

# MGH INSTITUTE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

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



## Legacy of Leadership

**President Paula Milone-Nuzzo heads into retirement with MGH Institute enjoying record-high enrollment and financial stability.**

Deborah Jones Appointed  
MGH Institute President

PAGE 11

Research Funding Soars  
Above National Average

PAGE 23

Hacking Assistive  
Technology

PAGE 28

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# Table of Contents



## First Words ..... 2

President Paula Milone-Nuzzo looks back on the last eight years in her final First Words.

## Five Questions ..... 3

Teresa Kimberley discusses the state of stroke recovery, who receives rehabilitation, and what a better path would be.

## COVER STORY

### Legacy of Leadership ..... 4

See how President Paula Milone-Nuzzo guided the Institute through challenging times to today's financial stability and record-high enrollment.



## New Leader, New Chapter ..... 11

The University of Texas Medical Branch's Deborah Jones has been tapped to succeed President Milone-Nuzzo.

## Along the Waterfront ..... 12

A recap of campus news including the appointment of the new School of Nursing dean, national recognition for faculty, a farewell to three retirees, and the launch of the Center for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.



## Commencement ..... 18

Look back at the 2025 commencement.

## Collaboration ..... 20

Read about a few of the partnerships the MGH Institute has with local and international institutions.

## Research Roundup ..... 23

Learn about the Institute's research funding and recent initiatives.

## Student Service ..... 28

Students are making a difference by working with children in Charlestown, promoting stroke awareness, and developing assistive technology for local residents.

## Alumni News ..... 31

Meet alumni who are helping students gain experience and connections with the MGH Institute, and those who supported students by running the Boston Marathon.

## Last Words ..... 36

A Physician Assistant's Look Back, and Forecast Forward: Michael Mendes, MPAS, PA-C.

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# Reflecting on All We Have Accomplished

Dear Friends,

As I write this final message to you all, I can't help but reflect on the last eight years and the many accomplishments and challenges we've had.

When I arrived at the MGH Institute in August of 2017, I found exceptional academic programs, a thriving community full of accomplished faculty, staff, and students, and simply an amazing place doing impactful work. We were in good financial health and had a wonderful Board of Trustees supporting us. But I kept hearing that the IHP is one of Boston's best kept secrets and I wondered, "Why would we want to keep such an incredible gem hidden from the larger community?" As I began telling the IHP story to whomever would listen, I saw people get as excited about our work as I was. That validated what I knew to be true: the IHP was a unique environment making an exceptional difference in the lives of many.

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**For me, the people will be the hardest to leave. Each of you has made me a better person and leader in some way and I can't thank you enough for that.**

Along with the upswings, there have been some downswings too. Eighteen months into my presidency, COVID walloped the United States and like everyone else, we were not prepared for such a devastating illness. When we first heard about the virus, I sent our faculty and staff home for two weeks only to have that time extended over and over.

Like most of higher education, we weathered the pandemic, but the residual effects were difficult. As a

health professions school, our enrollment suffered a one-two punch from an overall drop in higher education applications, and the negative perception of a career in health care delivery, all of which significantly impacted our finances. Thankfully, in the ensuing years, our enrollment rebounded to more than 1900 students, our highest ever. The growth is twofold: students enrolling in programs we already have, and in new programs we continue to develop. Since I arrived, the Institute has never been stronger than it is now; we have a bright future.

The Institute holds a privileged place as the only degree granting entity within the Mass General Brigham (MGB) system. Through our collaborative work, we have demonstrated the value of the Institute to the MGB workforce, as reflected in staff retention and enhancement of a true learning environment. I have always felt that we're an important asset to the system and we have worked hard to make that value visible and tangible for MGB.

For me, the people will be the hardest to leave. I have been blessed with an incredibly supportive Board of Trustees who trusts my judgment, provides support when needed, and offers wise counsel on the challenges facing the Institute. Board Chair Jeanette Ives Erickson has been a dream to work with and I can't thank her enough for taking this journey with me. My Cabinet and Executive Council are made of incredibly talented leaders who know their work and are devoted to the Institute and its vitality. Having such talented people around makes the President's role far more effective.

I have loved meeting and getting to know the donors who have listened to my stories over many a lunch meeting and invested in our success. The same can be said of our accomplished alumni



**Paula Milone-Nuzzo,  
President and John Hilton  
Knowles Professor**

who have taken their degrees and gone on to be leaders in their fields, making a name for themselves while enhancing the name and reputation of our cherished institution. I am going to miss every single faculty, staff, and student who create the environment that I have grown to love. They are the heart and soul of this vibrant community and the reason the IHP is such an amazing place. Each of you has made me a better person and leader in some way and I can't thank you enough for that.

As I think about the future, I am grateful for the time I spent here; every day has been an honor to serve as your president. I know the IHP will continue to flourish and grow in the years to come, and I can't wait to see all the upcoming successes.

Warmly,  
Paula

## FIVE QUESTIONS

# Teresa Kimberley

*Teresa Kimberley, Director of the MGH Institute's Brain Recovery Lab, was among the team of stroke experts that helped the American Heart Association (which oversees the American Stroke Association) issue a new policy statement calling for stroke survivors to be discharged based on their functional needs, not their zip code, insurance, or a doctor's cultural competency.*

*In this edition of "Five Questions," OSC's Sean Hennessey spoke with the veteran stroke researcher about the state of stroke recovery, determinants of who receives rehabilitation, and what a better path would be.*

**1** **You recently helped craft a new policy statement from the American Heart Association that says stroke survivors must be discharged based on their functional needs. Can you expand on that?**

**Teresa Kimberley:** Your health and recovery needs should determine where you go after the acute care hospital stay. However, those are not the primary factors determining where people go when they leave the acute care hospital. Numerous studies indicate that factors besides the care team's assessment determine where you go (e.g., insurance, race, age, geographic region). If you have the capacity to participate in three hours of therapy per day after your stroke, you should go to an inpatient rehabilitation hospital, like Spaulding. If you do not have the capacity to do that, you might be a better fit for a skilled nursing facility. You may also be discharged home and have access to home health or outpatient rehabilitation. Disturbingly, inpatient rehabilitation may not even be presented as an option to you and your family. You, as the stroke survivor or care partner, might not even know that such a thing exists, what the differences in your experience will be, or how that may affect your ultimate recovery.

**2** **What needs to happen in this space for stroke survivors to get better long-term care?**

**TK:** The acute stroke care goal is to save lives, but another important role is to assess the patient's need and capacity for continued recovery. Acute care rehabilitation professionals (physical, occupational, and speech therapists) should evaluate patients before discharge. The whole care team should discuss the best option for this person, based on their medical and recovery needs. Families also need to be educated about what their loved ones will receive during the next and vital stage of recovery. The difference may be profound—three hours of therapy daily versus 45 minutes once or twice weekly.

**3** **How does it happen that there's no systematic way to handle stroke survivors the same way?**

**TK:** It is multifaceted. There isn't funding for help with transitions in care or a mandated framework for the decision and referral process. More research is needed to understand which factors predict optimal recovery and response to therapy. Transitions in care are a time-consuming, complex process to do well, and our care teams are already stretched. There is also an issue of access to inpatient rehabilitation, and, throughout the country, there are diverse cultural norms for care after stroke.

**4** **Is funding the common denominator here?**

**TK:** It is an important factor. Not all of stroke care is well-funded. Rehabilitation access is not generally reimbursed at high rates, and there are limits to the amount of therapy you can receive, depending on your insurance. With some health insurance plans (i.e., Medicare Advantage), you may only get



a handful of rehabilitation visits. The health system may be incentivized not to provide much rehabilitation, even after something as impactful as a stroke. Often, however, people don't understand this critical variable when purchasing plans. Disturbingly, it has been uncovered that some Medicare Advantage providers have systematic processes to deny coverage.

**5** **How can long-term stroke care get better?**

**TK:** We need to convince the government and hospital systems to understand and value the benefits of rehabilitation. This will improve reimbursement, and systems will prioritize rehabilitation. To achieve that, we need more comparative effectiveness studies that use outcome measures related to the person's level of function, not just hospital readmission. We need to have studies that help aid in predictive outcome decision-making. These are tough studies to do, but evidence is required to change policies.



# Legacy of Leadership

**President Paula Milone-Nuzzo heads into retirement with MGH Institute enjoying record-high enrollment and financial stability.**

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BY ALYSSA HAYWOOD

(l to r) Matthew Ma, PA '26; President Paula Milone-Nuzzo; Brooklyn Saucedo, PA '26, and Jochebed Kim, PA '26.

# W

# herever Milone-Nuzzo has worked, she has focused on caring for, educating, encouraging, and elevating people and their communities.

Paula Milone-Nuzzo, PhD, RN, FHN, FAAN, has held many titles—professor at Southern Connecticut State University, associate dean at Yale’s School of Nursing, dean of nursing at Pennsylvania State University, and president of the MGH Institute of Health Professions—but the role that best defines the spirit of her legacy is community health nurse. Wherever Dr. Milone-Nuzzo has worked, she has focused on caring for, educating, encouraging, and elevating people and their communities.

“What I saw and continue to see in Paula is that she is committed to making things better and to developing people,” says Catherine Gilliss, dean emerita at Duke University’s School of Nursing and the former dean of Yale’s School of Nursing, where she was Milone-Nuzzo’s colleague and mentor.

“Paula feels called to serve. She is insightful and observant without being showy,” Gilliss adds. “She takes on the conflicts and takes on the work of resolving conflicts. She does not want to be the singer in the band. She will always be playing the rhythmic bass guitar.”

It’s an approach that has carried Milone-Nuzzo from the classroom, where she fell in love with teaching, to serving on the board of the American Academy of Nursing, to her leadership career in higher education. And it’s these skills and experiences that have seen her through a myriad of challenges including a global pandemic.

And while Milone-Nuzzo has now decided to retire from her role as Institute president, she will continue to invest in people.

“I’ve had a great career, and people have helped me along the way,” Milone-Nuzzo says. “I think everybody needs a little help. Often, people struggle when there’s really no reason to. There are administrative hurdles that can be frustrating, so I try to move those out of the way. People do have to work hard. But if we, as leaders, can help people be successful, then I feel their success is our success.”

## Becoming a new president

When the MGH Institute’s Board of Trustees was looking for a new president, Milone-Nuzzo was the dean of nursing at Pennsylvania State University. She and her team had transformed Penn State’s nursing program into the independent College of Nursing, elevating its status on campus and nationally, and helping the research enterprise rise to a ranking of 17th in funding from the National Institutes of Health.

She was also investing in people.

“Paula was interested in all of the faculty,” recalls Lisa Kitko, a former Penn State PhD student and instructor and current dean of the University of Rochester’s School of Nursing. “When I completed my PhD, I thought I’d be happy as a non-tenure track professor. But Paula mentored me and encouraged me to think about a career in research, and she encouraged me to pursue tenure. With all the people she mentored, Paula took an individualized approach to setting people up for success.”

That reputation appealed to the MGH Institute’s Board of Trustees, and Milone-Nuzzo received a call from Board Chair George Thibault, who told her about the Institute and its presidency.

