

Activist Profile

Hilary Siebens, MD

Hilary is the membership chair of the Los Angeles chapter. She has spearheaded three important projects in Los Angeles which PNHP California plans to adopt at the state level:

- 1) Hilary has developed a membership outreach project that welcomes new members to PNHP, informs them about chapter activities, and invites them to participate at a level that suits their talents and schedule;
- 2) Hilary introduced the vision for an organizational code of conduct for our members that applies to interactions with both colleagues and critics (this code will be published on new website for PNHP California);
- 3) Hilary has assisted our medical student fellow, J. Fenix, in the exciting chapter development work in San Diego.



As a physiatrist and geriatrician, Hilary's career commitment has been to geriatric rehabilitation. Her patient populations include geriatric primary care, stroke, neuro, ortho, and complex medical rehabilitation as well as palliative and hospice care. Care sites have been rehab hospitals, acute hospitals, nursing homes, and house calls. She has done clinical research, program development, and participation on national expert panels. Currently she runs her own consulting firm, Siebens Patient Care Communications, and continues to practice part-time in outpatient rehabilitation.

After years of watching the devastating effects of health care payment systems on her patients and their families, Hilary became involved in health care reform in the late 1990's. She joined PNHP in 2002.



Hilary's words

I don't consider myself an activist, I'm just doing what seems necessary, as a physician, for patients and their families.

I started going to outdoor rallies for single payer here in Los Angeles several years ago. It was very uncomfortable. I was the only doctor in a white coat amidst a crowd of many many others - nurses, workers, teachers, ministers, you name it. I said to myself, "Look at where health care is. As doctors we have to take to the streets?!!!" Where are the other doctors I wondered? Fortunately, we're organizing in southern California as PNHP LA chapter and our numbers are growing.

The philosophy in rehabilitation medicine is to do the very best one can with a patient, with a team, in whatever situation arises. That "can do", team spirit is really needed in our country right now. PNHP has attracted many exceptional, hard working, dedicated physicians, and others, all equally concerned, even horrified, at what patients, families, and many physicians have to endure. We concur that we bring professionalism and much front line experience to health care reform. We've done our homework. It's a real pleasure to work with everyone as we find our way towards a robust, lasting change that ultimately will be win-win for everyone.