



HUP Pharmacists

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Stephanie Ennis, RPh, is one of the HUP pharmacists who volunteers time at the clinic.

For more than 15 years, HUP pharmacists have been quietly volunteering their time in two neighborhood clinics, providing medications, vitamins, and even the vaccine for flu shots that would otherwise be unavailable to members of those communities. “The success of the clinic can be measured by the return of patients on a routine basis,” said **Wayne Marquardt, RPh**, a senior pharmacist at HUP. “Patients have told us that they come back because we treat each of them with respect and actually take the time to listen.”

More Than Just Dispensing

The two clinics were created by, and are staffed by, Penn Med students. The first — University City Hospitality Coalition (UCHC) — was created in 1991 for patients, many of whom are homeless, with no easy access to health care. It’s located in St. Agatha-St. James Catholic Church on 38th and Chestnut Streets.

HUP pharmacists started coming to the weekly clinic in 1992, providing a larger selection of medications than was previously available. “Up to that time, the only source of medications were samples from physician offices.”

Working with the clinic’s physicians, HUP pharmacists developed a formulary (list of medications) that better met the needs of their patients. But dispensing meds is only one of the pharmacists’ contributions. “As we put together prescriptions, we explain the process to the medical students — why we’re using certain drugs,”

Marquardt said. Sometimes the students sit in when pharmacists talk with patients. “We take the time to make sure the patients know how to use everything correctly. These are lessons the students will use in their future practices.”

“It’s so important to have a stable group of medications for this population,” said UCHC medical director **Bill Matthai, MD**, of Penn Presbyterian Cardiology. “Wayne and his staff not only maintain that supply but are flexible enough to make changes as our population changes or a new drug comes out.”

In 1995, another group of Penn Med students started United Community Clinic (UCC) in the First African Presbyterian Church at 4159 Girard Avenue, an area of West Philadelphia that doesn’t have access to affordable health care. “This is more of a well-clinic for a poor working class community,” Marquardt said. “They need pre-employment physical exams, TB testing, flu shots... but don’t have the money to go to a physician’s office.”

Marquardt said that, for several years, the needs of this patient population didn’t require a pharmacist onsite, but he continued to teach medical students at HUP how to dispense medications and counsel patients.

An upsurge in activity in the last year or so initiated plans to bring the pharmacists back on site. “A pharmacist is now coming every week to our clinic,” said **Eric Goren, MD**, of Internal Medicine who is medical director of UCC. Although it’s rare for pharmacists to

(continued on page 2)

HUP Pharmacists: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

be in this type of clinic, Goren noted that “we need pharmacists to counsel patients on how to take medications, side effects to look for. This helps patients make better decisions.”

Equally important, “the multidisciplinary environment provides our medical students with a better understanding of the role on the pharmacist in patient care.”

Well-Stocked Formulary

In addition to volunteering at the clinics, Marquardt coordinates the rotations of the other HUP pharmacists who work at the clinics and keeps both formularies filled with needed medications. “I keep records on how much medication is dispensed, to whom, and the person who dispensed it. That helps me keep the formulary well-stocked for each visit.”

He explained that the formulary includes antibiotics, decongestants, analgesics, asthma medications and topical preparations for dermatologic problems... but no narcotics. Funding for formularies comes from the budgets of each clinic but “they purchase the medications through HUP Pharmacy because we can get it all at cost.”

Pharmacists do bring a small number of prescriptions, but only for conditions that do not require continuous monitoring and follow up, such as is needed for hypertension patients. To better serve this population, Marquardt worked with **Susan Wieggers, MD**, of Cardiovascular, and former medical director of UHC, to obtain a grant to fund the diagnostic workup and treatment of hypertension patients.

“The grant also pays for their medication. As long as they come back on a regular basis for monitoring, it works,” Marquardt said. “Right now we currently have 18 patients enrolled in these clinics.”

The success of the two clinics is evident in their volume. In 2008, HUP pharmacists dispensed over 500 prescriptions and 10,000 doses of vitamins, and supplied over 120 flu shots. But the results goes beyond numbers. “I feel good that I can help out,” Marquardt said. “I’ve gotten to know many of our clinic patients through counseling and answering their questions, and it makes me feel that I’ve made a difference.”

All Employee Meetings

In current economic times, attending All Employee Meetings is more important than ever. Learn more about HUP and the Health System and ask HUP leadership your questions. The next three will take place on:

- **Wednesday, May 13, noon to 1:00 pm**
- **Wednesday, June 10, 5:00 to 6:00 pm**
- **Wednesday, July 15, 8:30 to 9:30 am**

All meetings are held in Medical Alumni Hall on 1 Maloney.