“When George called, I knew I wanted a different leadership challenge,” Milone-Nuzzo says, “and I was impressed by how interprofessionalism was woven into the school’s DNA. It was a community of scholars and students working toward the common good.”

For Thibault, hiring Milone-Nuzzo was the clear and promising choice.

“Among all the candidates, Paula stood out because of her broad experience as an academic leader at Penn State and at Yale,” Thibault recalls. “Besides her acknowledged leadership in nursing, she had also been a leader in interprofessional education at Penn State. We felt she had the vision, experience, and national reputation to take us to the next level. And we were right!”

Milone-Nuzzo arrived on campus as the new president just in time for the 2017 fall semester.

Those early days, Milone-Nuzzo recalls, were a time of listening and learning. She got to know faculty, staff, students, and the Institute's Charlestown community. She was an experienced nursing leader who became a student of occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology so she could effectively guide every program. And she continued her signature role as chief barrier-mover and chief motivator.

Professor Emerita Pat Reidy, DNP, FNP-BC, FNAP, FAAN, who recently served as interim dean of the Nursing School, points to Milone-Nuzzo's administrative achievements, including taking on the work of finding clinical placements for the school's Nurse Practitioner program students. But it was the president's belief in and support of her people that really stood out.

"I remember Paula coming up to me at an employee appreciation event, and she encouraged me to apply for the American Academy of Nursing," Dr. Reidy says. "I really appreciated that because at the time, I didn't think I qualified for the Academy, but Paula is very encouraging. And in 2020 I was inducted."

Provost Reamer Bushardt, PharmD, PA-C, DFAAPA, sums up Milone-Nuzzo's approach, saying, "She is a character-driven, high-integrity, caring leader. She draws energy from her connections with students, faculty, and staff."

"Some university presidents are so heavily focused on external relations and fundraising that they are harder to get to know. Paula is not that kind of president. She certainly does the important external work, but she devotes significantly more of her time to the internal life of the Institute."

## Growing a small graduate school that's part of large healthcare system

Milone-Nuzzo has shepherded the MGH Institute's growth on multiple fronts: improving students' educational and clinical experiences, adding new programs, and increasing the research enterprise.

"When I came on board, our research effort was being led by two fabulous professors, Jordan Green and Tiffany Hogan," noted Milone-Nuzzo. "Then we grew from the ground up by bringing in additional faculty who were focused on research and by supporting current faculty who had research interests."

The results have been impressive. In 2013, four years before Milone-Nuzzo's arrival, external research funding was about \$500,000. Today it has reached \$50 million.

"The Institute's research enterprise is the fastest-growing within the MGB system," says Board Chair Jeanette Ives Erickson, RN, DNP '11, NEA-BC, FAAN. "We have world-class

innovators engaged in research activities across the continuum in basic research, clinical research, translational science, and workforce research."

Research efforts have rippled through the Institute. Drs. Green and Hogan mentor students and junior faculty, helping them form research questions and navigate the world of grant funding. And research efforts benefit the many patients and clients who are served by faculty and students.

Milone-Nuzzo has also proudly overseen the development of several centers dedicated to important areas of healthcare. These include the nursing-led Center for Climate Change and Health Equity and Tedy's Team Center of Excellence in Stroke Recovery, which received a generous \$1 million gift from Heidi and Tedy Bruschi, the former Patriots football player and stroke survivor. The school's already strong commitment to interprofessional education has grown under Milone-Nuzzo's leadership through new centers, including the Dr. Charles A. and Ann Sanders IMPACT Practice Center and the Center for Interprofessional Education and Practice.

"For Paula, leadership has always meant building bridges—between students and communities, faculty and practice, philanthropy and purpose," says Regina Doherty, OT, OTD, OTR, FAOTA, FNAP, associate provost for faculty affairs and dean for interprofessional education. "Paula has had an unwavering commitment to interprofessional education and practice. She guided the opening of the Sanders IMPACT Practice Center in 2017, a space where students learn under the guidance of expert faculty, and where thousands of community members receive free care each year. Under her watch, the Institute has more than doubled the amount of care and training it provides, delivering \$1.8 million in free care services last year alone."

"The centers say to the world that we take these areas seriously, that we are invested in these areas, and we are making an impact," says Milone-Nuzzo.

Another crucial part of her work has been raising the Institute's profile within the Mass General Brigham system.

"We were seen as an MGH entity," Milone-Nuzzo says of the IHP, which was launched by Massachusetts General Hospital. "But when we looked at the power of the organization—it was Partners Healthcare at the time—it was clear that we could benefit from a closer relationship to the whole system. We wanted to honor the MGH relationship and extend beyond that."

To do this, Milone-Nuzzo worked with Dr. David F.M. Brown, then department chair for emergency medicine, to find clinical placements for physician assistant students.

"Paula has been president during a time of enormous change for MGB," reflects Brown, now the president of Mass General



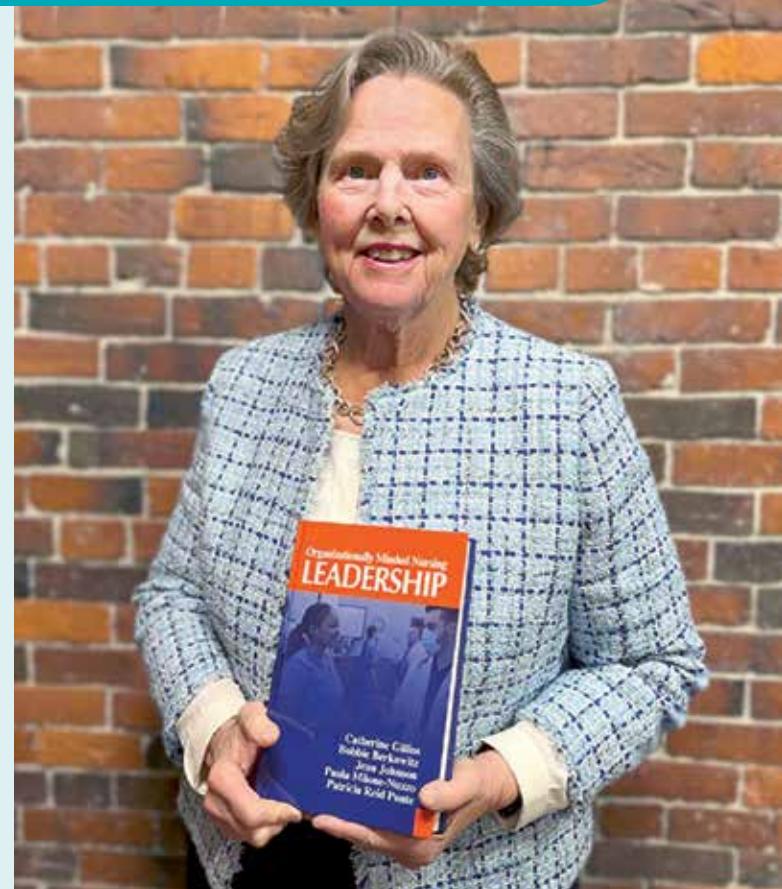
Milone-Nuzzo with Phyllis Wallace MSN '24 at an event for the IHP Community Pantry.



Milone-Nuzzo meeting with the 2025-26 Student Government Association Executive Board, (l-r) Treasurer Jima Baez, a second-year DPT student; Emma Green, a second-year OTD student; President Christa Guerrier, a second-year DEN student; and Vice President Secretary Simone Gamble, a second-year CSD student.



Milone-Nuzzo with one of the 2025 Commencement speakers, Akshaya Kannan, a Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology graduate.



Milone-Nuzzo holding *Organizationally Minded Nursing Leadership*, a nursing textbook she co-authored.



Milone-Nuzzo with then Boston Mayor Marty Walsh at an event recognizing a grant from RSM to the SAiL Lab in January of 2020.



Milone-Nuzzo at the opening of the Tedy's Team Center of Excellence in Stroke Recovery with (l-r) Tedy's Team Communications Director Allison Gianfelice; Executive Director Elizabeth Perry Tirrell; Tedy Bruschi and his wife Heidi Bomberger Bruschi; the Center's Director Kimberly Erler, OT PhD; MGH Institute Board of Trustees Chair Jeanette Ives Erickson; and CBS Boston Sports Director Steve Burton.

Brigham's academic medical centers. "And while the Institute from a governance standpoint is still part of Massachusetts General Hospital, it has become, with great intentionality, a Mass General Brigham asset. The MGH Institute supports our future workforce needs across many health professions and across many parts of our organization.

"Leaders often think they know the solution, and they spend time trying to get other people to agree with their solutions. But Paula's approach is to consider different points of view and what they mean and then bring people to a decision in a thoughtful way."

Milone-Nuzzo says a key strategy in building the MGB relationship has been "having conversations where we explain how we can be helpful. It's understanding and sharing the value that we bring."

"There are so many MGB providers who love to teach, and they get job satisfaction from working with our students," she continued. "Those relationships can lead to job placements for our students, which gives MGB a pipeline of new employees who already know the institution."

Provost Bushardt points to another asset that the Institute offers MGB: the Tuition Reduction and Incentive Program, or TRIP, which offers 40 percent off tuition to Mass General Brigham employees so they can earn a health professions degree. TRIP also offers 20 percent tuition discounts to alumni and to the employees of organizations that train Institute students. A few years ago, Bushardt says, only around 20 MGB employees paid reduced tuition. Today, 250 MGB employees take advantage of this benefit.

"We've also put a massive amount of energy into partnering with different hospitals and institutes, like the Mass General Brigham Heart and Vascular Institute and the Mass General Brigham Cancer Institute, that are both coming to life.

"There are plans for a cardiac implantable electronic device program, a first-in-the-country technical program that will be run with the Heart and Vascular Institute, where we're going to train technicians that help to support patients and families after they have a defibrillator or resynchronization device or other invasive cardiac device implanted.

"We are writing joint grant initiatives with McLean Hospital to run psychiatric development training and do enriched mental health care training, creating opportunities for paraprofessional training. We're working with Spaulding Hospital to help individuals who have exhausted their insurance for rehab services get the care that they need through our IMPACT Practice Center in a way that's coordinated and benefiting from Spaulding expertise."

The MGH Institute is also launching a new Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences program in the fall of 2026 for students who have some college credits or an associate's degree and want to pursue a healthcare career. The program will flexibly respond to students' needs. Forty percent of the coursework can be customized, and faculty will help students design a curriculum that will help them achieve their goals.

"We're setting students up to achieve a higher level of professionalism and to earn more as practitioners," explains Denis Stratford, the Institute's chief operating officer.

It's all part of a bigger workforce development picture.

"We are one of the partners in the Bloomberg Philanthropies grant," Stratford says, "About \$40 million was given to Mass General Brigham and [Boston public school] Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers.

"The goal is to set up pathways that lead students to a healthcare job after they graduate from high school and give them the option to enroll in an associate degree or a bachelor's degree program," he continued. "Then we're looking at how these students can become Institute students either at our new undergraduate level or in one of our graduate clinical programs. We really want to help students who go to Kennedy Academy see a path to a career."

