

MGH INSTITUTE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE BOSTON GRADUATE SCHOOL FOUNDED BY MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

From Graduate to Advocate

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INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

MGH Institute of Health Professions will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit March 22–25, 2020, by a team representing the New England Commission of Higher Education (formerly the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, NEASC).

The New England Commission of Higher Education is one of seven accrediting commissions in the United States that provide institutional accreditation on a regional basis. Accreditation is voluntary and applies to the institution as a whole. The Commission, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, accredits approximately 220 institutions in the six-state New England region as well as several American-style institutions overseas.

MGH Institute of Health Professions has been accredited by the Commission since 1985 and was last reviewed in 2010. Its accreditation by the Commission encompasses the entire institution.

For the past year and a half, MGH Institute of Health Professions has been engaged in a process of self-study, addressing the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*. An evaluation team will visit the institution to gather evidence that the self-study is thorough and accurate. The team will recommend to the Commission a continuing status for the institution. Following a review process, the Commission itself will take the final action.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the MGH Institute to:

Public Comment on MGH Institute of Health Professions

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514
E-mail: info@neche.org

Public Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution. The Commission cannot settle disputes between individuals and institutions, whether those involve faculty, students, administrators, or members of other groups. Comments will not be treated as confidential and must include the name, address, and telephone number of the person providing the comments.

Public Comments must be received by **March 25, 2020**. The Commission cannot guarantee that comments received after that date will be considered.

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mghihp.edu

Looking Ahead to a New Decade of Quality and Excellence



Paula Milone-Nuzzo,
President and John Hilton
Knowles Professor

As we make decisions, as we define our future, as we chart a path, we examine how each decision or path contributes to our commitment to the school's quality mission.

As we welcome the new opportunities that come along with the brand-new decade on which we are embarking, I am inspired to think about the future and the MGH Institute's contribution to health care.

Since its founding in 1977, the Institute has stayed true to its mission to advance care for a diverse society through education, clinical practice, research, and community engagement. Over the years, we have operationalized our commitment in different ways and with different populations. We have added high-quality educational programs that have produced leaders in their fields. We have recruited researchers who are transforming the way we teach children and provide clinical care. We have innovated in the clinical practice setting and have supported our Charlestown neighbors to improve the health and well-being of our community. What has always remained the consistent hallmark of our work is our commitment to the highest-quality education, practice, research, and outreach.

While many organizations talk about their commitment to quality, we demonstrate it by the work the IHP community does. There are no shortcuts, no work-arounds, no cutting corners. As we make decisions, as we define our future, as we chart a path, we examine how each decision or path contributes to our commitment to the school's quality mission. Our IMPACT Practice Center, our Center for Climate Change, Climate Justice and Health, and our new Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are just a few examples of our ongoing commitment to excellence in all we do.

One of the hallmarks of quality in higher education is accreditation. The New England Commission of Higher Education, or NECHE, is scheduled to visit campus in March for an

accreditation review. Our self-assessment process over the past two years has been a rigorous one. We have engaged hundreds in the IHP community to really understand where our opportunities for improvement exist. We have addressed challenges where we could and identified other challenges that require more time and included them in our self-assessment. The process has been about improving the school's quality, not just about having a successful outcome to the accreditation process. The robustness of our self-assessment process is evidence of our objective of having the best academic, research, and clinical programs.

Every day, we see the impact of the IHP's excellence in our alumni, who are changing the world through their practice. Whether it's a physical therapist leading health care strategy at an innovative health care company, or a speech-language pathologist helping children with communication difficulties in Germany, or a nurse practitioner addressing the health needs of the homeless population on the streets of Los Angeles, our alumni are the living representation of the Institute's high-quality academic programs. The IHP is where they began their journey into health care leadership and where they can return for lifelong learning and professional development through courses and seminars from our Continuing Professional Development program. The diverse range of offerings allows alumni to receive the same high-quality educational offerings that launched them on their health care careers. We are so glad the IHP can provide this resource.

We will continue our commitment to quality and excellence as we enter this next decade, just as we have done over the last 43 years. We are proud of our history and excited for our future. We look forward to having you join us on this journey.



Four Elected to Board of Trustees

The MGH Institute's Board of Trustees has been strengthened by the recent addition of four new members: Dr. John Herman, Dr. Michael R. Jaff, Dr. Madelyn "Maddy" Pearson, and Meredith Beaton Starr.

"We are excited about John, Michael, Maddy, and Meredith joining the Board," said Board Chair Dr. Jeanette Ives Erickson. "We look forward to benefitting from their wisdom and knowledge to help the MGH Institute continue to advance its mission of educating tomorrow's health care leaders."



Dr. John Herman is associate chief of the Department of Psychiatry and the distinguished scholar for medical psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital. An associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and a distinguished fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, he was the chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine, overseeing the Commonwealth's 39,000 licensed physicians and the safety and quality programs of its 200 hospitals.

A past president of the American Association of Directors of Psychiatry Residency Training, Dr. Herman has lectured across the U.S. and internationally. His primary interest is improving access to mental health care, particularly addiction treatment, focusing on helping primary care clinicians learn straightforward approaches to patients suffering from psychiatric problems.



Dr. Michael R. Jaff is vice president of clinical affairs, innovation, technology, peripheral interventions for Boston Scientific. The former president of Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Dr. Jaff is a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, a fellow of the American College of Physicians, and a member of the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, and the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Intervention. He is a registered physician in vascular interpretations.

A highly respected speaker who has published more than 280 peer-reviewed publications and 10 textbooks, Dr. Jaff served for more than 12 years as the inaugural Paul and Phyllis Fireman Endowed Chair of Vascular Medicine and medical director of the Fireman Vascular Center at Massachusetts General Hospital. He is also the founder of the Vascular Ultrasound Core Laboratory.



Dr. Madelyn "Maddy" Pearson is chief nursing officer and senior vice president of clinical services for Brigham Health, where she led a successful initiative for Brigham and Women's Hospital to achieve Magnet designation. Previously, she was regional senior vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer for the Mount Sinai Health System Downtown Campus in New York. There, she was instrumental in efforts to reduce hospital-acquired conditions and improve quality and patient safety.

Prior to Mount Sinai, Dr. Pearson was the senior vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center in New Jersey, which sustained Magnet status during her leadership. She also has served as a program appraiser for the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Magnet Recognition Program.



Meredith Beaton Starr is an occupational therapist and integrative health coach at the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, a collaboration between Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. An expert in integrative therapies, pain management, and stress management, Starr is conducting research in integrative medicine interventions with women who experience migraine headaches. She also is director of engagement and liaison to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Pan-Massachusetts Challenge. At Dana-Farber, she is a member of the Leonard P. Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies and Healthy Living Advisory Board, serves on the Institute Initiatives and Women's Cancers visiting committees, and is co-chair of the Susan F. Smith Center for Women's Cancers Executive Council.

For complete bios, please go to mghihp.edu/board-trustees.

Grant to Improve Literacy and Reading in Charlestown

A grant received by the MGH Institute from the Charlestown office of accounting firm RSM will leverage the graduate school's literacy expertise and research to help provide children at Harvard-Kent Elementary School with the support and resources to succeed in school and in life.

Dr. Tiffany Hogan, director of the MGH Institute's Speech and Language Literacy (SAiL) Lab, and post-doctoral fellow Dr. Rouzana Komesidou will lead a three-year grant to implement a long-term initiative at the Charlestown public school with one of the highest rates of economically disadvantaged students and one of the highest rates of English-language learners in Boston.

