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MetroHealthgiving

Advancing the charitable mission of The MetroHealth System

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In the Spotlight

MetroHealth is committed to being a national leader in public health by targeting the health care needs of the most vulnerable in our community. Through the **MetroHealth Center for Community Health** and innovative health care programs throughout **The MetroHealth System**, we are taking much-needed services directly into traditionally underserved communities. Featured in this newsletter are a few of the programs made possible through the generous support of others who share our commitment to saving lives.



Dr. Jean Stevenson, director of MetroHealth’s BRinging Education Advocacy and Support Together (BREAST) program, is shown examining a breast cancer survivor. The BREAST program takes free breast cancer exams and mammograms into the community for low-income and minority women.

Going Into the Community to Save Lives

Linda Perry appeared to be the picture of health, which is why, she says, her friends were shocked to learn earlier this year she had breast cancer.

“This has been so fear-inspiring because they often put off having mammograms because they don’t feel anything out of the ordinary or don’t have any symptoms,” the 58-year-old Clevelander said. “I didn’t feel anything different, either, and didn’t have any symptoms, but I had cancer.”

Today, Ms. Perry appears to be cancer-free and is looking forward to a new year as a substitute aide in the Cleveland Heights/University Heights School System. She was fortunate her cancer was diagnosed in its early stages during a community screening as part of **MetroHealth’s BRinging Education Advocacy and Support Together (BREAST) program**. By the time many others seek medical care, the cancer has already moved to an advanced stage.

“Compared to the state average, MetroHealth sees four times the number of African Americans with breast cancer and 12 times the number of Hispanics with the disease,” said **Jean T. Stevenson, M.D.**, director of the BREAST program. “That’s so unfortunate and unnecessary. We realized we

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“Donor support has allowed us to reach nearly five times the number of women we could three years ago.”

Jean T. Stevenson, M.D., is the director of the **Breast Clinic** at the **Cancer Care Center at MetroHealth** and serves as director of **BRinging Education Advocacy and Support Together (BREAST)**, a program which actively goes into minority communities to provide breast cancer screenings and education. Dr. Stevenson and the BREAST program team will be inducted this year into the **Cuyahoga Unit of the American Cancer Society’s Cancer Care Hall of Fame** for their role in reaching out to underserved women.

Her Passion

Breast cancer is highly treatable, especially when caught in the early stages. But what we found is many minority women are reluctant to seek care and by the time they come to us, their breast cancer is already at an advanced stage. It’s unfortunate because that’s when the disease is harder to treat and sometimes impossible to cure. That’s why we developed the BREAST program, which offers free breast cancer exams and mammograms to uninsured and

low-income minority women and educates them about the importance of early detection. If we can catch the disease early enough, we can save more lives.

Making a Difference

Naively, we thought that we could just throw open the doors of MetroHealth and have women lined up for free breast screenings. But it didn’t work that way. A lot of women living just two and four blocks away weren’t coming due to transportation and other issues. That’s when we realized we had to make it convenient for them to seek care by providing services in an environment where they felt comfortable. Through philanthropic support we were able to hire a bilingual community liaison to more effectively communicate with the growing Hispanic population, and also take our services to the community rather than expecting them to come to us. That’s when attendance quickly rose from an average of 15 women per screening to an average of 50.

Vision for the Future

Though the BREAST program has grown so much since it started in 2003, we’re still at the tip of the iceberg. We want to continue to provide five breast cancer screenings each year, but would like our outreach and education efforts to yield more patients per screening. Also, we currently rent a MammoVan, which allows us to provide on-site mammograms, and it would be wonderful if we owned our very own unit. Since our patients aren’t coming to MetroHealth, we must continue to come to them.

Donor Support Helps Expand Outreach

The generosity of donors has, without a doubt, allowed the BREAST program to expand. In fact, it was the initial gift from the **Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation** that enabled us to hire a bilingual program coordinator and provide the supplies necessary to take the screenings into the community. Other gifts have come from the **American Cancer Society** and, most recently, a combined grant from **National City** and the **National Breast Cancer Foundation**. Support from organizations such as these has allowed us to reach nearly five times the number of women we could three years ago. Donor support is so important to helping us save more lives. ■

Stopping a Silent Killer



Linda Ervin, a diabetes patient enrolled in MetroHealth's Chronic Disease Management Program, receives nutritional tips from MetroHealth clinical dietitian Cheri Collier.

Its presence is felt by many families, a potentially deadly force slowly taking its toll. Diabetes is now the fifth deadliest disease in our country. And as death rates from heart disease, cancer, and stroke are declining, the number of people dying from diabetes has jumped 45 percent in the last 10 years.

Those sobering statistics and the fact that the disease is highly treatable prompted MetroHealth and the **Saint Luke's Foundation of Cleveland, Ohio** to join forces to fight back. The partnership created the **Chronic Disease Management Program**, which targets not only diabetes, but also asthma, obesity, and smoking cessation. The program at the **MetroHealth Buckeye Health Center** recently celebrated its one-year anniversary.