## A global pandemic, a racial reckoning, and an economic downturn

The years of Milone-Nuzzo's presidency have seen dire events—and led the IHP to craft dynamic responses.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Milone-Nuzzo and her team quickly took action, moving to a virtual learning environment and responding to the devastating healthcare threat.

**"Paula's approach is to consider different points of view and what they mean and then bring people to a decision in a thoughtful way."**

— DR. DAVID F.M. BROWN, PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTERS, MASS GENERAL BRIGHAM

"We set students up to be part of the solution," Stratford says of the school's response and recovery effort. "Paula made sure the Institute was leveraging the available resources. We worked as a team."

When Mass General Brigham (known then as Partners) set up Boston Hope Medical Center, a 1,000-bed field hospital for COVID patients, Institute students worked beside clinicians, providing badly needed care, administering vaccines, and, as first responders, receiving the vaccine themselves.

Navigating the pandemic also meant ensuring students could earn their degrees on time—even though they had been pulled out of their clinical placements when COVID hit.

"The faculty came up with innovative approaches," Stratford noted. "We upgraded to a HIPAA-compliant version of Zoom, and we had students providing telehealth care. We flipped the IMPACT Practice Center, offering remote care. We did more with live simulation and software-based simulation."

Provost Emeritus Alex Johnson, who also served as vice president of academic affairs, recalls, "Paula's support during the COVID pandemic was critical to the success that we had in helping students meet all of their clinical and academic requirements safely and in a timely manner. This was unbelievably challenging to do. Paula helped to secure scarce clinical placements and acquire federal and institutional resources to meet the many financial needs that emerged over those two years. It really was a great success story, and Paula's leadership during this time was impressive and important."

Then George Floyd was murdered.

A few years earlier, students had come to Milone-Nuzzo and shared their dissatisfaction with the Institute's cultural awareness, pointing to weaknesses on campus and in the curriculum. Their feedback was sharp and laced with frustration.

Milone-Nuzzo listened. She kept students involved in the improvement process and took control of the school's DEI council. After Floyd's death, Milone-Nuzzo organized town halls and participated in student-organized vigils. The

DEI Office became the Office of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, or JEDI (later renamed Mission, Vision and Community Excellence), and faculty received support in updating their curriculum and their awareness of students' experiences with racially charged situations on campus and in clinical placements.

A year later, violence struck in Winthrop, Mass., where an Institute graduate, who had guns and white supremacist literature in his home, shot Ramona Cooper and David Green, who were Black. In a statement to the community, Milone-Nuzzo wrote of the tragedy: "It can feel as if we are in a state of perpetual recovery, managing a series of difficult events." The best response, she explained, was personal and communal: building resilience, self-care, and kindness to others.

Once the pandemic ebbed, other challenges remained.

"People were exhausted from COVID," Milone-Nuzzo recalls. "Any clinician who wanted to get an advanced degree wasn't



**President Milone-Nuzzo in her Building 36 office. While effective at building partnerships and initiatives, the Institute's sixth president says her favorite aspect of the job is working with students.**

going to come to school at that point. Students were scared to go into health care, so we weren't getting applicants. And the economy was bad."

Enrollment numbers declined, dragging down tuition revenue. To compensate, the Institute had to do a reduction in force. A heartbroken Milone-Nuzzo tried to lay off people as humanely as possible by asking managers to have personal conversations with those affected.

Trustee Jim Canfield, who joined the Board the same year that Milone-Nuzzo became president, sums up these tough years by noting, "Paula faced an extraordinary number of challenges over her tenure, from budgetary issues within Mass General Brigham and the Institute to enrollment challenges; from managing a higher educational campus during the COVID years to managing during protests. She was at the helm through all of this, and she always came up with a measured, thoughtful, and reasoned approach that addressed the concerns of the school and its constituents."

Canfield also praises Milone-Nuzzo for keeping an eye on the future.

"She's always thinking about what we will look like and what healthcare education and healthcare delivery will look like five to 10 years from now."

This strong stewardship has led to steady progress. Thanks to the efforts of Milone-Nuzzo and her team, enrollment numbers have climbed to an all-time high, and the school's finances have stabilized.

"I wouldn't leave if I thought the Institute was in bad shape," Milone-Nuzzo says. "I want the next president to have a strong start."

## The next chapters

While Milone-Nuzzo will be retiring and spending more time with family, she will still be continuing her work in higher education. She plans to teach leadership courses with Gilliss, dean emerita at Duke, and consult with other colleagues and organizations.

Her legacy will also continue to set an example for colleagues.

"As a teacher, Paula has the personal insight it takes to convert the human experience to actionable leadership," Gilliss says. "She's a standout in our field, and our field is a field called to service. In doing this work, Paula has left a trail of good works and good relationships."

Kitko, Rochester's nursing dean, says, "Paula is still important to me today. She expects me to take the support I received from her and pay it forward. She exemplifies how important it is to mentor the next generation of healthcare practitioners. And she is still available for a quick call."

"I wish she weren't retiring," Kitko says, "because nursing deans have to pull together and advocate for nursing and health care and research, the science of what we do. And Paula has taught us that we're in a long game. We have some quick wins, but this is a long game, and you just keep working at it."

To best commemorate Milone-Nuzzo's career, it's vital to understand where her heart truly lies.

"You only need to walk on campus to witness Paula's engagement with students, to understand how proud she is of them and of the Institute. And then you see her at graduation, and she just beams every time a student crosses that stage," Erickson, the MGH Institute's board chair, says. "Paula cares deeply about each student. She knows the Institute is providing exceptional educational opportunities, and she knows that students are prepared to go out into the world and do good work in the clinical field and in research, education, and leadership positions."

Doherty, the associate provost for faculty affairs, agrees: "Paula's presidency leaves an indelible mark—not just on the Institute, but on the field of interprofessional education and practice. Her legacy of transformational leadership will continue to shape us long after her presidency." ■

# University of Texas Medical Branch's Deborah Jones Appointed MGH Institute President

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

Deborah J. Jones, PhD, MSN, RN, FAAN, Chief Integration Officer, Senior Vice President and School of Nursing Dean for The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), has been appointed president of the MGH Institute of Health Professions.

"I am inspired by the IHP's mission to educate health professionals and researchers who will drive innovation in the delivery of equitable and interprofessional care," said Jones. "This mission aligns deeply with my own purpose, which is to bring together people, ideas, and systems for the greater good, because the greater good is stronger than any individual part. I am honored to be leading the MGH Institute of Health Professions into its next chapter."

**"I am inspired by the IHP's mission to educate health professionals and researchers who will drive innovation in the delivery of equitable and interprofessional care."**

*- DEBORAH J. JONES,  
PHD, MSN, RN, FAAN*

Jones succeeds President Paula Milone-Nuzzo, who is retiring after eight years at the IHP helm. The selection of Jones follows a national search that drew a distinguished pool of candidates from across the health professions and higher education landscape.

"Dr. Jones brings the right combination of experience, insight, and interpersonal



**Deborah J. Jones will be the MGH Institute's seventh president.**

skill to lead the Institute into its next chapter," said MGH Institute Board Chair Jeanette Ives Erickson. "Her commitment to students, faculty, and staff—along with her strong sense of mission and collaborative approach—resonated across our community."

Dr. Jones joins the Institute with an extensive background in academic nursing leadership, interprofessional education, academic-clinical system collaboration, expanding educational programs, and strengthening clinical and community partnerships. Under Jones' leadership as nursing dean, BSN graduates from UTMB achieved the highest NCLEX pass rates among large schools in Texas for four consecutive years, faculty retention exceeded 98%, doctoral preparation of faculty increased from 57% to 98%, and the previously unranked research enterprise is now in the top 50% of U.S. nursing schools in NIH funding.

When Jones served as UTMB's Interim Provost for a year, she had leadership oversight and fiscal accountability for the entire academic enterprise, including more than 4,000 employees, 3,800 students, and a \$788 million budget. She advanced strategic initiatives that strengthened financial sustainability, expanded academic programs, improved clinical placement alignment, and enhanced faculty recruitment and retention.

"Dr. Jones has worked within complex health systems and is recognized for her ability to build constructive relationships across clinical, academic, and community organizations," said David Brown, MD, President of the Academic Medical Centers for Mass General Brigham. "Her background positions her well to strengthen the Institute's role within Mass General Brigham and support its contributions to workforce development across the system."

When Jones addressed the MGH Institute community last month, she articulated a forward-looking and realistic vision for the Institute's next phase of development, emphasizing the importance of strengthening academic programs, expanding opportunities for students, and deepening alignment with Mass General Brigham. Through the evaluations faculty and staff had the opportunity to fill out, community members praised Jones' clear and compelling communication style, her warmth and approachability, and her collaborative leadership presence. Many noted Jones' ability to connect authentically with individuals and groups, as well as her steady, thoughtful approach to complex challenges.

Jones will become the MGH Institute's seventh president when she begins her role on January 18, 2026.



## Dr. Maura Abbott Appointed School of Nursing Dean

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

Maura Abbott, PhD, AOCNP, CPNP-PC&AC, FAAN, has been appointed dean for the School of Nursing at the MGH Institute of Health Professions. She will also serve as associate chief nurse for academic affairs at Massachusetts General Hospital; both posts took effect September 1, 2025.

Dr. Abbott served as associate dean for clinical affairs and associate professor at Columbia University School of Nursing, where she led transformative initiatives in oncology care, academic-clinical integration, and nursing workforce development. A nationally recognized nurse scientist, educator, and clinical leader, Abbott brings more than two decades of experience in adult and pediatric oncology, community-based practice innovation, and academic nursing leadership.

“Dr. Abbott is a bold, collaborative leader with a deep commitment to academic excellence, health equity, and preparing the next generation of nurses and nurse leaders,” said Reamer L. Bushardt, PharmD, PA-C, DFAAPA, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “Her appointment comes at a pivotal time as the Institute expands its nursing workforce initiatives, deepens its partnership with Mass General Brigham, and leads regional and national strategies to address the nursing shortage and evolving care needs of our communities.”

In her new role, Abbott leads one of New England’s most prominent graduate nursing schools, which enrolls more



**Maura Abbott, PhD, AOCNP, CPNP-PC&AC, FAAN, became the School of Nursing dean on September 1.**

than 550 students across bachelor’s, master’s, doctoral, and advanced certificate programs. In her role as associate chief nurse for academic affairs at Massachusetts General Hospital, she will collaborate closely with clinical nursing leaders across the system to strengthen academic-clinical partnerships, enhance the pipeline for nursing talent, and align education with evolving care models.

“Dr. Abbott’s appointment creates exciting new opportunities to advance shared academic/practice partnerships and priorities across Massachusetts General Hospital and the Mass General Brigham system,” said Debbie Burke, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, chief nurse and senior vice president for patient care services at Massachusetts General Hospital. “She will be a key partner in

helping us build stronger clinical-academic collaborations, develop innovative workforce strategies, and support the professional growth of nurses at every level—from student to leader.”

Abbott is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, has held a leadership role with the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation, and has worked with the National Cancer Institute and Dr. Jill Biden’s Cancer Moonshot initiative. She has led nationally recognized programs in oncology urgent care, rural and urban cancer survivorship, mobile community screening, and pathway programs for nursing students.

