Happy New Year from the Stoeckle Center!

What’s Going on in Primary Care at The Mass General?

A Primer on the Ambulatory Practice of the Future (APF) Project

The APF Project is a joint effort of the Massachusetts General Physicians Organization (MGPO), the Stoeckle Center, and the Center for the Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology (CIMIT). Charged with radically improving the experience of outpatient health care for patients and clinicians, the group has created a new model of ambulatory care, which will become the basis for a primary care internal medicine practice for employees of the Mass General and the MGPO.

The model will rely heavily on team-based care delivery that tightly integrates all care providers involved with the patients. Patients and families will be crucial members of the care team, and the health goals they set will become the foundation of a contract with the care team. All members of the care team, including patients, will gain skills and knowledge needed to help patients achieve health goals. New roles of “Health and Life Balance Coach” and “Care Coordinator” will be piloted to support patients’ needs for information, knowledge, advice, and navigation of the health care system. The practice will employ and study the impact of new information systems (e.g., patient portal, personal health record), and point-of-care diagnostic and therapeutic technology, both at the practice site and remotely in the patient’s home and community.

In the past twelve months, the APF committee has been working to solidify support at the Mass General and the MGPO for the APF’s business proposal. In addition, the committee is designing two important pilots to be implemented in 2007. The first will employ a ‘toolkit’ to assist patients in managing depression, with the goal of demonstrating that patients have more success managing their mental health disease if given education and training customized to their needs. The second program will use remote monitoring of blood sugar and blood pressure to help patients and care teams manage diabetes more effectively.

WELCOME New Primary Care Physicians and Nurse Practitioners

The Mass General is pleased to welcome 25 new doctors to our halls! On October 13, 2006, the Primary Care Operations Improvement (PCOI) and the Massachusetts General Physicians Organization (MGPO), in conjunction with the Stoeckle Center, held Primary Care Physician Orientation Day. Dr. Michael Barry, Chief of General Medicine and the Medical Director for the Stoeckle Center, and colleagues introduced the new group to the hospital’s organizational structure, instructed them on working effectively with various hospital groups, and shared information about teaching opportunities and computer resources. The day closed with camaraderie and good food at the Ether Day reception.

Stoeckle Center Staff Members Welcome Little Ones

Nicola Majchrzak, project leader for the Ambulatory Practice of the Future, and her husband welcomed Madeline Grace to her family on September 19, 2006; and Elizabeth Kaplan, project manager at the Stoeckle Center, and her husband were joined by Katharine Augusta on October 1, 2006. Both moms plan to return to work in January.

(Photos: Katharine, left, and Madeline, right, becoming fast friends!)
Thirty New Advance Care Planning Facilitators Join the Ranks

In October, the Stoeckle Center sponsored another advance care facilitator training program for primary care practitioners, bringing the number of facilitators at the Mass General to 111! Participants completed online training sessions before attending a one-day class of instruction and role-playing. The course got high marks from participants who reported increased knowledge of the advance care planning process, ability to demonstrate skills of basic care planning, improved communication skills, and experience with creating their own advance care directives.

The Stoeckle Center is convening a task force of facilitators to implement advance care planning in primary care practices, with attention to reimbursement issues, the placement of the advance directives in the LMR, and the integration of the counseling into the workflow of the practices. For more information, or to learn about future trainings, please contact Julie Martin, Communications Manager, at the Stoeckle Center (617.724.5151).

Upcoming Primary Care Events at The Mass General

- **Friday, January 12; 7:45-9:00am**  
  General Medicine Rounds — Update: Treatment of Asthma  
  Speaker: Aleena Banerji, MD  
  Where: Simches Research Bldg, Rom 3120; 185 Cambridge Street

- **Friday, January 26; 7:45-9:00am**  
  Stoeckle Center Seminar — Stress Reduction for Busy Clinicians and Patients: Hurry Up and Relax!  
  Speaker: Ann Webster, PhD: Mind/Body Medical Institute; Harvard Medical School  
  Where: Yawkey Building, 10th floor, Doerr 10660

- **Friday, February 9; 7:45-9:00am**  
  General Medicine Rounds — Osteoporosis: Treatment Options in Women and Men  
  Speaker: Benjamin Leder, MD  
  Where: Simches Research Bldg, Rom 3120; 185 Cambridge Street

Profiles in Primary Care

- **Clinical Innovation Awards Announcement: Dr. Sanja Percac-Lima**
  Dr. Percac-Lima is a primary care physician practicing at MGH Chelsea Health Center and recipient of the inaugural Clinical Innovation Award, given by the Clinical Research Program. She has an interest in understanding and overcoming barriers to effective health care among recent immigrants. Her one-year project will focus on low rates of colorectal cancer screening among Latinos and other immigrant groups. She will specifically evaluate in a randomized control trial the impact of a "Navigator Program" on changing rates of colorectal cancer screening in the MGH Chelsea Community.

Primary Care in The News

- **Hospital Doctors Shut Doors to New Patients**
  In mid-November, the Boston Globe published an article about the difficulty new patients have finding a primary care physician, stating that “most primary care physicians at Boston’s top-tier teaching hospitals are so busy that they have officially closed their practices to new patients.” Mass General doctors Sherry Haydock, Brit Nicholson, and Bob Hughes were interviewed for the article.

  The Mass General gets at least 25,000 requests to the physician referral call center each year for primary care doctors. Even though spaces open up when previous patients move, change insurers, or die, most people are turned away because those openings are filled through informal channels, as when new patients gain access to a doctor through a family member who is already a patient, or when a doctor takes a new patient as a favor to a colleague.

  The article warns that access to primary care doctors may worsen when uninsured residents of Massachusetts gain access to coverage under the new mandatory insurance law.