Cancer Center fellowship program receives $1M gift

The MGH Cancer Center has received a $1.05 million gift from Sovereign Bank, N.A., a division of Santander Holdings USA, in support of its Hematology/Oncology Research Fellowship Fund. On April 3, the banking group’s president and CEO and other company representatives joined MGH President Peter L. Slavin, MD, for a special ceremony in the Trustees Room to recognize the gift.

Santander, the largest bank in the eurozone, recently acquired Sovereign Bank, its first retail bank in the mainland United States. The group has a long history of social action around the globe and also has previously donated funds to aid academic, research and technology projects in New England, including programs at Harvard and MIT.

“This is truly a wonderful event in our hospital’s history,” Slavin said. “I am very grateful that Sovereign|Santander is partnering with us. This relationship will encourage innovation, advance the goals of our Cancer Center and advance community leadership for both of our organizations.”

Sovereign Bank will also become an “Innovative Supporter” of the Friends of the MGH Cancer Center, a volunteer organization committed to enhancing the quality and experience of cancer patients and their families through activities, lectures, symposiums and innovative programs.

During the ceremony, David Ryan, MD, chief of Hematology/Oncology, expressed his (Continued on page 2)
— Advance directive

(Continued from page 1)

What are the different types of advance directives?
The most common advance directive used at the MGH is the Massachusetts Health Care Proxy form. This is a legal document that names a person you trust as your health care agent. This person will have the authority to make health care decisions for you if you are unable to speak for yourself. Another type is a living will, which details what type of treatment you want or don’t want when you are seriously ill. Massachusetts living wills are not legally binding. However, they may be used together with a Massachusetts Health Care Proxy form to guide treatment. Remember to check if the type of advance directive you have is legally acceptable in whatever state or country you reside both now and in the future.

Where can I get a health care proxy form and/or living will?
The Maxwell and Eleanor Blum Patient and Family Learning Center in White 110 has Massachusetts Health Care Proxy Forms as well as another form known as “Five Wishes” for children, teenagers and adults. This form includes a section where you can designate who you would like as your health care agent. Massachusetts is one of about 42 states in the U.S. that legally recognizes the “Five Wishes” document as an advance directive. Remember to keep the original copy of any advance directive document you complete and provide copies to your health care agent, health care provider and anyone else with whom you feel it would be important to share this information.

What conversations do I need to have before and after filling out an advance directive?
To ensure that your wishes are carried out, you need to make sure your health care agent knows the type of care you would like to receive and respects your values and beliefs, even if they differ from those of the agent. Share your wishes with loved ones as well, but take the time to select someone else to serve as your health care agent who will honor your wishes and be able to speak for you should you be unable to do so yourself.

Where can I learn more?
In honor of National Healthcare Decisions Day on April 16, the MGH will host information tables about advance care planning from 8 am to 3 pm in the White Corridor and Wang Lobby. There will also be a presentation, “Understanding Advance Care Directives,” with speaker Carolyn LaMonica, RN, at noon in the Blum Center.

Child Protection Consultation Team offers support, training

TRAINING, SUPPORTING AND CLOSELY COLLABORATING with clinicians are key roles of the MGH Child Protection Consultation Team, which is available 24 hours, seven days a week to ensure staff always have a person to turn to when dealing with child abuse or suspected maltreatment cases.

“Our team can help in a number of different scenarios, not only in dealing with abuse of children, but also in the adult service where staff sometimes believe there could be a risk to a child related to a parent’s substance abuse, domestic violence or mental health issues,” says Alice Newton, MD, FAAP, the program’s recently appointed medical director. “There is a lot of discomfort when dealing with these situations, and we know that staff are so relieved when they learn that they can contact us to serve as a resource.”

Along with Newton, Debra Drumm, LICSW, and Susan Lipton, LICSW, round out the three-member team. Established in 2000, the MassGeneral Hospital for Children program focuses on providing interdisciplinary training for staff to ensure the highest standard of care to children and families who may have or are suspected of experiencing abuse or neglect. This includes interventions, assessments and referrals. “Our team also helps to ensure standards of practice around child treatment, and by doing so we assist in providing the best care possible for patients and families experiencing these issues,” Drumm says.

According to Lipton, 30 percent of the team’s consults come from the Pediatric Service and are most often related to issues of medical neglect, ingestions, fractures, head trauma and suicide attempts. “Neglect is on the rise and registers more than 60 percent of consultations annually,” she says.

