Community Connections: Summer 2008

Boston University Medical Center, Department of Marketing/Public Affairs

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Boston University
Boston Medical Center receives $15 million from Shapiro Family Foundation

THE CARL AND RUTH SHAPIRO FAMILY FOUNDATION HAS GIVEN BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER (BMC) $15 MILLION FOR ITS BUILDING THE NEW BMC EXPANSION PLAN.

In recognition of their generous support, the hospital will name the new 245,000-square-foot ambulatory care center the Carl J. and Ruth Shapiro Ambulatory Care Center.

Building the New BMC is a multi-year capital-expansion project that will create approximately 500,000 square feet of new clinical space to consolidate services, upgrade and expand services, and improve access to care. To support and fund the effort, the hospital anticipates launching a major capital campaign.

The nine-story ambulatory care center will be located at the corner of East Concord and Albany streets and will provide outpatient care. Experiencing consistent annual growth in patient volume, existing facilities are no longer adequate to meet the increasing demand for services.

BUSPH awarded $2.5 million to improve emergency preparedness

The Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) received a $2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to coordinate and improve emergency and disaster response among public health and medical care providers throughout Boston and the metropolitan area.

The 11-month project is strengthening lines of communication and cooperation among hospitals, public health departments, long-term care facilities, ambulance services and community health centers in an area that includes 2.2 million people plus 62 cities and towns.

"We are working to build consistent communications and response protocols among public health offices, health care providers and other emergency responders," said Harold Cox, MSSW, associate dean of public health practice at BUSPH, who is responsible for coordinating the preparedness project. "In a localized emergency that might require patients to be evacuated from hospitals or nursing homes, for example, we need to know quickly which other facilities in the area have the capacity to accept and care for them."

"We have a tradition in Massachusetts of thinking that each city and town should be responsible for its own health care and public health services," Cox continued. "The modern-day threat of terrorism and the challenges of possible epidemics or weather-related emergencies require us to break out of that mold and work toward better integration of services."

The grant, awarded by HHS's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, establishes a new regional collaboration that will develop an efficient, timely and reliable communications system. Known as the Partnership for Effective Emergency Response (PEER), the collaboration also will bolster mutual-aid agreements and deliver training.

"This project will ensure more efficient delivery of services to a large population area in times of medical or health-related emergency," said Brian Golden, New England regional director of HHS. "One of the best aspects of the PEER project is that the templates and tools it develops will be made available to communities nationwide, extending the nation's emergency-response readiness."

The project concludes this summer with an emergency response drill involving all participants.

For more information, call (617) 414-8423.
We are deeply grateful to the Shapiro Family for their commitment to Medicine and 15 years of support to Boston Medical Center. The Shapiro Family Foundation has been instrumental in helping BMC provide exceptional care without exception.

The exterior was rehabilitated using historic photographs, facilitating the restoration of a bellicose slate roof and the installation of two new carved, granite lintels (thresholds) to match the originals.

For 30 years, the BCD Building stood vacant, while the FGH Building was partially occupied due to building deficiencies. Today, the BCD Building houses BMC’s Information Technology Services, with 150 workstations, private offices and team spaces, and the FGH Building holds the new Center Conference Center and administrative offices of several clinical departments.

"BMC is proud to contribute to the vitality of our city, as well as to the quality of life of our patients and this community," said Elaine Ulman, BMC president and CEO. "We are thrilled to receive this award acknowledging our efforts to preserve these two unique buildings."

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"As we look to the future, we need to ensure that we continue to provide exceptional care without exception." 

"Over the years we have come to know much more about the critical role that BMC plays in caring for the underserved and underprivileged in our community," said Ronny Zinner, president of the Shapiro Family Foundation. "In our estimation, BMC is doing extraordinary work fulfilling the mission of providing exceptional care without exceptions for so many Bostonians."

"It’s been exciting to work in such a unique setting, where two professions work together to ensure that basic needs of families are met," said Giordano, a Resident in Family Medicine. "I’ve had many wonderful opportunities and experiences growing up and going to school in Boston, and appreciate this chance to work with many families in the commuity.

"Pro bono support is key to our program’s ability to serve more than 1,500 patient-families a year," said Samantha Morton, Esq., deputy director of the Medical-Legal Partnership for Children at BMC. "And David’s presence has allowed us to significantly expand our capacity to serve patient-families."

For more information, visit www.bumc.bu.edu. 
Changes come to Commonwealth Care coverage; BMC HealthNet Plan remains most popular choice

BMC HealthNet Plan continues to be the most popular plan in the state for Commonwealth Care and is the only plan offered statewide. As of June 1, there were more than 75,000 Commonwealth Care members enrolled in BMC HealthNet Plan.

As of July 1, there will be changes made to copays and premiums that some Commonwealth Care members across all managed-care organizations will pay. These changes are the result of a long collaborative process between the Connector Authority and the four Medicaid-managed care organizations that provide Commonwealth Care coverage. As part of these changes, plan type IV will be eliminated and those members will be assumed by plan type III.

More than two-thirds of BMC HealthNet Plan Commonwealth Care members will continue to pay no monthly premium after July 1. Additionally nearly nine out of 10 members will pay either no premium or the lowest premium increase possible in the state.

Plan type III members will see the most significant premium increases, which are based on historical actual costs of serving these members.

The Connector also approved copay increases that vary by plan type, but apply uniformly to all members, regardless of their managed-care organization.

Any BMC HealthNet Plan members with questions about copay and premium changes may contact the Member Services Call Center at 1 (877) 957-5300 or Commonwealth Care at 1 (877) 623-6765.

Also, like MassHealth members, Commonwealth Care members are periodically required to verify their eligibility in order to continue to receive benefits. Members will receive eligibility review forms and information from the state. They should fill the form out and return it to the address provided. Members with questions can call MassHealth Customer Service at 1 (800) 841-2900. MassHealth processes eligibility review for Commonwealth Care members.

Dental school professor serves as mentor in oral-health research project

A PROFESSOR AT THE BU GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE (GSDM) IS COLLABORATING WITH JUNIOR FACULTY AND STUDENTS IN RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF ORAL-HEALTH CONDITIONS ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

Based on a recent study, oral-health conditions can affect more than a child's health - they affect the quality of life of both the children and their families. This study, by Dr. Jones, who is principal investigator of one of the projects in the Northeast Center for Research to Evaluate and Eliminate Dental Disparities, is designed to develop patient questionnaires, surveys and other effective tools that would serve as valid, reliable instruments to capture the impact of oral conditions on daily life.

As part of the five-year award, Jones will conduct the research while mentoring junior faculty at GSDM, as well as students at the BU schools of medicine and public health.

"The work we are doing with children and their families builds on the earlier work we did in the VA with older adults," added Jones, a senior researcher at the VA Center for Health Quality, Outcomes and Economic Research, a BUSPH affiliate in Bedford, Mass., "and I am fortunate to have a wide array of scientists and collaborators who are also available to my students."

"Working with Dr. Jones allows me to pursue areas of dentistry and public health that students are not exposed to as part of the dental curriculum," said Raffi Miller, a DMD-degree student participant. "It is amazing to see how much dental health can affect an individual's life."

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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SUMMER 08