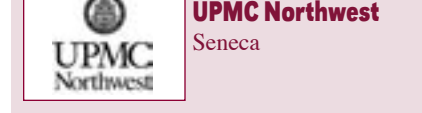
The Ellwood City Hospital (TECH)  
Ellwood City



Titusville Area Hospital (TAH)  
Titusville



UPMC Horizon  
Greenville/Farrell



UPMC Northwest  
Seneca



Warren General Hospital (WGH)  
Warren



## Care Apothecary News



### Ida Mary Jane Boyens, Pharm.D.

Ida joined the Vantage® team in late 2008. She is a 2007 graduate of LECOM School of Pharmacy. After completing pharmacy school, she completed a one year clinical pharmacy residency at Hamot Medical Center, Erie PA. Her areas of interest are trauma, neuropsychology and geriatric patient populations. Ida is also ACLS certified. See stated... "I look forward to utilizing my clinical skills in working with the Vantage® Care Apothecary team."

Prior to attending pharmacy school, Ida was a Certified Purchasing Manager (C.P.M.) for General Electric Transportation Systems. She worked in various areas of sourcing and is a certified Six Sigma Black Belt. Ida is also a US Army combat (Operation Desert Storm, 1990-1991) veteran and was on active duty for seven years prior to landing in Erie. She was awarded a Bronze Star medal for her accomplishments in Operation Desert Storm. She finished her military commitment in the individual ready reserves (IRR) in 2006 at the rank of Major.

Ida's proudest accomplishment is her son, Josh who is in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade at Walnut Creek Middle School. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with Josh, cooking, volleyball and being an active community service member.



### Thea Pierce, PharmD

Thea attended the University of Pittsburgh for undergraduate pre-pharmacy and then went to LECOM School of Pharmacy and graduated in 2005 and has worked for CVS and Rite Aid Retail pharmacies since. She worked as a floating pharmacist for Rite Aid with her Immunization Certification. Thea has been a practicing immunizing pharmacist for 2 years and stated "I am proud to be part of the Vantage® Care Apothecary team".

## Vantage® Care Apothecary Celebrates Six New Certified Techs

On January 26<sup>th</sup> we celebrated our newest Certified Pharmacy Technicians. Roses and pins were handed out to Care Apothecary Technicians Vicki Kiskadden, Amy Bell, Lacey Walker, Crystal Chisholm and Karrie Anthony. Also included in the ceremony was HME's Kathy Douglas who also is celebrating her certification. Robin Garner Smith, Senior Vice President, Long Term Care stated, "We are proud of our latest graduation group. The Vantage® Care Apothecary Techs worked very hard toward this credential spending time during lunch hour and study groups after work. They are great examples of our tradition of quality service and putting our customers first. A special thanks to Val Simonette and Ida Boynes for all their help with math classes and study groups. Our Technicians strive for accuracy and timeliness in filling Rx's and are always there to help one another out in a pinch. They are an important part of our Care Apothecary team. "Congratulations to our new CPhT's, we are very proud of you.



Kathy Douglas, Crystal Chisholm, Amy Bell, Lacey Walker and Vicki Kiskadden. Missing from photo, Karrie Anthony.

## Zach Kuhn... continued from page 9



Zach is a Volunteer Fire Fighter

"Vantage® is more than just factor in a box", and this is more than just a slogan in a brochure. The Vantage® people work hand in hand with, and coordinate care through the HTC – the Hemophiliac Treatment Center in Pittsburgh. Patients and parents are secure in the knowledge that advice and counsel are just a phone call away; and personal care – immediately available if needed.

House Bill 1105 sits in front the General Assembly, awaiting passage as thousands of blood disorder patients await the law that will finally formalize the necessary standards of care required. But as important, allow each patient choice; the choice of who supplies their product and what company they want to coordinate and facilitate its delivery, and ultimately their care.

Vantage® is a member of the National Hemophilia Foundation, a leader in the advocacy for patients with blood disorders and a strong and ardent supporter of House Bill 1105.

Vantage® is people, people like Jerry Marks who has literally dedicated his life to this cause; and people like Zach Kuhn – who has not only benefited from the Vantage® philosophy, he has himself now become an advocate, offering his support, encouragement and experience to parents who are just beginning their fight for a normal life for their children with blood disorders.