"We are currently on the threshold of a paradigm shift on how we approach issues around effectiveness in literacy instruction and emphasis on local sustainability and community buy-in," Hogan and Komesidou wrote in the grant application. "This program has not only the potential to improve literacy outcomes in struggling readers but also create a sustainable model that will increase literacy awareness among students, their families, and the Charlestown community."

The first \$180,000 of the \$300,000 grant was presented to the Institute during a January event at RSM's Charlestown office. Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh and Chris MacKenzie, RSM's market leader, spoke about the importance of local businesses giving back to the community, and cited how partnerships such as the one with the MGH Institute, RSM, and Harvard-Kent can play a significant role in residents' lives. "This is an investment in people many of you probably will never meet, but because of this will go on to do great things," said Mayor Walsh.

Hogan and her team will first identify students in grades K-2 at risk for



Dr. Tiffany Hogan, left, and Dr. Rouzana Komesidou, right, talk to Harvard-Kent Principal Jason Gallagher about how the grant will help the elementary school's students.

poor learning outcomes and then administer additional diagnostic assessments of reading, language, and cognition to better characterize these students' abilities.

"This program has the potential to improve literacy outcomes and to increase literacy awareness among students, their families, and the Charlestown community."

- DRS. TIFFANY HOGAN AND ROUZANA KOMESIDOU

Graduate students in the Institute's speech-language pathology program will then provide small-group, evidence-based interventions for word decoding (matching sounds with letters) and language comprehension (background knowledge, grammar, and vocabulary) after school. Data collected through observations, interviews, focus

groups, and document review will be used to help strengthen how reading and literacy issues are addressed with Harvard-Kent children in all grades.

For MGH Institute President Dr. Paula Milone-Nuzzo, the reading initiative is the latest example of the growing partnership with Harvard-Kent. Over the past two years, hundreds of graduate students from all the Institute's programs have spent thousands of hours working with the public school's children, not just on reading and literacy but cooking (occupational therapy), fitness (physical therapy), and health and wellness (nursing and physician assistant studies). Institute faculty also have presented mindfulness techniques to both children and teachers.

"This is a shining example of how corporate dollars given to a graduate school with the expertise to assist children in need in the local elementary school is more than a win-win," she told the audience. "We hope this can be a model for other relationships that can develop that will ultimately improve our city."

Two New Doctoral Programs Are Launched

PhD in Health Professions Education



Dr. Roger Edwards speaking to a class of HPED students.

When Josh Merson heard that the MGH Institute would launch an online PhD in Health Professions Education, he was all in.

Merson, an assistant professor in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, had just earned his HPEd master's degree at the Institute. So when he reviewed the new program's curriculum, he immediately realized

the benefits of continuing his education even further.

"I saw how pursuing a doctorate would not only strengthen my effectiveness as a faculty member but also contribute scholarship to best practices in team-based learning that could benefit a wide spectrum of students and faculty in the various health professions," said Merson, who is pursuing the PhD while continuing to work full time.

According to Dr. Roger Edwards, the program's director, Merson is the perfect type of person for the program—an accomplished physician assistant who developed a passion to improve his teaching skills.

"There is so much that we still don't know about how to best accomplish teaching, academic scholarship, and administration," said Edwards. "The program enables doctoral-level education for 21st-century health professionals who want to take their careers to the next level."

Students, who are taught by faculty from the IHP and the Center for Medical Simulation, can choose to focus on simulation-based education, leadership and administration, interprofessional education, or create a customized concentration, which is what Merson is doing.

The program will provide students with a spectrum of research skills that support evidence-based teaching across the health professions, alleviating what Edwards calls substantial knowledge gaps. "Graduates will be able to take this new knowledge and make meaningful contributions to the field of health professions education and advance their careers," he said.

Post-Professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy

Collaborating interprofessionally and implementing innovative solutions to advance health care delivery are among the highlights of the MGH Institute's new post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy program.

Each course of the online program will expand the knowledge and skills of practicing occupational therapists, going well beyond improving how

they currently treat patients, according to Sarah McKinnon, the program's director.

"This program is a way for occupational therapists to understand the process of identifying problems, developing solutions, and implementing quality improvements that can truly make a difference where they work to improve patient care," said Dr. McKinnon, who in addition to her role at the Institute serves on the board of directors for the American Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee and is the government representative for the Massachusetts Association for Occupational Therapy. "It's much more than learning how to become a better occupational therapist."

Students, who will be individually mentored by a faculty-led team of peers, will work on and complete an innovation project during the five-semester curriculum, resulting in tangible solutions that can directly impact problems in practice and where students work. McKinnon said projects could include reducing the time it takes for a patient in the emergency room to be seen by an OT or creating more effective teaching methods.

McKinnon, who previously worked at Massachusetts General Hospital in a clinical role, noted the program will incorporate the Institute's innovative interprofessional education model, making it the only post-professional curriculum to include team-building skills in every course. In addition, it's the first post-professional OTD program to offer core coursework addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion for health professionals.

"As a former online post-professional student, I know firsthand the importance of linking new learning to clinical practice," she said. "When students graduate from this program, they'll be prepared to be exceptional interprofessional leaders."



Dr. Sarah McKinnon runs the post-professional OTD program.

An Inclusive Effort to Help Her Homeland

A wistful smile crosses Rawan AlHeresh's face when she sees MGH Institute students assisting Palestinian refugees with disabilities in Jordan.

The smile comes from knowing that scores of people are getting rehabilitation help they normally would not be able to receive. The wistfulness is because she too is a Jordanian from a family of Palestinian refugees who were among the more than half a million residents displaced by the creation of Israel in 1948 after World War II.

"I grew up in a developing country and my ancestors are refugees," says Dr. AlHeresh, who joined the Institute in 2017 as an assistant professor of occupational therapy with a research focus on community-based rehabilitation in developing countries and occupational and social justice among refugees. "I've always stayed connected to my country and knew that I wanted to do something positive to affect my people."

Although AlHeresh has not lived in Jordan since moving to the USA for her PhD in 2011, the story of her grandfather's relocation, along with still having relatives living in Jordan, prompted her to take a hard look at her career goals. "I would ask myself, 'What am I doing? Should I continue to stay comfortable, or should I take a gamble?'" she recalls. "I thought I should use research and education to make a difference."

The result? She founded Toward an All-Inclusive Jordan, an initiative that focuses on rehabilitation, clinical training, and advocacy for adults and children with disabilities. Thanks to a seed grant from the Institute and the global health department at Massachusetts General Hospital, her interprofessional initiative has brought together 20 students from occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, physical therapy, nursing, and physician assistant studies to work at the Baqa'a and Gaza refugee camps in Jordan.



Dr. Rawan AlHeresh founded Toward an All-Inclusive Jordan to provide rehabilitation services for adults and children with disabilities.

During their stay, which is overseen by AlHeresh and other faculty members including Susan Lambrecht Smith, an assistant professor of speech-language pathology, the students have conducted hundreds of patient evaluations, held workshops, and led educational sessions for parents and local rehabilitation workers who want to learn more about disability issues.

"No one has really done any research on how rehabilitation service delivery can improve people's lives in Jordan—so it's like starting from ground zero."

- DR. RAWAN ALHERESH

AlHeresh has co-authored papers with several of the OT students who stayed in Amman for three months to complete their capstone projects in 2019, the results of which she will incorporate into her research. "No one has really done any research on how rehabilitation service delivery can improve people's

lives in Jordan, so it's like starting from ground zero," she says, noting that a lack of practitioners—the World Health Organization reports that low- and middle-income countries have fewer than 10 rehab practitioners per 1 million population—and persistent cultural stigmas are major roadblocks to overcome. As it is, she expects it will take 25 to 30 years to implement large-scale changes related to effective approaches to access to rehabilitation in low- and middle-income countries.

