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Boston University Medical Center, Department of Marketing/Public Affairs

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Boston University
May is National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month

Special activities planned at the Medical Center for this month are:

May 22: A free melanoma/skin cancer screening will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Boston University Medical Center/The University Hospital on the fourth floor of the Doctors Office Building (DOB-4). The general public is urged to attend. Pre-registration for the exam is required, and can be made by calling Alan Gette, R.N., M.P.H., at 638-4016.

May 23 – Cancer Awareness Day activities, sponsored by the Hospital's Cancer Care Committee, will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the ATRIUM Lobby of BUMCH. The public is urged to attend. Informational materials on all cancers will be available during these hours, with special emphasis on skin, lung and breast cancer.

Mayor Flynn urges residents to take early detection of cancer seriously

The image of Mayor Raymond Flynn in a wheelchair at the Boston University Medical Center/University Hospital (BUMCH) last month, with his left arm suspended in a sling, is one that the people of Boston will not soon forget. The powerful message he delivered in a press conference there, urging regular check-ups for the early detection of skin cancer, is one that Flynn and his physicians at BUMCH hope the people of Boston will long remember.

Flynn underwent outpatient surgery at the Hospital on Monday, April 26, to have a malignant melanoma lesion removed from the back of his left hand. Flynn's attending physician there, Howard Koh, M.D., F.A.C.P., said at the press conference that, because the cancer was caught so early, Flynn had a 95 percent chance of a complete recovery. Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer.

"Flynn's) long-term prognosis is excellent because of early detection," Koh said, following Flynn's 57-minute morning surgery, performed by Gary Rogers, M.D. Koh, an associate professor of dermatology, says Rosemarie Costanzo, the Hospital's director of information and referral service, is happy to deliver the good news of Flynn's 95 percent chance of full recovery from melanoma during a press conference held at BUMCH/University Hospital on April 26.

New BUMCH cancer and health information phone lines now taking calls

The best approach to good health and disease prevention is providing an individual who has health-related questions with answers from an informed source. Two resources for such information have recently been developed by Boston University Medical Center (BUMCH) and are available to any consumer in the Greater Boston area who has access to a telephone.

The Hospital has recently launched two phone services designed to help the lay person gather information about cancer (BUMCH Cancer HelpLink) and general health (BUMC Health Connection). BUMC Cancer HelpLink and the BUMC Health Connection are part of a telemarketing initiative that is just one component of the multi-faceted marketing drive the Hospital is using to position itself at the forefront of the rapidly changing Boston health care industry.

"We realize that not only is health care changing, but people's health habits are changing too," says Joannie Jaxtimer, the Hospital's director of marketing, communications and public relations. "Preventive medicine is the wave of the future, and we feel these phone services will help everyday people stay well informed and in good health."

"BUMC Cancer HelpLink and BUMC Health Connection both provide a single point of entry to all the cancer and health care services offered by the Hospital," says Rosemarie Costanzo, the Hospital's director of physician and affiliate support services (PASS). "Traditionally, academic medical centers have been hard places to access. Here, we feel obligated to provide the type of information these two lines afford."

BUMC Cancer HelpLink, a free and confidential telephone information and referral service, is staffed by registered oncology nurses who are able to answer specific questions about more than 40 types of cancer in a professional manner on a one-on-one basis from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., five days a week. The Cancer HelpLink nurse can also refer concerned callers to Hospital physicians according to their specialty and recommend the most appropriate health care resource and/or social service.

The launching of BUMC Cancer HelpLink coincided with the opening of the new BUMC Cancer Care Center in late March. The Center, located on the third floor of the Preston Family Building (F-3), is a place where cancer patients can receive all the treatment they may need from Medical Center physicians and specialists in one location (see related page 4).

Local celebrity helps open new cancer center

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Commonwealth Medical Group opens

Commonwealth Medical Group, the Hospital’s first primary care and multispecialty group practice, located at 930 Commonwealth Ave., was officially opened on March 2 with a ribbon cutting ceremony held at the facility. Commonwealth Medical Group represents an important venture for the Hospital to follow the health care industry’s trend toward increased ambulatory care. Physicians at the practice represent a wide range of medical disciplines, providing primary care for adults and children, obstetrics and gynecology, dermatology, nephrology, urology, infectious diseases and sports medicine, oncology and mental health services. The satellite group practice is the first of many ambulatory sites planned by the Hospital in the years to come. For more information about Commonwealth Medical Group, call 270-6700.

Redeemed soda cans fuel City Hospital Kids’ Fund

Thanks to $787 in proceeds from the redemption of used soda cans at the Commonwealth Medical Campus soda cans by the Office of Facilities Management during the past year, some children in the local community are going to have lives that are a little more comfortable and a little brighter this year.

The money, donated to the Boston City Hospital Kids’ Fund, was proceeded promptly to a local non-profit business. The money for this fund was donated to the kids’ fun, which is known as “failure to thrive,” a group of children who was flown to Boston City Hospital, where they were given some clothes to wear for the event.

