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Boston University School of Medicine News



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Boston University School of Medicine's Geriatric Evaluation Unit of Boston VA has received a four-year grant.

The Geriatric Evaluation Unit of the Boston Veterans Administration Medical Center (BVAMC) has been awarded \$75,000 a year, renewable indefinitely, by the VA's Central Office in Washington, D.C.

The grant will be used this year to add professional staff for the program, which is a direct extension of Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and the BVAMC's neurology department. At present the program comprises a four-bed unit. Additional staffing provided by the grant will allow the program to serve more veterans in need of comprehensive geriatric assessment and treatment, according to its director, Janice E. Knoefel, M.D.

The Geriatric Evaluation program, begun in July 1983, employs an interdisciplinary approach to treating patients. Members of the health team include a neurologist, a geriatric clinical nurse specialist, a social worker, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a corrective therapist, a recreational therapist, the unit's head nurse, a psychologist and a dietician. Each team member performs a comprehensive assessment of the patient, and outlines treatment plans for the patient and his or her family. Through such evaluation, both treatable illness and psychosocial needs are identified. Treatment, rehabilitation planning, and resource mobilization helps patients to realize a high level of independent functioning, reduces hospitalizations, and decreases the need for nursing home care.

BVAMC grant/22222

Patients selected for the program are over 60 years of age, and have problems in such areas as dementia, Parkinson's disease, walking, fainting, incontinence, poor nutrition, multiple drug usage, arthritis, osteoporosis, and psychological conditions affecting independent living.

Through its clinical service to veterans, the GEU is a focus for geriatric and gerontological training for physicians, nurses, social workers, therapists, and psychologists.

In addition to directing the Geriatric Evaluation Unit, Knoefel is a consulting neurologist at University Hospital's Home Medical Service, and at Jewish Memorial Hospital, a chronic care hospital affiliated with Boston University School of Medicine, and serves as a neurology instructor at the School of Medicine.

For further information about the GEU, interested veterans may contact the BVAMC at 232-9500.