## Partnering for Growth and Savings



Tom Sedlak, Senior Vice President of Facility and Business Development

*In keeping with the Strategic Plan, Vantage® has begun a marketing program to extend outside the current geographic area of northwest Pennsylvania. Vantage® is launching a national sales program, beginning with the eastern half of the United States.*

Under the direction of Tom Sedlak, Senior Vice President of Facility and Business Development, the focus will be on expanding current services such as negative pressure wound therapy, modular hyperbaric oxygen services, industrial sleep and mobile services. The area of focus will be hospitals, long term care facilities and large physician group practices. Assisting in this new endeavor will be Randy Poulson, Director of Sales Development and Katrina Leftheris, Coordinator of New Product Development. They will be working with Tom Sedlak to expand current relationships, and certainly to develop new opportunities. Sedlak stated, "One method of accomplishing this will be to attend regional and national conventions as vendors explaining the "Vantage® Opportunity", as well as expanding contacts through our owner hospital CEOs and Doctors who see the need for the Vantage® model in other markets throughout the United States."

Beginning December 2008, three new operational regions have been opened; New York/Long Island, Philadelphia, and Ohio/Indiana. Hired to develop these areas are Victor Acosta, Bill DeCroce, and Bruce Cowart, respectfully. Their goal is to successfully market services outlined above in their respective regions. As they develop relationships with hospital and long term care facilities, their ultimate goal is to develop new "Vantage® Systems" in those markets.

Vantage® turns Cost Centers into Revenue Centers, and has been successful with these programs for over 25 years. One of the keys to Vantage's® success is partnering for growth and cost savings. As the state of the national economy and legislative activities continue to impact health care, Vantage® sees this as a great opportunity to expand into other parts of the United States and continue to grow.

For more information contact Katrina Leftheris: 1 LECOM Place, Erie, PA 16505 814-282-4534, [katrinal@vhcn.com](mailto:katrinal@vhcn.com)

## Chief Operating Officer... continued from page 1

In 1999, Hunter was recruited to join the Vantage® Team as Vice President of Infusion Pharmacy Services. It was in these years that Mary Jo began to apply her special skill set to the many other facets of the business. She recruited, hired and trained; building a team of talented, caring professionals who shared her and Vantage® goals and vision. She balanced priorities and budgets all the while keeping her eye on the ultimate goal – to grow the division and help grow Vantage®. This segment of her career was marked with many accomplishments, including tripling annual revenues in nine years for the Infusion Therapy Division.

Ms. Hunter thrives in the Vantage® culture of coaching, teaching and growing. She smiles at the mention of Vantage® mentor Jerry Alonge, CEO – relating how he ends all of his meetings with the question "what can I do to help you do your job better?" Yes, Mary Jo ends her meetings the same way. She speaks with pride about Vantage's® policy of open doors and open minds that allows the flow of knowledge and ideas while encouraging the Vantage® ethos of involvement and teamwork. Ms. Hunter expands how Vantage® is a "strength-based" organization that creates pathways for people to set and accomplish their goals.

There is an old saying, "If you do not know where you are going, it is pretty hard to get there, or anywhere." Not only does Mary Jo know where she is going, she understands where Vantage® needs to go. Hunter is crystal clear on her role as COO – to support the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the organization set forth by the board and relayed to the organization. She takes to heart her role in fostering the Five Core Values of the Vantage® philosophy – Creativity, Flexibility, Mutual Respect, Customer Service and Truth.

Mary Jo marvels at how well she fits into the Vantage® culture, but she is equally inspired by how that culture allows her - and every employee really - to make and mold "it," in return.

Celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary this year, Vantage® has grown from two employees and a core of visionaries with an idea to turn cost centers into profit centers, into a \$50 million dollar enterprise that employs over 330 people and serves thousands of patients and an ever-growing list providers and partners in 14 states. There is little doubt that Vantage® will continue on its path of aggressive growth and become a truly nation-wide company. Mary Jo Hunter has been given the responsibility and mission, the tools and technology to make this leap possible. She now has the reins to lead this next charge. Believing that there are no limits is the first step in the journey; and if history is any indicator of the future, Mary Jo will not only succeed, she will exceed.



# Vantage® Advocacy Report



Congressman Jason Altmire

SCHIP Legislation, hailed by family health advocates is slated for Senate approval and is expected to cut the number of uninsured children by more than half. The State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, is one of the first new pieces of legislation signed into law by President Obama. The house members voted 289 to 139 to reauthorize and extend the legislation. The projected cost over the next four to five years will approach 33 billion and is to be partially funded by an increase in cigarette tax from its current 39 cents to one dollar a pack.