Although it's been just two years since the project began, her work is being noticed already. AlHeresh received the 2019 Thomas S. Durant Fellowship in Refugee Medicine from Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Global Health, and in November received an award from the Jordan Ministry of Youth.

"This work is an extension of being a scientist who grew up in a developing country," she says. "As faculty and students, we have responsibilities toward making the world a more inclusive place."

Watch Dr. AlHeresh and IHP students talk about their experiences at www.mghihp.edu/Jordan

An Initiative to Promote More Nursing Research

Andy Phillips enjoys challenging the status quo.

Shortly after becoming a nurse in 2008, he realized that many of his new nursing colleagues in New York had established procedures that ran contrary to what he had just learned while earning his degree at Columbia University's School of Nursing. Although the alternatives worked well, they didn't align with evidence-based practice at that time.

"I was coming from a long business background where if you saw something, you spoke up to address it," said Dr. Phillips, who previously had spent over 20 years as an actuarial consultant working with collectively bargained pension and health funds. "So I did." He was shortly named co-chair of a new quality improvement committee tasked with introducing an evidence-based culture into nursing practice.

"Nursing can and needs to be more than about just treating patients at the bedside. We want them to embrace research and bring their knowledge to the forefront, because they are the ones on the front lines of what works and what doesn't."

- DR. ANDY PHILLIPS

"It was an important goal, especially with the busy working environment of nurses focused on the care of patients and the limited time available for research," said Phillips. These efforts to achieve a change in nursing culture encouraged him to pursue a PhD in nursing informatics, focused on



Dr. Andy Phillips speaking during a recent event at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital.

examining methods to evaluate change in health care systems.

He will now combine his business acumen, negotiating skills, data collection, and teaching as the first director of nursing research at the Spaulding Rehabilitation Network.

The first step, he says, is for nurses to see themselves differently. "Nursing can and needs to be more than about just treating patients at the bedside," said Phillips, an assistant professor of nursing at the MGH Institute since 2013, who will continue teaching. "We want them to embrace research and bring their knowledge to the forefront, because they are the ones on the front lines of what works and what doesn't."

Maureen Banks, Spaulding's chief nursing and operating officer, agrees. "While research has been a core element to Spaulding's mission for many years, our nurses have not been as active in research as possible," says Dr. Banks, who earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice

from the Institute in 2019. "We have done a significant amount of work throughout the years to utilize evidence-based practice, so Andy's role will really enable us to create the framework needed to have our staff nurses integrate research into practice."

Leveraging the interdisciplinary nature of rehabilitation care, Phillips believes, provides an environment that can lead to new areas of nursing research and participation. "Scholarship and research are often done by a small core of people who have a passion for it. Bringing this passion to all of nursing is the real challenge of culture change."

In the meantime, Phillips will take his message across the Spaulding system, meeting nurses where they work to encourage them to take that first research step. "It's something that's going to take nurturing, and that's fine," he says. "I've always found it fun to be a part of trying to change things to make them better."

A Patient's Testament to Excellence

There are patient testimonials. And then there is this testament about Gayun Chan-Smutko, associate director of the MGH Institute's genetic counseling program and an associate professor: "I am alive today because of her. My family is thriving today because of her. And, because of her, our future is brighter than we could have ever imagined."

Those words come from an essay written by Liza Talusan, who first met Chan-Smutko 15 years ago at the MGH Cancer Center. Talusan's young daughter had just been diagnosed with retinoblastoma, a cancer that would result in the loss of her eye.

"After I received my child's diagnosis, I hated hospitals. I was angry at doctors, nurses, treatment centers, and I was even angry at myself," wrote Talusan. "Though Gayun was delivering difficult news, she gave me one of the greatest gifts—the gift of knowing that it wasn't my fault and that my body and my genetics held the ending to my story long before it was written. Gayun helped me to trust medicine, to trust health care, and to trust myself through my child's treatment."

Talusan's essay led to Chan-Smutko being named the 2019 Genetic Counselor of the Year by Invitae, a California genetic testing company that sponsors an annual event honoring genetic counselors. Chan-Smutko is quick to downplay the recognition, also known as the Code Talkers Award (a play on genetic code and counseling), noting the two other finalists were just as qualified.

The women have remained in touch throughout the years. Chan-Smutko was there to counsel Talusan and her sister when they both tested positive for the BRCA1 "breast and ovarian cancer" gene. "It's all about relationship building and meeting the needs of patients," said Chan-Smutko. "Just like in Liza's case,



Photo: Simon Simard

Dr. Gayun Chan-Smutko, left, helped Liza Talusan and her family deal with several medical issues.

the results of genetic testing can affect not just one person but an entire family."

Championing Diversity

Since arriving at the Institute in 2018 as one of the genetic counseling program's first faculty, Chan-Smutko has served on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council and several sub-committees. She also was an early member of the planning committee for the Power, Privilege, and Positionality event, held for new students each semester to spur conversation and raise awareness on campus about issues surrounding implicit bias in health care.

"Gayun helped me to trust medicine, to trust health care, and to trust myself through my child's treatment."

- LIZA TALUSAN

Throughout her teaching career, Chan-Smutko has incorporated examinations of diversity into her classes. Past

speakers have included Talusan, who for more than two decades has been a facilitator of conversations in schools about diversity, racism, bias, privilege, and power. Chan-Smutko hopes to have Talusan speak to her students in the coming months.

Her efforts championing diversity have not gone unnoticed. At the 2019 National Society of Genetic Counselors' annual conference, she received the inaugural Leader in Diversity & Inclusion Award, which "recognizes one outstanding individual who has demonstrated leadership and/or exemplary achievements in dedication to diversity and inclusion efforts within the genetic counseling profession."

"Gayun's participation will positively impact future genetic counselors and other health professionals," said Maureen Flynn, director of the Institute's genetic counseling program and one of several Institute faculty who nominated Chan-Smutko for the NSGC award. "Potentially it will help to shift our field to further integrate diversity and become a more inclusive profession with which to serve our colleagues and patients."

MGH Institute Continues Its Solid Financial Health

The MGH Institute continued its decade-long pattern of positive financial health in Fiscal Year 2019, which ended September 30, 2019.

According to Atlas Evans, the vice president for finance and administration, operating revenues grew 4.8 percent to \$60.1 million, net assets increased 6.3 percent to \$91 million, and total assets improved 3.0 percent to \$125.6 million.

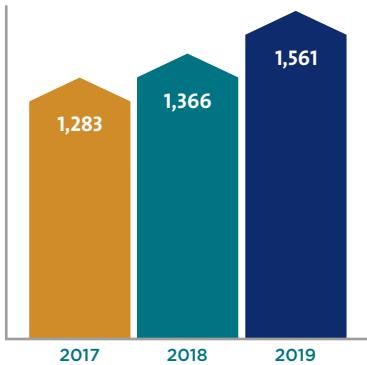
Fundraising efforts at the IHP also continued their recent upward trend. The number of gifts received by the Institute over the past three years increased 21.6 percent, from 1,283 in Fiscal Year 2017 to 1,561 in Fiscal Year 2019.

Clare McCully, the chief development officer, believes the jump is a reflection of the Institute's growing prominence as one of the country's premier health professions graduate schools.