When Arto Bissouette, R.N., learned she would have the opportunity to speak to first lady Hillary Clinton, she never thought of asking for her autograph. Bissouette, president of the Committee to End Elder Homelessness and assistant director of the Boston University Medical School, was chosen to be a 19-member panel that met with Clinton, who heads the President’s Health Care task force, Typer Groe, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy to discuss health care reform at Bunker Hill Community College in February. What she did ask Clinton for was to seriously consider ways to address and intervene and create housing for homeless elders, she says. Having the program is an indication of how this hospital takes the issue very seriously. It is a very unique thing. Most hospitals don’t stretch themselves beyond the acute care need of patients; I tried to deliver this message to Clinton as best I could. I think this is a direction for the future, and in planning on health care as a whole, we have to look at the needs of the high-risk populations.

Bissouette brings elder homelessness problem to first lady’s attention

Bissouette believes that she was chosen to testify because of her work through the Hospital with the Elders Living at Home Program (ELAHP), which has been working closely with the Committee to End Elder Homelessness and the support of the Boston University Medical School. She said that she had no hesitation in accepting the invitation, as she believes that it is important to address the needs of the elderly population. “I have a lot of feelings that I would like to share with the committee,” she said.

The main point she tried to drive home is that if we don’t intervene and create housing for the elderly, they will end up in the hospital system, which is already overburdened. “I think this is a direction for the future, and in planning on health care as a whole, we have to look at the needs of the high-risk populations.”

Self defense courses being offered to community

If you’re not what keeps Green smiling, he says, you are more prevalent negatives like gangs, alcohol and drugs pulling parents in the wrong direction, today there are more places to turn to than many teens realize.

“Are those teen parents trying to help teen parents, or are they just looking to help themselves?”

Isabella Ortega, assistant director of the Department of Community Health Services, says they are more prevalent negatives like gangs, alcohol and drugs pulling parents in the wrong direction, today there are more places to turn to than many teens realize.

“Is there help here now to help them develop their own programs?”

Green says she knows nothing about the clinic and their youth focused programs. “They told me they need the clinic, and that it was like a magic match, and that’s what they told me.”

Green, who told the clinic they would be “hon­ored” to help with their program.

To understand Green’s burden to help teen parents, one must go back before the South End Health Clinic, located on 400 Commonwealth Avenue.

“This is a dream come true for me,” says Green. Green is working with Cambridge youths facing parent­hood to fulfill their required 40 hours of service as a Black Achiever. But, she says, “the South End Health Clinic has been a help to me in developing my own program.”

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“Are those teen parents trying to help teen parents, or are they just looking to help themselves?”

Richard Green, an employment representative in the Department of Human Resources, has been receiving a lot of publicity lately. But fame is not what keeps Green smiling these days. As a direct result of a front page story that ran in the Jan. 26 issue of the South End News, Green is now assisting with a teen parent support group at the South End Health Clinic, located at 400 Commonwealth Ave.

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malignant melanoma, which started as a mole two years ago, developed into a dark, disfiguring lesion on March 30 by 1998. The lesion was referred by his dermatologist, Dr. William Flynn, to Dr. Koh, who examined the lesion and referred Flynn to Dr. Koh's assistant, Dr. Mary Flynn. Dr. Koh advised Flynn to see a dermatologist for further examination.

"Take the advice of doctors very seriously."

—Mayor Raymond Flynn

Melanoma/Skin Cancer Screening

Saturday, May 22

Take advantage of this free service, offered by the Hospital's Dermatology Program. The service is aimed at detecting melanoma, a potentially deadly form of skin cancer.

Cancer Awareness Day

Wednesday, May 26

Come for free information that could help save your life. See page 1 for details.

From All Walks of Life

Sunday, June 6

Get involved in this pledge walk to benefit AIDS care and research. For further information, contact the AIDS Action Committee, 131 Clarendon Street, Boston, MA 02116. The phone number is 617-638-6767.

For more information about any of these events, contact Joanne Jaxime, BUMC's director of marketing, communications and public relations, at 617-638-8914.

Walk for Hunger a Record Success

The 24th annual Walk for Hunger, held on Sunday, May 2, was a big success, with 46,000 walkers from all over the country, including Boston, and the surrounding area, joining forces to walk 10 miles for a good cause. A record $3.2 million was raised to provide meals for hungry Massachusetts men, women, and children. Over 200 BUMC employees joined the Walk this year.

HelpLink

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"What is a help service?"

A help service is a telephone helpline designed to provide information and advice on a wide range of topics, from health and fitness to personal finance. HelpLink is a free service provided by the Community Connections, and is available to anyone in the Boston area.

Points of Pride

Did you know that Boston University Medical Center/The University Hospital operated the first surgical unit for cancer patients in the United States?

COMING UP

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