SCHIP was first enacted in 1997 and is the largest addition in federal health coverage since Medicare was enacted back in 1965. According to USA Health data; 11 million children are covered by the program, 8.7 remain uninsured and an additional 4.5 million children could be covered under this legislation.

Families USA, a consumer activists group for family healthcare reports that in Pennsylvania 220,000 children are uninsured and that this legislation is projected to cover 129,000 from that uninsured base. Jason Altmire, representing Pennsylvania's 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District stated, "Each state operates its SCHIP program differently, the 129,000 children are the ones qualified for SCHIP who are not covered". He went on to say that it will cover everyone who is eligible or who will become eligible in the next year. The program is for working families, while Medicaid is for those with little or no income. "This is for families who work hard, and who play by the rules. I can't think of anything that we could be doing that is of greater importance and impact than making sure that working families have health insurance for their children".

Jason has been a leading advocate for our nation's veterans, voting several times for this country's largest increases in veterans' health care funding to fix sub-standard care at military and VA facilities across the country. In addition to his support of Veterans, Congressman Altmire's roots are steeped in the health care industry. In 1996, he joined the Federation of American Hospitals, where he worked until 1998. He then returned home to western Pennsylvania to join the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, (UPMC), a 20-hospital system with more than 48,000 employees and \$7 billion in annual revenue.

At the time of his resignation to begin his run for Congress in 2005, he was UPMC's Acting Vice President for Government Relations and Community Health Services. In 2008 Representatives of Vantage® and its owner hospitals met with Jason Altmire at the Premier Advocacy meeting in Washington, DC. It was at these meetings that everyone agreed that Jason Altmire, though only in his sophomore term, was making his presence known on Capitol Hill regarding health care legislation. His advocacy and support of SCHIP is exemplary.

*...I can't think of anything that we could be doing that is of greater importance and impact than making sure that working families have health insurance for their children.*

## Franklin Building... continued from page 1

turning cost centers into revenue centers, has worked successfully over the past twenty five years, creating jobs, and partnering for growth and cost savings. These two newly acquired Franklin buildings will provide Vantage® with many options; including Sleep Labs to open in March 2009, executive office space for expansion, lease opportunities, and a home base for its Health Group Telecommunications Fiber Service Center.

Tom Surman, VP of Corporate Communications and Real Estate Development stated, "The acquisition of these two highly visible buildings will be a major asset in Vantage's® expansion plans. With over 25,000 total square feet of additional space we will be able to accommodate our immediate needs, have room for growth and be able to offer prime office and residential space to the Franklin community. Franklin is one of the most charming cities in Pennsylvania, and when the Oil Regional Alliance presented the properties to us, we immediately saw the possibilities for growth within Vantage® while expanding job opportunities in the Franklin Market." Surman also stated that he would be moving his office from the Vantage® Meadville headquarters to their new Franklin location to oversee the development and growth of the project. Tom Surman can be reached at 814-720-0300 and at tomsurman@vhcn.com.



## What's News



### Hank C. Hill, M.D.

Saint Vincent Surgical Oncologist Hank C. Hill, MD, has authored an article titled, "Challenges of Utilizing Immunostains to Facilitate the Diagnosis and Management of Metastatic Adenocarcinoma," in the December, 2008 Journal of the National Medical Association.

Dr. Hill is the northwestern Pennsylvania region's only Surgical Oncologist. At Saint Vincent Health Center, Dr. Hill has been instrumental in the development of The Saint Vincent Cancer Care Center, which is recognized by the American College of Surgeon-Commission on Cancer as an accredited site for cancer education and care. As a surgical oncologist, Dr. Hill works in collaboration with family practitioners and other specialists in the care of cancer patients. He also provides surgical management of the most complex cases in the region including endoscopic ultrasound, liver and pancreas surgery.

Dr. Hill practices at Saint Vincent Surgical Oncology, 145 West 23 Street, Suite 202, Erie, PA.



### Sister Ricarda Vincent, SSJ

#### Senior Vice President of Mission Integration

Sister Ricarda Vincent, SSJ, recent past president of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, has joined Saint Vincent Health Center in the newly created position of Senior Vice President of Mission Integration. Sister Ricarda will be responsible for more deeply integrating the mission, vision, values and faith-based identity of Saint Vincent Health System. This position will also provide opportunities to further the understanding of the Sisters of St. Joseph mission of unity.

