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BMC PHYSICIANS AMONG BOSTON'S BEST

BMC doctors were honored in 32 specialties – with some recognized in more than one category – in Boston Magazine’s new list of the city’s best physicians.

The publication’s October issue features an index of 76 medical specialties and subspecialties, and physicians in the Boston area. Of 37 general internists named, 10 hail from BMC – more than any other single health-care institution.

In addition, 17 BMC physicians were found in various pediatric categories.

“Our physicians are passionately committed to excellent patient care,” stated Elaine Ullian, BMC president and CEO. “They excel in their professions and are truly among the very best.”

The list was developed by Best Doctors, a local company that polls the medical profession every two years for nominations of physicians in their specialty to whom they would send a loved one.

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BMC cardiologist George Philippides, MD, cuts a cake at the Cardiac Care Unit’s celebration for staff recently named in Boston Magazine’s Best Doctors list. The celebration was organized by the unit’s nurses.

BUSM RESEARCHERS STUDY NEW MEDICATIONS TO TREAT ALZHEIMER’S

Several new studies at BUSM’s Alzheimer’s Disease Center are focused on the efficacy of immunotherapy drugs in slowing the progression and reversing the effects of Alzheimer’s disease.

Alzheimer’s patients have an abnormal build up of a protein called beta amyloid in their brains. The studies are being conducted on patients with mild-to-moderate Alzheimer’s disease to examine whether these new medications are capable of slowing down the symptoms of Alzheimer’s by decreasing the buildup of the protein.

Current Alzheimer’s disease treatments may slow the decline and help symptoms but do not halt brain deterioration, according to Anil Nair, MD, assistant professor of neurology at BUSM and a neurologist at BMC. “Better treatments are needed to halt, reverse and prevent Alzheimer’s disease, and the only way to find effective new medications is by carrying out clinical research studies,” he said.

The DHA (Docosahexaenoic Acid) Study, an 18-month trial in progress at BUSM, is examining the effectiveness of treating Alzheimer’s disease with DHA, a compound of omega-3 fatty acids found in certain fish oil and algae, in the hope of slowing the rate of progression and for developing new medications. This study is classified as a Phase Ill study, which involves large-scale testing (hundreds to thousands of people) to provide a more thorough understanding of the drug’s effectiveness, benefits, and range of possible adverse reactions.

The Gammaglobulin Liquid in Alzheimer’s Disease (GLAD) Study will use the antibody product obtained from healthy donors that help protect the body against infection and other illnesses to...
SURGEONS' COMBINED EXPERTISE HELPS PATIENTS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

"It's a miracle! My life has changed!" said Shirley Flanders, after oral and maxillofacial surgeons at BMC performed a total temporomandibular joint (TMJ) replacement that relieved her of long-felt pain.

After severe arthritis had caused her jaw to retrude, Flanders developed sleep apnea and a blocked airway, which put her at potential risk for developing severe cardiac problems. "I made the decision to have surgery when I could no longer endure the relentless pain my rheumatoid arthritis was causing," she explained. "I was unable to open my mouth. I could not eat properly. I could not receive proper dental care, and I was unable to do things I truly enjoyed."

Pushkar Mehra, DMD, director, and David Cotrell, DMD, chief and chairman of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at BMC, are among a handful of surgeons in the country with "super-specialized" training in the management of complex facial deformities, including one-stage management of TMJ disorders and associated facial deformities.

After an evaluation, Mehra gave the 71-year-old Flanders an option she had never heard of before—a state-of-the-art surgical procedure where her TMJ condition would be surgically managed at the same time as her sleep apnea—a one-surgical operation.

Mehra, who has seen many patients with advanced degenerative joint disease and post-traumatic deformities, recommends the procedure especially for those patients who have had no relief of their symptoms through conventional therapy that involves several operations.

"To the average patient, the most common joint-replacement surgery in hip and knee," stated Mehra, associate professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery at GSM, "but for patients with chronic facial and joint pain, TMJ replacement—which is partly skull-based, partly lower-jaw—is now a viable option."

Tammy Fountain had a developmental face and jaw deformity that could not be corrected with conventional facial-reconstructive surgery. Rather than undergo multiple surgical procedures at most other medical centers, the teenager underwent a successful treatment at BMC, similar to Flanders'.