“I am honored to join the MGH Institute and Mass General Brigham,” said Abbott, who had been at Columbia University since 2014. “It’s not often you get an opportunity to lead an entity that’s integrated into an academic health center, but that’s what the MGH Institute is, and why it’s so unique. This is an incredible chance to lead in a time of rapid change and to build powerful connections between education, practice, and research that will strengthen nursing and improve health for all.”

Abbott earned her PhD and MSN from Yale University and holds board certification as both an adult oncology and pediatric nurse practitioner. She replaces Patricia A. Reidy, DNP, FNP-BC, FNAP, FAAN, who served as interim dean for the past year and retired this summer.

# Mary Hildebrand and Kathy Lyons Named to American Occupational Therapy Roster of Fellows

BY LISA MCEVOY

When your work has made a difference to patients around the world, people tend to notice. For Mary Hildebrand, MOT, OTD, OTR, and Kathleen Lyons, ScD, OT, OTR, the latest acknowledgment of their significant contributions came in April during the American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference and Expo in Philadelphia when they officially joined the AOTA Roster of Fellows.

Since 1973, the AOTA Roster of Fellows has recognized occupational therapist members of AOTA who have made a significant contribution to the profession.

Lyons is a national leader in the fields of occupational therapy and rehabilitation sciences, focusing on advancing the science aimed at enhancing the quality of life for adult cancer survivors through research and advocacy. Hildebrand has worked to improve the quality of life of

adults with rehabilitation needs, especially those with neurological disabilities.

"Kathy's work is not only impactful but also influential in advancing patient-centered care and outcomes," wrote OT Chair Sarah McKinnon, OT, OTD, OTR, BCPR, MPA, FAOTA, FNAP, in her nomination of Lyons. "Her innovative and impactful leadership has informed evidence-based cancer care and advanced quality of life for cancer survivors across the globe."

"With [a] combined clinical and academic role, Dr. Hildebrand blends the best of both worlds by helping others to lead more productive lives through occupational therapy knowledge gained in the academic world while, at the same time, facilitating the development of a new workforce of occupational therapy practitioners with a much appreciated 'real-world' perspective," wrote Dr. Diane Smith and Dr. Lisa Connor, the first program chair of the OT department, in their nomination.



Kathleen Lyons (l), occupational therapy professor and director of the Cancer Rehabilitation (CaRe) Lab, and Mary Hildebrand, occupational therapy associate professor emerita, joined the prestigious American Occupational Therapy Association's Roster of the Fellows.



Distinguished Teaching Associate Professor Eleonor Pusey Reid (l) and Associate Professor Alex Hoyt are part of the 2025 Class of Fellows who were inducted into the American Academy of Nursing in October.

## Nursing's Pusey-Reid and Hoyt Inducted into American Academy of Nursing

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

It has almost become a rite of summer: The American Academy of Nursing announces its Class of Fellows, and faculty from the MGH Institute of Health Professions are on the list. This year was no exception.

In June, the Academy announced that Distinguished Teaching Associate Professor Eleonor Pusey-Reid, DNP, RN, MEd, and Associate Professor of Nursing Alex Hoyt, PhD, RN, were named to the Class of 2025 New Fellows. This is the fourth consecutive year a faculty member has been accepted by the most prestigious nursing organization in the world.

"I'm honored," said Pusey-Reid. "I didn't expect it, largely because I hadn't been thinking much about the cumulative impact of my career."

"It's hard to put into words what this means," said Hoyt. "I've been teaching and researching for 25 years and while being a Fellow has been in the back of my mind, it's not something I ever gave much thought to, until recently. I'm thankful for the mentors and sponsors who encouraged me to apply. This is a real thrill."

The newest Fellows Class represent 42 states, the District of Columbia, and 12 countries. Pusey-Reid and Hoyt made the cut after a rigorous process that includes seven layers of evaluation before their submissions are even voted on. Their inclusion brings to 14 the number of IHP faculty members who are Fellows in the Academy.

Pusey-Reid and Hoyt were formally inducted in October during the Academy's annual Health Policy Conference in Washington, D.C.

# Saying Goodbye to Three Longtime Leaders

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

Personal histories, plenty of gratitude, good-natured ribbing, and looking ahead were all on display as the MGH Institute community gathered to say goodbye to three colleagues whose aggregate service to the Institute is 38 years.

Patricia A. Reidy, DNP, FNP-BC, FNAP, FAAN, interim dean for the School of Nursing, and director of community engagement; Elaine Tagliareni, EdD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN, School of Nursing professor, and director of faculty development; and Diane L. Smith, OT, PhD, OTR, FAOTA, professor of occupational therapy, and doctoral capstone coordinator, were celebrated by dozens of faculty members, staff, family, and friends during a retirement ceremony in May.

“These are amazing people who we get to celebrate and honor,” said President Paula Milone-Nuzzo. “I think you are going to leave big holes in the IHP community, and we’ll do our best to fill them.”

Here are some excerpts from the retirees’ speeches.

## Diane L. Smith

“After working for several large universities, I truly appreciate the innovation that occurs in a dedicated health professions institute and I appreciate all of my students—the oldest of whom are in their 50s now—who’ve laughed at my jokes and hopefully learned a thing or two. I’m very fortunate to keep up with many of them, and it’s a joy to see them grow in their profession.

“I’m thankful to that woman on my dorm floor at the University of Illinois, who, when I was wondering what to major in, said, ‘You seem like an occupational therapist.’ Like most people on the planet, I had no idea what that meant, and it took me a while to figure out, through lots of different jobs, what my niche was. But here we are.”



Pat Reidy (l), Interim Dean for the School of Nursing and Director of Community Engagement; Elaine Tagliareni (r), School of Nursing professor and Director of Faculty Development; and Diane Smith, professor of Occupational Therapy and Doctoral Capstone Coordinator, retired from the MGH Institute after a collective 38 years of service here.

## Elaine Tagliareni

“My favorite book when I was growing up in Troy, New York, was *Stuart Little* by E.B. White. The book ends with a message that has stayed with me through all these years. Stuart climbed into his car and started up the road that headed North. As he peeked ahead into the great land that stretched before him, the waves seemed very long, but the sky was bright, and he felt somehow that he was headed in the right direction.

“Looking back, it’s almost uncanny that the closing scene came to mirror my own professional life. Twenty-five years teaching at a community college... then the call came from the NLN [National League for Nursing], where I was given the opportunity to lead 40,000 nursing faculty in their faculty development. That path led me to a cocktail party at IHI [Institute for Healthcare Improvement], where I ran into Paula, an unexpected turning point that has turned into the gift of a lifetime. I had no idea of what was

ahead for me, but it became my very special road to the North.”

## Patricia A. Reidy

“What a journey it’s been. And as I’ve often said to our graduates, nursing is a profession full of opportunity. From the bedside to the community, from primary care to education, administration, leadership—I’ve been very fortunate to experience all of these paths, and I’m especially appreciative of all the opportunities I’ve had at the IHP.

“Thank you to my wonderful colleagues in the School of Nursing. You are extraordinary. I am so inspired by your dedication to our students and the extra mile that you go to ensure their success. I’m grateful to work side by side with you and appreciate the support you’ve given me during this past year in my interim dean’s role. It has been full circle to educate our students, to precept them, share in their graduation and welcome them back as faculty, and we’ve done that.”

# Community Gathers to Honor the Founder of the Marjorie Nicholas Aphasia Center

BY BRUNA OLIVEIRA

For over two decades, people with aphasia have turned to the MGH Institute for expert diagnosis and therapy—all thanks to the visionary leadership of Marjorie Nicholas, PhD, CCC-SLP, FASHA. In June, family, faculty, staff, students, and clients gathered to celebrate the founder of what is now fittingly named the Marjorie Nicholas Aphasia Center.

Since starting the Aphasia Center, which provides diagnostic and treatment services to adults with aphasia and related communication impairments, Dr. Nicholas has dedicated her efforts to serve those with aphasia by training students and faculty members, working one-on-one with clients, and building interprofessional programs and partnerships with other institutions.

The longtime speech-language pathologist's approach comes from a place of deep compassion for those affected by



Marjorie Nicholas (center) and her family during the Aphasia Center naming celebration.

the disorder, which she first encountered early in her career at Boston VA Medical Center in Jamaica Plain.

"I saw how a person with aphasia couldn't find the words when they awoke from their stroke and tried to answer questions

from their nurses," said Nicholas. "I saw how a person with aphasia had difficulty understanding the words spoken to them by their loved ones. I saw how a person with aphasia was not able to go back to work because they no longer could effortlessly read or write."

This compassion toward those affected by aphasia is what prompted Nicholas to start the Center and what has motivated her to continue working with clients even after she retired in 2024.

During her closing remarks, Nicholas emphasized that compassion should always be the foundation and core of the Marjorie Nicholas Aphasia Center.

"I want to express my deep gratitude to the people with aphasia who've passed through our doors and have kept on passing through our doors for more than two decades," said Nicholas. "We call them clients, but they are really true teachers of our students."

# School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Adds Undergraduate Degree Program, New Department

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

A new degree program, a new department, an interim chair, additional programs, and prerequisites are making for some busy times at the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, which is undergoing a significant expansion.

For starters, the school has created a new department called the Department of Health Sciences, led by Kim Mace, who is serving as interim chair. She has been overseeing the growth of the prerequisite program since she arrived at the MGH Institute in 2021. This will be home to the new Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences major, a degree program that was approved in April by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. The program is built for students who earned an associate's degree at a community college or those who began coursework at a four-year institution but never finished.

Dean Laura Plummer says the BSHS aligns with the Institute's mission of diversifying

the health professions to be able to provide care for a complex society. And it dovetails well with the Early College Pathways Program Plummer is working on with Charlestown High School, where the high school students visit the Institute for an introduction to audiology, speech-language pathology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing, and simulation activities, among others.

"With the launch of the bachelor completer degree, we now have a full educational pathway for students," said Plummer. "They can go from high school to earn an associate's degree and then to the IHP for a bachelor's and graduate degree to launch and advance a career in the health professions."

Along with the new degree program, the Health Professions Education Department (HPEd), led by Department Chair Roger Edwards, is moving under the SHRS umbrella. Prerequisites will be moving, too.



Online Prerequisites Program Director Kim Mace is the interim chair of the new Department of Health Sciences, which is home to the MGH Institute's new Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences degree.

# MGH Institute Launches Pilot Program with the American Medical Student Association

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

The MGH Institute of Health Professions' Healthcare Data Analytics program has entered a partnership that could potentially reshape the program and drastically increase student enrollment.

At its national conference in Washington, D.C., the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) announced that its Scholars Program will use the MGH Institute's Machine Learning course, now offered on the edX platform, as the core fundamental curriculum for its new research development program. The hope is the medical students who finish coursework on edX will want to continue and transfer credits into the MGH Institute's Master's in Healthcare Data Analytics program.