"Although this is not a new role to many faith-based hospitals, this is new to Saint Vincent," remarked Sister Ricarda. "I truly believe all Saint Vincent associates live our mission, know how to treat people and one another and I am grateful for the opportunity to use my role to strengthen these beliefs and deepen the spirit of Saint Vincent as a result."

Sister Ricarda entered the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1952 and served as President for the past eight years. At Saint Vincent Health Center, Sister served in pastoral care for 1 year and was on the Saint Vincent Board of Trustees for 8 years.



## Vantage® Bleeding Disorder Management Program Spotlights...



### Zach Kuhn

It was not long ago that the parents of a child diagnosed with a serious blood disorder, like hemophilia, were often given the terrible news with little hope. In fact, long-time bleeding disorder advocate, newly appointed Director of Vantage® Bleeding Disorder Services and hemophilia patient himself - Jerry Marks - was told that he would not see his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. But to Jerry and the bleeding disorder community - those are fighting words. Thirty years past that birthday, thirty years of involvement and advocacy later and Marks sees nothing - but the bright side.

Zach Kuhn looks like any normal sixteen year-old high school sophomore, and he is. But there is a maturity to Zach, sensibility born from his need to be treated three times per week, intravenously, with a synthetic form of factor that fortifies his blood to stave off spontaneous episodes of internal bleeding. But Zach is strengthened with the support and knowledge gained from the hemophiliac community in general and Jerry Marks in particular. Zach has come to understand that this is his condition, and he must take responsibility for its treatment. Since the age of eight, Zach has been mixing his own medicine, and starting his own IV treatments. Most of us "needle-phobes" could not even imagine this.

But Zach Kuhn has made a choice, to live as normal a life as he possibly can. While there may be activities that he must avoid, Zach has been known to rough it up a bit with his buddies. But perhaps most impressive of all, he is fulfilling his dream to become a fire-fighter. Zach is currently an active junior member at the Belle View Volunteer Fire Company in Erie, Pennsylvania. A common misconception about hemophiliacs is that they bleed faster if injured. They do not. They simply bleed longer because their blood lacks the necessary clotting agents. The greater risk is from the "spontaneous episodes" of internal bleeding, which can do long-term, hidden damage to vessels, organs and joints. And this is where the Vantage® Team comes in.

The Vantage® Bleeding Disorder Management Team is different, and it begins and ends with their people. Vantage® patients know that 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, they have access to a Vantage® specialized bleeding disorder - IV trained - nursing team, a 24 hour alert line and a full-time patient advocate. They also have the confidence that their factor deliveries will be made in person, never having to find a box on the front porch, with no instructions and support.

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**Katrina Leftheris**

*Coordinator of New Product Development*

Katrina Leftheris has been named Vantage® Coordinator of New Product Development. Katrina graduated with honors from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania with a BA in Communications and a minor in English and Business. Vantage® has recognized Katrina's skill sets and feels she will provide a solid corner stone in Vantage's® growth nationally. Katrina stated, "I have watched Vantage's® growth over the past years and the collective vision and goal of National Business Development under the direction of Tom Sedlak will produce multiple opportunities to recreate the Vantage® model in markets outside of the state of Pennsylvania." In addition to national coordinating, Katrina will also focus on North Carolina and Florida for development.



**Bruce A. Cowart**

*Director of Regional Operations - Ohio, West Virginia and Indiana Region*

Bruce joined Vantage® recently as the Director of Regional Operations - Ohio, West Virginia and Indiana Region. He has an extensive background in operations with his last position at Professional Medical Equipment of University Hospitals and Sisters of Charity Health Systems of Cleveland Ohio, where he also launched a Hospital-to-Home program. Bruce is a graduate of Aeon Bible College in Indianapolis, Indiana. He currently lives in East Liverpool, Ohio with his wife and 4 children.



**Victor L. Acosta, Sr.**

*Director of Regional Operations - New York Region*

Vantage® is proud to announce the hiring of Victor L. Acosta Sr., as the Director of Regional Operations - New York Region, Victor is responsible for managing major multiple accounts, to achieve efficient and profitable sales, create proposals, negotiate agreements and maintain a strong overall relationship with new and existing customers in the region. His expertise is in wound care and has over twenty plus years of experience in; negative pressure wound therapy units, vascular lymph edema pumps, gradient sequential pumps, low air pressure mattresses, support surfaces and respiratory support. Victor stated, "I am honored to be a part of the Vantage® family and plan to use my experience in medical sales, service, procurement and in the management field to help grow

Vantage® in North East."



