Chief Nurse Address: Celebrating teams and teamwork

DEBBIE BURKE, RN, DNP, MBA, NEA-BC, senior vice president for Patient Care and chief nurse, kicked off this year’s National Nurses Week celebration at the MGH with her inaugural Chief Nurse Address May 4. Burke took up the chief nurse position Jan. 1, and since then has been visiting patient care areas to better get to know staff and to let them get to know her.

“What has really resonated with me in all those unit visits is how much you talked about the value of your team and how much you value teamwork,” said Burke. “Today we’re going to be celebrating teams and teamwork.”

Burke highlighted a handful of the many extraordinary groups across the MGH who come together to care not only for patients and families but also for one another.

Through short videos, she highlighted the value of diversity in teams, their contributions to innovation and their generosity in caring for patients at the MGH and across the world in times of crisis.

“Being part of a team can also just be great fun. It creates a good work environment,” Burke said. “We all feel good when we are part of a team. We have each other’s backs and all bring our A-game when we come to work. This week as we celebrate Nurses Week together, I hope that you celebrate with your own team. I hope that you’ll recognize the important work that you do for patients and families, and that you also recognize the joy and fun that you have being part of those teams.”

Red carpet ready

“My Aunt is a Nurse,” says Rose-Laure Teixeira, a freelance Giorgio Armani makeup artist who volunteered as part of a May 8 Nurses Week event at the MGH. “I know how hard nurses work, and sometimes they forget to take care of themselves or even feel guilty about taking care of themselves. Today is a way for us to give back. It’s beautiful to make a woman feel beautiful.”

Teixeira and a team of makeup artists joined celebrity makeup talent Tim Quinn at the MGH, to pamper more than 140 oncology nurses. Quinn, who is the national director of Creative Artistry for Giorgio Armani Beauty, is also a former MGH Cancer Center patient himself. He has visited the MGH for the last seven years providing makeovers, beauty treatments and swag bags full of goodies.

“When my friend Sheila, an infusion nurse, was telling me about working at the MGH, she said, ‘You’ve got to come work at Mass General. Giorgio Armani comes to do your makeup!’” says Suzanne Markworth, RN, now in her second year as a member of the Hematology/Oncology Outpatient clinic team. She knows exactly what Sheila meant.

This year, the goodie bag included a special surprise: a ring created by Claudia Frustaci, a makeup artist turned jewelry designer who was treated at the MGH Cancer Center. Frustaci said her designs are inspired by her treatment and represent the “unique beauty and strength of the woman wearing it.”

“Only if you’ve been behind the closed doors of treatment do you know how emotional it is,” Frustaci says. “It takes a very special person to make someone feel protected and safe during cancer treatments. This small way of giving back is truly from the bottom of my heart.”
Research Roundup

RESEARCH at the MGH is interwoven throughout more than 30 departments, centers and units and is conducted with the support and guidance of the MGH Research Institute. The Research Roundup is a monthly series highlighting studies, news and events.

RESEARCH FINDS DAILY EXERCISE CAN MAKE FOR HEALTHIER, YOUNGER HEARTS

How can we keep our hearts healthy even as we age?

Maintaining heart function requires balancing the loss of heart muscle cells due to injury or aging with the regeneration or birth of new heart muscle cells. But young adults can only renew about 1 percent of their heart muscle cells each year, and that rate decreases with age. In addition, individuals who lose too many heart cells without generating new replacements have a higher risk of heart failure.

Recognizing a need to enhance regenerative capacity of heart muscle cells, a research team based at the MGH, the Harvard Department of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology, Harvard Medical School and the Harvard Stem Cell Institute sought to test the effects of exercise in increasing cell formation.

They found that, in mice, exercise increased the generation of new heart cells, both under normal conditions and after a heart attack. These findings also may have applications in the human heart, suggesting a heart may be made younger by exercising more every day.

The next step for the team – co-led by Anthony Rosenzweig, MD, chief of MGH Cardiology – is to pinpoint which biological mechanisms link exercise with increased regenerative activity in the heart, with the goal to better understand how these mechanisms could be applied to patient care.