"Our alumni, regardless of when they graduated, have always known how good the Institute is and the quality education they received," said McCully, "so I think their pride in the IHP has contributed to more of them contributing. But more donations have come from people who don't have such a direct connection, and to me that is an indication of how others perceive the school and that they want to help support our mission."

To view more details on the Institute's FY19 financial report, please go to www.mghihp.edu/FY19.

Number of Donations, 2017–2019



A Prescription to Improve Substance Abuse Treatment

The MGH Institute is among just 19 colleges in the country that are participating in a federal initiative to dramatically increase the number of nurses and physician assistants who can treat patients with substance abuse disorders.

Through a grant funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, School of Nursing faculty Susan Stevens and Jason Lucey are partnering with Chris Shaw and Dawn Williamson from Massachusetts General Hospital's Addiction Consult Team to implement a program that expands on the federal 2016 Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. When NP and PA students graduate this spring, they will be among the first new practitioners who will be eligible to immediately receive a waiver to prescribe medication-assisted treatment and overdose-reversal medications such as buprenorphine.

"There's a major demand for more substance abuse providers—because the opioid epidemic is not letting up."

— DR. SUSAN STEVENS

According to Dr. Stevens, the grant's principal investigator, as many as 450 new graduates have received an additional 24 hours of training over the past three years. "There's a major demand for more substance abuse providers because the opioid epidemic is not letting up," said Stevens, noting that Massachusetts continues to have the highest rates of opioid deaths in the country. "This is a way to substantially



Dr. Susan Stevens is partnering with IHP faculty member Jason Lucey and members of Massachusetts General Hospital's Addiction Consult Team so that 450 Institute graduates in the Class of 2020 will have received training.

expand the number of practitioners who can treat people with substance use disorders."

The grant, "Partnering in Recovery," follows the work done by Associate Professor Lisa Walker, director of the physician assistant studies program, who was on Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker's Medical Education Working Group on Prescription Drug Misuse. Over the past two years, the state's PA programs collaborated with the Department of Public Health to develop curriculum core competencies for PA students. The results of the effort were recently published in *The Journal of Physician Assistant Education*. "It was gratifying that all of the state's PA programs came together to develop these guidelines," Walker said. "We hope that our work can be used as a model in other states."

A close-up photograph of a woman with curly brown hair and glasses, smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding two young boys with blonde, curly hair. The boy on the left is wearing a dark t-shirt, and the boy on the right is wearing a grey t-shirt with the word "HERCULES" printed on it. They are all smiling.

From Graduate to Advocate

Rachel Sakofs, SLP '07, uses her IHP education to help her son and to raise awareness of a rare disorder.

BY BEVERLY FORD

When Rachel (Miller) Sakofs earned her Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology in 2007, little did she know how important a role her MGH Institute education would play in her family's life.

It all began several years ago when she noticed her son, Amit, was not developing as a typical 18-month-old should. "He wouldn't just go through the middle of the room to get a toy. He'd crawl over furniture, go under the couch," she recalls. "He'd find the most constrictive way to get there. He was always seeking out ways to be squeezed or touched, and he was seeking these things out from his environment. His own body wasn't providing the integration that it should, so he was seeking it from the outside world."

It turns out Amit wasn't just seeking out sensory stimulation. There were other red flags as well. Unsteady on his feet, his balance always seemed a bit off, his motor skills not up to par for his age, and his language skills behind those of other children. Sakofs, who was working in a private practice, recognized many of these early warning signs because of what she learned from IHP faculty, especially Gregory Lof, Howard Shane, and Sharon Weiss-Kapp, all of whom were influential in developing her critical thinking processes. "Every area of functioning was atypical," she says of those early days. "I just felt there had to be some underlying reason for all of these delays."

Around Amit's third birthday, she noticed something else. Light brown marks, called *café au lait* spots, had begun to form on his skin. Her pediatrician suspected the boy had a genetic disorder and referred them to a genetic counselor, who urged Sakofs and her husband, Justin, to get their son tested.

"We were honestly scared of the outcome," she recalls of those frightening days. "We had been grasping at straws, trying all kinds of different therapies and strategies, wondering

'Will this work? Will that work?' So we didn't know what to expect."

It took nearly a year for a diagnosis, and when the news came back it wasn't good. Amit had neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), the most common form of three similar genetic disorders that develop in one out of about 2,500 births. The disease, which usually manifests between the ages of 10 and 20, is often marked by the presence of noncancerous tumors, typically found along nerve pathways. Depending on where those tumors, called neurofibromas, are located—whether the brain, spine, or nerves—complications including severe pain, hearing or vision loss, learning impairment, or cardiovascular issues can develop. For Amit, this diagnosis explained his developmental challenges in balance, walking, language, feeding, and sensory processing.

The diagnosis brought a kind of relief to a family that had long wondered what they could do to help their child. Now, shortly after Amit's fourth birthday, at least there was a name for the disorder, an awareness of what they might expect, and access to a network

of families that were dealing with the same challenges. What it couldn't do, however, was offer a cure.

Slow Progress

While the diagnosis gave a name to their son's condition, it didn't solve other problems like the hours of physical, occupational, and developmental therapy Amit needed or the daily routine of dealing with his condition, which all but consumed the Sakofs' lives. He had speech problems, feeding and sensory challenges, and balance and climbing issues—a mixed bag of developmental delays that required weekly visits by four different therapists. During each session, Sakofs would remain close by, learning the therapeutic techniques that would help him. In between those sessions, she would use her speech and language background to help Amit understand directions and communicate, often using music therapy and singing along to some of his favorite Leonard Cohen songs to calm his restless nature, lulling him to sleep at night.

Progress was slow. Amit's lack of core strength meant he had problems walking, crawling, even holding a fork



Rachel Sakofs had an early inkling that her son, Amit, was not developing as expected.



As a young child, Amit was constantly seeking sensory stimulation.

and spoon correctly. It prompted his parents to back off from working on his verbal skills to focus on his more pressing physical issues.

To complicate things even further, Sakofs was making regular trips from her Chicago home to Boston, where her father was battling cancer. After he passed away, the combination of grief, the daily stress of worrying about Amit, and the fact her circle of friends—unable to understand what she was going through—seemed to pull away, put the family over the edge. “The loss of my father, the loss of your typical child, the loss of the life we were trying to achieve—it was just layers of loss,” she says. “I had a hard time with that.”

By now, the couple had welcomed a baby girl, Mira, who does not have the NF1 gene. Recognizing they needed more help, they decided to move in with Justin’s parents in New Jersey. “We had to give in to the reality that we couldn’t do it on our own,” she recalls. “As much as we tried, it just wasn’t working.”

Finding a Passion

A few months after the move, Sakofs attended a nearby neurofibromatosis forum and shared her story with a man whose daughter also had the genetic condition. The opportunity to talk with someone who understood what she was going through bolstered her spirits and sparked a drive to re-enter the world at large. “I thought there was a role for me in all of this,” she says. “There’s got to be some meaning.”

An opportunity to find that meaning arrived shortly afterwards when the man from the conference asked her if she could go to Washington, D.C. to lobby Congress for more research funds to study the disorder. She said yes without hesitation. Armed with letters from neurofibromatosis sufferers and constituents affected by the disorder, Sakofs set off in February 2019 for the trip that would change her life once again.

“We stormed Capitol Hill for two days,” she says, recalling how, as a new

representative with the advocacy group Neurofibromatosis Northeast, she met with Congressional staffers, including members of Massachusetts Senator Edward Markey’s staff, to discuss the need for research funding from National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense. She made a strong first impression on the organization’s executive director, Karen Peluso.