"That's something we hope can be a pathway for any medical student who



**MGH Institute of Health Professions' Master of Science in Data Analytics (MSDA) Program Director Dr. Shuhan He announced the launch of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) Scholars & Research Fellowship.**

wants to strengthen their career, especially if they're looking for research and more advanced degrees in their career trajectory, or increase their competitiveness for any residency

application," said Shuhan He, MD, director for the program.

He says if this partnership goes well, he can imagine scaling this quickly.

"Partnering with a national organization like AMSA gives us a unique opportunity to reach thousands of medical students across the country in a coordinated and scalable way," said He. "This model complements the work we're also doing with individual medical schools—allowing us to engage students both through their institutions and through the organizations that support them during medical school, residency, and beyond. We believe this framework can extend to other health professions as well, including nursing, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, and physician assistant programs."

## New SoTL Center Launched

The new Center for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) will help faculty take the expertise they teach in the classroom and translate that into research. Laura Wolford, director of the Teaching and Supporting Student Experience in Learning Lab (TASSEL), is heading up this new center and shares the following:

"The faculty at the MGH Institute are outstanding educators and clinicians. Their deep clinical experience allows them to translate real-world practice into powerful learning opportunities in the classroom.

"At the same time, academia values research productivity—presentations and publications—which can feel like a separate and unfamiliar expectation. Too often, faculty are asked to contribute to research only as collaborators, without the chance to lead projects

themselves. The new Center creates space for them to shape research that grows directly from their teaching expertise and creativity.

"The goal is to build a strong culture of education scholarship across the Institute. We'll offer office hours, mentoring, workshops, and structured opportunities to do research in community.

"The idea behind the SoTL Center is to help faculty be in charge of their own research careers, and publish about something that they actually care about and are doing already, which is education and clinical education. We will help them take their next teaching question or their next pedagogical idea and turn that into high-quality education research. This work is more exciting and meaningful when we do it together."



**Dr. Laura Wolford is the new director of the MGH Institute's Center for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.**

# President Milone-Nuzzo Advocates for Higher Education at State House



(from l to r): Emmanuel College President Beth Ross, Smith College President Sarah Willie-LeBreton, MGH Institute of Health Professions President Paula Milone-Nuzzo, Senate President Karen Spilka, Springfield College President Mary-Beth Cooper, Urban College of Boston President Yves Salomon-Fernández and Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts President Rob McCarron at the State House following their meeting earlier this month.

BY YINGCHU ZHAO

When it comes to supporting higher education, independent institutions like MGH Institute of Health Professions play a critical role—a point President Paula Milone-Nuzzo highlighted during a meeting with Massachusetts Senate President Karen Spilka at the State House in March.

Milone-Nuzzo was joined by the presidents of Springfield College, Urban College of Boston, Emmanuel College, and Smith College in a discussion organized by Rob McCarron, president of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts. The meeting provided an opportunity for Spilka to hear directly from these college leaders about emerging challenges from Washington, D.C., and to explore opportunities for stronger collaboration and increased support from the Commonwealth.

“Private colleges are not just an economic engine driving Massachusetts forward—we are also a supportive engine, powering progress in health, science, and social services,”

Milone-Nuzzo said. “We make a real impact in communities across the state.”

One of Milone-Nuzzo’s biggest concerns centered on potential cuts to research funding from the National Institutes of Health and their direct impact on Massachusetts communities—particularly local children and families.

“Research goes beyond labs and publications—it directly impacts real people,” Milone-Nuzzo said.

She described how the MGH Institute’s literacy programs with Boston Public Schools have already transformed children’s learning. Without continued funding, these initiatives could vanish.

As the conversation unfolded, President Milone-Nuzzo raised an issue that resonated clearly around the room: Massachusetts faces a growing demand for skilled healthcare workers, and independent colleges are crucial to meeting this need.

“Independent colleges are not just educating students—we are fueling the healthcare system,” Milone-Nuzzo emphasized.

## Retired PT Faculty Giving Back and Staying Connected

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

It’s not often one retires from the MGH Institute but then stays connected with both time and treasure. But that’s exactly what two physical therapy faculty members have been doing for the past seven years. Not only do they have no plans of stopping any time soon, but they hope to grow the scholarship they started.

Faculty Emerita Marianne Beninato and Janet Callahan both spent about two decades within the Mass General Brigham system and retired in 2018. Beninato had served as a faculty member at the MGH Institute since 1997, while Callahan spent much of her time at Massachusetts General Hospital and came to teach at the Institute in 2012. These days, the couple participates in the anatomy elective that’s offered every January.

Not long after the duo stopped working full-time, they started putting their money to work instead, donating \$25,000 to establish the First in Family scholarship, given to a PT student who is the first in their family to attend college.

In the past three years, three PT students have been First in Family scholarship awardees. These scholarship recipients have enthusiasm for learning and the potential to make significant contributions to the profession, as evidenced by their determination to be the first in their family to carve this path.

Beninato and Callahan know all about the IHP community and its network, which is why they want to grow their scholarship while encouraging others to give, too.

“I’d like people to know how great the need is,” said Beninato. “If they’re inclined to give, they could give additionally to any of these scholarships that are ongoing, because every bit counts, right?”



Marianne Beninato (l) and Janet Callahan retired from physical therapy teaching roles in 2018 but have stayed connected to the MGH Institute.

# Celebrating the Future and the Past

BY LISA MCEVOY

The 2025 Commencement was as much about a beginning as it was an end for the 619 graduates. "Your tale has yet to be told," said President Paula Milone-Nuzzo. "And while we are here today to celebrate your accomplishments, it is important to reflect on the journey that has brought us to this moment."

The graduates received their diplomas in front of 3,000 family, friends, and faculty members at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, and heard from peers and professionals who looked to the future while reflecting on the past.

Kayla-Paige Flynn from the Direct-Entry Master of Science in Nursing program, who was selected to give the Commencement address for the School of Nursing, said, "In preparing this speech, I couldn't help but reflect on how we got here. From a young age, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in psychiatry, though I wasn't exactly sure what that would look like. Then I learned about the role of a psychiatric nurse practitioner, and everything clicked."

The journey wasn't always easy, but while there were challenges, there were also benefits, according to Akshaya Kannan from the Master of Science in



In two ceremonies on May 5, 619 graduates of the MGH Institute received their diplomas and congratulations at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

Speech-Language Pathology program, who was selected to give the Commencement address during the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and the School of Healthcare Leadership ceremony.

"Setbacks aren't the end, they're just stepping stones in our journey," said Kannan. "I know it seems like we should have everything figured out by now, but the truth is, this is just the beginning, and we should be proud of everything we've accomplished thus far."

Dr. Kevin Whitney, a graduate of the MGH Institute Doctor of Nursing Practice program, who was named president and chief operating officer of Cooley Dickinson Hospital in March, looked forward while sharing the words of the author Harvey Mackay during the School of Nursing Commencement: "A great accomplishment shouldn't be the end of the road, just the starting point for the next leap forward."

## A Journey to Today's Commencement

BY MAEVE MULLEN

As she strode across the stage of the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, a beaming Naomi Martel looked out across the crowd to her cheering family. A two-year journey of balancing work and education was complete and the reward—a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the MGH Institute of Health Professions—was well worth it.

"I am so proud of myself," said Martel. "Before I started this program, I wasn't sure I was going to make it, knowing that I had a full-time job and a family, but I'm so proud knowing what I went through. It was a lot of work."

After nearly a quarter-century in nursing, Martel could have easily said, "I've done enough," but that's not who she is. While her career at Massachusetts General Hospital has been successful—she has been a nurse director for the past eight years—the mother of two wanted more.

"It's something I wanted to do, just to advance my degree in nursing," noted Martel. "I'm happy about it because I think



Graduate Naomi Martel listening during the School of Nursing commencement ceremony, where she was awarded a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

that it will also give me opportunities to do different things in leadership."

Martel found lasting value in the relationships she built during the program. She shared that one of her biggest takeaways was the importance of networking. She appreciated connecting with people outside of her organization who helped

open her eyes to different ways of doing things and who she can reach out to for advice.

"Mass General has been really good. I don't think I'm going anywhere," she shared. "I call this my second home."

Thanks to Martel's new degree, a home with more possibilities than before.

# Peter Brown Awarded Honorary Doctorate

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

Peter Brown never expected to be looking out on the sea of graduates at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and being honored at the MGH Institute Commencement. After all, Brown is a former TV news director, Partners HealthCare executive, and longtime public relations leader, not an academic. Yet there he was, receiving an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, for his extensive record of distinguished service to both higher education and health care.

"When we were thinking about people who met the criteria, people who were significant contributors, people who were long-time friends of the IHP," recalled President Paula Milone-Nuzzo, "Peter's name rose to the top."

The inaugural chair of the President's Council at the Institute, Brown was originally an award-winning news director for CBS Boston and led the station to numerous awards, including the



During his address, honorary degree awardee Peter Brown urged MGH Institute graduates to "pay it forward" to help others.

prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award for the best local news station in the U.S.

After nearly 22 years at CBS Boston, including 10 years as news director, Brown moved to Brigham and Women's Hospital as its vice president of public affairs and communication, where he worked with hospital president Gary Gottlieb, who appointed Brown his chief of staff when Gottlieb became CEO of Partners HealthCare (now Mass General Brigham).

"His longstanding service as a leader in Partners HealthCare, his service to the community, and his leadership in support of the IHP has distinguished him as a significant and sustained contributor," wrote Milone-Nuzzo and Board Chair Jeanette Ives Erickson in their nomination letter. "He has consistently expressed his belief in and commitment to the mission of the MGH Institute and its role as an innovative force in health care and higher education in both words and actions."

"This is the biggest award I've ever received," said Brown. "I'm humbled beyond words. It's really an honor."

## Proud Graduates Look to the Future

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

The day's rain and clouds did little to dampen the mood inside the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, where more than 600 graduates of the MGH Institute of Health Professions came to accept their diplomas and awards for a wide variety of degrees and accomplishments.

"It's exciting," said Courtney Swanson, who graduated from the Post-Professional Occupational Therapy program. "I'm happy to be done, but I'm also proud. We've come a very long way, and classes were tough, papers were long, but it just feels proud to have made it to this moment."

Pride was certainly a theme, and for good reason.

"I'm really proud of all of us," said Jaclyn Okun, who earned an Entry-Level Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree. "I think it's such a milestone and an incredible opportunity that we've all had and I'm really grateful."



Kaylee Foster (l) and Alyssa Garza were all smiles after receiving diplomas from the Masters in Speech-Language Pathology program.

For most, it was an emotional day, one to say goodbye and reflect on all that has been accomplished.

Casey Hynes, who earned her Post-Professional Doctorate in Occupational Therapy, will continue working in acute care at Beth Israel Hospital and plans on launching her own private practice.

"I'm really excited," said Hynes. "I can't believe that we finished this next chapter to go our new separate ways and begin our new careers."

The path was fortified through grit, then grins. For all, a job well done.

Christine Kane, who completed the Doctor of Physical Therapy program, plans on working at an outpatient practice in Natick and Wellesley.

"I give so much kudos to all of my professors and lab instructors as well as my classmates who made the experience what it was," said Kane. "The IHP really shaped me into a better human and ready to take on tomorrow."

