

# CHAMPIONS IN HEALTH CARE



May 24-30, 2013 Volume 14, Issue 12



**Laurie Eberst**  
Grand Champion  
profile on page 6B

Gold Sponsors:



Dignity Health is a proud sponsor of the  
2013 Champions in Health Care Summit

*“Bending the Cost Curve: Partnerships for Affordable Care”*

We congratulate and celebrate the exemplary  
Champion in Health Care leaders, including  
Dignity Health recipients:



**Laurie Eberst**

Senior Vice President of Operations for  
the Dignity Health Southern California  
West Service Area

2013 Grand Champion in Health Care



**Alan Iftiniuk**

President and CEO at French Hospital  
Medical Center

2013 Champion CEO

*Congratulations!*



# Champions gets a new look, awards luncheon

Champions in Health Care is getting a major makeover for 2013, one that we think will create a sustainable platform for future years. For our third edition of Champions, we decided to create a theme for the first time and select our winners around that theme. With the impending arrival of Obamacare, our theme for 2013 is "Bending the Cost Curve: Partnerships for Affordable Care."

We also decided to expand our Champions in Health Care awards presentation, asking our honorees to join a panel discussion and inviting a keynote speaker. This year's keynote will be delivered by Herb Schultz, regional administrator for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and our awards luncheon will be held at Santa Barbara's El Encanto hotel on Friday, June 21.

When we launched the health care special section three years ago, our goal was simple — we wanted to recognize the enormous reservoir of talent that exists in the region's hospitals, academic institutions and medical facilities.

The reason for our focus on health care is also simple: Health and related services are among the largest industry clusters in our region, and they've been steadily growing in recent years.

And while there are a number of programs that recognize health care leadership on a city or county basis, there hasn't

been a broader regional program. For this year's Champions awards, we asked for nominations from eight fields that are of critical importance to the health care industry.

This year's categories are:



**HENRY DUBROFF**  
Editor

**Grand Champion:** An exemplary leader from one of these areas who is truly worthy of special recognition.

**CEO:** The top leader of a major health care institution.

**Primary Care:** An executive or practitioner within a primary care setting.

**Medicine:** A physician or medical professional with a track record of success in providing care.

**Researcher:** The leader of a research institution or company that relies on innovative research, or a top-level researcher within that institution or company.

**Educator:** An educational leader who helps train the next generation of medical professionals or the community.

**Philanthropist:** A person who has made significant contributions of time or money to a health-care related philanthropic organization.

**Designer:** A person who has made noteworthy contributions to the design of health-care facilities or the branding of a health-care organization.

**Volunteer:** A community board member or other volunteer at a major institution.

To make our selections, we cast a wide net, looking for nominees who were worthy of recognition based on our theme of developing partnerships to make care more affordable. We were open-minded about whether these partnerships could be developed within an organization or externally.

Our staff made the final selections, and I hope you enjoy reading about them on the pages that follow.

In making our selections we relied on the expertise of Health Care Editor Dana Olsen, one of very few reporters in our region who specializes in this field. Also crucial to the success of Champions is Research Director/Special Reports Editor Dara Barney, who joined us just about a year ago. The section was produced by Barney. Advertising production was done by Graphic Artist Elizabeth Willhite.

We hope you enjoy this special report, and I hope to see you at our awards luncheon on June 21 at El Encanto, where we hope to provide valuable insights into how health care reform is reshaping the delivery of medical care in our region.

Our Champions special report and reception would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. Our gold sponsors are Tolman & Wiker Insurance Services, Pacific Western Bank and Dignity Health.

• Contact Editor Henry Dubroff at [hdubroff@pacbiztimes.com](mailto:hdubroff@pacbiztimes.com).

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A word from our sponsor



Dignity Health is proud to sponsor the 2013 Pacific Coast Business Times Champion in Health Care summit. This year's theme, "Bending the Cost Curve: Partnerships for Affordable Care" is of particular interest as we prepare for the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Changes in the law focus on provisions to expand coverage, control health care costs, and improve the health care delivery system. So how will all of this impact us? Whether you are a business owner making decisions for your workforce, an employee weighing the various coverage options, or the primary purchaser of health benefits for your family, understanding the changes is of utmost importance.