**William A. DeCroce**

*Director of Regional Operations - Philadelphia Region*

Bill joined Vantage® in December as the Director of Regional Operations - Philadelphia Region. Initially, his charter is to bring Vantage® products and services to the Philadelphia market with the ultimate goal being the expansion into NJ, MD, DE and DC. The plan is to lead with long-term care pharmacy via Vantage® Care Apothecary followed closely with Vantage® wound care.

Bill has an extensive background in sales/sales management in software and technology in long term care. He spent the last eight years as the Senior Account Manager covering the East Coast for a division of Omnicare.

Bill is a graduate of Duquesne University. Originally from Pittsburgh, he now makes his home in Linwood, NJ.



# High Speed Connectivity for Healthcare comes to Erie

Vantage® Health Group Telecommunications, (HGT), as part of a statewide initiative, now has fiber optic networking in the Erie Area with its new 10GB protected ring. Currently HGT provides services to its healthcare members including: local telephone services, long distance, voice over IP (VOIP), pagers, cell phones, dedicated T-1 lines and internet connections. Jay Long, Senior VP of HGT, stated; "The deployment of our new fiber optic ring will solidify Vantage's® position in the region as the leader in healthcare technology and communications." Electronic communications between hospitals and doctors using electronic medical records (EMR) can now be seamless and affordable. Over the years, HGT has provided hospitals, doctor's offices, nursing homes and other healthcare related facilities with low cost, high bandwidth service. This new fiber ring technology service will immediately be available to all of its current Healthcare members. HGT welcomes new members and healthcare related facilities to participate in this high tech, cost saving fiber ring."



*Fat Pipe Engineer, Chip Van Tassel; Saint Vincent Health Center Vice President of Operations, Paul Matters; Vantage's® Health Group Telecommunications Director, Jeff Scarpitti and Jay Long, Senior Vice President Vantage® Health Group Telecommunications.*

A Commencement activation and light-up ceremony took place late in 2008 at Vantage's® main switch location housed at Saint Vincent Health Center. On hand for the event were representatives from Vantage® HGT, partnering companies Fat Pipe, and Executives from Affinity Technology Consultants. Fat Pipe Engineer Chip Van Tassel, stated, "We are looking forward to bringing this cutting edge network to Erie and the surrounding area. We are going to offer bandwidth, which has never been available in this market, and carrier class reliability." Rhett Hintze, Affinity's Managing Director, was quoted, "This announcement demonstrates one more option that can be used by organizations to improve their access to broadband and further adoption of enhanced services for patients and clients." HGT continues to demonstrate their value as a technology aggregation agency providing various technology options for physicians, hospitals and other health care providers. HGT will provide this and other connectivity options to the broader health care community through on-going telecommunications aggregation efforts.

Vantage® is pursuing partnerships within Northwestern PA to link Warren, Corry, Erie, Meadville, Titusville, and Franklin.

# Saint Vincent Names Building in Honor of Former President/CEO

Saint Vincent Health System is proud to announce the naming of a new building and establishment of an endowment in honor of longtime former Saint Vincent CEO, Sister Margaret Ann Hardner, SSJ.

The Sister Margaret Ann Hardner building is an 80,000 square foot multipurpose building located at 2315 Myrtle Street, Erie, PA adjacent to Saint Vincent Health Center. The Hardner Building is connected to an 800-space parking ramp via a covered skywalk and is home to several physician offices, diagnostic testing facilities and other health care services and has been a key component of the expansion of the Saint Vincent Health Center campus.

Sister Margaret Ann Hardner served as President and CEO for nearly 20 years taking Saint Vincent Hospital to Saint Vincent Health System and running what would become one of Pennsylvania's busiest hospitals. Sister Margaret Ann recruited subspecialists, developed advanced services and led multimillion dollar building projects. She established and enhanced medical education programs, making Saint Vincent one of the best community hospital sites for physician training. Most important – Sister Margaret Ann worked to extend health care services to the underserved in Erie and throughout northwestern Pennsylvania by establishing the family practice residency program to train mission-based family doctors.

# Federal Affairs Network (FAN) Advocacy Meeting

WASHINGTON, D.C.