STUDY LOOKS AT OVERDOSE RISK FACTORS IN ADOLESCENTS

With overdoses being among the leading causes of death in youth with substance use disorders, a team of MGH investigators wanted to identify factors that may increase the risk of drug overdose in adolescents and young adults.

The team conducted a retrospective analysis of 200 intake assessments of adolescent patients admitted to the hospital's outpatient Addiction Recovery Management Service. They found that the substance-specific factors most strongly associated with a history of overdose were alcohol use disorder, cocaine use disorder and amphetamine use disorder. Psychiatric conditions including eating disorders, depression and anxiety disorders also were associated with overdose.

Patients with a history of intentional overdose were more likely to have a history of self-harming behavior and inpatient psychiatric treatment.

Amy Yule, MD, of the Addiction Recovery Management Service and the Division of Child Psychiatry, says that, in addition to screening for substance-specific risk factors, these results suggest “it is important that providers systematically screen young patients for overdose histories and for psychiatric factors that may increase overdose risk.”

Matching gifts

FUTURE FRIENDS: Three members of the MGH Development team had a coincidentally life-changing day May 8, as each welcomed a special gift – three babies born within three hours of one another.

Leslee Parker-Sproul, director of Development, at right, had Griffin McCarthy Sproul at 1:35 am, weighing 8 pounds, 10 ounces. In a room down the hall – and less than an hour later – her colleague Carrie Powers, director of Development, at left, brought Charlotte Elysse Powers into the world at 2:30 am, at 8 pounds, 2 ounces. Next up was Leigh Mueller, assistant director of Development, center, with Zoey Nicole Mueller making her debut at 3:55 am, weighing 6 pounds, 7 ounces. “The craziest part of our deliveries is not only that the babies came on the same day, but within a few hours of each other,” says Parker-Sproul. Adds Powers, “I’m sure that Griffin, Zoey and Charlotte will be best pals. And perhaps even future colleagues at MGH!”

Tap into myStrength

WHEN TRYING TO MAKE healthy decisions, it may be difficult to know where to start. The Partners Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is committed to helping employees on the path to a healthier life. Recently, the EAP launched myStrength, a free and confidential online resource aimed at improving health and well-being through educational videos, tip sheets and activities.

Looking to relieve stress? View a meditation video. Hoping to improve sleep quality? Start a sleep diary and receive tips to enhance sleep efficiency. Struggling to manage symptoms of anxiety or depression? Set goals and create an action plan, or watch a video lesson about the practice of mindfulness.

The program also features resources for managing chronic pain, helping those in recovery from a substance use disorder and many more topics along the work-life spectrum.

Participants are encouraged to visit the site daily to read inspiring quotes, track their health or connect with others in the myStrength community. myStrength is available to Partners employees and their immediate household members. For more information visit, AskmyHRportal.com.
“CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN can help to reduce the risk of skin cancer and early signs of aging by the sun,” says Arianne “Shadi” Kourosh, MD, MPH, director of Community Health in the MGH Department of Dermatology.

On April 27, the Department of Dermatology teamed up with the Maxwell & Eleanor Blum Patient and Family Learning Center to provide tips on how to enjoy the summer while protecting one’s skin. Amy Sam, Health Education project specialist, and Blum Center interns, Maddie O’Connell and Taylor Shelton, educated attendees about sun safety tips, handed out UV activated key chains and provided visitors with a chance to win a gift tote bag.

During the event, dermatologists also used a portable skin scope to assess sun damage, and taught attendees how to decode sunscreen labels.

“Basically, there are two types of sunscreens, chemical or physical,” says Kourosh, who shared the following tips on how to have a sun-safe summer. “Each of these protects your skin differently and contains different active ingredients.”

**CHEMICAL SUNSCREEN:**
- Protects by absorbing the sun’s rays.
- May contain one or more of many possible active ingredients, including oxybenzone or avobenzene.

**PHYSICAL SUNSCREEN:** (often recommended for children 6 months and older or who have sensitive skin)
- Protects by deflecting the sun’s rays.
- Contains the active ingredients titanium dioxide and/or zinc oxide.