“Being a speech-language pathologist, Rachel brings an important health care perspective when she talks with people,” says Peluso, who has been associated with the organization since 1982 and started lobbying for research funds more than 20 years ago, after her daughter was diagnosed with the condition.

Since 1996, those efforts have helped to generate about \$600 million in research funding, and it’s starting to pay off. A promising drug called selumetinib, a joint effort by pharmaceutical giants AstraZeneca and Merck & Co., is awaiting final approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Other



Amit, Mira, Rachel, and Justin enjoying a family outing.

promising cures are on the horizon, including gene-based therapy, although researchers say that's still years away from being perfected.

Today, the news is better in the Sakofs' household. Amit, now eight years old, shows the signs of a typical second-grader. Smart and personable, he still has some speech and social challenges, including some difficulty with attention, but to his mother, it's a huge difference from where he was just a few years ago.

As for Sakofs, she has found a way to channel her passion. She plans to continue her lobbying role from Florida, where the family moved in late 2019 when Justin started a new job, and hopes to start a local NF chapter there. While continuing to practice as a speech pathologist, she's looking for opportunities that utilize her strengths and experiences in related fields, such as rare genetic disorders and advocacy. As a start, she is scheduled to speak this summer at a national neurofibromatosis conference.

Whether she continues in practice or takes another direction, she'll have a new perspective on things thanks to Amit.

"He's helped me integrate everything I learned at the IHP with real life, and I feel I have grown so much as a clinician in my skills, expectations from clients and families, perspective, and being able to adapt to patient scenarios," she says. "It's been a blessing."

The family knows challenges will lie ahead, as the full impact of Amit's disorder may not be known until he reaches his thirties. Yet the future also holds promise, with a potential treatment on the horizon and perhaps eventually a cure, while Amit experiences the normal trials and tribulations of middle school, high school, and beyond.

"I'm a bit nervous about what's going to happen as he gets older, but it's so wonderful to see how far he has come," Sakofs says. "I've learned a lot from him in how he has dealt with his condition and has developed a personality that brings us so much joy. In a lot of ways, Amit has been my best teacher." ■



Today, Amit shows the signs of a typical second-grader.

"[Amit's] helped me integrate everything I learned at the IHP with real life, and I feel I have grown so much as a clinician in my skills, expectations from clients and families, perspective, and being able to adapt to patient scenarios. It's been a blessing."

- RACHEL SAKOFS

EMERGENCY



EXPORTING EXPERTISE

BY ALYSSA HAYWOOD

When the MGH Institute's Department of Continuing and Professional Development (CPD) was created in 2017, its mission was to create and support innovative continuing professional development that advances interprofessional, team-based skills and performance across all health professionals to optimize patient wellness and care delivery. Here are a few examples of how it's already having that effect.

Derek Belong (left) and Michele Rodrigues-Belong.

A Hidden Issue

Derek Belong is a captain for the New Bedford Police Department. Michele Rodrigues-Belong is the director of emergency services at South Coast Hospital Group. Together, the Belongs are working to make New Bedford a place where survivors of human trafficking can get help, thanks to what they learned at the “Human Trafficking Education and Training Academy,” sponsored last fall by the MGH Institute’s Department of Continuing and Professional Development in collaboration with the national advocacy group HEAL Trafficking.

The two-day workshop gave the couple ideas about how police and medical personnel can collaborate to combat a situation that often is hidden in plain sight. “We have a large immigrant population, and they often are vulnerable to trafficking,” says Belong, who notes that he encounters human, sex, and labor trafficking regularly. “Police officers have an opportunity to be someone’s safe person. Yes, the job’s about solving crimes, but with training, police officers can be the safe person that someone finally talks to.”

Rodrigues-Belong, who has a master’s degree in nursing administration, echoes the need for a similar approach from a health care perspective. “The literature says that at least 85 percent of people who have been trafficked report that they have also had at least one emergency department visit. That’s a huge number, and it means we’re missing a very large segment of the population if we don’t know to ask the right questions,” she says. “We have to build relationships and ask questions when patients come in to see if there are any red flags, like if they work 18-hour days. “We are here to provide assistance and resources, quickly and safely, when the victim is ready,” she adds, “but this is about much more than that. It’s about getting people out of situations where they are being taken advantage of.”

To Susan Farrell, the director of CPD, what the couple experienced is a perfect example of how the department’s myriad offerings are designed to effect change. “We design our courses specifically to help health care providers do their own work better and learn how to collaborate more effectively with others,” says Dr. Farrell, an emergency physician with over 20 years of experience in medical education at Harvard Medical School and a Master of Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. “It’s a way of exposing the Institute’s mission and expertise to a wider audience.”

It’s also a good example of how CPD offerings reach beyond the immediate health care community and create experiences that foster shared learning between participants from different backgrounds. “The course was an exciting opportunity to network with people from across the country who could help me become a better law enforcement educator, especially when it comes to training police officers about how to approach victims,” Belong says.



Dr. Susan Farrell addresses the audience at a recent CPD event.

A Literacy Gap in Children

Cindy Olson, an elementary school reading specialist at the Parkview School in Easton, Mass., had become increasingly concerned at what she was seeing in her classes. “What I have been noticing more and more over the past years is how language issues are mixed in with reading issues,” says Olson, who has 25 years of experience. “Children are having difficulty understanding how words and sentences go together to make meaning.”

Wanting to keep up with the latest trends on how to engage children more effectively, she attended “Closing the Literacy Gap in Elementary Education: The Science of Language & Literacy.” The two-day course was taught by two of the MGH Institute’s most renowned communication sciences and disorders researchers—Dr. Tiffany Hogan, director of the school’s Speech and Language (SAiL) Literacy Lab, which focuses on improving educational outcomes for children and adults with speech, language, and reading impairments, and Dr. Joanna Christodoulou, head of the BEAM Team, which uses behavioral and brain data to improve student outcomes and optimize educational interventions for struggling learners.

During the program, Olson says she learned that brain scans confirm what she sees at the elementary school: When children have a learning disability, crucial areas of their brains aren’t



Janice John of Cambridge Health Alliance is incorporating the interprofessional lessons she learned at the Institute's four-day conference.

being activated when they read. It also addressed another concern of Olson's—the effect of technology on children's communication skills.

"There's been a huge shift in society away from conversation," she notes. "Families don't talk as much at home as they used to. Middle school friends text each other instead of calling, and sometimes they text each other while in the same room to avoid talking. And often it's kids from very privileged backgrounds who converse the least because they have the most devices."

Since attending the course, Olson has shared her newfound knowledge with her colleagues and has launched a new approach. "Before, if kindergarten children didn't know their letters and letter sounds in the fall, we would drill them," she explains. "This year, we decided that these kids really need more of a language base. So every day we decided to read a picture book to them and then have them discuss the book."

The school's four kindergarten classes are being split between the two approaches. Olson plans to evaluate the children's learning to compare each group's progress, the start of what she hopes is an improved teaching and learning strategy.

An Interprofessional Approach

Janice John was already quite familiar with interprofessional education.

The associate medical director at Cambridge Health Alliance's Assembly Square Care Center in Somerville, John had been immersed in the team-based learning and care approach in her previous role as a co-director of the Crimson Care Collaborative. The program, which brings together medical and dental students from Harvard University with nurse practitioner and physician assistant students from the MGH Institute, provides primary care services at seven clinical sites in Greater Boston.