**"The IHP really shaped me into a better human and ready to take on tomorrow."**

- CHRISTINE KANE, DPT GRADUATE

# Determining What Happens to Brain During Intense Stroke Rehabilitation

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

It's widely understood that when stroke survivors undergo rigorous rehabilitation, their movement tends to improve. But what happens to the brain: Does it change? And if so, how?

These are fundamental questions that have never been examined—until now.

The MGH Institute's Teresa Kimberley, PT, PhD, FAPTA, is teaming up with Massachusetts General Hospital's David Lin, MD, to answer these very questions. They have received \$2 million over five years from the National Institutes of Health for their project, "Defining the Neurological Substrates of Proximal Upper Extremity Motor Control and Recovery After Stroke."

"This fundamental question really hasn't been studied in humans in a rigorous way before," said Dr. Lin, the study's principal investigator, who is director of the MGH NeuroRecovery Clinic, faculty in the MGH Center for Neurotechnology and Neurorecovery, and an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School. "Our grant is simply asking the question: What changes in the brain in response to high-dose, high-intensity rehabilitation?"

**"Our grant is simply asking the question: What changes in the brain in response to high-dose, high-intensity rehabilitation?"**

— DAVID LIN, MD

Dr. Kimberley says this is the most in-depth look at what happens to the brain during stroke rehabilitation. The study team will utilize transcranial magnetic stimulation and magnetic



MGH Institute's Dr. Teresa Kimberley (l) and Massachusetts General Hospital's Dr. David Lin have been awarded a \$2-million National Institutes of Health grant to research if the brain changes—and how—during a stroke survivor's rigorous rehabilitation.

resonance imaging to understand what's happening in the brain.

"How does the brain activate the muscle and connectivity? How well are various parts of the brain talking to each other?" asked Kimberley, who is a research associate at Harvard Medical School, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, and the MGH Center for Neurotechnology and Neurorecovery. "We want to ultimately understand the stroke pathophysiology better, so that future trials and treatments can understand how the brain itself is healing."

The study will look at two groups of stroke survivors—those receiving standard care that comes after a stroke, and those receiving intense therapy—to see differences in brain activity resulting from different therapy approaches.

"In the group getting elevated care, does their function improve? We will assume so," said Kimberley. "But then the question becomes, are we actually changing the brain? We're going to be

able to assess the normalcy of their movement and how that corresponds to brain activation and pathway changes. We'll be able to quantify explicitly that joint control improved in this way, and that relates to this part of the brain. So it's really detailed analysis."

Looking at the bigger picture, if the study shows marked improvement in brain activity because of intense post-stroke therapy, a case can be made to change the treatment stroke patients typically receive.

The study will be conducted at MGH's Center for Neurotechnology and Neurorecovery and MGH Institute's Brain Recovery Lab.

"Teresa and I are really excited and inspired to start this study," said Lin. "It's a study that investigates a fundamental question in our field. And it's a testament to the environment at Mass General and the MGH Institute of Health Professions that supports our collaborative investigation."

# Research Exchange Creates New Connections

BY LISA MCEVOY

August was a busy month for Hlynur Breki Harðarson. Before beginning his fourth of six years at the University of Iceland, he spent the month in Boston at the MGH Institute as the first person to take part in a research exchange between the MGH Institute and Iceland's oldest and largest university.

At the end of their third year, University of Iceland medical students complete the bachelor's part of the program with a research project. While in Boston, Harðarson worked with Karen Chenausky, PhD, CCC-SLP, on her research in the Speech in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders (SPAN) Lab into childhood apraxia of speech.

Harðarson visited Fenway Park, Harvard, and MIT, as well as exploring his interest in neurology. One highlight was shadowing Andrew Tsitsilanos, MD, MS, who works in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, joining him on rounds and learning about new



Hlynur Breki Harðarson observed Karen Chenausky's work with minimally verbal children with autism while on a research exchange between the MGH Institute and the University of Iceland.

advances in the rehabilitation center for spinal cord injuries.

"In the future, we're going to be able to put chips in heads below the lesion so that someone who had an injury can walk," recalled Harðarson. "Dr. Tsitsilanos also showed me what I would call Terminator stuff, where there is an exoskeleton and electrodes that mimic the actual movements of the leg."

There will be an opportunity next summer for another student from the University of Iceland to follow Harðarson's path and work on a research project as part of their bachelor's thesis.

"The partnership between the MGH Institute of Health Professions and the University of Iceland is an opportunity to learn from one another, expand our academic and research horizons, and create meaningful connections across faculty and students," said MGH Institute Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Reamer Bushardt, PharmD, PA-C, DFAAPA.

# Nursing Lessons Learned at MGH Institute Now Being Taught in China

BY LISA MCEVOY

Traveling to a new place is always going to result in new knowledge. That was certainly true for Zhiyuan Xiao, whose recent trip to the U.S. may lead to new learning opportunities for students in China.

For three months, the nurse practitioner, who serves as the associate chief nurse and a clinical preceptor at Peking Union Medical College Hospital in Beijing, China, explored nursing theory, practice, and research across the MGH Institute and the Mass General Brigham system, learning helpful information about educating nurses and how nurses provide care here.

His interactions on campus included learning about interdisciplinary education through the Dr. Charles A. and Ann Saunders IMPACT Practice Center (IPC) and how the simulation lab can facilitate learning.

"At the IPC, patients receive valuable health support and students benefit from real-world practice. It's a win-win model that I've never imagined," shared Xiao. "Simulation allows students to think critically, communicate, [and] develop their clinical skills in a process that helps transform fragmented knowledge into clinical competence."

John Wong, distinguished teaching associate professor in the School of Nursing and the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences' Department of Occupational Therapy, oversaw Xiao's fellowship and suggested Xiao write a weekly summary of what he learned each week.

"Just reading through them each week, I could tell that not only he has learned a lot, but he's actually going to use this when he goes back to China," said Dr. Wong.



Associate Professor Dr. John Wong (l) and President Paula Milone-Nuzzo (r) presented Zhiyuan Xiao with a certificate to recognize his fellowship with the School of Nursing.

# A Partnership for the Future with a European Flavor

BY LISA MCEVOY

There are numerous opportunities for MGH Institute students and faculty to learn from healthcare professionals across the Mass General Brigham system and beyond. Now, a new partnership extends those opportunities across the Atlantic Ocean.

A newly signed Memorandum of Understanding between the MGH Institute of Health Professions and the Deggendorf Institute of Technology (DIT) in Bavaria, Germany, establishes a formal student and faculty exchange program, starting with Physician Assistant Studies and potentially expanding to other disciplines. The agreement enables health professions students from both institutions to participate in academic and clinical experiences, building mutual understanding and fostering international collaboration.

DIT President Waldemar Berg, joined by Dr. Silke Härteis, chair of molecular and cellular anatomy at the University of Regensburg, and Dr. Thiha Aung, director of DIT's PA Program, visited the MGH Institute and Mass General Hospital for a ceremonial signing with MGH Institute President Paula Milone-Nuzzo at the Slavin Academy.

"This collaboration extends our commitment to international work and allows us to build a model that enhances the education of our students," said Milone-Nuzzo. "We want to cultivate students who embrace a global approach to health care. We're excited to build this structure and learn from each other in clinical training, curriculum development, and workforce preparation."

In her remarks, Milone-Nuzzo underscored the significance of global health literacy and shared learning, aligning the



**President Paula Milone-Nuzzo (l) and President Waldemar Berg from Deggendorf Institute of Technology signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a student and faculty exchange program between the two institutions during a ceremony at Mass General Hospital's Slavin Academy on April 25.**

exchange with the Institute's vision of preparing clinicians to serve individuals and families from a broad array of backgrounds as well as evolving populations.

"We're going to have the opportunity to educate our students as global healthcare providers and understand different approaches to different healthcare systems," said Milone-Nuzzo. "Appreciating the variability in the way people receive health care around the globe is so important for our students in terms of their development."

After the signing, Dr. Lawrence Borges, director of the Neurosurgical Spine Center at Mass General, demonstrated a cutting-edge 3D spinal surgery in the Ether Dome. Attendees viewed immersive videos with 3D glasses to understand how this technology helps prepare neurosurgeons.

Back at the Slavin Academy, Dr. James Gordon, vice president of education and chief learning officer at Mass General, led an interactive simulation on airway

management. Using a responsive manikin and team-based feedback, MGH Institute Physician Assistant (PA) students practiced high-stakes clinical decision-making.

The morning concluded with a panel discussion comparing the PA profession in Germany and the United States. Dr. Härteis and Dr. Aung shared their perspectives on the evolving healthcare system in Germany. Kate McElhiney, MPAS '17, joined Physician Assistant Studies Assistant Professor Jerene Bitondo, PA-C, DFAAPA, FAPACVS, Instructor Brittany Palaski, MPAS '19, PA-C, and Program Director Jenna Comeau, DScPAS, MSHS, PA-C, in discussing the evolution of the profession in the U.S., from its introduction to its current well-established state.

"The PA profession is still a young program in Germany," noted Dr. Aung. "I hope through this exchange, students can see how their careers might evolve in 20 to 30 years—without repeating the same early challenges."

# MGH Institute Research Funding Soars Above National Average

BY LISA MCEVOY

Research funding at the MGH Institute of Health Professions has increased by an impressive 236% over the past five years, far surpassing the national average for health professions schools.

“After all, who wants to be average?” joked Nara Gavini, PhD, MPhil, associate provost for research, during his opening remarks at Research and Scholarship Day on May 9.

Dr. Gavini highlighted the Institute’s dramatic research trajectory, from virtually no external funding just a few years ago to above-average by 2020, and now among the leading health professions institutions in grant funding as of 2023.

“There are 59 schools of health professions in the country,” Gavini noted.

“The average number of peer-reviewed publications per institution in 2023 was 91. At the MGH Institute, we published 330 papers in the same year. In terms of grant portfolios, only 50 of the 59 schools report any level of external funding. The average is \$10.1 million. We were at \$45 million in 2023, which is about 305% above the national average.”

Those numbers have continued to rise. According to the most recent figures, the MGH Institute’s grant portfolio exceeded \$50 million in the first quarter of this fiscal year.

Several faculty researchers presented their innovative, interdisciplinary projects that are driving this upward trend.

Professor of Nursing Brenna Morse, PhD, FNP-BC, NCSN, CNE, PMGT-BC, FNASN, FAAN, has worked on several initiatives related to pain in children with complex conditions, including the development of the Guideline for Ruling Out and Assessing Sources of Pain (GRASP) and a program to train nurses in home-based complex care that will be shared with nursing agencies and every nursing school in Massachusetts.



Associate Provost for Research Dr. Nara Gavini discussed how the research portfolio has increased since it was first established in 2013 during Research and Scholarship Day.

“It’s going to become statewide curriculum,” said Dr. Morse. “So every nursing student in Massachusetts can graduate knowing about people with complex conditions, knowing some special considerations for their care, and that working with them in their homes is a career option.”

