



LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

Vicki Jackson
MD, MPH

As the COVID-19 surge slowly lessens, we are all still working overtime to help our patients and their families. I want to thank our clinical care staff, administrators and all the MGH staff and volunteers who have gone above and beyond through these times. Our staff have put themselves at risk for the good of our patients and we are all grateful to them!

MGH's Division of Palliative Care and Geriatric Medicine help our patients and the community every day and through this crisis.

Dr. Mihir Kamdar will be assuming an expanded role in the Division as the Section Head of Palliative Care. His leadership will be an important part of the next stage in the Division as we continue to meet the needs of seriously ill patients and families, and educate the next generation of leaders in palliative care.

What is palliative care? Palliative care is a medical specialty that improves the quality of life for persons living with serious illness through the relief of pain and other symptoms, enhanced psycho-social and spiritual support, help with medical decision making, and coordination of care across settings among providers. Our interdisciplinary team works together with the patient's physician/medical team to create an individualized plan of care that helps improve quality of life for both patient and family.

"My doctor's compassion, honesty and fearlessness in the face of a life-threatening illness was an invaluable support for me and for patients like me."

- MGH Patient

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Special Staff for Special Care

The Social Work/Chaplain arm of the Division is at the center of all of our patient activities. To assist with psychosocial and spiritual needs, as well as offering emotional support to our patients and their loved ones, we have added three new social workers and a designated Palliative Care chaplain to our staff. Given how quickly we have expanded, we want to introduce the team so you can ask for our services if you need them.

Todd Rinehart, LICSW, ACHP-SW, Social Work Director. Todd provides direct clinical care to patients and their families, serves as our Bereavement Coordinator, and supervises our team to provide excellent patient and caregiver support.

Our inpatient social workers and chaplain assist when anyone who has been referred to the Palliative Care Service is in the Hospital and needs psychosocial and/or spiritual care to address the impact of living with a serious illness for themselves, and their families. In addition, our social workers and chaplain assist with difficult conversations, bereavement needs, caregiver fatigue and serve as integral members of the interdisciplinary team.

As our Palliative Care chaplain, Sarah Byrne-Martelli, DMin, BCC addresses the spiritual distress of patients and families. Adult inpatient social workers, Brooke Dugan, LICSW and Lynn Mazur, LICSW provide direct clinical care to patients and their families. In addition, Brooke is a member of the Continuum Project team and Lynn established and oversees the inpatient palliative care volunteer program.

Our out-patient services are offered through three programs:

Senior Health: Emily Sterling-Graves, LICSW works collaboratively with the Senior Health team providing psychosocial support for older adults, their families, and caregivers.

Dementia Care Collaborative (DCC): Susan Rowlett, LICSW, Program Director for the DCC's Caregiver Support Program, also supervises the social work staff for the Memory Care Initiative. Her clinical work is in the Neurology Department's Memory Disorder Unit (MDU). Chris Wight, LCSW serves as the primary social worker for MDU patients and families. Barbara Moscovitz, LICSW is the Associate Director of Education and Support for the Dementia Caregiver Support Program. Her clinical work is also in the MDU. Kelsey Anderson, LCSW works for the Memory Care Initiative, which offers interdisciplinary support for patients with dementia and their families in the primary care setting.

Home Based Palliative Care: Annie Lebowitz, LICSW, APHSW-C is a clinical social worker and provides psychosocial care and emotional support to patients and their families at home, most intensively around serious illness challenges. Annie coordinates closely with medical teams, case managers, elder services, and outside providers.

Our team is essential for the patient care in and outside of the hospital. We provide innovative, cutting edge services and programs to our patients, their families, and the community. Please contact us at 617-724-9197 if you are interested in our services. ▲

WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE



MATTHEW RUSSELL, MD, MSC, joined the Division in November 2019 as the Director of Ambulatory Geriatrics and the Medical Director for Senior Health. In August, Matt's role was expanded and he is now the Clinical Director of the Geriatrics Section. Matt will work closely with Sharon Levine, MD, Section Head of Geriatrics, to expand our footprint for Geriatrics throughout the Hospital.

Matt is board certified in Internal Medicine, Geriatric Medicine, and Hospice and Palliative Medicine. He attended Boston University for his undergraduate degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology with a minor in Classical Civilization. He went on to receive his medical degree from UMass Medical School. He completed his Internal Medicine Residency and Geriatric Medicine Fellowship at Boston University/Boston Medical Center.

Over the course of his career, Matt has practiced across the spectrum of Geriatric and Hospice Palliative healthcare delivery. This includes home and office-based practices, and skilled nursing facility and acute hospital care. He has held leadership positions including medical directorships of several nursing and rehabilitation facilities, a home health agency, and hospice programs.