"Students learned about the other professions, but sometimes there were not enough opportunities for them to learn collaboratively while treating patients," says John, a physician assistant who is the chief PA for primary care at CHA.

Seeking a more effective approach, John attended CPD's annual "Leading Across Professions—Interprofessional Innovations to Bridge Learning and Practice" last spring. The four-day conference, held by the IHP in collaboration with the Institute for Patient Care at Massachusetts General Hospital, was exactly what she was looking for. "The course was a great opportunity to work with a team on how we can develop new teaching models," she says. "I learned a lot that I could apply working with students."

"The course was a great opportunity to work with a team on how we can develop new teaching models. I learned a lot that I could apply working with students."

- JANICE JOHN, SPEAKING ABOUT "LEADING ACROSS PROFESSIONS: INTERPROFESSIONAL INNOVATIONS TO BRIDGE LEARNING AND PRACTICE."

Interprofessional education has been one of the MGH Institute's hallmark teaching missions since its beginning, so the decision to develop a conference on the subject made perfect sense. "We've been teaching IHP students how to work in teams for decades, so why not provide this approach to other health care professionals?" says Farrell. "It was a perfect way to support the school's interprofessional mission while exposing practitioners to think more deeply about how their teams can be resilient and cohesive rather than pulling apart and falling back into their professional silos."



Gina McCarthy, the former director of the Environmental Protection Agency, is just one of many experts that have presented at CPD events over the past two years.

The course included a discussion about design thinking, a process of human-centered problem solving that John is using at CHA. “We are exploring how to bring patients’ voices into designing and delivering care so they can help determine what kind of care they will receive,” she says.

A Varied Menu

The conferences, seminars, and courses are varied. Several have touched upon topical issues, such as “Caring for Adolescents in the Age of Legalized Recreational Marijuana,” “The Impact of the Opioid Epidemic on Our Patients and Our Practice,” and the upcoming April symposium, “Climate Change & Health 2020: The Public Health Challenge of Our Time,” which will be co-sponsored with the Institute’s Center for Climate Change, Climate Justice, and Health.

Other recurring events have focused on topics specific to health care education and skill development, such as improving teaching strategies for clinical instructors, learning the skills of point-of-care ultrasound, and developing evidence-based

strategies to prevent burnout. A collaboration with Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital is in the works to create a course on helping practitioners recognize when cognitive decline is related to minor head injuries in older persons.

While Institute faculty are often featured, Farrell has also enlisted outside experts. Gina McCarthy, the former Environmental Protection Agency director, was the keynote speaker at last year’s climate change symposium. This year’s speakers will include Dr. Renee N. Salas, a Yerby Fellow at the Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment at Harvard University’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and Dr. Keith L. Seitter, executive director of the American Meteorological Society.

“We’re providing a high-quality learning experience that really furthers people’s abilities to improve people’s lives,” Farrell says. “Our offerings help develop a community of educational practice that creates real value for providers and patients alike, expanding the Institute’s mission to a new audience.” ■

“Our offerings help develop a community of educational practice that creates real value for providers and patients alike, expanding the Institute’s mission to a new audience.”

- DR. SUSAN FARRELL, CPD DIRECTOR

The Way You're Teaching Health Care Is the Right Way

Ellen O'Keefe was receiving her physical therapy care at the Marjorie K. Ionta PT Center for Clinical Education and Health Promotion, part of the MGH Institute's Dr. Charles A. and Ann Sanders IMPACT Practice Center, when Jon LaPook walked into the room and asked if he could observe the session.

Dr. LaPook, the CBS News chief medical correspondent, pulled up a chair next to her. Giving her his undivided attention, LaPook asked the Charlestown resident about the care she was getting from DPT students Kamaria Washington and Vinson Chen, both of whom were being overseen by clinical instructor Katie MacDonald of Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital.

"I'm a lot better than when I first started coming here five years ago," said O'Keefe, who had a stroke that has limited her physical activities. "It's the highlight of my week, and I look forward to coming."

LaPook shared that interaction a few hours later with the audience at "Making An Impact—The IHP Today," the MGH Institute's annual fundraiser. Last fall's event raised \$439,200 to support student scholarships, \$165,000 of which was provided thanks to the Kay Bander Matching program.

"We talk about listening to the patient all the time, and I could see that your students were doing that as they worked with her," said LaPook, who is a professor of medicine at the NYU School of Medicine and an internist and gastroenterologist at NYU Langone Health. "The way you're teaching health care is the right way."

LaPook created the NYU Langone Empathy Project, which trains health care professionals to be compassionate and empathic, in part because of a poor interaction his father had with a



Dr. Jon LaPook of CBS News shares a laugh with Ellen O'Keefe as she receives physical therapy care from DPT students Vinson Chen and Kamaria Washington.

physician. He told the gathering he learned his own listening skills as a medical intern, taking the advice of the head nurse and reading a voluminous nursing textbook ("It must have been 1,000 pages," he recalled) so he would better understand how nurses provide care. More than 30 years later, he gives similar advice to interns under his watch. "When a nurse calls you at 3 a.m. and says the patient doesn't look good, that's the end of the discussion," he said. "The nurses know what's going on."

Scholarship recipient John Paul (JP) Bonadonna, OTD '21, spoke of his advocacy for improving diversity in the health professions, both on and off campus. "Research shows that students from underserved communities tend to go back to their communities, and when patients have someone with the same background treating them, health outcomes improve significantly," he said. "That is a key reason why these scholarships are so important. If we effectively recruit students and provide them with the resources to succeed, the IHP can become part of the solution to reduce health disparities across the nation."

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Created and supported by Ms. Burr, a long-time benefactor of the IHP, this fund supports multi-week international travel and study for occupational therapy students and faculty.



"Volunteering at the Al Baqa'a refugee camp in Jordan was an experience of a lifetime. The lessons learned and knowledge obtained gave me a new perspective and skill set moving forward, personally and professionally. This opportunity lit a fire within me, and I know that soon I will return to Jordan, and hopefully explore other areas of the world, to help support a sustainable plan to increase the overall health literacy and well-being of those in need."

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Created with contributions by the Norman family as well as Chris's friends and classmates, this fund supports thesis projects and research efforts of speech-language pathology students.



"For my master's thesis, I examined how people with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) learn and remember differently than healthy individuals. Through the Christopher Norman Fund, I was able to recruit participants for this critical study. Participants completed computer tasks that simulate learning of new information, using EEG technology to measure their brain activity. Because people with TBI must learn and remember strategies to compensate for their mobility and cognitive deficits, the study's goal was to deepen the understanding of how health professionals can best support these patients and to improve their quality of life."

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Isabel C. Kessler, PA '18			Ann M. Derrick, SON '65
Julie Keyser			Patricia F. Donehower, SON '67
Evan Kha			Chanelle Doucette
Dr. Mary S. Knab, PT '02 and Ms. Joan Kargel			Lauren Doucette
Dr. Hillary A. Kocoloski, PT '07			Sade Doucette
Linda M. Kottmann, NS '91			Gail D'Ovidio
Joan Kugel, SON '60			Diane B. Drinan
Alyce Marie Kuklinski, NS '99			Jane Dunphy
La Novita Inc.			Emily Z. Eddy
Dr. Elissa Ladd and Mr. Jeffrey Liebman			Dr. Kelly Farquharson
Kristin A. Larson, NS '08			Kelly Feeney
Kate R. Latta, SON '60 and Dr. William B. Latta			Jerome J. Fitzsimmons
Janice Lemieux			Katherine Fleming, CSD '03
Peter Lewis			Kayley Fleming
Dr. Gregory L. Lof and Mr. Tom Mutschler			Dr. Loraine Fleming, NS '12
Brenda Mahnken, NS '00			Sara Franco, NS '19
Janice P. Maienza, NS '88			Anna H. Fredman, CSD '10
David Martin			Laura M. Galbraith, PA '18
Laura McAnena			Dr. Dorothy J. Galbreath, PT '11
Dr. Anne McCarthy Jacobson, PT '99, '02 and Mr. Erik D. Jacobson			Michelle M. Gardner, PT '94
Toniann McFadden			Catherine Gessner
Casey McVicar			Doreen M. Giamarco, CSD '98
			Diane Gillis, NS '08
			Diana B. Glidden, NS '08
			Matthew B. Goss, PA '18
			Richard Goss

THE MGH INSTITUTE FUND

Funding to attend the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's National Forum came from alumni who donated specifically in support of the School of Nursing.