Prudence Plummer, PhD, PT, BPhysio (HONS), who directs the Institute’s Cognitive-Motor Behavior Lab and is a professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, discussed attention capacity, interventions designed to improve flexibility performance in people with stroke and other neurological conditions, as well as how to predict which patients with stroke will fall during the transition from the hospital to home.

“Failing an attention-demanding task such as stepping over an obstacle might better predict if someone is going to be at risk of falling compared to the simpler clinical measures currently used in the hospital,” she noted.

Tiffany Hogan, PhD, CCC-SLP, shared the work she does to figure out how to close the research-to-practice gap. It currently takes more than 15 years for less than 15% of research to make it into

practice, and only 60% of patients with chronic illnesses receive evidence-based care.

“We have a gap in research that’s making it into practice, but we also have a gap between the practice factors that are considered in research,” said Hogan, the director of the Speech and Language (SAiL) Literacy Lab and professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. “The goal of translational research is to reduce that gap.”

For 22 years, Kathy Lyons, ScD, OTR/L, has been researching activity engagement in people who are living with and beyond cancer, with a focus on increasing engagement through activity prescriptions.

“I use the term ‘activity prescription,’ but it’s important to say that in this approach, we don’t really do the prescribing,” explained Dr. Lyons, a professor at the Department of Occupational Therapy and director of the Cancer Rehabilitation (CaRe) Lab. “It is more of a lifestyle management approach, where we are teaching people to think like therapists and write their own prescriptions for activities that they think are going to increase their health and well-being in the short term.”

# Optimizing Provider-Patient Etiquette in the Virtual World

Effective patient etiquette is an essential component of quality patient care, but how do etiquette best practices translate to telehealth delivery? Are those patient interactions different, and if so, what do practitioners need to know?

Assistant Professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders Rachel Pittmann, PhD, CCC-SLP, CHSE, and her team are finding out, thanks to a grant they received from the Peter L. Slavin, MD Academy for Applied Learning in Health Care at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Over the past few years, Dr. Pittmann, the assistant dean of interprofessional practice, has been researching telehealth etiquette, which is often called “website manner.” Based on her earlier work with interprofessional colleagues, Pittmann identified the most salient skills relevant to patient satisfaction, and collaborated on the development of a validated telehealth etiquette competency checklist tool. This tool is intended to help train health professionals in essential interactive skills to use while conversing with a patient via a computer screen.

This past spring, she and her research team, Communication Sciences and Disorders’ Assistant Professor Esther Herring and Instructor Suzanne Pennington, along with Assistant Professors of Nursing Kathy Sabo and Rachel Cox Simms, launched a pilot curriculum for speech-language pathology and advanced practice nursing students to build their awareness and use of telehealth etiquette skills.

“The goal of implementing these distinct skills is that patients feel connected to their healthcare provider in spite of not being physically together during their appointment,” said Pittmann. “Research shows that patients who have that connection will follow their treatment



Second-year Speech-Language Pathology student Nick Wilder utilizes guidelines from a telehealth curriculum while working with a simulated patient at the Impact Practice Center.

plan and have better health outcomes. This is about outcomes by way of connecting with patients.”

**“It’s all part of being very deliberate to do the best you can in a telehealth setting to mimic the same care you would give that person if he or she was in the same room.”**

— ALYSSA GARZA, M-SLP ’25

Following the semester-long curriculum, the research team evaluated the curriculum’s impact and were pleased by the statistically significant improvements in students’ application of best practices in telehealth etiquette. Students like Alyssa Garza, M-SLP ’25 said the part of the curriculum that enabled skill

practice with simulated patients paid immediate dividends.

“A notable example is how I now navigate interruptions, because things like internet connections are always finicky,” observed Garza. “Setting a precedent of discussing proactive solutions if this does happen makes the overall session go smoother. It’s all part of being very deliberate to do the best you can in a telehealth setting to mimic the same care you would give that person if he or she was in the same room.”

To ensure the team meets the funder’s goals of disseminating and scaling the project beyond its initial pilot group, the research team has implemented a modified curriculum for all Sanders IMPACT Practice Center students and will present the work at international conferences this winter. In addition, a manuscript describing the outcomes of the curriculum is currently undergoing peer review for dissemination in an international journal.

# Normalizing Nurses Asking Questions About Guns and Gun Storage

BY SEAN HENNESSY

An estimated 132 people in this country will die today as a result of gun violence. With gun ownership prevalent—40 percent of U.S. adults have a gun in their home—the probability of violence or suicide with a gun shows no signs of abating. It begs the question: Is there anyone who can help bring down the rate of gun violence and death?

Nurses, for one.

Three School of Nursing advanced practice faculty, Assistant Professor Kathy Hall, DNP, MS, ANP-BC, NE-BC, Instructor Kate Kieran, MSN, PMHNP-BC, and Assistant Professor Meaghan Rudolph, MS, RN, PMHCNS-BC, argue that nurses play a significant role in gun violence prevention.

In their article, “Gun violence: What if we don’t ask?” in the *Journal of Legal Nurse Consulting*, the trio say research shows that most patients are willing to have assessments of gun storage as part of their care, and argue nurses are in a unique position to identify and mitigate risks.

“Asking about firearms in the home is an assessment question that can become as routine as asking about seatbelts, pets, and smoke detectors, not an opportunity for judgment,” the authors state. “Safer firearm storage information is a resource for patients, not a demand for behavior change.”

While asking about guns may be a simple question, if a patient says yes to guns in the home, the concern among many nurses is: what’s next? That’s where a second journal article comes in: “Working Smarter: Facing Firearm Safety,” which has been submitted to the *American Nurse Journal*. Authored by Kieran, Rudolph, and MGH Institute



With gun violence making headlines everyday in this country, three School of Nursing researchers argue that nurses can play a significant role in gun violence prevention.

Professor Brenna Morse, PhD, FNP-BC, NCSN, CNE, PMGT-BC, FNASN, FAAN, the article points out that while information about violence, risk, and firearm ownership may surface through conversations, “nurses receive little or no education, training, or support regarding firearm violence discussions and assessing an individual’s risk.”

“Asking about guns in the home as part of a safety assessment is like asking about helmets, seat belts, or ungated pools,” they write. “Nurses routinely assess safety and health-related risks and provide education on these topics. Nurses can and should engage patients in discussions about gun safety and storage without shame or blame.”

“The article is essentially trying to address those concerns,” said Kieran. “It’s a review of ‘Hey, here’s why it’s important.’ But then also, ‘Here’s what you can do, and some reference lists nurses could go to and say, ‘Here’s

how we talk about it, and here’s some phrases to use.’”

“If you pick up one patient who is at risk by not storing their guns safely and you can educate them, that’s a win,” said Dr. Hall.

Kieran knows all about that. She says the proudest moment in her career was when she convinced a client to relock his guns that he had been leaving around the house. Adding to the risk was an 8-year-old nephew who was visiting.

“I was really proud that we were able to have a family conversation, and he agreed to lock them back up, and I felt like maybe nothing would have happened—but what a risk!” recalled Kieran. “We removed that risk after a 10-minute conversation. I think the more nurses also experience that it’s not so scary, that people are willing to talk with you, and that you can make a big difference, it’s very rewarding and reinforcing.”

# The Age of Adaptive Education

BY BRUNA OLIVEIRA

Flashcards haven't changed much for a long time. Until now.

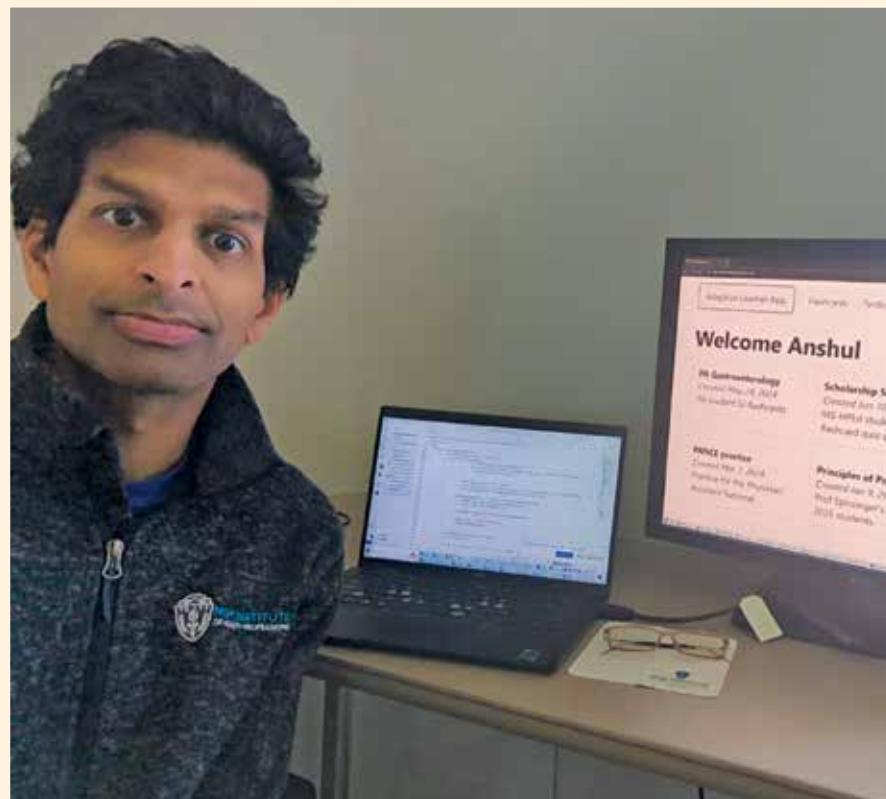
Blending the timeless power of flashcards with technology, the new Adaptive Learner app created by Health Professions Education Assistant Professor Anshul Kumar, PhD, and a team of developers customizes every study session to target what students need to master while providing faculty with valuable data on how well a student is learning.

The web application follows the traditional flashcard use system; if students get a question wrong, the app will place the digital flashcard in a high-priority pile to review more often. If they get it correct, the app places it in a low-priority pile to review less frequently.

"Instead of using the physical index cards, we're just handling all of that digitally," explained Dr. Kumar. "The technology behind the scenes is simple. It calculates how many times the student got the question right or wrong to then do sort of a lottery to figure out which question to ask next based on the priority levels."

Many adaptive learning and spaced repetition platforms already exist. However, the Adaptive Learner app stands out by giving teachers full control over the flashcard content and allowing them to track individual and group performance over any time frame.

"There's a separate instructor version of the app," said Kumar. "The teacher controls all flashcard questions that students see, and we can upload flashcard questions in a simple format. Our platform sends student performance data back to the instructor, and the instructor can see everything that every student does. They can look at a



Anshul Kumar, Assistant Professor in the Health Professions Education Department, is one of the developers of the Adaptive Learner App and has incorporated the web app into both PhD courses he teaches.

single student's record. They can look at their entire class's record, or they can choose a subgroup of their class."

Kumar has used his app in both of the PhD classes he teaches in the Health Professions Education Department. When he suggested it to Brittany Palaski, MPAS, PA-C, an instructor in the Physician Assistant Studies program, she decided to give it a try.

