Scholarship offers opportunity to advance careers

Nine MGHers recently were honored with 2018 Association of Multicultural Member of Partners (AMMP) Scholarship Awards. The scholarships are one of the many ways AMMP helps its members gain the education needed to broaden their skills and advance in their careers at the MGH.

“It really means a lot to see you – individuals of all backgrounds and walks of life – take advantage of these opportunities to help you move forward in your careers,” said Jonathan Gonzalez, senior finance manager in the Pathology Department and AMMP chair. “We are so excited to see you challenge your minds and become the scholars we know you can be.”

The 2018 scholarship recipients – honored Sept. 12 at an East Garden Room breakfast ceremony organized by Sandra Thomas, staff assistant in the Patient Care Services Office for Quality and Safety and AMMP scholarship chair – are Mimi Adams, Internal Medicine; Altrecia Henry, Human Resources; Laxmi Kasti, RN, White 9; Orleuse Louis, Nutrition and Food Services; Lisa Leung-Tat, Cancer Center; Emmanuella Paris, Ellison 9; Idriss Slaoui, Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine; Eron Senfuma, Emergency Medicine; and Gwendolyn White, Cancer Center.

“You may not know it, but you could be the inspiration to countless others who decide they want to go back to school based on your example,” said Rolando Mercado, community resource specialist in the MassGeneral Care Management Program and AMMP public relations chair.

AMMP is committed to the advancement, retention, recruitment and development of multicultural professionals into leadership roles at all levels and areas of the MGH, MGPO and Partners. For more information or to become a member, email phsammp@partners.org.

Family fun at Fenway

On Aug. 28, members of the MGH Committee for Latino Initiatives (CLI) and MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC) teamed up at Fenway Park to educate visitors during the El Mundo Latino Family Festival.

The group included CLI members – from left, Magaly Valentin, Human Resources business partner; David Marquez, MGH Police and Security officer; Awilda Lalande, operations manager in Patient Care Services; Yocelin Cordones, MGHfC administrative coordinator; and Katia Canenguez, PhD, MGHfC Child and Adolescent psychologist. The group offered raffle tickets for movie tickets and two bicycles, and handed out MGH giveaways.

“I am proud of our presence at the family festival because it shows the Boston community at large our commitment and involvement within our Hispanic culture,” says Valentin.
NEW STRATEGY FOR ANESTHESIA COULD REDUCE DOESES AND IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR PATIENTS

People sometimes mistakenly think of general anesthesia as a deep state of sleep, but anesthesia is actually four distinct brain states – unconsciousness, amnesia, immobility and suppression of the body’s damage sensing response, or “nociception.”

In a new paper, Emery Brown, MD, PhD, director of the MGH Neuroscience Statistic Research Laboratory in the Department of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine, and colleagues argue that by putting nociception at the top of the priority list, anesthesiologists can use far less medication overall and may be able to bring patients out of anesthesia more quickly.

Using a similar strategy to manage pain during the post-operative period may also help to reduce the need for opioids, which has been a major goal in the wake of the current opioid addiction crisis.

STUDY FINDS LINKS BETWEEN FIBROMYALGIA AND BRAIN INFLAMMATION

Fibromyalgia – characterized by symptoms including chronic widespread pain, sleep problems, fatigue and problems with thinking and memory – affects an estimated 4 million adults in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A key challenge in diagnosing and treating patients with fibromyalgia is that there have been no reliable biological indicators of the disease. Patients are typically diagnosed after other conditions have been ruled out, which also makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of treatments.

A new study from Marco Loggia, PhD, of the MGH-based Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging, has identified widespread inflammation in the brains of fibromyalgia patients. While previous research has suggested that neuroinflammation has a role in the condition, this study is the first to provide visual evidence through MR/PET brain imaging.

Loggia says the findings could help researchers identify and test new treatment targets. “It should also reduce the persistent stigma that many patients face, often being told their symptoms are imaginary and there’s nothing really wrong with them.”

A BETTER WAY TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY TREATMENTS

MGH researchers have found that measuring levels of extracellular RNA (exRNA) – molecules carried in several bodily fluids – in urine can help track the progression of the two most common forms of muscular dystrophy.

The team is the first to show that urine exRNA can be used to monitor systemic diseases that do not directly affect the urinary tract. The findings could help in developing new treatments for muscular dystrophy by offering a convenient, painless and low-cost way to track the activity of the disease and the response to therapeutic drugs. The current testing method involves taking biopsies of muscle tissue.

“Urine exRNA monitoring could determine whether a drug is reaching its target long before clinical effects on muscle function could be detected and may enable early identification of whether dosage adjustments may be required – something that would be impossible with invasive muscle biopsies,” says Thurman Wheeler, MD, MGH neurologist and senior author of the study.