Dignity Health's longstanding vision is for a growing and diversified healthcare ministry distinguished by excellent service and committed to equitable access to compassionate, high quality, affordable care for all. For generations of residents, our hospitals have inspired hope and contributed to health and well-being of the communities we serve. We have done this by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education, research, and outreach.

These are exciting and challenging times as many different partners come together in an unprecedented way. We look forward to working in partnership as advocates for affordable care.

Dignity Health                      Dignity Health  
St. John's Hospitals              French Hospital Medical Center

A word from our sponsor



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For over 30 years, Pacific Western Bank has helped our healthcare banking clients meet and exceed their most ambitious goals. Whether your organization is a hospital, physicians group, managed care provider or residential care facility, our team of industry experts understands the specific risks you are exposed to and the solutions needed to move your business forward.

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## CHAMPION CEO

# CEO helps take hospital from debt to top ranks

By **Marlize van Romburgh**  
Staff Writer

Alan Iftiniuk is a man who isn't afraid of a challenge.

In 2004, he stepped into the top executive position at French Hospital Medical Center in San Luis Obispo, which Dignity Health (then called Catholic Healthcare West) had just acquired. After years of mismanagement, the hospital was on the brink of bankruptcy.

Iftiniuk started working to turn that around.

In the nine years since, French Hospital has renovated its facilities, overhauled its management, hired new staff and expanded its services.

It has won numerous national awards, capped last year by an honor from Thompson Reuters naming it one of the Top 100 hospitals in the U.S. for cardiovascular care.

"The hospital was truly in very, very dire straits" when he took over, Iftiniuk said in an interview. "It was bankrupt and had a lot of problems caused by varying degrees of mismanagement and neglect. But nobody ever turns anything around by themselves. If I should be credited for

anything, it should be for putting together a very strong team of physicians, executives and board members. The members of the community itself, too, were very important to the turnaround."

His staff throw much of the credit right back at Iftiniuk, who they say was instrumental in guiding French Hospital back to solid ground.

"Mr. Iftiniuk's rescue of French Hospital from a neglected and plundered for-profit hospital to a nationally recognized cardiac care center" is deserving of a Champions in Health Care award, the hospital staff said in their nomination of him for this special section.

Describing the CEO as "tenacious and compassionate," the staff pointed out that even as Iftiniuk has guided French Hospital back to financial stability, he has also helped it forge new partnerships with other health care organizations in the area and upped the standards for care in the community.

The facility is the only accredited "baby-friendly" hospital in San Luis Obispo County, according to Dignity Health. "It's a

see **CEO** on page 14B



STEPHEN NELLIS PHOTO

French Hospital CEO Alan Iftiniuk helped transform the medical center into a Thompson Reuters' Top 100 hospital in the U.S. for cardiovascular care.

A word from our sponsor



### Tolman & Wiker Insurance Services, LLC

Are you confused and concerned about the impact of Healthcare Reform? If so, you're not alone. Many companies today are getting conflicting advice from various sources, very few of whom truly specialize in Healthcare Reform. Worse yet, many are receiving advice from their advisors to "wait and see" and "wait until we know for sure" what the impact might be. You need to begin preparing now.

Tolman & Wiker Insurance Services is leading with solutions to Healthcare Reform that include expert counsel from compliance attorneys, as well as consultation and thorough analysis of the complex regulations and the coverage options from our certified Healthcare Compliance Specialists.

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## Mental Health First Aid

### Mental Health in the Workplace

Untreated depression costs employers billions of dollars each year.

#### What Employers Need to Know

- When proper treatment is applied an individual can recover productivity and an employer can recover \$3-4 for every \$1 invested as the employee recovers their full potential.
- Early intervention can prevent a mental health issue from developing to a level that may lead to disability

#### What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid Course is a 12 hour course. It is customizable to focus on specific areas of concern and to meet various scheduling needs. The potential benefits are enormous:

- Learn to recognize signs and symptoms of mental health issues early so treatment or self-help strategies can be supported before disability occurs.
- Learn about highly effective treatment options.
- Position your company to be a pioneer of in the area of mental health literacy and begin to recoup dollars lost due to the incidence of depression.

#### Who should take the Mental Health First Aid course?

Individuals at all levels in any workplace.

Classes begin in June and July

(pre-registration required; group rates available)

Contact Aaron Anderson at (805) 884-8440, ext. 3296.

Visit [www.mentalwellnesscenter.org](http://www.mentalwellnesscenter.org) for more information.



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