• FUN FACT •

• **16,800** • The average number of prescriptions filled by the outpatient pharmacy each month.

Swine Flu PREVENTION

Swine influenza is a contagious respiratory disease. It spreads from person to person in the same way as the seasonal flu: through coughing and sneezing. You may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching your mouth or nose. You cannot get swine flu from eating pork or pork products.

Signs and symptoms of swine flu include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some people have also experienced diarrhea and vomiting. People with the swine flu are contagious from one day before symptoms appear and up to seven days or more after they become sick.

The best way to avoid getting the flu is to wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol hand sanitizer. To keep your immune system strong, get plenty of sleep, eat nutritious food, drink plenty of liquids and be physically active. Other common-sense actions to stay healthy and prevent its spread include:

- Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.

Information for clinicians about the swine flu can be found at <http://uphsxnet.uphs.upenn.edu/news/swineflu/clinical-info>. You can also learn more at <http://uphsxnet.uphs.upenn.edu/news/swineflu>.

Join the RACE for the CURE

Join the Penn Medicine team in the annual **Susan B. Komen Race for the Cure** and help raise money for breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment. The race takes place this Sunday, May 10 at the Philadelphia Art Museum.

To join, go online to race.komenphiladelphia.org and click ‘Join an Existing Team.’ Enter ‘Penn Medicine’ in the space for Team Company. You can join an existing Penn Medicine team or form your own sub-team. The entry fee is \$15 for children under 12 and \$40 for adults.

For more information about the race, go to race.komenphiladelphia.org.



COST CUTTERS

Has your department found a way to cut costs? If so, please e-mail your successful efforts to sally.sapega@uphs.upenn.edu or call 662-4488.

Grassroots Efforts at HUP

Penn Medicine leadership is doing all they can to reduce operating expenses and increase revenue, but saving money has become a grassroots effort at HUP. A new series will focus on how employees are using ideas to reduce the cost — but not the quality — of providing care.

This first article focuses on HUP's Stewardship Core Council, which issued a challenge to its nursing units: How can we decrease costs while maintaining our high level of care?

Close to 100 ideas were submitted and one of the first included the challenge of designing a process to access low beds and bariatric beds for our patients. "HUP owns both kinds, but they weren't kept in a single location," said **Jeanne Romano, MSN, RN, NE-BC**, manager of Nursing Products & Operations. "If we needed one and couldn't locate it, we'd have to rent." The solution was to find a central place to store the beds. "Now when we get an order for one of these beds, Materials Management knows exactly where to look before renting." **Estimated annual savings: nearly \$84,000.**

Decreasing the use of secondary IV tubing when administering medications to patients ranks as another good way to save money. As Romano explained, it's preferable to use a backpriming technique — which keeps the same tubing in place — when replacing IV medication bags. "Some units used a different line for each bag, but we want to keep a closed system, with only one line. We re-educated the nurses so they all know how to use this technique." **Estimated annual savings: over \$40,000.**

A pulse ox is a disposable finger probe that measures a patient's oxygen level. HUP is in the process of upgrading to a newer version. "To help offset the additional cost, we implemented a recycling program for used probes," Romano said. The recycling company picks up the used ones and completely replaces the adhesive — only the sensor is reused. We then purchase them at a cost lower than for new ones.

Romano said the probes can be recycled up to four times before they are permanently 'retired' from use. Although they can't be used in every situation, "we're asking units to use the reusable probes whenever possible." In terms of savings, Romano said that "originally we just wanted to break even with the newer probes, but we might be able to reduce our overall costs as well."

The Council also evaluated the amount of supplies kept by a patient's bed — some of which may be thrown out — as well as those given to discharged patients. "The amount of supplies given to a patient at discharge varied from nurse to nurse. We asked them to limit the amount to what patients will need in the next day or so, until they or their family are able to purchase more or receive a home visit by a nurse."

Three other simple but effective suggestions to save money include:

- Providing hospital scrubs — instead of sauna suits — to trauma patients who must have clothes cut off during emergency care (**estimated annual savings: \$4,100**).
- Using long-term tubing — instead of temporary tubing — for EtCO₂ monitoring on patients from the time they enter the PACU instead of switching when they get to a patient care unit (**estimated annual savings: \$1,700**).
- Limiting personal care items given on admission to only those patients say they need.

The savings on each unit were measured from December to February. "The unit with the greatest percentage decrease in three months received a prize, but we'll continue to monitor their progress."

Meanwhile, the Stewardship Council is not resting on its laurels. "We're going back to the master list of ideas to find more ways to save."

SOM Ranks in TOP THREE

Penn's School of Medicine is among the top three research-oriented medical schools in the nation, according to an annual survey of graduate schools by *U.S. News & World Report*. Penn tied for third place with Washington University in the prestigious survey, with Harvard University and John Hopkins University ranked first and second, respectively.

