

Patient-family advisory councils come together

—by Liza Nyeko, Office of Patient Experience/MGH Center for Quality & Safety

MGH patient-family advisory councils (PFACs) came together, November 14, 2017, in O’Keeffe Auditorium to celebrate the voices of patients and families and highlight their contributions to enhancing the care experience. Founder and executive director of Health Story Collaborative, Annie Brewster, MD, facilitated two panel discussions, demonstrating the power of storytelling to effect change.

Said senior vice president for Performance Improvement and Service Excellence, Inga Lennes, MD, “Stories are the things that motivate us. They fuel change. Our PFAC members have amazing stories that inform our efforts to advance our mission.”

Former senior vice president for Patient Care, Jeanette Ives Erickson, RN, thanked PFAC members for, “the incredible work that is happening because of your commitment to advise and improve the care we deliver.” She cited examples of their input into key initiatives, designing new buildings and services, developing educational programs, and participating on hospital committees. Ives Erickson introduced her successor, Debbie Burke, RN, who’s been a member of the Cancer Center PFAC and the Pediatric Oncology FAC for years.

Said Burke, “We’re going to need your help in the years ahead to remind us of what’s most important—you and your families.”

One panel focused on the unique relationship between patient, provider, and parent through the accounts of Tarrah Zedower, of the Pediatric Oncology FAC, and Howard Weinstein, MD, chief of Pediatric Oncology. Together, they told the powerful story of one care journey and the importance of trust and partnership.

Another panel, comprised of members of the other six PFACs, shared stories of coping with medical conditions, finding strength in the patient-family-provider relationship, and contributing to hospital efforts to improve the care experience. Matt Reid, General PFAC; Paul O’Leary, Ambulatory Practice of the Future Care Alliance; Darcy Daniels, Pediatric FAC; Michael Bider, Heart and Vascular Center PFAC; Ann Buckley, Cancer Center PFAC; and Kim Nunnari, Cystic Fibrosis PFAC, all shared stories.

Said Reid, “When I was in the room with people who run that department, they took me seriously. They listened in terms of me representing myself as a person, as a patient, and then representing other patients. It felt amazing to be able to have that voice... That speaks volumes about the culture that has been created here.”

For more information about patient-family advisory councils, contact Liza Nyeko at 617-643-5484.



(Photo by Kate Flock)

Panelists, Tarrah Zedower, of the Pediatric Oncology FAC, and Howard Weinstein, MD, chief of Pediatric Oncology, share their journey together.