As a clinician educator in the fields of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine, he has expertise in teaching about Geriatric syndromes and end-of-life clinical care competencies. As a faculty member of the Academy for Communication in Healthcare (ACH), he is a national resource for teaching the practice of high-stakes communication in the clinical setting.

Memory Care Program Officially Open!



The start of 2020 began with exciting news for the Division of Palliative Care and Geriatric Medicine. After many months of hard work, the Memory Care Program is officially open and seeing patients!

The program is a part of the Memory Care Initiative (MCI), a Mass General Brigham funded pilot working to provide more coordinated and effective care for patients with memory concerns and their care partners. The ultimate goal of the program is to demonstrate the clinical and financial benefits of interdisciplinary care in dementia, and the value of upstream care for patients with dementia in primary care. The program has the support of the UCLA Alzheimer's Dementia and Care Program as a part of their John A. Hartford Foundation grant allowing access to their resources and expertise.

This pilot program is located within the Bulfinch Medical Group practice and is designed to provide comprehensive geriatric assessment and co-management with primary care providers for patients with either a known diagnosis of dementia or memory concerns. Upon enrollment, patients and/or care partners will receive an initial call from the program's Memory Care Manager, Kelsey Anderson (pictured top left), a licensed clinical social worker followed by a visit in the Bulfinch Clinic by Gabrielle Rex (pictured top right), the program's Geriatric Nurse Practitioner. Each dyad is reviewed with the program's Medical Director, Dr. Christine Ritchie, a geriatrician and palliative care physician. Individual care plans are made and implemented in partnership with the primary care provider.

The clinic can help with timely evaluation and diagnosis of memory and thinking concerns, symptom and behavioral management of dementia, education, support, and counseling, as well as connection to additional resources. The clinic is currently being piloted for one year; those interested must be a patient within the Bulfinch Medical Group. For additional information please email: kanderson49@mgh.harvard.edu or call: 617-724-2403. ▲

"I am so beyond grateful to know that this team exists and that you're part of this journey with us. There is just such comfort in knowing we're not alone."

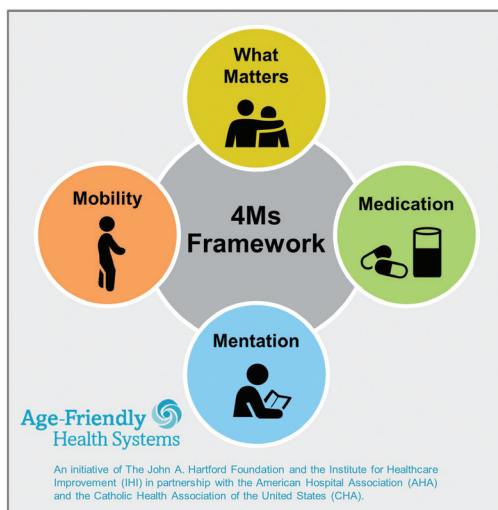
- MGH Patient Care Partner

MGH is Age-Friendly!

MGH has received our Level 1 designation for the National Age-Friendly Health Systems (AFHS) movement! AFHS is a new model for patient centered care for older adults. The framework called the 4Ms - What Matters Most, Mentation, Medication and Mobility - is spreading to all hospitals and medical practices in the US and abroad.

According to the US Census Bureau, the US population aged 65+ is expected to nearly double over the next 30 years. This reality will leave our health systems behind as they struggle to reliably provide medical care to every older adult. Receiving full AFHS recognition is a critical hospital priority, so that every interaction, with every older person, supports evidence-based, excellent care that is compassionate, patient-centered and thorough. The 4Ms Framework gives all practitioners a context in which to accomplish these goals.

What Does It Mean to Be Age-Friendly?



Senior Health Engages with Town Halls

In April 2020, as COVID-19 was surging, Dr. Matthew Russell, Medical Director of Senior Health, instituted virtual Town Halls to engage with patients in the Senior Health Clinic. Older patients were frequently disconnected from typical in-person clinic services, and news coverage of the coronavirus placed patients at risk for receiving inaccurate and/or conflicting information.

The overall goal of the Town Halls was to create an experience that would reach patients to address questions and fears, and provide practical information for staying healthy during the pandemic. To date, nine Town Halls have taken place with MGH experts from various medical fields. Some topics have included understanding infectious disease, virtual health care visits, how to stay healthy while socially isolated, and the importance of talking about The 4Ms (see article above). Special guests have included Mayor Marty Walsh and renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Video recordings of the Town Halls can be accessed at [here](#). This site also includes recordings of events hosted by the Dementia Care Collaborative.