Penn was also ranked in the top ten in four specialty programs: Internal Medicine (#4), Drug/Alcohol Abuse (#6), Women's Health (#6) and Pediatrics (#2). Two of Penn Medicine's PhD specialty programs also ranked among the top ten in the nation: immunology and infectious

disease (#7), and microbiology (#8). The criteria to determine the top research-oriented medical schools included quality assessment, research activity, faculty resources and student selectivity.

"Penn's ranking in the survey reflects the continued dedication and commitment to excellence among our faculty and staff. We are proud to continue our national leadership in medical education, patient care and research," said **Arthur Rubenstein, MBBCh**, executive vice president of the University of Pennsylvania for the Health System and dean of the School of Medicine.

Hospital Week CELEBRATION

Help celebrate Hospital Week on Monday, May 11, at the Ruth and Raymond Perelman Center for Advanced Medicine:

- Witness the official closing of the Perelman Center time capsule.
- Sign up for a Center tour.
- Enter the gift basket raffle.
- See the beautifully engraved memorial bricks.

The event will be held from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. We hope you can join the celebration!

Shorttakes

HUP SAFETY LINE

By Nick Pinizzotto

SPRING SAFETY AT HOME

SKIN CANCER SCREENING

Learn about early skin cancer detection and prevention at the free skin screening sponsored by the Department of Dermatology on Saturday, May 16. Call 215.662.2737 to reserve a spot. Space is limited! The screening will take place in Suite 1-330S on the first floor of the Ruth and Raymond Perelman Center for Advanced Medicine.

Focus on MELANOMA

The sixth annual Focus on Melanoma will take place on Friday, May 15. Listen to expert researchers and clinicians from the Abramson Cancer Center discuss the latest findings for melanoma and its treatment. Whether you are at risk for melanoma, newly diagnosed or a long-term survivor, you'll want this up-to-the-minute information, including the latest research, treatment advances, clinical trials and survivorship issues, as well as what the future holds for melanoma treatment. For more information or to register, call 800.789.PENN (7366) or go online to Oncolink.org/conference/melanoma. Registration deadline is Monday, May 11.

As the warmer weather arrives, people tend to do more around the house, including cleaning and maintenance, which often involves the use of many household chemical products. In fact, we're probably exposed to more chemicals at home than at work!

Think of all the chemicals in the products we use during the day: personal care items like toothpaste, soap, antiperspirant, hairspray/gel, cosmetics; cleaning chemicals such as tub and tile cleaner, dish and laundry soaps, and air fresheners; and possibly maintenance and lawn care items. While many consumer chemical products may improve our home lives, the improper use, overuse or accidental exposure to them can have negative effects on our health.

In other words, it's just as important to use these products responsibly and understand their potential hazards as it is for those you encounter at work.

The Department of Health and Human Services has a website designed specifically for safety and health information on many chemicals used at home. The database links over 8,000 consumer products to their health effects, based on information provided by manufacturers. It answers important questions pertaining to manufacturer information, such as chemical ingredients and percentage content; the acute and chronic effects of those ingredients; and additional toxicology information associated with exposure and use. Safety Management encourages employees to visit <http://hpd.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm>. It's both enlightening and useful. In addition, the National Safety Council (www.nsc.org) contains very useful information and statistics on general home safety and health in the United States.

So, as you rise from the couch or out of bed this weekend to tackle those longstanding chores, think about what you're doing, how you're going to do it safely and be sure to read up on the hazards you'll encounter. We want you to return to work happy and healthy!



HELPING PEOPLE ALL THE TIME

Congratulations to November's Helping People All the Time raffle winners. Keep up the excellent work!

Paula Malagoli
Regan Sheffer
Mary Bankhead
Laura Capra
Samantha Lascala
Nancy Boehmler
Alita Doswell
Elsie Wright
Sharon Kim
Katrina Jones
Jane Berry
Melissa McLeod
Pauline Ansine

Silverstein 1
Silverstein 1
Ground Ravdin
Founders 5
Founders 5
Silverstein 11
ED
Founders 1
Founders 7
Ravdin 9
Silverstein 8
Silverstein 8
Dulles 6

Renee Bollenbach
Rosalyn Nixon
Aditi Chowdhury
Pari Tucker
Cathy Amorose
Sekaya Weekes
Kameelah Shamsid
Mark Werner
Dennis Kelly
Amy Disbot
Linda Rhule
Melissa Ems

Dulles 6
Founders 14
Founders 14
Founders 10
Silverstein 12
Ground Gates
Founders 5
Founders 5
Dulles 6
Silverstein 8
Silverstein 8

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