

# Touchpoints

A newsletter of the Kenneth B. Schwartz Center

*Dedicated to  
strengthening the  
relationship between  
patients and  
caregivers*

## SAVE THE DATE

**Invitations** will be mailed soon for the Schwartz Center's seventh **annual dinner** on **October 30, 2002**, at the Westin Hotel, Copley Place. The evening will feature a performance by singer and songwriter **Beth Nielsen Chapman**, a **video** on a Schwartz Center program, and the announcement of the fourth annual **Compassionate Caregiver Awardee**. This year's dinner is chaired by: Benjamin Kincannon, Senior Partner/General Manager, Fleishman-Hillard, and Elizabeth Kincannon; Schwartz Center Board member Thomas Lynch, MD, Director, Thoracic Oncology, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Laura Pappano; and Alan Rottenberg, Esq., Director, Goulston & Storrs, and Debora Rottenberg.

## *When our different worlds come together*

**D**elivering compassionate health care in today's stressful environment can be challenging, even under the best of circumstances. What happens, though, when the patient and the clinician speak entirely different languages? What if, within those languages, the patient and the clinician have two entirely different sets of perspectives and beliefs about health and medicine — perhaps one from the relatively young western tradition of medicine and the second from a medicine whose roots stretch back through five millennia?

For physicians and other caregivers at Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston, this situation is reflective of daily

reality. Located in the bustling heart of Boston's Chinatown, the hospital serves a patient population unlike any other in the region. Annually, roughly 30,000 patient encounters at Tufts-NEMC are non-English speaking, i.e., situations in which the patient knows little or no English. The bulk of these patients are ethnically Chinese. The development of a curriculum in cross-cultural awareness has been a major effort of the Asian Health Initiative of the Community Health Programs at the hospital, and for the past three years, it has been supported by a grant from the Kenneth B. Schwartz Center.

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Howard Spivak, MD, vice president, Community Health Programs, Tufts-New England Medical Center in the hospital's General Pediatric Clinic. Spivak spearheaded the development of the Asian community curriculum in cross-cultural awareness.

## — *When our different worlds come together*

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“You can never learn everything about a people and a culture with a few hours of discussion,” cautions Betty Lam, who for the past three years has coordinated the effort to develop the cultural competency curriculum of the Asian Health Initiative. “We always preface our discussions with the warning not to stereotype patients. But what we’ve developed can be a great tool, for ourselves, and hopefully for others.”



Spivak consults with Julia Lee, CPNP, General Pediatric Clinic, The Floating Hospital for Children, Tufts-New England Medical Center.

Tufts-NEMC has produced a comprehensive curriculum that strategically targets potentially difficult situations that are known to arise during the treatment of patients in a non-English speaking setting. In the cases of patients with Asian cultural backgrounds, these scenarios include dealing with family members present at the patient interview and patient use of alternative medical therapies. These areas are highlighted in a series of video vignettes that document encounters between caregivers and their patients; accompanying them is a set of carefully designed discussion

questions and informational material. Through workshops, the curriculum develops the rudiments of cultural competency in caregivers in three ways:

- by identifying and addressing the problem of distinguishing differences *due to an individual* and differences *due to a culture*;
- by educating clinicians in the changing demographics of society, along with training in techniques to understand the patient’s perspective, to utilize effectively the invaluable services of an interpreter, and to work effectively in the absence of one; and
- through an interactive session, in which taped encounters between clinicians and patients in cross-cultural situations are assessed and analyzed.

According to Lam, the video can be a stand-alone tool. “However, it is preferable that people engage in a collaborative workshop process.” Lam considers the cultural competency curriculum to be a “work in progress,” adding that feedback from participants is incorporated into the program and continues to make the curriculum more comprehensive.

“The medical community still needs a lot more training,” Lam continues. “Once an effort like this has been piloted, it needs to be promoted to a wider audience. Perhaps future resources could be used to build awareness.”

