MGH opposes Question 1

Proposal would critically impact emergency department wait times and decrease access to care

THE MGH HAS ANNOUNCED its opposition to mandated nurse staffing ratios, citing the devastating impacts the rigid government requirements would have on nurses’ ability to provide emergency care to patients. On the Massachusetts ballot this November as Question 1, these unnecessary and unfounded staffing requirements also would dramatically increase emergency room wait times and delay lifesaving services in hospitals across the state.

“I worry that this will really increase wait times for our patients in the Emergency Department,” says Ali Raja, MD, vice chairman of Emergency Medicine. “Nobody should have to wait for care just because a mandated ratio – rather than the professional opinion of an ED nurse – says they should.”

The enormous costs and operational hurdles associated with implementing the nurse staffing ratio would set the MGH back $9.4 million in the Emergency Department.

“The reality is, in the Emergency Department we’ve always been able to shift our resources of nursing care to be able to care for very sick patients as well as very stable patients at the same time. This bill will tie our hands and change how we care for patients.”

— Bridget Garabedian, RN, Emergency Department

“For the ER to function at its best, we need to be able to make critical decisions in a timely manner and be able to relocate staff in a moment’s notice.”

— Abby Fleisig, RN, Emergency Department
WHEN IN DISTRESS: Four teams of MGHers have recently deployed to assist in relief efforts following a humanitarian crisis abroad and natural disasters in the U.S. Kim Waugh, RN; Kristen Wilson, RN; Amanda Tetreault, PT; and Lindsey Martin, NP, (pictured left) comprise a team sent by the MGH Center for Global Health that is currently serving aboard the USNS Comfort to assist those affected by the Venezuelan migrant crisis in South America.

Martin and Lynn Black, MD, also were sent to North Carolina in early September with the International Medical Corps in response to Hurricane Florence.

The center has also sent a team – including Maya Ginns, NP; Susan Goguen, RN; Karla Haney, RN; Philip Manners, MD; and Amy Cameron, PA – to areas affected by Hurricane Michael near the Florida panhandle. MGHers serving on the MA-1 federal Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) also deployed in response to the hurricane include Paul Biddinger, MD; Jacky Nally, RN; Dave Mather; Monica Staples, RN; Lisa Anahory, RN; and Allison Curtis, RN.

Benefits Enrollment starts Oct. 29

OPEN ENROLLMENT for 2019 benefits kicks off Oct. 29 and runs until Nov. 20. AllWays Health Partners – Partners’ new health plan administrator – will provide customer service, claims processing and a national provider network for health plans starting Jan. 1, 2019.

This is your chance to review your current benefits and explore others that are available to you from Partners HealthCare. It’s a good time to think about any life changes you’ve experienced since your last enrollment period and how they might affect your benefit needs in 2019. Have you started a family? Did one of your children start college? Are you thinking about retiring in the near future? Also, look back at the past year and how much you’ve used your health care benefit. Does it warrant a change in plans for next year?

Four key areas of Open Enrollment:

• Review your 2019 health plan options. You’ll still have two health plan options: Partners Plus and Partners Select.

• Explore Supplemental Life and Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) coverage. MetLife is offering new life insurance options to Partners HealthCare employees, in most cases without requiring proof of good health during this Open Enrollment period only. The coverage can help protect your spouse and children if the unthinkable happens.

• Check into Flexible Spending Accounts. Partners HealthCare offers both Health Care and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts. These accounts help employees pay for qualifying health care or dependent care expenses using pre-tax dollars. The tax-free accounts can save you hundreds of dollars annually, but you must enroll each year.

• Examine additional benefits, such as dental, vision, disability and retirement. Partners offers a wide range of other employee benefits. New this year: Employees can use Davis Vision benefits to buy eyeglass frames or contact lenses online.

Partners HealthCare and AllWays Health Partners will host dozens of informational events during the Open Enrollment period. For more information, visit AskMyHr or call the HR Support Center at 1-833-275-6947.

Patient Access gives back


Events for the week included:

• A keynote address by Sally Mason Boemer, senior vice president of MGH Administration and Finance.

