MGH Charlestown HealthCare Center celebrates 50 years

THE MGH CHARLESTOWN HEALTHCARE CENTER – MGH’s oldest community health center and one of the first established in Boston and the nation – will celebrate its 50th anniversary in September.

“We’re excited to celebrate MGH Charlestown’s 50 illustrious years of caring for this community and rising to meet its challenges, including issues such as youth violence and trauma, opioid addiction and food insecurity,” says Jim Morrill, MD, medical director at MGH Charlestown. “We look forward to continuing to grow, learn and carry our work forward into the future alongside our health center colleagues in Everett, Chelsea and Revere.”

MGH Charlestown was founded in 1968 as part of a coordinated citywide districting plan to provide comprehensive medical care to all Boston residents and work with the city’s teaching hospitals. The practice now provides adult and pediatric primary care to more than 10,000 people, and specialty care in mental health, dermatology, neurology, nutrition, OB/GYN, physical therapy and podiatry. Additional services include patient navigation, health education and wellness services, viral hepatitis/HIV/STI programs, substance use disorder nurses and recovery coaching. Morrill says, through (Continued on page 4)

Home Base takes new ‘spin’ on veteran fitness

ON AUG. 15, HOME BASE, a Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Program, partnered with Rev’d Indoor Cycling to host a first-of-its kind spin class aboard the historic USS Constitution. The studio is owned by the wife of a U.S. Army staff sergeant who participated in the Home Base Program and wanted to give back in a unique way. With one mission in mind – to make vets sweat – the class brought together local community supporters and nearly 30 veterans enrolled in Home Base’s Warrior Health & Fitness Program for a high-energy cycle class with an unforgettable view.
New technology gives an ‘edge’ to the naked eye

A new device that gives the human eye a “bionic edge” may sound like science fiction, says MGH dermatologist Victor Neel, MD, PhD, but it is a real and much-needed development for a procedure called Mohs surgery, a procedure to remove skin cancers on the face.

“Fred Mohs developed his technique 70 years ago, and today we’re still using the same procedure,” says Neel. “If Dr. Mohs rose from the grave, put on a white coat and went into the Mohs unit, he’d feel right at home because nothing has changed.”

Through a recent partnership with a physicist at UMass Lowell, Neel says he’s testing a device called optical polarization imaging (OPI) to allow surgeons a more accurate look at a tumor prior to surgery.

Mohs surgeons typically use their best judgment to identify the boundary between a patient’s tumor and the normal skin around it, also referred to as the margin. “The problem,” says Neel, “is that it’s impossible to see skin cancer margins with your eyes. There’s a limitation to what the unaided eye can see.”

OPI operates like a camera by taking pictures of the collagen in the skin. Tumor cells secrete enzymes that deform and destroy collagen’s interwoven mesh-like structure. By visualizing abnormal collagen, OPI allows Neel to identify the boundary lines that separate the tumor from normal skin before making any incisions.

“It’s a very inexpensive and simple, yet elegant technology,” says Neel. “It would allow Mohs surgeons to take a picture of the surgical site in real time and construct a surgical plan based on what they are able to see.”

Neel emphasizes he doesn’t want to replace Mohs surgery. Instead, he says OPI could help improve accuracy and reduce the average number of surgical stages per case, saving money for patients and insurers.

Neel and his team recently published a paper showing the successful results from their first pilot study using data from six patients with basal cell carcinoma, the most common type of skin cancer. In all six cases, OPI accurately predicted the tumor’s boundaries by identifying structural collagen changes. Neel is now in the process of detailing 60 more cases with similar results and hopes to conduct a multi-center OPI trial in the near future.

“I’m looking back at the 25,000 Mohs cases I’ve done at Mass General, and I don’t want to do another 25,000 the same way,” Neel says. “It’s exciting to see a change on the horizon.”

Students celebrate summer of experience

Dozens of students filled the O’Keeffe Auditorium Aug. 14 to celebrate the end of the six-week Summer Jobs Program hosted by the Center for Community Health Improvement Youth Program. The annual program and recognition event – now in its 28th year – honored 240 high schoolers and 15 college students from Boston, Chelsea and Revere who dedicated 40,000 hours to the MGH and its community health centers this summer.

