Burian University-Community Lecture Welcome

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• Good evening. Thank you for being here. It is wonderful to look out into the audience tonight and see a reflection of the way our community and university come together to engage in conversation about the important issues of the day. We have with us this evening:

• Mrs. William Burian--Ann--and the Burians' son Matthew Burian

• Community health care leaders--many of whom I've gotten to know well in recent months and consider close colleagues. (They include the president of the Kalamazoo Academy of Medicine and VPs of the two major hospitals)

• Members of the University's Board of Trustees--Ken Miller and Mary Asmonga Knapp

• WMU friends and donors
• University administrator, and faculty and staff members, and
• The people in charge of our future, our students (2 HHS student reps).

• You are in for an informative evening, thanks to our guest, William A. Sanger. I met him during an earlier visit to campus, and it is my pleasure to welcome him back to Kalamazoo to share his insights on the critical issue of the day--national health care reform. I'll be telling you more about him after dinner, but please join me in welcoming Bill and his wife, Janice (jahNEESE), to our community.
• Twenty years ago--in 1989--the Burian lecture series was established to celebrate the strong ties between the Southwest Michigan community and our College of Health and Human Services. and to provide us all with a chance to hear from health care leaders of national stature. This evening's discussion is exactly the kind of gathering envisioned by the series that honors the vision of the founding dean of the College of Health and Human Services, Dr. William Burian.

• Dr. Burian built, and we continue to nurture, a college that has achieved national stature in the allied health care professions. It is, quite simply, one of this University's jewels--one I knew and respected long before I had the chance to become a part of this community and lead this great University.

-It is a college with nationally recognized and highly competitive graduate programs that are preparing the allied health care professionals of the future. Six of our graduate programs are among the top 100 such programs in the nation and our enrollment in this college continues to grow every year. This fall, for instance, enrollment in the college is up 4.25 percent and we have a 17 percent increase in the number of doctoral students. (FYI--from 41 in 2008 to 48 in 2009)

-And the college is a major research center, with faculty members who contribute to the body of knowledge and earn significant financial support from organizations such as the National Institutes of Health and Department of Education. It is among the nation's highest NIH-funded allied health schools not associated with a medical center. That's a qualifier that we are talking about changing, but it remains a point of immense pride.
-For community members throughout Southwest Michigan, the College of Health and Human Services is the primary point of contact with Western Michigan University. The health care services they receive though our Unified Clinics, improve their quality of life and help them address health care needs ranging from speech and hearing therapy to children's trauma assessment and substance abuse treatment. More than 1,800 patients per week receive a wide range of services from our faculty, staff, and students. This equates to more than 80,000 appointments annually.

Health care is in fact the second oldest academic focus at Western Michigan University. More than 85 years ago, our first non-teaching program was launched when we began offering occupational therapy classes. We are committed to the health professions.

This evening is about the health care needs of our nation and the potential that exists within this community to be involved in the discussion and to offer solutions to the challenges and opportunities that demand our attention.

Again, thank you for being here this evening. Enjoy your dinner and conversations and let's continue those conversations as we work together to address the nation's health care future. Thank you.

Sanger introduction.

It is now my pleasure to tell you a bit more about our speaker this evening. We are enormously proud of his affiliation with us as an alumnus of our health studies program. And we are proud of his significant accomplishments as a leader on the national health care stage.
William A. Sanger is chairman, president and chief executive officer of Emergency Medical Services Corp., which is based in the Denver area. A leader in the health care industry for more than three decades, Bill Sanger heads a company that is America's leading supplier of medical transportation and a leading provider of outsourced emergency department and hospital-based physician services in such areas as radiology, anesthesia and emergency medicine. In 2008, his company provided services to 11 million patients in more than 2,000 communities nationwide.

He has been in his leadership role at EMSC since 2005. Prior to joining EMSC in 2002, Sanger was president and CEO for three years of Cancer Treatment Centers of America.

In addition to his role at EMSC, he is the managing partner and co-founder of BIDON Companies of West Palm Beach, Fla. That firm is a privately held health care service company that specializes in "turnarounds" and limited investments in health care startups.

His professional affiliations are numerous. They include serving as Chairman of the Board of Denver-based Global Medical Response and as a member of the Board of Directors for both Vidacare Corp. and the Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry.

In addition to his degree from WMU, he earned an MBA from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. Among his many honors, he has been recognized with

  • Florida's Excellence in Enterprise award
• Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year for the Rocky Mountain Region (2007)
• And as a finalist in Ernst and Young's 2008 National Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming our speaker to the podium to answer the critical question, "Reinventing Health Care: Do We Really Have the Answer?"

William A. Sanger.