**READ LABELS AND DON’T SKIMP ON THE SUNSCREEN:**
- Use SPF 30 or higher.
- Use broad spectrum sunscreen – it can protect your skin from the sun’s UVA (aging) rays and UVB (burning) rays, which helps prevent skin cancer.
- Water resistant: Know how long – either 40 or 80 minutes – the sunscreen will stay on wet skin.

**TREAT YOURSELF TO PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND SUNGLASSES:**
- Look for lightweight shirts, pants and sunglasses with UV protection.

**MAKE SHADE YOUR BEST FRIEND:**
- When possible, seek shade between 10 am – 2 pm when the sun’s rays are the strongest. If there is no shade around, use an umbrella or wide-brimmed hat.

**BE EXTRA CAREFUL AROUND WATER, SAND AND SNOW:**
- These surfaces reflect the sun’s rays, increasing the chance for sunburn.
MASSGENERAL HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN (MGHfC) celebrated its newly-renovated Pediatric Perioperative Suite on White 3 – a space outfitted with modern technologies that focus on the pediatric perspective – with a ribbon-cutting ceremony April 16.

“This state-of-the-art pediatric perioperative suite will present a safe and pleasant environment for our pediatric patients and their families,” says Erik Shank, MD, division chief of Pediatric Anesthesia.

A glass-printed mural of the iconic Boston Common “Make Way for Ducklings” statue welcomes patients and their families into an expansive waiting room that houses age-appropriate toys, touch-screen tablets and cozy alcoves for seating. A dedicated, quiet space aimed at making the perioperative experience less anxiety-provoking for children with sensory sensitivities and developmental disabilities is located adjacent to the waiting room.

The 21,000-square-foot area – just steps away from the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) – now offers four perioperative bays equipped with interactive LED light boards. The dancing colors, confetti and balloons create a calming distraction for children as they prepare for and recover from surgery.

Three new pediatric operating rooms incorporate the latest technologies – such as high definition surgical booms that allow for better visualization and increased access to the patient – into all aspects of patient care and increase MGHfC’s ability to perform minimally invasive surgeries to improve recovery times.

“MGHfC prides itself on providing our patients with the highest level of pediatric surgical care available anywhere,” said Allan Goldstein, MD, MGHfC surgeon-in-chief and chief of Pediatric Surgery. “The perioperative suite’s modernization significantly enhances the experience for children and their families during an otherwise difficult time while giving our exceptional clinicians access to the latest advances in surgical care.”

BADGES AND SIRENS were abundant on the Bulfinch Patio May 17 as children gathered to explore emergency vehicles and meet the personnel who operate them at the PUPP on the Patio Touch-a-Truck event. The hands-on event was sponsored by the newly formed PUPP (Police Uniting with Pediatric Patients) program – a collaboration between MGH Police, Security and Outside Services and MassGeneral Hospital for Children’s (MGHfC) Child Life Program – aimed at fostering relationships between patients and police.

The PUPP program started as part of MGH Police, Security and Outside Services’ community policing efforts. “If our officers are called to a floor, there is almost always something stressful happening,” said Kristen Bolognese, MGH police officer and program co-developer. “Instead, this event is something fun that gets patients out of their hospital rooms and hopefully makes them feel a little less sick and a little more comfortable with us.”

Attendees – including patients, community members and employees’ children – were greeted by Perky, from the Chelsea K-9 Police Unit, and McGruff the Crime Dog. They explored an MGH police cruiser, a Boston EMS ambulance, a Boston Fire Department fire engine and Chelsea Police motorcycles. Children sat inside the vehicles to honk horns, push buttons and have their photos taken. Crayons and police-themed coloring pages allowed the youngsters to decorate figures in uniform and draw their own badge designs. Popcorn and cotton candy were handed out by MGH Police officers.

“The goal of a Touch-a-Truck is to make kids more familiar with emergency vehicles and first responders,” said Shaun O’Halloran, MGH police officer and program co-developer. “We want kids to realize that we are friendly and here to help. Many local communities hold Touch-a-Truck events. This event gives our patient community, especially our inpatient community, a chance to attend one that they might not otherwise be able to attend in their own communities.”

MGH police officers also brought cotton candy and popcorn to the pediatric floors as a special treat for those who could not attend the event.

PUPP program staff plan to host bimonthly events for inpatient MGHfC patients and families.