"Attending the Forum was truly inspiring and reinvigorating to be able to be surrounded by a network of over 5,000 individuals, all of whom are passionate about making a difference both in their work and in this world that we all call home. Not only did I walk away from the event with new tools, but I resolved to share what I learned with my peers and colleagues so we can and will make a change."

- Alexa McWhinnie, MSN '20

DR. CHARLES A. AND ANN SANDERS INTERPROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Created and supported by the Sanders family in recognition of Dr. Sanders' role in creating the Institute, this fund promotes participation in regional, national, and international interprofessional learning experiences.



"Coming from an undeveloped country, I knew at a young age I wanted to work in the health care field with patients who often are financially disadvantaged and lack the resources for optimal medical care. Before coming to the IHP, I had the chance to work in several hospital departments where I was able to experience how an interprofessional team can provide improved patient care. Being a great physician assistant is learning to have patience, empathy, and compassion as we are entrusted to care for patients when they are at their weakest moments."

- Rejvi Shaju, PAS '21

Valerie J. Grande and Ann W. Noble	Elizabeth Lee	Cecelia Plaehn	Dr. Maureen A. Sroczynski, NS '12
Marilyn M. Greehan, SON '54	Brooke Lenahan Aronson	Eileen Plaehn	Aldo Staffieri
Judi S. Greenberg and Joshua D. Levine	Nate Levin	Molly Plaehn	Laura Sternberg
Dr. Katherine Breen Grevelding, PT '00, '02	Natalie and Christopher Lewis	Hannah Potter	Katia Stie
Sasha Gunther	Grace Lilienthal	Lauren Putnam	John Sullivan
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Gwon	Jack Lindsay	Ann R. Quealy, SON '64	Anthony Susi
Sara Hall	Nina Lipton	Dr. Lisa Quinn	Jeanette Takita, SON '60
Edward Hammond	Arturo Lopez-Casanova	Quinn Physical Therapy	Jermaine Dario Thomas
Dr. Barbara A. Hannon-Vishio, NS '14	Daniel Lustick	Frank B. Rabadam, PT '98	Sarah B. Thompson, NS '93
Elizabeth Harriman, CSD '02	Keanna Macchiarulo	Adam Rainville	Dr. Minhee Throneburg, PT '09 and Mr. Josh Throneburg
Alison Hayashi	Amanda Mack	Elyse B. Raymond, NS '17	Joan M. Tincher, NS '92
Kathryn Hazelwood	Anne Mackenzie	Sheila Regan	Robin Tucceri
Pauline Herthel	Ellen Mackler	Gabrielle Rex	Scott Urban
Dr. Paul Hildreth, PT '06	Stephanie Marble	Raquel Reynolds	Dr. Mary L. S. Vachon, SON '65
Amanda Holden	Savannah Marcelino	Christina Riccio, NS '12	Sofia Vallila Rohter
Jessica Hopkins	Stephanie Masick, NS '05	Carolyn M. Rochon-Abruzzo, NS '86	Ann Vincente
Daniel Humphrey	Alicia Matarese	Desiree Rogers	Kenneth Wakwe
Kathleen Huynh	Ashley Mathew	Frank Romano	Christine Walsh
Sarah Jagdmann	Elizabeth Matzkin	Jess Romeo	Elizabeth C. Walsh, NS '05
Natalya Jenney	Matthew McGowan	Susan Rubinstein	Anyi Wang
Jessica Jonas	Paul McGowan	Kathryn Sabo	Zoe Warren
Mr. & Mrs. Allan & Susan Jussaume	Patricia J. McLoughlin, NS '95	George and Carole Sacerdote	Sheila Watters
Mollie Kam	Laura Mellick	Tiffanie Sainte-Quackenbush	Colleen H. Webb, NS '11
Amy Bowman Karas, CSD '96	Joshua Merson	Rachel E. Sakofs, CSD '07	Samantha Webb
Dana L. Karash, NS '03	Yuliya Metelitsa-Moss, CSD '06	Kira Sass	Erik Weigand
Barbara J. Kaslow, SON '55	Teresa A. Mirabito, NS '95	Marianne Savastano, CSD '02	Helen Wen
Dr. Richard J. Katz, PT '04 and Ms. Janet R. Katz	Mark Moody, CI '09 and Kristen N. Moody	Patricia Scharfe	Benjamin White
Kerry Kearns	Emily W. Moore, SON '57	Amy L. Schmidt, CSD '07	Richard Wilk
Jeffrey Kerbel	Gregory Moore	Dr. Catherine Schmidt, PT '07	Lori A. Williams, NS '90
Mitchell Kimber, NS '19	Lisa M. Morrissey, NS '16	Dr. Kim Schoessow	Michael Williams
Joanna Kreisel	Beth O'Connor	Sarah Schwarzschild	Julika Wocial
Patti Kwedor-Ivy	Patrice M. Osgood	Tovah Segelman, CSD '03	Dr. John Wong
Brooke Labonte	Kevin Papargiris	Dr. James Seykot, PT '15	Melissa Wood, CSD '03
Susan (Kloss) Lanen, NS '92	Brian Paris	Kristen Shannon	Dr. Eileen Wu, PT '06 and Dr. Eddie Kim
Brian Lasonde	Dr. Alisa A. Pascale, NS '15	Caitlyn Shea	Mei Xu
	Patricia Pierce	Marie L. Sheehy, NS '85	Cathlyn Yu, CSD '15
	Mallory Pingeton	Kiang Soon	Dr. Lauryn Zipse
	Allison Pinto	Kari Spaeth	

Class Notes

Class Notes are compiled through a variety of sources, including information sent in by alumni, hospital publications within Partners HealthCare and beyond, and public information released by various organizations.

The following abbreviations are used in Class Notes: BWH – Brigham and Women's Hospital; MGH – Massachusetts General Hospital; SRN – Spaulding Rehabilitation Network.

Communication Sciences and Disorders

Last fall, five graduates who earned their Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology degree at the IHP joined the largest contingent of students in the PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences program's history. The alumni are (l-r) Xue Bao '18, Melissa Feller '04, Marc Maffei '16, Amy Maguire '12, and Carla (Tierney) Hendricks '12.



Dietetics

Jill Castle, MS-Dietician '95, presented a TEDx talk entitled "The Nutrition Prescription for Healthier Kids" in which she explained the misconceptions people have about feeding their children and how to integrate a more comprehensive nutrition education program into food culture. One of the nation's top childhood nutrition experts, Jill is the author of *Eat Like a Champion: Performance Nutrition for Your Young Athlete* and co-author of *Fearless Feeding: How to Raise Healthy Eaters from High Chair to High School*.

