

Lafayette Start-Up Wants to End Wrong-Site Surgery

By Sophie Braccini



Dr. Arne Brock-Utne (center) and his team.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Wrong-site surgery, when a surgeon operates on the wrong side of the patient's body, is a nightmare that is more than anecdotal. According to the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare, although reporting of wrong-site surgery is not mandatory in most states some estimates put the national incidence rate as high as 40 per week. A young doctor and entrepreneur in Lafayette has set out to change that by creating a system called Issio Solutions that prevents wrong site surgery. The system is being implemented at the Aspen Surgery Center in Walnut Creek where, according to Issio Solutions, Inc., the quality of operations has skyrocketed.

"Issio has caught approximately one incorrectly scheduled surgery per week," says Issio's Erin Smrz. "Zero incidents at the surgery center in the four months that Aspen has been using the application designed by Dr. Arne Brock-Utne—they are the safest clinic in America."

The American Academy of Or-

thopaedic Surgeons says that wrong-site surgery is a devastating problem that affects both the patient and surgeon, and results from poor preoperative planning, lack of institutional controls, failure of the surgeon to exercise due care, or a simple mistake in communication between the patient and the surgeon.

"Communication is key to eliminating the problem," says Brock-Utne. "In hospitals today doctors are working under great stress with a large volume of patients. And surgery is a team effort, everyone needs to be on the same page at the same time, manipulating a large amount of information that most of the time is in one paper file that everyone needs to be reading at the same time."

Brock-Utne says that the problem is that hospital and surgical centers have made great efforts to computerize the business side of hospitals, but not the clinical side. His solution is a cloud-based system that is accessed by all the different stakeholders in an operation, including the patient, and

updated in real time as the patient moves through the system from admission to the operating table. As the information is updated, those who need it can access and control it.

"When they arrive at the clinic, patients answer a series of questions regarding the procedure they are having that day," explains Brock-Utne. "They are offered different choices, and if they do not see the operation they are scheduled to have, they can indicate so." The response triggers an alert, and that is how the first mistake was caught at Aspen—a patient had been scheduled for the wrong surgery.

At each step that precedes the surgery, staff inputs what is done and at what time. "This is also a way to improve infections in hospitals," says Brock-Utne. Patients must receive a dose of an antibiotic one hour before an operation. But sometimes the surgeon is late and starts after the window of efficiency of the product. With Issio in place, monitors in the operating room will automatically signal the problem. "We also added

systems to make sure that no step is skipped during the pre-op preparations."

Since September of last year Aspen Surgery Center has agreed to be the beta site for Issio. Staff first worked double-charting until Feb. 4 when they started relying only on Issio. Now Brock-Utne's team has been demonstrating the application to ambulatory surgical centers. For a clinic, the cost is both hardware to equip the facility with the flat screen televisions, and mobile devices for personnel and patients to input information; and Issio charges the clinic a fee per patient. The return on investment comes from eliminating paperwork and all the costs associated with

errors.

So far Brock-Utne has financed the company he started in November of 2011 with the support of family and friends. He was helped along the way by a next door neighbor who is a software engineer; another one is in finance; and his wife, who is maintaining her practice as a pediatrician. He has already hired 11 people and one intern and put his anesthesiology career on hold with no regret—he feels this business is his life's calling.

For more information, visit www.issio.com.

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business briefs

Absolute Celebrates 10th Anniversary
3658 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Ste. 101, Lafayette
www.absolutecenter.net
Absolute Center in Lafayette (across from Trader Joe's) will host a week of "Stress Less" events March 4-9 including nutrition, chiropractic, yoga and meditation to celebrate 10 years of success. "We are inviting speakers from the community and the events will be public," says Absolute's Louise Eby (previously known as Louise McMenamin). "Some of our clients were saying how nice it is to see a small business survive during the past economic downturn, and that we should be proud of ourselves for being able to hunker down." For more information, call (925) 299-9642 or visit the Absolute Center website.

Trunk Show at Zahra
3578 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
Zahra Boutique Salon is presenting a Trunk Show from 9 to 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28. The store will feature local women's creations: Doray from Orinda will bring her hair accessories; Devera will show her jewelry. Shila, Zahra's daughter, says she likes to feature local creators in the store. There will be free hors d'oeuvres and drinks at the event.

4th Annual Comedy Night at the Orinda Theatre
Laugh-lovers will have the opportunity to enjoy a champagne-filled night of comedy at the landmark Orinda Theatre Friday, March 8 when the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with Tommy T's Comedy Clubs, presents "Live at the Orinda IV." The evening will start at 7 p.m. and feature no host bars in the lobby and theater. Champagne, wine and mixed drinks can also be purchased during the performances, starting at 8 p.m. with a mid-show intermission. Master of Ceremonies Wayne Coy, 92.1 KKDV radio personality, will open the show and introduce the comedians. This year's slate features Kabezy, David Van Avermaete, Arthur Gaus and headliner Will Durst, who The New York Times calls "possibly the best political comic in the country," returning fresh from a recent tour with all new material. Advance discounted and VIP tickets may be reserved until March 7 using credit cards at the Chamber website - www.OrindaChamber.org - or at First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road. Tickets at the door (if available) will be \$40 per person. A portion of profits from this event will benefit local non-profit organizations as well as the on-going community work of the Chamber of Commerce.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette
The Entrepreneur's Club speaker Del Blaylock will discuss "Business Casual is Too Casual" at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21 in the Chamber Conference Room.

Business Issues/Government Affairs Meeting at 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 22 in the Chamber Conference Room.

Ribbon Cutting at Urban Suburban at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28 at 3328 Mt. Diablo Blvd. The business is changing its name to The Mechanic of Lafayette, foreign and domestic auto repair.

Moraga
Dinner for Business Person of the Year Bill Snider, owner of Moraga Hardware & Lumber since 2000 and Across the Way since 2002. Snider is originally from Iowa and completed his undergraduate degree in business at Saint Mary's College. Snider moved to Moraga in 1990 with his wife Vel to raise their children and become part of the community. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, he is active in and was one of the original founders of the Shop Moraga First campaign. He has been a frequent volunteer at his children's schools, and supports many charities and service organizations. Always ready with a joke, Snider's sense of humor often brings smiles to customers' faces.

Orinda
The Chamber's Downtown Parking Committee has been working on a plan to ease parking in the downtown area by creating special permits for employees in adjacent streets. The chamber also envisions longer-term solutions by encouraging partnerships with city government, BART, churches with parking lots, County Connection, and other potential agencies. The city of Orinda will consider the chamber committee parking plan for the first time at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19. The committee encourages everyone interested in this issue to attend the meeting or to contact one of the committee members through Candy Kattenburg at the chamber, (925) 254-3909 or info@orindachamber.org. Come to the meeting to see what the city proposes as next steps.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

Correction, issue date Jan. 30, 2013, An Inspiring Tale of Food Intolerance and Granola: The co-founder of Thoughtful Food, Marie Banis, was not mentioned in the article. Banis left Thoughtful Food in May 2012, but still holds a partial stake in the company. To view the corrected article online, visit <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0624/An-Inspiring-Tale-of-Food-Intolerance-and-Granola.html>.

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