Extensive pre-operative preparation with orthodontists, general dentists and physicians involved reconstructing her face and skull area, with artificial jaw joints and bone grafts placed in her face, below the eyes and under her nose. Through the combined expertise of her surgeons and nurses, and previously was associate dean for academic affairs to the U.S. Navy Dental Corps, after a 21-year career. Prior to assuming his present position at BU, he served as director of the American Board of Endodontics and has served as associate dean for academic affairs to the George Washington University.

In 1996, Hutter retired with the rank of captain from the U.S. Navy Dental Corps, after a 21-year career. Prior to assuming his present position at BU, he was director of predoctoral endodontics at the School of Dentistry, University of Maryland.

At GSM, Hutter also directs the Advanced Specialty Education Program in Endodontics and was previously was associate dean for academic affairs. In addition, Hutter is a diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics and has served in leadership positions in numerous professional associations, including the American Association of Endodontists. He also serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Journal of Endodontics.

Jeffrey Hutter, DDS, MEd

Hutter succeeds Spencer Frankl, DDS, MDSc, the dental school's longtime dean who died Oct. 20. "Both Boston University President Robert Brown and I are grateful for Dr. Hutter's willingness to take on this added responsibility during this transition," stated Karen Antman, MD, provost of the BU Medical Campus and BUSM Dean.

Hutter received his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, a Certificate in Endodontics from the National Naval Dental Center, and a master's degree in education and human development from George Washington University.

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Hutter's hopes for the current academic year include continuing many of the initiatives begun under Frankl's leadership. These include providing community-based educational and service opportunities for dental students, and expanding the school's global reach through the new BU health center and dental school in Dubai, one of the United Arab Emirates.

New Ambulatory Building Project Underway

Work will soon begin on two major BMC clinical services building projects on Albany Street.

The first is a two-story-plus-basement addition to the Menino Pavilion that will allow expansion of BMC's Emergency Department (ED). The second project is a state-of-the-art ambulatory center at 725 Albany St. that will be a replacement for the Doctors Office Building and other clinical space. The building at 91 East Concord St. will be demolished to accommodate the New Ambulatory Building (NAB).

In addition to improving and expanding ambulatory space, the new building projects will allow further consolidation of services and accommodate growth in volume.

"Consolidating clinical practices on campus ensures one standard of care practice and facilitates more efficient use of physician and staff time," said Gregory Grilloné, MD, BMC's acting chief officer, and associate professor of ophthalmology and head neck surgery at BUSM. According to Grilloné, physicians will be involved in all space-programming discussions and in the design of the clinical floors in the new building.

The Menino addition, scheduled for completion in fall 2009, will increase the space by 21,964 square feet. The basement level includes mechanical and storage space. The Menino ED will expand by 11 beds (a 64 percent increase in adult medical/surgical ED beds), and the Radiology Department will gain a second magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) suite. The second floor will be shell space for future expansion of the Menino operating rooms and post-anesthesia care unit.

The NAB will have over 245,000 square feet of space and be nine stories high. The basement level will house radiology and pharmacy services, IMPAC (Internal Medicine Preoperative Assessment Clinic) and support space. The first floor will house patient reception, financial services and retail space, while the second floor is designed for a cafe for patients and staff. Floors three through eight will hold ambulatory clinical services and the ninth floor will contain a new hospital clinical laboratory. The building is expected to be completed in December 2010.

Vehicular access and drop-off to the building will be via a covered two-story entrance off Albany Street. Parking will be available across the street at the 710 Albany St. garage.

Hospitlal Intervention Helps Those Toughed by Violence

Since BMC's Violence Intervention Advocate Program started nearly one year ago, more than 70 victims of violence have enrolled in the program, gaining access to an action plan assisting them through the process of discharge, recovery and reintegration into their communities.

"If you don't intervene in a way that addresses what got them in their predicament to begin with and help them move right back into the same situation," said Thea James, MD, Emergency Department, director of the Violence Intervention Advocate Program. "We don't just treat them and then give them a list of places to call for help. It's a lot of hand holding with the victims and their families."

After James and her staff of two violence-intervention advocates make contact with patients and express their support, they begin to establish a relationship between medical staff and the patient's friends and family. A screening tool is then used to form an action plan based on the patient's needs, which often are education, employment and mental-health counseling.

