



## *Thursday Memo – March 20, 2014*

This week our Memo is written by a writer who has written at least 3 times: Rebecca Lubelczyk who is Medical Director for Norfolk MCI and the current President of the Society of Correctional Physicians (and Clinical Associate Professor in our department). She writes about the moment who know you have influenced a student to enter into a world of medicine that you believe in it and the elation that accompanies that moment. Many folks have felt that in family medicine - the connection, the inspiration. Spoiler alert - Rebecca was one of the people that caught my attention that prison health might just be a place to serve a diverse group of people who were truly in need.

You can respond to Rebecca at [rebeca.lubelczyk@umassmed.edu](mailto:rebeca.lubelczyk@umassmed.edu) or to the list serve directly. Enjoy!

### The "IT" Girl

It finally happened. No, really IT finally happened. I knew it would. At least I hoped it would. I pretty much knew it would but wasn't completely sure. But it did. IT finally happened.

Las Vegas was where IT happened (oh, keep reading - nothing incriminating here). [Correctional Medicine] Leadership Institute, July 2013, Paris Hotel. I usually give one of the first talks of the old "boot camp" for new medical directors to demystify the new world of corrections. After this particular one, I had a small gathering of participants desperate to meet me (and check out my awesome blue shoes). In the back of the pack, was a quiet, slight woman who waited patiently. When she was the only one left, she spoke. "Dr. Lubelczyk, you probably don't remember me." The hair was longer, darker, but the face was still narrow and carried a smile I didn't remember her sharing in the past. "CA? Of course I remember you! What are you doing here in Las Vegas? At a correctional medicine conference!" CA explained to me that she always found my stories of correctional medicine fascinating. I would often use examples from my incarcerated life to underscore points that my co-facilitator and I were making for the second year medical interviewing course. On reflection, CA was a reticent student from about 5 years

ago and we struggled to get her to participate in class. She was a dancer in her college years. Now she was standing in front of me, with heels, subtle make-up, professional dress and happy to see me.

"I always wanted to go to California and figured that I'd never get there unless I did it during residency. Because corrections is so interesting, I'm at the San Francisco jail. I saw an announcement for this conference and thought that Las Vegas wasn't too far of a drive. Then I saw your name listed as a speaker and I knew I had to go. I had to tell you what I'm doing".

After years of precepting students, teaching students, giving Grand Rounds, contributing to the Family Medicine department creative writing memo, IT finally happened. I came face-to-face with someone I "touched". I was elated for the entire conference. I introduced CA to all my colleagues, took her around, made her take a Society of Correctional Physicians brochure (did you think I wouldn't?), flaunted to everyone "this is her! She was my student!" I can't say if she will definitely seek a correctional position upon her graduation, but she's seriously thinking about it. She's experiencing something many of us never had a chance to in residency: get a glimpse of correctional medicine as a viable career choice. I am so proud of her and hope to see her again amongst us colleagues.

I relayed this story to Marc Stern as he has a dedicated interest in teaching students. He had to correct me. She was not "IT" but rather one of many he believes that I have "touched". Who knows how many have at least considered corrections because of me or because of all of us. I do hope he is right (as often he is). Either way, I'm chalking this up in the win column. I will continue to keep writing, teaching, espousing to anyone who will listen. Just try and stop me.