Included in the curriculum is a document on Chinese culture that covers subjects ranging from Eastern healing practices to the political history of China and Chinese-American immigrants to the basics of sociology of the modern multi-generational Chinese-American immigrant family.

Tufts-NEMC’s vice president of Community Health Programs, Howard Spivak, MD, comments, “The growing diversity of patient populations in many communities requires that we develop ways to provide care in a respectful and effective manner. This curriculum, and our experience working on it, can hopefully help others.” Indeed, in the last year of the project, portions of the curriculum have been incorporated into medical interpreter training courses at Cambridge College, the Boston Area Health Education Center, and the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association.

Schwartz Center Administrative Director Marjorie Stanzler says, “Teaching cultural competency is a difficult undertaking but much needed in today’s diverse society. The Schwartz Center is committed to developing models and disseminating successful tools such as Tufts-New England Medical Center’s comprehensive curriculum on the Asian community.”

For your convenience, we have enclosed an envelope should you wish to make a donation to the Schwartz Center. You may also donate by credit card via [www.the-schwartzcenter.org](http://www.the-schwartzcenter.org). Thank you for your support.

Inserted in this issue of *Touchpoints* is a flyer giving patients specific tips on how to communicate effectively with their caregivers and reminding patients that they have a right to compassionate care. If you would like additional copies, please call the Schwartz Center at (617) 724-4746.

## Spring Soirees Solidify Supporters

**Two spring receptions** brought friends of the Schwartz Center together to share their commitment to our mission and to learn more about our unique programs for patients and caregivers. In May, **Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo** graciously hosted the Center's first out-of-state event in its Washington, DC, office. The room was packed with representatives from many of the major health-related organizations based in DC including: the American Association of Health Plans, American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, National Association of Community Health Centers, and National Association of Public Hospitals. The event also attracted staff from nearby medical centers as well as people from the business community. Guests listened closely to remarks by **Senator Edward Kennedy** who underscored the vital nature of a strong, personal patient/caregiver relationship and applauded the efforts of so many in the room who are working to improve the delivery of health care.

Back in Boston, the **Westin Hotel, Copley Place**, hosted a June gathering for local supporters. The program included a spokesman from **AstraZeneca**, a generous supporter of

the Schwartz Center. Currently, the pharmaceutical company is funding the expansion of the **Schwartz Center Rounds** to ten teaching hospitals. **David Reif, PhD**, Associate Director of Cancer Research, talked about the mutual benefits of the partnership with the Schwartz Center. He stressed the inherent value of the Rounds in bringing together a group of health care professionals across disciplines to share their feelings about patient care "not only on a medical level but also on a personal level." He went on to say, "Being a part of this program is a reminder of why most of us went into medicine." **Ann Snow, RN**, a nurse at **Emerson Hospital** in Concord, Mass., the first community hospital to conduct the Schwartz Center Rounds, underscored the benefits of the Rounds: they provide the Emerson community "with the opportunity to talk about the challenges associated with delivering medical care while simultaneously coping with the powerful emotions that affect all caregivers."

*If you are interested in hosting a reception in your home or place of business, please call Jill Shulman, development director, at 617-724-6416.*



*All photos are from the Boston reception in June.*

*Clockwise from upper left:*

*Board members Judith Swahnberg Novotny (left) and Betsy Frawley (right) with dinner co-chair, Elizabeth Kincannon (husband and co-chair Ben Kincannon was unable to attend.)*

*Dinner chairs Thomas Lynch, MD, and Laura Pappano and Debora and Alan Rottenberg (left to right)*

*Board member Carol Wells-Federman, MSN, MEd, Trudy Colburn, RN, Emerson Hospital, Carol Lynne Mandle, Boston College School of Nursing, and Ann Snow, RN, Emerson Hospital (left to right)*