"The effects of trauma from post traumatic stress after the injuries they've sustained," said James. "The program has developed partnerships in the community with organizations that provide resources for violence prevention, training, mental-health counseling and life skills to victims of violence. Patients are also assigned a primary care physician if they do not already have one.

"We provide them with the tools, information and opportunities they need that will make it possible for them to make a different choice and make them capable of contributing to society," explained James.

In addition, the program recently collaborated with the Brigham and Women's Institute in hosting a two-week training session on bringing violence-intervention advocates to Massachusetts General Hospital, Lawrence General Hospital, UMass Memorial Medical Center, Brockton Hospital and Bay State Medical Center, as part of a three-year, $600,000 grant awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. BMC advocates continue to assist each other with weekly conference calls, site visits and networking building.

Men cook for women's health

Marshall Carter Jett, chairman of BMC's Board of Trustees, and former Speaker of the House Thomas Finneran, chair of the 11th Annual Boston Cook for Women's Health. The event, held in Codman Square, raised more than $240,000 for women's health services at the Codman Square Health Center and Dorchester House Multi-Services Center. Both BMC HealthNet community health centers. Carter, along with Gov. David Paterson, Lt. Gov. Tim Murray, Boston Mayor Tom Menino, and Peter Hesley, vice president for operations at BMC, were "grills" for the event, serving food and goodwill from more than 32 Boston restaurants to the 1,000 people in attendance.
RESEARCH IN BRIEF

Many African HIV patients drop out of vital treatment

According to a recent study by BUSPH researchers, more than one-third of patients receiving HIV medication in Africa die or discontinue treatment within two years.

BUSD researchers study influences on central nervous system

BUSD researchers have found that the release of dopamine—a neurotransmitter formed in the brain that is essential to the healthy functioning of the central nervous system—can be influenced by numerous factors.

Survey shows perceptions of stress among pathology residents

BUSD researchers conducted a nationwide survey to identify stressors perceived by pathology residents.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER FELLOWS RETURN FROM AFRICA

Two BU Medical Campus students recently returned to BUMC after serving as Albert Schweitzer Fellows at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Lambarene, Gabon.

In a competitive, nationwide process, Kevin O’Connor, BUSM Class of 2008, was chosen as one of four medical students to serve as a junior physician at the hospital. Meredith Collins, an MPharm student with a concentration in international health, was selected as the single recipient of the 2007 Lambarene Public Health Fellowship.

For three months O’Connor worked on the pediatric service of the Albert Schweitzer Hospital, seeing children with sickle cell disease, tuberculosis, malaria and other parasitic illnesses. He also visited outlying villages to help provide maternal and infant care.

“Almost all of the difference in the practice of medicine in Gabon as opposed to home can be traced back to the tests we have and don’t have here and how we use them to diagnose and treat disease,” said O’Connor.

Collins spent almost five months at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital’s Community Health Outreach Program, which provides village-based health care, including maternal/child health, HIV/AIDS education and prevention, tuberculosis education, and malaria prevention and treatment.

“Many African HIV patients drop out of vital treatment. In order to understand factors that contribute to this problem, we need to look at the stressors that residents’ program directors say are significant stressors in residency training programs. This survey is a preliminary attempt to identify stressors and provide objective data that program directors can use in their quest to orchestrate an ideal pathology residency program,” said senior author Lija Joseph, associate professor of pathology and associate director of the BUSM Residency Training Program. The survey was published online in the December issue of the American Journal of Clinical Pathology.

The study was published on Oct. 16 in PLoS Medicine, an open-access journal of the Public Library of Science.

Factors include input from other neurotransmitters, as well as the reducing/fuslding state of the cell. The level of oxidation and reduction of molecules reflects conditions within the nervous tissue.

Survey respondents, comprising 35 program directors and 148 residents, acknowledged that faculty favoritism and bias, as well as lack of professionalism among faculty members.

Survey respondents, comprising 35 program directors and 148 residents, acknowledged that perceptions of stress exist in their programs. Both identified work overload and variability in faculty expectations as the top two stressors in a pathology training program. Residents ranked lack of effective time and pressure to teach and to do extra projects as significant stressors. Program directors recognized board examinations, in-service examinations, family and financial concerns, and job opportunities as significant stressors.