"Though it's still early, we're very encouraged by what we're seeing," said **E. Harry Walker, M.D.**, director of the **MetroHealth Center for Community**

Health. "In some areas, there's a 75 percent increase in compliance – patients are sticking with the program because they want to improve, and they want to learn how."

Patients like **Linda Ervin**, whose diabetes was so out of control that doctors feared she could lose her sight or kidney function.

"My blood sugar level had gotten so high – up to 300 when it should have been less than half that," said the 54-year-old Cleveland woman. "I was sluggish, had no energy, and would get dizzy and have to sit down, so I started to think that maybe I needed to adjust my medication."

But Ms. Ervin soon learned that it was her lifestyle – not medication – that needed adjusting. "I was amazed to see that I was eating three to four times the correct portion size; but once I began to cut back and cut out certain foods, I really began to see a difference," commented the mother of six.

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A year later, Ms. Ervin's weight is down 20 pounds and her blood sugar is 110, which is where it should be. Her success exemplifies the program's positive impact on the community.

"We're thrilled to see that the program is already showing promise in transforming the lives of this community," comments **Denise San Antonio Zeman**, president of the Saint Luke's Foundation. "This just reaffirms our belief in MetroHealth and the decision to come together to improve the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Greater Cleveland."

Made possible through a \$10 million grant from the Saint Luke's Foundation, the Chronic Disease Management Program gives patients living in the area once served by the former Saint Luke's Medical Center the education and resources they need to successfully prevent and manage chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, and obesity. These diseases typically impact economically disadvantaged neighborhoods where patients are not likely to have health insurance.

"This type of progress never could have occurred without the philanthropic support of Saint Luke's. Although we can treat the diseases, patients need to be taught how to manage them, which requires a program like this. We hope our success will inspire others to support our efforts so we will be able to expand to reach even more people," concludes Dr. Walker.

For more information on supporting the Chronic Disease Management Program, please contact Kate Brown at 216-778-7509. ■

Reaching Out to the Future



Reach Out and Read supporters and volunteers honored at a recent ceremony: (back row, left to right) William Grater; MetroHealth pediatrician Dr. Robert Needlman; MetroHealth president and CEO John Sideras; and Mark West. Shown in the front row are: (left to right) Lolita Grater, Nancy Dawson, Evelyn Boyd, and Leigh Davis.

Some memories fade over time, but 89-year-old **Evelyn Boyd** can still clearly recall the first book that her mother read to her.

“It was called *Pilgrim’s Progress* and my mother would read it and we would understand it because it was a large book with all these pictures in it,” said the retired Cleveland music teacher with a reminiscent look in her eyes. “I’m not sure if it’s still in print, but we still have it.”

The experience inspired Mrs. Boyd’s imagination and sparked a love of reading that she hopes to pass along to patients at **The Children’s Hospital at MetroHealth** by supporting MetroHealth’s **Reach Out and Read (ROR)** program. The national program encourages doctors and nurses to talk to parents about the importance of reading to their children and provides a free picture book to low-income children six months to five years of age during each checkup.

Mrs. Boyd and her late husband, Gilbert, are among the program’s largest

individual supporters, a devotion that stems from 33 years of witnessing the ill effects of reading disparity as a teacher in Cleveland’s inner city. It was the same disparity that motivated MetroHealth pediatrician **Dr. Robert Needlman** to found the program in 1989 while working in Boston’s inner city.

“Access to books is important to reading development, but many children from low-income families can’t afford books, so they don’t have them at home,” Dr. Needlman said. “Our objective is for children to have at least 12 books in their home library by the time they start kindergarten and parents who understand the importance of reading to them.”

MetroHealth’s ROR program provided more than 20,000 new and used books to pediatric patients last year. Supporters like Mrs. Boyd make the program possible by contributing books and volunteering their time to read to children who are waiting to see their doctor. As a result of their generosity, a group of supporters was honored during a special ceremony recently at MetroHealth. Mrs. Boyd was among those recognized, as well as representatives from **Half-Price Books**, the **Solon City Schools**, **Strongsville United Methodist Church Women’s Group**, **Judy Ausherman, Ed.D.**, in conjunction with **Cleveland State University**, and volunteer readers **Valerie Tisher** and **Mr. and Mrs. Bill Grater**.

For more information on supporting the Reach Out and Read program, please contact Michelle Wood at 216-778-7694. ■

MetroHealth Named National Model in Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation

The MetroHealth Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio is one of 14 rehabilitation facilities in the nation to be named a top model system for spinal cord injury care. As part of the federal designation, MetroHealth will receive \$2.25 million over five years to expand the **Northeast Ohio Regional Spinal Cord Injury System**. **Dr. Greg Nemunaitis** will serve as the principal investigator for this grant.

The federal designation comes from the **National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research** in the **U.S. Department of Education**, which has funded a network of **Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems (SCIMS)** since 1971 to study the course of recovery and outcomes for individuals with spinal cord injury.