“You are the reason why we do this work,” said Tracy Stanley, senior manager for MGH Youth Programs. “You inspire us with your energy, your curiosity and determination. We hope you learned something new about yourselves and gained greater insights into what career paths you want to pursue now and later in life.”

This year’s Summer Jobs Program expanded its partnership to include Becoming a Man (BAM), a Boston-based initiative that offers at-risk teens from disadvantaged neighborhoods the resources to develop life skills and explore career opportunities. Fifteen students participated in the program, and attended workshops about mental health stigma and self-care.

They also were connected with MGHers from an array of multicultural backgrounds and met regularly to make positive connections with established professionals and learn from their experiences.

“There is nothing better than seeing students faces light up when they talk about what they are doing and learning,” Stanley said. “These types of real-world experiences often provide the wow factor in their internships that can have a lasting impact.”

During the event, Raul Uppot, MD, of the Interventional Radiology Department, was recognized for his contributions to the Summer Jobs Program. Former and current students nominated Uppot for the Mentor of the Summer Award, citing his dedication in providing numerous learning opportunities, including introducing students to different departments and job options from numerous departments within the hospital.

Nai Collymore-Henry, vice president of Partnerships Alliance for Business Leadership – a Boston-based organization of business leaders dedicated to social responsibility and sustainable growth of the state’s economy – was the event’s keynote speaker.

“Society does not determine your worth,” said Collymore-Henry, who told the students they have the power to create their own history despite challenges they may face for being different. “I encourage you to make space for yourself at the table, even if you need to bring your own folding chair. MGH is yours. Today shows that.”
FAQ: This year’s flu shot policy

THE MGH HAS APPROVED a new Influenza (Flu) Vaccine Policy, requiring that all employees, professional staff and non-employees – volunteers, students and others – receive a vaccination for influenza before the start of the 2018-2019 flu season. The MGH flu task force has shared the following Q&A about this year’s flu season and new policy. Learn more at www.askmyHRportal.com.

WHY IS THE MGH CHANGING ITS INFLUENZA POLICY FOR THE 2018-2019 FLU SEASON?
Influenza kills approximately 36,000 people each year in the United States. While the flu is a dangerous virus, most cases can be prevented by receiving the annual flu vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control confirms that receiving the flu vaccine is the single best way to prevent the spread of flu. The MGH and its employees have made a promise to our patients and their families to consistently deliver safe and quality patient care. To do this, we must do everything we can to prevent the spread of the flu.

AM I REQUIRED TO RECEIVE A FLU SHOT THIS YEAR?
Yes. All employees, professional staff, volunteers and non-employees must receive the vaccine before Nov. 15. Employees who do not receive the vaccine by this date are subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

ARE THERE ANY EXEMPTIONS TO THIS NEW POLICY?
Employees who have a medical contraindication to the influenza vaccine – such as a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome or a serious allergic reaction to the vaccine – can request exemption through Occupational Health Services. Employees who wish to decline the vaccine because of a deeply held religious belief can do so by consulting with Human Resources. The deadline for requesting an exemption is Oct. 15.

WILL THE MGH OFFER FREE FLU SHOTS FOR EMPLOYEES THIS YEAR?
Yes. Occupational Health Services will offer flu clinics at several MGH sites in September and October. A complete schedule will be posted on the Ask myHR portal: www.askmyHRportal.com. The main campus flu clinics will be held Sept. 17 to 21 in the Bulfinch Tent. Vaccines also are available at the Occupational Health clinic at 165 Cambridge St., Suite 404, during normal business hours: 7 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

IS IT OK FOR ME TO RECEIVE MY FLU SHOT FROM MY PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN OR SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE OF PARTNERS?
Yes. If you receive your flu shot from a Partners-affiliated primary care physician, your vaccine recorded in Epic will automatically be recorded in PeopleSoft. If your vaccine is received from a non-Partners primary care physician or clinic – such as CVS or Walgreens – you will need to provide proof of vaccination to Occupational Health Services before Nov. 15. To submit documentation of vaccination received outside of Partners, bring it in person to Occupational Health Services or email it to occhealth@partners.org.