• Serving meals at the New England Center and Home for Veterans.

• Writing letters for active U.S. troops to be distributed by Pease Greeters, a non-profit organization in New Hampshire that welcomes troops, Department of Defense employees, civilian contractors and occasionally working military dogs, as they return or deploy through Portsmouth International Airport at Pease.

• Hosting a canned food drive.

• A kick-off breakfast and ice cream social.

“We welcomed this opportunity to spend time together to make a difference by giving back in our local communities,” says Ben Orcutt, director of Patient Access Services. “We look forward to continuing to serve MGH patients with accurate, respectful and professional service.”

Companion“ship”
PAMPERED BY THE PROS: Kathy Bazazi, retail manager of the MGH Images Oncology Boutique, received the star treatment Oct. 11 at Gillette Stadium, as she was treated to a “Day of Pampering” hosted by the Patriots Foundation. The day celebrated the strength and courage of 13 women who are battling or have completed treatment for cancer. It included car service to and from Gillette Stadium, a healthy breakfast, spa treatments, tips from a nutritional expert, lunch and a tour of the stadium field. During lunch the group was surprised with tickets to that night’s Patriots home game, where they were honored during the pregame ceremony.

“The day of pampering was amazing,” says Bazazi, who has completed her cancer treatment. “Not only was it inspiring and relaxing, it was so nice to see so many caring people giving their time for us. It was wonderful to meet Patriots owner Robert Kraft and the Patriots players.”

HUBweek happenings

HUBWEEK 2018 reaffirmed Boston’s unique role at the intersection of science, art and technology, and showcased the fourth annual civic collaboration of Harvard, the MGH, MIT and the Boston Globe. A total of 37 MGH clinicians participated in 18 different HUBweek programs throughout the Oct. 8-14 week. The MGH Research Institute mentored young scientists from Boston Public Schools in a science communication competition. The MGH convened an important conversation on student-led efforts to end gun violence. The Clay Center helped parents and teachers talk with kids about online gaming and student activism. The MGH Center for Addiction educated HUBweek audiences on the science of recreational marijuana and on addiction in young adults. And MGH was featured in discussions of clinical and research breakthroughs in Alzheimer’s disease and the microbiome.
– Question 1
(Continued from page 1)

Department alone – $34.1 million a year across the institution – and would translate to severely negative impacts. Wait times in the emergency room would dramatically increase, causing delayed services throughout the hospital – including those that are time-sensitive and lifesaving. Question 1 would limit capacity in the MGH Emergency Department by more than 100 patients a day.

There are no exceptions to this mandate, even in the event of an unexpected influx of patients – such as a multi-car crash, large fire or tragedies such as the Boston Marathon bombing. According to an independent study by MassInsight and BW Research Partners, mandated nursing staffing requirements would exacerbate the current nursing shortage, which is highest in psychiatric units at 7.8 percent, and in emergency departments at 7.5 percent.

The ballot question would require that hospitals across the state, no matter their size or specific needs of their patients, adhere to the same rigid nurse staffing ratios within all patient care areas at all times. The petition does not make allowances for rural or small community hospitals, holding them to the same staffing ratios as major Boston teaching hospitals.

If Question 1 passes, the MGH would be required to hire more than 170 new nurses to meet the ratios, leaving only 37 business days to hire, onboard and train these new nurses. If the staffing ratios are left unmet on Jan. 1, 2019, beds, units or even whole hospitals may have to close or suspend services.

For more information, visit Apollo, the MGH intranet, or the Coalition to Protect Patient Safety at www.protectpatientsafety.com.

Let the judging begin

IN AN EFFORT to spread the word for employees to get their annual flu shot, Apollo – the MGH intranet – invited staff to get creative and submit a flu shot meme. From more than 100 submissions, the judges narrowed down the memes to 10 finalists, and your help is now needed to vote for your favorite and help determine the winner.


“Voting no on Question 1 is very important to me to make sure we can still use our judgement and flexibility as nurses to provide safe care for our patients.”
– Stevenson Morency, RN, Med-Surg Unit

“Voters — future patients nearly all — have every reason to reject Question 1.”