Aside from their role aiding clinicians and families at the MGH, the team also works within the Boston community to help with cases and evaluations for organizations including the Children’s Advocacy Center of Suffolk County, the Children’s Trust Fund and the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, where they also train new intake workers and daycare providers. In a field where difficult situations are encountered on a daily basis, the team members say it is the support they receive from one another and the knowledge that they are making a difference in the lives of children that keeps them rooted in their profession. “It’s also about supporting staff around some of their most challenging cases,” Drumm says. “We are here for them to talk to and offer guidance. It’s so important that they learn more about abuse, even though it’s unpleasant.”

Adds Newton, “It’s the last thing people want to think about, but the worst thing is for staff to sit with it alone and not address it.”

To contact the Child Protection Consultation Team, call 617-724-0285 or request the MGH page operator contact the program.
IN 2004, the newly formed MGH Disparities Committee surveyed MGH patients about issues related to race, ethnicity and their health care. At the time, 21 percent of black patients and 25 percent of Hispanic/Latino patients at the MGH reported they thought they received a lower quality of care than white patients. In a survey conducted in 2012, fewer than 10 percent of black and Hispanic/Latino patients held those views.

“These data make me, and should make all of us, really proud,” said Karen Donelan, ScD, EdM, senior scientist at the Mongan Institute for Health Policy at the MGH. “The perception of fair and respectful treatment has continued to grow over the past eight years, and we’ve made great progress. But we still have work to do, especially for patients with limited English proficiency. We want our mission, credo and ‘excellence every day’ applied every day to all of our patients and their families.”

Donelan spoke during the “Racial and Ethnic Disparities: Keeping Current Seminar Series” hosted by The Disparities Solutions Center. The April 4 presentation, “Hearing All Voices: Race, Ethnicity, Language and the MGH Patient Experience,” explored trends in patient satisfaction connected to racial, ethnic and linguistic disparities in health care.

Measuring patient-reported outcomes is an essential component of quality assessment, Donelan explained. The 2004 survey was one of the first projects undertaken by the MGH Disparities Committee as a way to measure minority patients’ perceptions of their care, because routine patient experience surveys often exclude or under represent these populations. Donelan said her research team – including Joseph Betancourt, MD, director of the Disparities Solutions Center; Elizabeth Mort, MD, senior vice president for Quality and Safety; Esteban Barreto, senior research assistant; and eight bilingual interviewers – worked to ensure a higher response rate by using special survey methods including statistical sampling techniques, bilingual study materials, and telephone interviews conducted by trained bilingual interviewers. Many MGH departments and an expert advisory team also helped to support the effort, Donelan said.

The 2012 follow-up survey was funded by the Center for Quality and Safety and reached out to samples of black, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian patients, as well as patients who speak Spanish, Arabic, Khmer, Portuguese and Chinese. The survey sample included 1,700 patients of all ages who visited MGH primary care practices and health centers in January 2012. Donelan said the survey included standard quality measures – whether patients thought doctors and nurses spent enough time with them; if clinicians explained things in a way they understood; if patients felt welcomed by staff; and if they felt they received the same quality of care as fellow patients.

“This work is a labor of love,” Donelan said. “For me, this is the heart of why we think about engaging patients in assessing the quality of their care. We are all guided by the needs of our patients and their families, and we want to ensure they have a good experience each time they come to MGH.”

Breaking barriers to hear all voices
Aspire Gala raises nearly $1.4 million for MGHfC

MORE THAN 900 PEOPLE turned out for this year’s Aspire Spring Gala, which raised nearly $1.4 million to support the MassGeneral Hospital for Children program that helps children, teens and young adults with autism spectrum disorders develop the social skills critical for success at home, school and within the community.

Guests at the 13th annual event at the Four Seasons Hotel in Boston – including Aerosmith bassist Tom Hamilton, retired Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling and Liberty Mutual Insurance CEO David Long – were treated to dinner and a live auction, which featured items including two tickets to Super Bowl XLVIII and a tour of the “Today Show.”

“The funds raised support financial aid for participants in all our programs, program development and pro bono work in the Boston Public Schools,” says D. Scott McLeod, PhD, executive director of the Aspire Program.

Event sponsors included Liberty Mutual; McKinsey & Company; Aon PLC; Choate Hall & Stewart; Great Hill Partners; Safelite Group, Inc.; Nutter, McClennen & Fish LLP; Stephanie and David Long; Nelson Levine de Luca and Hamilton; and Cresa Partners Boston, Inc.