Nursing

Deborah Meehan, MSN '89, a staff nurse at Swedish Health Services in Seattle, WA, was among the volunteers highlighted in the Washington state hospital system's "Good For Health" initiative. Deborah is committee chair and chief executive for a local Boy Scout troop.

Gargi Cooper, MSN '03, a nurse practitioner with Lynn Community Health Center, was quoted in a story in the *Daily Item*

of Lynn about its recuperative care center that helps the homeless in that city. Gargi also serves as the medical director of recuperative care at the respite center run by the human services agency Bridgewell.

Julie Chan, MSN '10, a pediatric nurse practitioner at the Lynn Community Health Center, was quoted in a *Lynn Journal* story supporting a plan to distribute contraceptives to high school students in that city.

Awards Nominations Due March 20

Know of an alumna/e who is doing great things—even yourself? If so, please nominate them for one of the IHP's two annual alumni awards. The **Bette Ann Harris Distinguished Alumni Award** is the highest form of recognition awarded to an alumna/e who graduated from the Institute at least 10 years ago. The **Emerging Leader Alumni Award** recognizes the accomplishments of an alumna/e who graduated less than 10 years ago. Go to mghihp.edu/alumni-awards-and-honors to submit a nomination. Entries are due March 20.

A Mini-Alumni Gathering

Three MSN graduates, along with School of Nursing Professor Inge Corless, met this fall during the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care meeting in Seattle (l-r): **Meghan Noonan Feldpausch, MSN '06**, an NP at the MGH Program in Nutritional Metabolism; **Kathleen Fitch, MSN '01**, the program manager of the REPRIEVE (Randomized Trial to Prevent Vascular Events in HIV) study at MGH and an NP at the MGH Program in Nutritional Metabolism; Dr. Corless; and **Sarah Williams, MSN '03**, an NP at the Michael Reese Research and Education Foundation Care Program in Chicago. Kathleen and Meghan gave presentations during the meeting.



Molly Gundlach, BSN '11, co-sponsored a new wound treatment associate program at Cape Cod and Falmouth hospitals, where nurses will now use it to learn best practices in providing evidence-based wound care.

Rita Olans, DNP '13, authored, "Nurse and antimicrobial stewardship: Efforts are underway to address the looming crisis" for *American Nurse*.

Emily Elgert, MSN '19, is a family nurse practitioner at the Community Health Center of Cape Cod.

Marissa Stevens, MSN '19, is working at the Lovering Health Center in Greenland, NH. In a news release, Mari said that her IHP education taught her "to be a mindful care provider."

Physical Therapy

Monica Neal, DPT '04, writes, "I miss the Institute and am thrilled to see all the advancements since my time there." Monica, the director of rehabilitation services and diabetes clinic at New Orleans East Hospital, recently founded meta3 Coaching, LLC to provide coaching and strategies for health care leaders, providers, and patients.

Colleen Peyton, DPT '04, an assistant professor of physical therapy and human movement sciences and pediatrics at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, was a co-author on "False Negatives: Delayed Zika effects in babies who appeared normal at birth," which was published in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Catherine Hoell, DPT '08, lead clinical therapist at Oppenheim Rehabilitation Center in Chatham, was interviewed for the story, "Do You Really Need a Formal Exercise Program?", published in *CapeCod.com*.

Rebecca Martin, DPT '10, was among several rehabilitation professionals who presented a seminar on Parkinson's disease to the Potsdam, NY, community.

Saloni Doshi, DPT '12, who works at BWH, was interviewed for the *Harvard Health Letter* article, "Is it too late to save your posture?"

Eric L'Italien, DPT '14, who works at SRN-Charlestown, was interviewed in the *Harvard Health* article, "Straight Talk on Planking."

Physician Assistant Studies

Isabel Kessler, MPAS '18, presented "First-Time Seizure" as part of the Pediatric Neurology Lecture Series at USA Health Strada Patient Care Center in Mobile, AL. A physician assistant in neurosciences at USA Health, Isabel is a member of the American Academy of Physician Assistants and the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians.

We invite you to submit your news and photos to alumni@mghihp.edu, or at www.mghihp.edu/alumni.

A Death in the Emergency Room

It was around 4 a.m. and I was working in a slightly less-acute section of the Massachusetts General Hospital emergency room, right next to the ambulance entrance. As I grabbed supplies from an IV cart, I heard the hospital garage doors open and watched as an ambulance came roaring in.

The EMTs jumped out, pulling out a stretcher with a patient who was in cardiac arrest. He had a Lucas machine strapped around him doing automatic CPR compressions. Comatose, eyes wide open, the patient stared blankly into space while his chest wall was pumped aggressively. He looked about my age, in his late twenties, and very slender. Even during my time as an EMT before starting the physician assistant studies program at the Institute, I had encountered few such young people in cardiac arrest.

My preceptor, an emergency room physician, grabbed me, and we followed the ambulance team into the acute section of the ER where the EMTs gave report: a single-car accident, car vs. tree, the patient found just outside his vehicle.

Before I knew it, the surgery team had performed a thoracotomy and set to work, the surgeon doing a cardiac massage. My preceptor was explaining to me everything that was going on, but it was all happening so fast I had a hard time retaining anything. I just kept looking at the patient's face, wondering who he was, where his parents were, who his friends were, what his life was like.

After just a few minutes, the surgeon announced the man had died. The two dozen people in the room—the PAs, EMTs, firefighters, residents, nurses, students, and doctors—fell silent, bowing their heads in a brief moment of silence. Then, one by one, the students and residents went up to look at the chest cavity, touch the patient's heart, feel the anatomy, ask questions. This is



why I came to graduate school in the first place: to learn. I went into student mode, looking for signs of trauma, questioning whether drugs or alcohol had been involved, etc.

Suddenly, I remembered that this was someone's son, brother, nephew, friend. My emotions overwhelmed me. I felt sick.

There are going to be patients that you'll remember forever, and as sad as it was, you can learn from it.

Everyone returned to their chairs and pretended to work again. No one was talking about that this young man had just died. The silence was difficult to grapple with. I asked my preceptor a random question about a different patient we had together, but saw tears shimmering in her eyes. She answered with a slight quiver in her voice. Even with years of experience, she too was trying to swallow her own emotions over such a tragedy.

I needed to process what I just experienced. After my shift ended, I went home and talked it over with my roommate and friends. I took a long bike ride, then a long run. No matter what I did, I couldn't get rid of the pit in my stomach.

At the beginning of my next shift, I brought up the young man's death to another preceptor. He told me that talking about these types of cases is vital, that there are going to be patients that you'll remember forever, and as sad as it was, you can learn from it.

It's an odd feeling to think you can handle anything and, in an instant, be humbled in the face of trauma as your feelings suddenly push aside your training. Surrendering to these moments and embracing your natural feelings is important. But that doesn't make it any easier to get used to, and I don't expect it ever will.

Adam Raphael is a physician assistant studies student in the Class of 2021.

Interested in writing about a health care experience for Last Words? Please email to news@mghihp.edu.



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Running the 2020 Marathon for the IHP



Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy Kimberly Erler (right), who earned her PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences from the IHP in 2017, and Jordan Griffiths, a 2019 Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology graduate, are this year's Team IHP members who will run the 2020 Boston Marathon in April. Kim is supporting student scholarships and financial aid, while Jordan's efforts will assist the IMPACT Practice Center.

To become part of an initiative that has raised more than \$140,000 since 2011, please go to mgihp.edu/TeamIHP2020 or scan the QR Code.


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