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

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In our Division in the past few months, we are still working hard to innovate and expand our offerings. We have launched the Memory Care Initiative and expanded our Social Work Department. Also, as a hospital dedicated to improving the lives of older adults, we have joined the hundreds of communities in becoming an Age-Friendly Health System (AFHS). This commits us to improving every interaction we have with older patients and their families from the Emergency Department to Primary Care. From the Institute of Healthcare Innovation, MGH has received Level 1 designation as an AFHS and are working diligently to transform all of our Departments and interactions.

The Mass General Brigham Memory Care Initiative (MCI) launched in February 2020 at the MGH primary care offices of the Bulfinch Medical Associates and at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. MCI is a pilot program for patients with memory loss and their families. We have an excellent interdisciplinary team, who offer assessment, diagnosis and on-going services for the patient and their caregivers, throughout the challenging medical and life changes of memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

With the leadership of Todd Rinehart, our Division's Director of Social Work, we have seen the growth of this team. New and excellent licensed clinical social workers and our designated chaplain are providing the needed support services for all of our patients and their families.

As always, our Division's goal is to offer exceptional care through our extraordinary clinicians, staff, and our services. We thank them for all their work through the COVID-19 crisis and every day.

Vicki Jackson, MD, MPH

Chief, Division of Palliative Care and Geriatric Medicine

Awards and Achievements

Charles “Chuck” Pu, MD presented an abstract at the American Academy of Home Care Medicine (AAHCM) annual meeting last fall, titled: “Evaluation of the Partners Mobile Observation Unit Program,” which won the Research Poster of the Year award. The award is given to researchers who have made notable contributions to the development of clinical and/or translational research to develop and advance the field of home care medicine.

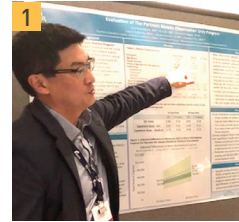
Eric L. Krakauer, MD, PhD, Director of the Global Palliative Care Program, was awarded the Medal of the People’s Committee of Ho Chi Minh City for service to the people of Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam. Krakauer assisted with establishing palliative care major hospitals throughout Vietnam.

Laura A. Petrillo, MD, physician in Palliative Care, was an Awardee of the MGH Cancer Center’s Internal Research Grant program, which is funded by the American Cancer Society. In January 2020, Laura presented her research on *Patient-Oncologist Communication and Decision Making Among Patients with Metastatic Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer and Targetable Mutations*.

Division chaplain, **Sarah Byrne-Martelli, DMin, BCC** received her Doctor of Ministry from St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in NY in January. Her dissertation was “Memory Eternal: A Vision for Orthodox Christian Bereavement.”

Physicians **Bethany-Rose “BR” Daubman** and **Mihir Kamdar** were named Emerging Leaders in Hospice and Palliative Medicine by the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine. They were selected in recognition of their career accomplishments, involvement in the Academy, mentoring of residents and students, and participation in charitable work.

Thomas Finucane, MD, HMS Senior Lecturer of Medicine, received the 2020 American Geriatrics Society (AGS) Choosing Wisely Champion Award, for his leadership in geriatrics regarding choosing tests and treatments wisely and for inspiring others to promote high-quality, person-centered care.



1. Pu presenting his poster at AAHCM.
2. Byrne-Martelli receives her doctorate.
3. From left, Nguyen Chan Hung, MD, PhD, Chair of the Vietnam Cancer Society; Krakauer; and Nguyen Tan Binh, MD, PhD, Director of the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Public Health.

EVENTS

All held virtually by Zoom or join by phone



Conversations with Caregivers

Tues., Oct. 20
5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Creative Coping for Older Adults During COVID-19: How to Stay Safe and Sane

Christine Ritchie, MD, MSPH and Olivia Okereke, MD, MS

Tues., Nov. 17
5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

What Does Science Tell Us about Which Foods Will Help Protect Our Brains?

Nancy B. Emerson Lombardo, PhD

Tues., Dec. 15
5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Reflections of Caregiver Experiences

Panel Discussion

RSVP to nmozzone@mgh.harvard.edu

Ageless Grace Classes

Every Tues. & Fri. 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Join a virtual movement class based on neuroplasticity. Ageless Grace is excellent for the brain, body, & emotions. Reduce social isolation and be in community.

RSVP to nmozzone@mgh.harvard.edu

Senior Health COVID-19 Town Halls

MGH experts give updates on the coronavirus and ideas to stay healthy.

Thur., Oct. 15 / 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
Thurs., Nov. 19 / 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
Thur., Dec. 17 / 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

RSVP to mchateauneuf@mgh.harvard.edu

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www.massgeneral.org/medicine/pcgm/

WAYS TO GIVE

For information about ways to support the Division of Palliative Care and Geriatrics at Mass General, please contact **Patrick Rooney** at patrick.rooney@mgh.harvard.edu.

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