

The fifth annual meeting of the Allied Health Research Institute was held June 10-11th at the Chase Park Plaza in St. Louis. Attending were over 60 stakeholders representing academia and industry.

The focus of the meeting was aptly described in the title: "Academia and Industry: Partnering in Research". The conference's intent was to provide a springboard for collaborative research and networking culminating in the announcement of the Institute's research initiatives - plans for funding research and the creation of a post acute registry.

In the era of healthcare reform, the keynote speaker, Leslie Norwalk a former administrator of CMS, laid the foundation for the necessity of research within the post continuum. She walked the audience through the rationale for healthcare reform and its impact on cost, quality and access - all factors that impact the delivery of healthcare. Ms Norwalk's slide presentation can be reviewed on website: www.theahri.org

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to discussions revolving around four topics identified by educators and healthcare providers as requiring priority research: workforce retention, the EMR, interprofessional education and clinical effectiveness. Each subject was introduced by a speaker expert in the subject. (Presentations and biographies are available on the website). The audience then went through a process of formulating research questions around each subject. Over 90 questions were identified that will now be scrubbed by the attendees for accuracy and completeness.

Over the course of this summer, the AHRI research committee will take that list and identify 6-10 for funded research. The questions and the RFP process/procedure will be posted on the AHRI website in September. It is expected that up to 4 five thousand dollar and 2 ten thousand dollar awards will be announced by the end of the year. Please refer to the website: www.theahri.org for the list of questions and information regarding funding applications.

The 2008 Fellowship awardees presented their updates: John Jackson, MA, OTR from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, delivered a power point presentation on "Development of a Predictor Model for Discharge Destination in Inpatient rehabilitation Patients" and Bridgett Piernik-Yoder from the University of Texas health Science Center at San Antonio, on her research entitled "Post-acute rehabilitation services among stroke patients with and without diabetes". Both of their presentations can be viewed on the website www.theahri.org.

The announcement of the creation of a Post acute Registry provided the finale for this year's meeting. It is envisioned that the Registry, capturing data on patients' rehabilitation post acute discharge, will be the first of its kind. The AHRI Board of Directors has approved initial funding for a proposal to bring this to fruition.

As work commences on these projects, updates will be provided to you on the website - www.theahri.org.

In summary, the meeting was well attended, produced a long list of potential research questions, articulated the Institute's Research initiatives and set the stage for a solid research partnership between academia and Industry.