“This designation is evidence of the innovative and comprehensive nature of our rehabilitation program and trauma system delivery to spinal cord injured patients,” said **Gary Clark, M.D.**, director of the Rehabilitation Institute. “Studies have demonstrated that patients receiving care in a spinal cord injury model system have shorter lengths of stay, fewer complications, better functional outcomes, and lower costs of care.”

The funding will be used for multiple studies, including Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES), wheelchair skills and design, community and clinician education, pressure mapping, and integration of community services.

Other SCIMS to earn the distinction include Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, University of Pittsburgh, and University of Michigan.

Remembering Dr. Medalie



When your life's work creates a path for others to follow, it's sure to influence and inspire generations to come. Such is the legacy of **Dr. Jack Medalie**, who was internationally recognized as a pioneer in the field of family medicine.

Dr. Medalie died in June at the age of 84. However, his research, teaching, and development of the medical specialty continue to shape the delivery of family medicine.

Dr. Medalie was the first to bring the concept to Cleveland, founding the area's first family medicine program, which was

established at MetroHealth in 1975. Family medicine was an emerging specialty then, with no residents in the field in Cleveland. Dr. Medalie established training programs to ensure a steady stream of qualified and well-trained specialists. This commitment is perhaps most recognized with the creation of a post-graduate fellowship training program. Established with the assistance of the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**, the program is considered one of the best in the nation.

"Though his contributions to our field are too vast to enumerate, he will always be remembered for being a critical element in the development of family medicine," said **James Campbell, M.D.**, director of the **MetroHealth Department of Family Medicine**. "When you consider the number of family physicians in Cleveland is more than 100 fold than it was 30 years ago, his imprint is very clear."

Though Dr. Medalie retired in 1987, his commitment to advancing the practice of family medicine remained strong. Most recently, he served on the **Senior Health and Wellness Center Vision Advocacy Council**, a group of business and community leaders who are lending their expertise to secure funding for the **Senior Health and Wellness Center at MetroHealth South**. The facility, located in the former Deaconess Hospital, will serve as a one-stop community-based center for all senior health care needs – from primary care to adult day care to hospice services.

Dr. Medalie committed his life to research, teaching, and building a foundation that led to advancing the practice of family medicine. We are indebted to him for creating a legacy that will continue to serve as a blueprint in developing medical professionals and the Senior Health and Wellness Center.

For more information on honoring Dr. Medalie's legacy by supporting the Senior Health and Wellness Center or the Jack Medalie, M.D., Endowment, please contact Michelle Wood at 216-778-7694. ■

Imagine making a gift to **MetroHealth**, then receiving not only a charitable tax deduction, but also regular payments in return. It's possible with a charitable gift annuity which allows you to give and receive!

By establishing a charitable gift annuity through The MetroHealth Foundation, you are entitled to a guaranteed specific amount every year for the rest of your life. The amount paid to you is based on the gift's amount and your age at the time you make it. Rates range from 6.0 percent to 11.8 percent. And regardless of how the financial markets fluctuate, your payment remains the same.

You can choose a gift amount that works best for your particular financial situation, and the charitable deduction and annuity payments will be calculated accordingly. For example:

- Mr. Williams, age 70, requests and reviews an annuity proposal, makes a gift to The MetroHealth Foundation for \$5,000, and signs a gift annuity agreement. His charitable deduction would be \$2,213.65 and yearly payments to him would be \$325.

To learn more about charitable gift annuities and receive a sample personal proposal, call Diana Cook at 216-778-5004.

This information is intended for educational purposes only. Please consult with your qualified tax and legal advisor(s).

needed a program that would reach minority patients when their cancer was in its earliest stage.”

The BREAST program was created in 2003 to provide free breast exams and mammograms to low-income and minority women. Dr. Stevenson soon realized many women were unable to come to MetroHealth for services because of transportation and other issues, and to be effective the program needed to go out into the community. However, financial support was required to make that happen.

Through grants from the Northeast Ohio affiliate of the **Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation** and the **American Cancer Society**, MetroHealth was able to hire a bilingual program coordinator and begin providing exams and mammograms via a traveling MammoVan at area churches and shelters.

“We found the program appealing because of its outreach component,” said **Sophie Sureau**, Komen Northeast Ohio Affiliate’s executive director. “It’s important to bring someone out into the community that people can relate to; someone to target churches, parishes, and businesses to encourage them to work together to spread the word.”

By providing services directly in the community, MetroHealth now reaches five times the number of women

we previously had, with nearly 300 women being screened in the last year alone.

The program’s success recently captured the attention of **National City**, which awarded a \$75,000 gift to expand services to more actively target minority and low-income women under 40.

“There’s no doubt this program is saving lives,” said **Paul Clark**, National City’s president for Northern Ohio and chair of **The MetroHealth Foundation**. “With National City’s commitment to breast cancer education and prevention, we wanted to be an important part of helping MetroHealth reach out and care for even more women in need.”

For more information on supporting the BREAST program, contact Kate Brown at 216-778-7509. ■

“If I had waited, I don’t know when I would have had the opportunity to have another free screening and I probably would have put it off longer, so the program for me was a life saver.”

— Linda Perry, Breast Cancer Survivor

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