## Washington DC Welcomes Premier Hospital FAN Participants

Premier Advocacy held its December, 2008 Federal Affairs Network (FAN) meeting in our nation's capital on December 9-10. The meeting began Tuesday evening with a welcoming reception and dinner at the historic Occidental Restaurant adjacent to the Willard Hotel in downtown Washington, DC. Premier staff recognized Peg McCormick Barron, Vice President of Legislative Affairs for West Penn Allegheny Health System as the recipient of the Jim Scott Advocacy Award, which is presented each year to a Premier Federal Affairs Network member for their outstanding advocacy efforts.



*Award recipient, Peg McCormick Barron, Vice President of Legislative Affairs for West Penn Allegheny Health System*

Former White House staffer and CNN political analyst Paul Begala was the keynote speaker and provided his perspective on the 2008 Presidential campaign, underscoring that the country has not seen such a dramatic change in administration since Roosevelt succeeded Hoover. Begala noted that President Barack Obama not only won the election,



*Paul Begala Delivers Welcoming Reception and Dinner Keynote*

but won a "generation," referring to how he captured the youth vote by an unprecedented margin.

Premier's Senior Vice President of Public Affairs, Blair Childs, and FAN Policy Committee Chair Mary Edwards, Vice President of Public Policy for Fairview Health Services, welcomed attendees, provided an update on Premier's policy priorities and reviewed the meeting agenda, topics and speakers.

Childs reviewed Premier's legislative priorities and grassroots successes over the past year, highlighted several new policy position papers, gave a recap of Advocacy's efforts to hold hospital CEO validated savings meetings, and reviewed several new Premier initiatives.

Premier FAN meetings, held in June and December of each year, aim to provide healthcare executives from alliance hospitals and health systems exclusive access to key policy and decision makers on the federal front. FAN meetings feature discussions and presentations by federal healthcare veterans, Capitol Hill insiders, and others "in the know," with respect to the current political and policy landscape. The next FAN meeting will be held in June, 2009. Look for a specific date coming soon.



*Mary Edwards, Chair, FAN Policy Committee*

## Transitioning to a New Administration and Budget Outlook

Dan Mendelson of Avalere Health provided his perspective on the impact of economic changes on healthcare. Mendelson, who served as Associate Director of Health for the Office of Management and Budget under President Bill Clinton, detailed the economic pressures the country faces as it looks to reforming the healthcare system, including negative margins for healthcare providers, a growing federal deficit, and state budget shortfalls. Mendelson warned that hospital payments are always a target for reductions, but that payments for managed care and biologics seem to be the focus for cost savings right now.



*Dan Mendelson, President and Founder, Avalere Health*



*Neleen Eisinger, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) and Michael Park, Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Charles Grassley (R-IA)*

## Hospital Value-Based Purchasing

Neleen Eisinger of Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus' (D-MT) staff and Michael Park of Ranking Member Charles Grassley's (R-IA) staff provided an overview of value-based purchasing and insights into how and when it might be addressed by Congress. Eisinger discussed Senator Baucus' recently released white paper on health reform, which approaches the issue from the standpoint of coverage, quality and cost, and emphasized that he views this as a bipartisan effort and plans to work with Senator Grassley to achieve these objectives. Eisinger also discussed the discussion draft of value-based purchasing legislation released by Senators Baucus and Grassley in November and outlined some of the principles they support.

## View from the Hill: Healthcare Cost and Coverage

Wendell Primus of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)'s and Brian Hickey of Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin (D-IL)'s staff provided insights into the health reform agenda for the 111th Congress and what is likely to be addressed in the first 100 days. Primus speculated on a number of issues that may be included in an economic stimulus package in January, including supplemental Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) funding to the states, indirect medical education, and reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which expires in March. Primus also offered some insights into possible solutions to the fundamental problems of access, quality and cost of healthcare, including investment in HIT up front to save money in the long term, prevention and chronic disease management, pay-for-performance, transparency and additional funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Hickey discussed the Baucus white paper and the likelihood that the relevant House and Senate committees will take the lead on the legislation with a focus on bipartisan support. He also talked about FMAP and suggested that it is likely that a significant amount will be included in the stimulus bill but there are questions about whether to provide a flat or state-based increase, though the Senate has leaned toward a flat rate in the past. The last stimulus package introduced by the Senate provided a 1 percent increase in the match rate.

Communication and government advocacy representatives from our Vantage® owner hospitals are encouraged to attend these semi-annual meetings and opportunities to network on capitol hill. For more information contact Tom Surman; tomsurman@vhcn.com 814-720-0300.



*Wendell Primus, from the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Brian Hickey, from the office of Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin*

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