‘Forging a more equitable future’

“HOW DO WE CREATE a culture that really fixes the inequity of opportunity in leadership?”

It was one of the questions posed by keynote speaker Kathryn M. Rexrode, MD, MPH, chief of the Division of Women’s Health in the Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH) Department of Medicine and director of the BWH Office for Women’s Careers, during the 21st Annual Women in Medicine Month Celebration hosted by the MGH Office for Women’s Careers. Rexrode’s talk focused on the topic, “An Interwoven Journey: Women’s Health and Advancement of Women Faculty.”

“I never thought I would be a researcher,” Rexrode said, noting she initially thought she would become a clinician-educator, but after some early formative experiences, she found her passion ignited in research. “You find that you often are at a place in your career where you don’t yet know the narrative. One discovery leads to other paths.”

Rexrode discussed gender bias in medicine, how unconscious gender bias can affect both faculty and patients, and how women have often been underrepresented in clinical trials. “We need more women in medicine, in part to address gender-specific care and women’s health,” she said. Rexrode also shared some of the advice and lessons that helped her along her journey, including being true to one’s values, growing a network, creating allies and seizing opportunities that come one’s way.

During the Sept. 12 event, Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president, recognized 11 women newly appointed as full professors at Harvard Medical School. And Nancy Rigotti, MD, director of the MGH Office for Women’s Careers, honored the Claflin Distinguished Scholars and Jennifer Temel, MD, as the John T. Potts, Jr., MD, Faculty Mentoring Awardee – the first woman to be honored in the award’s history.

“Gender equity is essential because we need the talent of the entire workforce, all of the intelligent minds – men and women alike – to maximize clinical and scientific advancement,” said Rexrode. “Thank you to all of those who are committed to forging a more equitable future.”
Don’t wait, vaccinate!

MORE THAN 10,000 MGH staff have been vaccinated against seasonal flu at one of the many employee flu clinics hosted in the past several weeks at the main campus, health centers and offsite locations. This vaccination information has been recorded in each employee’s PeopleSoft database.

Staff who have received the flu shot from anyone other than a peer “flu champion” or from MGH Occupational Health should email documentation of their vaccine to occhealth@partners.org.

As a reminder, all employees, professional staff, volunteers and non-employees must receive the vaccine before Nov. 15. The deadline for submitting Medical Exemption requests – which must be sent to Occupational Health – or a Religious Exemption request is Oct. 15.

Flu shots are available from 7 am to 5 pm weekdays at Occupational Health, or by visiting one of the flu shot clinics. For more information, visit www.askmyHRportal.com.

MGH Votes! Promoting healthy habits

MGH STAFF, PATIENTS AND VISITORS turned out to participate in National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 25, visiting information tables at the main campus, Assembly Row and the MGH Chelsea HealthCare Center. More than 200 people registered to vote in Massachusetts at the events and hundreds more stopped by to pick up an “MGH Votes” pin, educational materials and to pose for pictures to share their support of the program and their pledge to vote.

Sponsored by the Physicians for Policy Action, the Mass General Physicians Organization, and Nursing and Patient Care Services, the MGH Votes initiative will continue throughout the month, with registration events taking place in several departments and at:

- MGH Charlestown HealthCare Center: Oct. 10 from 3 to 7 pm, Oct. 11 from noon to 4 pm and Oct. 12 from 7:30 to 10 am
- MGH Revere HealthCare Center: Oct. 15 from 9 am to 3 pm

The deadline to register to vote in Massachusetts is Oct. 17.

MAKE A VOTING PLAN

- What time of day will you vote? Polls are open from 7 am to 8 pm EST.
- Do you know your polling location?
- How will you get to the polls? Will you drive, take public transportation or walk?
- Do you have identification – such as a driver's license, state-issued ID card, recent utility bill, rent receipt, lease, copy of voter registration affidavit – in case you need to show it during check-in at your polling place?
- Have you marked the date on your calendar and set a reminder for the day before?
- If you can't make it to the polls on Nov. 6, do you know that early voting is available for all Massachusetts voters? A list of locations for early voting is available at www.MassEarlyVote.com.
- Do you plan to be out of town on Election Day or do you have a disability or religious belief that prevents you from going to your polling location? You may qualify for an absentee ballot.

Don’t wait, vaccinate!
Bowditch Prize call for nominations

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW being accepted for the 2019 Nathaniel Bowditch Prize. The $5,000 prize is awarded each year by the MGH Board of Trustees to any person or team – clinical or nonclinical – who has made a significant contribution to improving quality of care at the MGH while reducing the cost of such care. All nominations for the Bowditch Prize should be submitted by Nov. 15 to BowditchPrize@partners.org, or delivered to Andrew Warshaw, MD, chairman of the selection committee, in Bulfinch 370C. The nomination form is available by visiting apollo.massgeneral.org.