“This survey is a preliminary attempt to identify stressors and provide objective data that program directors can use in their quest to orchestrate an ideal pathology residency program,” said senior author Uly Joseph, MD, associate professor of pathology and associate director of the BUSM Residency Training Program in Pathology.

The survey appears online in the December issue of the American Journal of Clinical Pathology.

The main objective of the exercise was to challenge emergency medical teams to transport hundreds of casualties from the tarnar to area hospitals, and the ability of those hospitals to effectively and efficiently manage the surge of victims.

The scenario simulated a runway collision involving two airplanes at Logan Airport. In addition to the hospitals, more than 400 volunteer-400 volunteer victims, 1,000 emergency personnel, approximately 50 ambulances, 25 fire trucks, two helicopters, 20 buses and eight boats participated in the exercise.

BMC activated a Phase C-disaster response, as dictated by the hospital’s Emergency Response Plan, and initiated procedures that included activating its Incident Command System, opening the Incident Command Center, and mobilizing equipment, materials and staff throughout the institution to operate casualty-care areas to treat the victims and create additional critical-care and in-patient capacity. The hospital received almost 100 patients; of those, 27 were identified as critically injured, 17 seriously injured and the remainder as ‘walking wounded.’

‘The drill gave us an opportunity to test our critical care surge capacity, as well as the systems that support it,’” said Maureen McMahon, RN, BSN, MS, disaster coordinator at BMC. “Overall, we were pleased with our ability to swiftly respond to the medical needs of the victims, while at the same time continuing to provide exceptional care to our patients. We also were able to identify several opportunities for improvement so that we may be better prepared to handle a crisis.”

Fourth-year BUSM student Kevin O’Connor (right) and Dr. Diatla, general internist at Albert Schweitzer Hospital, visit a village in Gabon to give prenatal care, weigh babies, administer vaccinations and treat illnesses.

"Merredith took advantage of an important opportunity to test out and apply the skills and knowledge from her BUSPH training in the real world of public health practice," said Jonathon Simon, DSc, MPH, chair of the Department of International Health and director of the Center for International Health and Development at BUSPH. "Her educational experiences on our campus, coupled with her practical experiences in the field as a Schweitzer Fellow, prepare her to become an exceptional public health professional."

Collins also served as a 2005-2006 Schweitzer Fellow volunteering at the International Rescue Committee of Boston, an organization that focuses on refugee and immigrant health.

Food for Thought

Nearly 200 guests attended this year’s BMC Food for Thought Dinner and raised a record $1.4 million to benefit the Grove Clinic and other pediatric programs at the medical center. The event took place at Reisli, at the Charles Hotel in Cambridge. Pictured at the dinner are Joan and Steve Bolden (left), and Joan and Ted Cutter, who were honored for their successful leadership of the event for the past 14 years.
NUTRITIONIST'S DIET PLAN OFFERS COMBINED APPROACH TO WEIGHT LOSS
Caroline Apovian, MD, director of the Nutrition and Weight Management Center at BMC, was one of the primary researchers involved in the clinical trials to confirm the benefits of the active ingredients in Alli™, the only over-the-counter weight-loss aid approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Alli™ contains lipase, a digestive enzyme that breaks down fat in food so that it can be absorbed, stored and used by the body as needed. Alli™ also contains orlistat, an ingredient used to prevent the absorption of fats from the diet, reducing caloric intake.

"Alli™ helps to overcome the common pitfalls that many people run across when starting a diet without the assistance of a medically supervised weight management program," said Apovian.

Apovian has developed a reduced-calorie, low-fat plan in her book, The Alli™ Diet Plan—your essential guide to success with Alli™. The plan consists of three phases to maximize weight loss and is designed to balance fat intake throughout the day. Apovian's book includes a fitness plan and more than 300 recipes for healthy meals, as well as strategies for staying fit and tips for keeping the weight off.

The diet plan is meant to complement the use of Alli™, to help those who want a lifestyle change, explained Apovian, associate professor of medicine at BUMC. "Alli™ is not a magic pill—losing weight and keeping it off requires hard work, and the diet plan can help ensure success. In addition to weight loss, researchers have found that dieters who took Alli™ had greater decreases in cholesterol and blood-pressure levels.