*Rounds leaders, facilitators and participants from left to right: Sally Okun, RN, facilitator for Cape Cod Hospital and Rehabilitation Hospital of the Cape and Islands; Ann Snow, RN, Emerson Hospital Rounds participant and speaker at the reception; Robert Dickman, MD, Rounds leader, Newton-Wellesley Hospital; Jon DuBois, MD, Rounds leader, Emerson Hospital; and Sally Mack, MSW, facilitator, Massachusetts General Hospital*

*AstraZeneca representatives, Scott Young, Manager, Public Relations and Communications, and David Reif, PhD, Associate Director of Cancer Research (left to right)*



# Touchpoints

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### RECENT SCHWARTZ CENTER GRANTS

*Home Health Foundation, Lawrence, MA* - to develop and implement an education program to cross-train Home Health VNA and Merrimack Valley Hospice clinicians in their different approaches to patient care as a first step to developing a palliative care program  
*Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Chaplaincy and Paula Rayman, PhD, Boston, MA* - to start a design process for a spiritual support program for caregivers at MGH

*Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago, IL* - to implement a curriculum called "Difficult Conversations" for third year medical students to improve their communication skills around difficult patient issues

*Health Care for All and La Alianza Hispana, Boston, MA* - to convene two meetings to improve interpreter services in Boston hospitals and conduct a survey of patients and providers

*Smith College School for Social Work, Northampton, MA* - to support for the second year a unique Post Master's Certificate Program in End-of-Life Care for clinical social workers

*Hospice and Palliative Care of Cape Cod, Inc., Hyannis, MA* - to expand and tailor advance care planning and palliative care consultation services to the growing Brazilian community on Cape Cod

*David Todres, MD, Chief, Pediatric Ethics Unit, MGH, Boston, MA* - to conduct a study of the role of spirituality for clinicians in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit

*Visiting Nurse Association of Cape Cod, Chatham, MA* - to organize with four other groups a conference on Cape Cod for people who direct interpreter services programs to share information about program models

*MATCH-UP Interfaith Volunteers, Boston, MA* - to expand the reach of "What's Up, Doc?" workshops for non-English speaking elders to help them communicate more effectively with their caregivers and to disseminate the curricula

### THE SCHWARTZ CENTER ROUNDS: GROWING RAPIDLY

The Schwartz Center Rounds are a unique, multidisciplinary forum where caregivers discuss difficult emotional and social issues that arise in caring for patients. Started at Mass General Hospital five years ago, the Rounds currently take place in **21 hospitals in five states**. They have succeeded in very different environments — from academic medical centers to community hospitals to chronic care facilities. Unlike clinical rounds, the Schwartz Center Rounds focus on the way caregivers *feel* about the difficult issues they face. Attendees take comfort in realizing, perhaps for the first time, that they are not alone in struggling with these issues. This creates a sense of team that improves communication and benefits patient care.

*The Schwartz Center is committed to establishing Rounds in as many hospitals as possible in the coming years. The following hospitals are currently conducting Rounds:*

Brigham & Women's Hospital, Boston, MA  
Cape Cod Hospital, Falmouth, MA  
Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Hanover, NH  
Emerson Hospital, Concord, MA  
Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA  
Evanston Northwestern Healthcare, Evanston, IL  
Faulkner Hospital, Jamaica Plain, MA  
Frisbie Hospital, Rochester, NH  
Kent Hospital, Warwick, RI

Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA  
Memorial Hospital, Pawtucket, RI  
New England Sinai Hospital and Medical Center, Stoughton, MA  
Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Newton, MA  
North Adams Hospital, North Adams, MA  
North Shore Medical Center, Salem, MA  
Overlook Hospital, Summit, NJ  
Rehabilitation Hospital of Cape Cod and the Islands, Sandwich, MA  
Roger Williams Hospital, Providence, RI  
Saint Vincent Hospital, Worcester, MA  
UMass Memorial Healthcare, Worcester, MA  
Winchester Hospital, Winchester, MA