



MEDIA RELEASE

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Hospitals can learn from Disney: author

Hospitals can learn a lot more from the theatre industry than the service industry, a US health consultant and author will tell representatives at 'The Quantum Leap' healthcare conference in Sydney this week (24-27 Sept).

Fred Lee is the author of the bestselling book *If Disney Ran Your Hospital: 91/2 Things You Would do Differently*, which has been credited with changing the language of patient satisfaction in the US.

The conference is hosted by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS), the Australian Healthcare & Hospitals Association (AHAA), and Women's and Children's Healthcare Australasia and the theme is *Measurement: Redefining Health's Boundaries?*

In Lee's keynote address, he will make the point that healthcare, like theatre, is an experience rather than a service. He says often the real successes — the "difference between being good and great", for example — are not measurable, to quote W. Edwards Deming, the father of quality measurement.

"Nobody comes out of a movie or Disneyland and talks about the service they had — they talk about their experience," Lee says.

"A common approach to improving patient satisfaction is to copy what they do in the service industry, which I do not believe is the best model for patient care.

"A service is labour performed for a consumer which he would otherwise do for himself like laundry, cooking, changing the oil in an automobile. An experience is quite different, it is primarily emotional."

Lee said he was inspired to write his book when, after spending many years in the health sector — he was a vice-president at two major medical centres — he undertook a consultancy at Walt Disney World in Florida and made some interesting cross-cultural comparisons.

"Disney's mission is to meet the emotional needs of a family to have fun together. A hospital's mission is to meet the emotional needs of a family going through pain, anxiety, fear, and even tragedy together," he said.

Lee said empathy and compassion were as important to patient care as courtesy and competence because, by reducing stress they actually affect the immune system.

"Recent scientific studies show a significant correlation between empathy and clinical outcomes in numerous diseases, shorter length of stay in the hospital, and higher patient perception scores," he said. "Basically a hospital without compassion is like Disney without the fun."

The 'Quantum Leap' is sponsored by The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, and the Ministry of Health NSW. <http://thequantumleap.com.au/>

FRED LEE IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW THIS MORNING (MONDAY 24TH) 9AM TO 11AM THEN AT CONFERENCE



Media contacts: ACHS Communications Manager Ian McManus
0411 159 941 at the conference or 02 8218 2743, imcmanus@achs.org.au
Carmen Myler PR consultant (Niche Qld) – 0400 791 148 or
ctmyler@gmail.com

THE QUANTUM LEAP

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