For more information, visit www.mayoclinic.com.

STUDENT EFFORTS MAY HELP RECOVER MISSING CHILDREN
Boston-area parents now have a new tool to aid in the recovery of missing children thanks to GSDM's recently relaunched chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA). The My Child Identification Program (CHIP) is held annually to aid in the rescue and recovery of Boston area children.

According to the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a child goes missing every 46 seconds in the United States. More than 800,000 children are reported missing each year, and another 500,000 go missing without ever being reported.

In September, SNDA members took dental impressions and mouth swabs to obtain DNA of more than 75 children, ages two to 15, at Roxbury Community College. Parents will hold onto these impressions and swabs, which will help identify their missing children in the event of a kidnapping or disappearance. Children also were given the opportunity to be videotaped and have their voices recorded to aid families in their recovery efforts.

"Although the event was a success, more families need to be aware of programs like My CHIP," stated Kimberly Haynes, DMD '09, chapter vice president, SNDA. "We can not continue to ignore the blemishes of our society, especially when it comes to protecting our children."

In addition to dental impressions, the FBI recommends that parents have a recent photo of their children at all times.
Grants and Awards

Daniel Alford, MD, associate professor of medicine at BUSM and medical director for the Massachusetts Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment program at BMC, recently received the Nywater-Dole Award from the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence. Alford is considered an expert in policy development and best practices for opioid treatment. The award was presented at the organization’s recent national conference.

Jacques Denis, hospitalist assistant, Pediatrics Unit at BMC, was selected as the People First Team Member of the Year by Morrison Management Specialists, which manages BMC’s Food and Nutrition Services. Denis was honored for his commitment to caring for people and unwavering dedication to service and quality. He was one of only six individuals from a nationwide pool of more than 16,000 employees.

Steven Perlman, DDS, MD, a pediatric dentist at GSOM, received the Man of the Year Award from the East Midlands Association for Retarded Citizens, a nonprofit organization assisting people and families of those with disabilities, Perlman, who serves as the global clinical director of Special Olympics Special Smiles, was recognized for his “exceptional dental care to people with disabilities locally and around the world.”

A team of faculty and staff at BUSPH’s Department of Health Policy and Management and the Center for Health Quality, Outcomes and Economic Research, Veterans’ Affairs, in Bedford, Mass., recently received the Peter Reinstein Prize for the best article published in the International Journal for Quality in Health Care in 2006. Alfredo Selim, MD, senior scientist, Center for Health Quality, Outcomes and Economic Research, is lead author of the article titled, Use of Risk-Adjusted Change in Health Status to Assess the Performance of Integrated Service Networks in the Veterans Health Administration. The award was presented by the International Society for Quality in Health Care Inc.

BMC received a $442,852 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The award will facilitate access to substance abuse treatment for individuals through prevention and treatment for HIV-Alexander Valley, MD, attending physician, General Internal Medicine at BMC, is principal investigator.

WE CARE Awards

BMC honors employees and volunteers who have shown exceptional care toward others with WE CARE Recognition Awards.

WE CARE Employee Recognition Awards for October were presented to Yolanda Brena, certified nursing assistant, 6 East, Menino Pavilion; Robert Epps, lab support specialist, Laboratory Medicine; Rhonda Johnson, unit coordinator, Emergency Department, Menino Pavilion; and Marlene Stewart, practice assistant, Obstetrics/Gynecology at BMC.

The employee awards for November were presented to Kathryn Byrne, RN, Emergency Department, Pediatric Walk-In Unit; Karen Gunter, birth sister, Midwifery Program; Anne Joseph, technologist, Radiology/Nuclear Medicine; and Linda Rockwood, RN, staff nurse, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at BMC.

The WE CARE Volunteer Recognition Award for October was presented to Obina Ori, a volunteer for BMC’s Project Health. Working with BMC’s Pediatric Endoscopy Unit, the Harvard University student helped develop a mentoring program for pediactric children that improves their nutrition and fitness habits, reducing the likelihood of their developing type II diabetes.

The volunteer award for November was presented to Stephanie Kelly, an emergency room nurse who has served in BMC’s pediatric Emergency Department the past year. Kelly was recognized for her positive and creative energy, working with patients and families in the waiting and treatment rooms, and filing quiet time with projects that benefit the Emergency Department.