I DON’T INTERACT WITH PATIENTS AS PART OF MY JOB. DO I HAVE TO GET THE FLU SHOT?
Yes. All MGH employees, professional staff, volunteers and non-employees are required to receive a vaccine. Even if you do not interact with patients as part of your job, you likely share office or lab space with someone who does. Protecting yourself with a flu shot also means that you are protecting your coworkers and their family members.

LAST YEAR, THERE WERE STORIES ON THE NEWS THAT SAID THE FLU SHOT DIDN’T WORK. WHY ARE YOU REQUIRING ME TO GET ONE?
Reports of last year’s flu shot being ineffective were inaccurate. The Centers for Disease Control reported that last year’s vaccine was no more than 30 percent effective in stopping the current strain of flu. Those who received the vaccine but still got the flu reported milder symptoms and quicker recoveries. In a hospital environment, where we see some of the sickest patients, we must do everything we can to prevent the spread of this very serious virus.

I RECEIVED A MEDICAL OR RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION, SO I WILL NOT BE RECEIVING A FLU SHOT. DO I NEED TO WEAR A MASK IN PATIENT CARE AREAS?
Yes. Although we have changed our vaccination policy, there is no change to the Flu Mask Policy that is implemented by the hospital during flu season. All employees who are not vaccinated and work in patient care areas must wear a mask when working within six feet of patients. The mask policy will go into effect Nov. 15.
MGH named a top hospital in America by U.S. News & World Report

THE MGH HAS BEEN ranked No. 4 in U.S. News & World Report’s Best Hospitals 2018-2019 Honor Roll and is the only hospital ranked across all 16 specialties. Of the nearly 5,000 hospitals evaluated, the MGH has consistently placed among the top five hospitals on the honor roll since its inception in 1990.

The oldest and largest hospital in New England, the MGH conducts the largest hospital-based research program in the nation and is designated a Magnet hospital, the highest honor for nursing excellence awarded by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

A detailed list of the rankings, including the methodology used by U.S. News & World Report, is available at www.usnews.com/besthospitals.

What people are saying

ALONG WITH SHARING news, events and information of the hospital, the MGH Twitter and Facebook accounts help keep our patients, staff and community connected. Here are a few things people have said recently on Facebook and Twitter:

MEREDITH C: It’s inspiring to work with leaders like Dr. Deborah Washington to share their stories of how they got to where they are. A powerful reminder that everyone starts somewhere and all career paths are different.

LIANNE K: My adult son (with severe special needs) recently had back surgery. We were there for 5 days and all the staff were wonderful. However, there was one young woman whom I found exceptional. She was a food server and picked up his menus and delivered his trays. The thoughtfulness and care she showed was truly amazing. She obviously understands the stress of being in that situation and she was meticulous in looking at my menu and making subtle and helpful suggestions: Do you want salt? How about gravy for the potatoes? She made what some might consider a “small job” very important.

JOJO C: Best care I could of possibly received was from a nurse in the Neurosurgery recovery unit on 7th floor. Her name is Maddie. I can honestly state she is the best of the best. She made my stay there as comfortable as possible. Thank you Maddie!

ASHLEY M: Each nurse, doctor, X-ray technician, orthopedic surgeon, and passbery staff member who I encountered during an accidental 4+ hour ER visit was kind, attentive, and pleasant to deal with during a really trying time. I can now see why people swear by hospitals in Boston. Thank you!

To follow the MGH on Twitter, visit http://twitter.com/massgeneralnews. To “like” the MGH on Facebook, visit www.facebook.com/massgeneral. For questions about social media best practices or any of these accounts, email mghsocialmedia@partners.org.

– Charlestown

(Continued from page 1)

relationships with local nonprofit organizations, coalitions and schools, MGH Charlestown has responded to the needs of the community with programs and initiatives ranging from school-based behavioral health care and trauma support for Charlestown families, home visits, community education and efforts to address the opioid crisis.

“As part of our preparation for this event, we have met individuals who worked here when the health center opened and residents who have been coming to the clinic for those 50 years,” says Jean Bernhardt, administrative director of MGH Charlestown. “It has been amazing to see how loved the health center is by this community.”

A Sept. 8 celebration from 4-7 pm at the health center will feature speakers, activities, swag bags, light refreshments and a presentation on the history of the health center’s contributions to Charlestown.