"When Anshul originally approached the PA department, he brought a few different samples," said Palaski. "However, we already have a lot of resources to study for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) studying. So we thought, 'How can we use this on more of a program level and within the classes?' Something we do struggle with is any sort of predictive factors where we can predict how well these students are

going to do on the PANCE throughout the didactic year, as opposed to getting closer to the end."

Recognizing this challenge, Palaski saw the Adaptive Learner app as a tool to help instructors assess student progress on a daily basis.

"While the students have quasi-PANCE prep programs, they usually find them from outside sources, which means we have no idea what and how they're doing unless we ask them," shared Palaski. "The benefit of these flashcards from a faculty member level is that I can actually see how they're doing. I can see each question that they are answering, how they are improving upon it, and how many times they get it wrong. It gives me a little more control and allows me to rapidly distribute flashcards with PANCE practice questions to the entire class."

# Coming Together to Help Children in Charlestown

BY LISA MCEVOY

Faculty and students at the MGH Institute are trained, or are in training, to help people in a variety of ways. Sometimes that means helping an individual, and sometimes that means implementing a system that can help many people. At the Kennedy Center Early Education Program in Charlestown, both of those things are true.

The Kennedy Center provides individuals and families in need with services, opportunities, and the tools they require to lead productive and fulfilling lives. The MGH Institute has a longstanding partnership with the Kennedy Center, especially in one of their focus areas: early education services.

The partnership has evolved through the years to include programs such as classroom support in its early education programs and serving as a resource for students who need services. One initiative that is having a widespread impact is the implementation of the screening tool called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ).

The ASQ provides information on a child's developmental level and can indicate if that child needs to be monitored or referred for a service. Instead of waiting to see if there was a reason to screen a student, the goal of implementing the ASQ was to evaluate all students twice per year and establish a process to consistently document the results.

"We identified that this was a huge area where they needed support," said Jennifer Mackey, SLPD, CCC-SLP, director of clinical education in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and the coordinator of the Early Intervention concentration.

Dr. Mackey, who has been involved with the Institute's work with the Kennedy



(l-r) Director of Clinical Education in the MGH Institute's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and Coordinator of the Early Intervention Concentration Jennifer Mackey, Kennedy Center Education Coordinator Ta'Nia Atkinson, and CSD Assistant Professor Megan Schliep worked closely to implement an assessment for every child at the Charlestown education center.

Center since 2021, was interested in implementation science and thought the approach would work well to ensure that each child could be assessed. MGH Institute's Megan Schliep, PhD, CCC-SLP, MPH, an assistant professor in the CSD department who joined the effort in 2023, provided the implementation science guidance.

"Implementation science provides us with theories, models, and frameworks to serve as a guide to implementation efforts. A big part of implementation science is putting a name to what's being done and using common terminology so that we can operationalize it," said Dr. Schliep.

The work is being done thanks to funding from accounting firm RSM in Charlestown, as well as integral work by Ta'Nia Atkinson, the education coordinator at the Kennedy Center.

She led the training for teachers on how to use the ASQ as well as its online scoring software.

"It's a true partnership, and we took the time to build up trust between the different partners and establish shared goals," said Mackey. "We wanted to make sure that kids in the red were hooked up with systems that were going to give them support, that they have fundamental rights for. But we also then had this range of kids that were in the yellow zone, where we wanted to look at what support they might need instead of waiting to see what happens."

That support may mean helping the child or the family access some of the free services available in the community, including at the Institute's Julie Atwood Speech, Language and Literacy Center. It might also involve helping teachers of those students learn strategies to support the child's development.

# Hacking Assistive Technology

BY LISA MCEVOY

Students who enroll in the MGH Institute know they are going to gain skills and knowledge that will enable them to help people live their best lives. For some of those students, that educational experience extended outside of the classrooms and typical clinical locations to makerspaces during the Intercollegiate Assistive Technology Hackathon (IATH) this past spring.

The IATH pairs teams of students from Boston-area schools with people with disabilities from the local community who identify a daily living challenge and serve as co-designers of assistive technology devices. Now in its fifth year, the 2025 IATH featured nine co-designers who worked with 50 students from six schools—Tufts, Northeastern, Olin College of Engineering, Boston University, Salem State, and the MGH Institute.

Entry-Level Doctor of Occupational Therapy student Haley Apotheker and Elizabeth Sicard MS-SLP '25 joined Sarah Walker, a Tufts student studying innovation management and human factors engineering, to work with a family with a three-year-old boy who uses a wheelchair. They were tasked to come up with a solution that would keep the child from touching the wheels, since his hands soon found their way from the dirty wheels into his mouth.

“I wanted to work on that project because I am interested in pediatrics and it was a fixable problem,” said Apotheker. “His mom wanted guards for the wheels, but there is nothing like that on Amazon.”

With a budget of \$100 and a week to create, they developed a design that used the guard covering the front wheel of a motorcycle as inspiration. They 3D-printed it, which caused some challenges because the guards initially



Tufts student Sarah Walker (l), MGH Institute occupational therapy student Haley Apotheker (c), and recent graduate Elizabeth Sicard, (r) MS-SLP '25 show one of the wheel guards they created for the Intercollegiate Assistive Technology Hackathon this spring.

printed what is referred to as spaghetti—in other words, unusable junk. Fortunately, a later try was successful.

Taking part in the Hackathon not only gave Apotheker new experiences but also made her aware of how much she learned in her first year in the OTD program.

“It’s amazing how much knowledge my classes gave me in my first year,” she said. “As I worked on the guards, I realized how much I already knew about wheelchairs, adaptive devices, and sensory issues.”

Not only did the family receive a solution for an urgent need, but her team earned the award for the most innovative project. They weren’t the only award winners from the Institute. Sophie Nash OTD '25 was on the team that won the award for the most functional device. Her team created a sweatshirt that could carry a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) for a

patient from the Massachusetts General Hospital LVAD Clinic instead of his having to carry it in a bag.

Other MGH Institute students who took part included Sophie Schmidt and Mia Obermueller from the MS-SLP program, who worked on a team that created a keyguard for an augmentative and alternative communication device used by a five-year-old girl. Fellow SLP student Akshaya Kannan helped a man who plays power soccer for the Commonwealth Cruisers find a way to transport the front guard that attaches to his wheelchair to games.

Alia Yannone OTD '27 helped develop a transfer aid for the user of a power wheelchair and stander. Anna Lee OTD '27 was part of a team that created a device to better support a man’s head while he was in his wheelchair, while Kristyan Tran OTD '25 worked on a solution to help a video gamer access the game switches more easily during play.

# Enhancing Occupational Therapy Education Through Hands-On Experiences

BY MAEVE MULLEN

In the bustling halls, classrooms, and outdoor spaces of Harvard-Kent Elementary School in Charlestown, MGH Institute occupational therapy (OT) students step into the heart of their own education.

For the past two years, OT students have spent time with students and teachers at Harvard-Kent during the school day as part of their level one fieldwork and advanced doctoral experiences (ADE). In the fall, groups of second-year students have the opportunity to visit the school for a hands-on experience working with preschool children while taking the practice-based pediatrics course.

“The [MGH Institute] students lead a small group to learn how to work with these young kids,” said Mary Beth Kadlec, OT, ScD, ORT, an assistant professor in the OT program. “They assess them to the best of their ability because they’re in the middle of taking their core courses, so they don’t have the content yet. But they’re getting exposed, and they’re getting practice.”

The OT program had previously partnered with Harvard-Kent on afterschool programs, but there are advantages to OT students being there during the school day.

“Working in the classroom allows the students the opportunity to actually communicate with the teacher and see what the students do in the classroom, at recess, and in the hallway,” said Assistant Professor Mary O’Donnell, OTD, OT, MS, who teaches the School-Based Practice and Occupational Therapy elective in the spring for second-year OT students. “We know that that performance and participation can look really different with two adults



(Foreground) Elizabeth Lawlor (EL-OTD '27) works with one of the children at Harvard-Kent Elementary School while classmates Madeleine Gallay (rear, facing camera) and Leah Kornguth work with another student as Assistant Professor Mary O’Donnell (left) talks to them.

in the quiet one-on-one setting versus in a classroom full of 20 kids.

“They get the experience of leading sessions, they write goals, they do a screening and work together to develop treatment plans. It’s an extra layer of not just knowledge but application.”

The treatment plans the students create before each session are reviewed by Dr. O’Donnell and two third-year students who took the course last year and are now completing their Advanced Doctoral Experience (ADE).

Natalie Dye is one of those students.

The ADE comes after level 1 fieldwork, which includes five part-time fieldwork experiences; and the level 2 fieldwork, which includes two full-time, 12-week external placements. For her ADE, Dye not only assisted O’Donnell in the elective and during the school visits by the second-year students but also went to Harvard-Kent separately to work on several projects.

“I screened one of the preschool students using the HELP [Hawaii Early Learning Profile] model and checklist, developed plans for and led a preschool physical education class, created a reusable, Velcro, visual schedule for the gym teacher to use during preschool physical education classes, and supported students opening packages during snack time,” explained Dye.

Dr. Kadlec explained how valuable those last two projects were.

“The visual schedule is a tool that can help the youngsters understand the routine, the different activities for gym class, and what is going to happen next,” she said. “It is working *in vivo* to help them be successful. And then in snack time, the kids would typically just hand the packages to the teachers to open. We said, ‘the kids can learn to do that.’ It is teaching the OT students to understand how to help the kids and then how to teach the teachers. And that has really been the model.”

# First Student Impact Award Given for Tedy's Team Center of Excellence

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

Community outreach and education surrounding stroke prevention is a big part of what the Tedy's Team Center of Excellence in Stroke Recovery at the MGH Institute is about, and it's a big takeaway for graduate assistant Abbey Kroll, who has been working at the Center for the past year.

"I think that early education and prevention is key," said Kroll, a second-year physical therapy student. "Throughout our stroke workshops, we've recognized how much misinformation is out there, and being able to set that record straight has been really important. Just educating people, no matter their education levels, has been the biggest takeaway."

Kroll's efforts at the Tedy's Team Center of Excellence in Stroke Recovery is the reason she was awarded the Tedy's Team Center Student Impact Award during the student leadership awards ceremony in Shouse.

This is the first year the award has been given and honors a student who's made an outstanding contribution to stroke prevention and recovery, one who demonstrates leadership skills and a commitment to improving the lives of people who have had a stroke. Kroll fit the bill.

"Abbey has been amazing," said Gwen Larsen, Education and Community Outreach Coordinator for Tedy's Team Center of Excellence. "She has taken a lot of initiative and gone above and beyond to support the work of the center. What I found valuable is the student perspective, enthusiasm, and creativity she brings to our community education efforts."

Those efforts have taken Kroll around Greater Boston to organize workshops



Abbey Kroll (center) was awarded the first Student Impact Award by Gwen Larsen, Education and Community Outreach Coordinator for Tedy's Team Center of Excellence (l) and President and John Hilton Knowles Professor Paula Milone-Nuzzo (r).

on stroke education, the signs of stroke, and how to prevent stroke. She has played a key role in organizing sessions in Charlestown, Chelsea, Roxbury, and the North End, among others, as well as providing educational material.

"Abbey has been a key part of the center over the past year," concluded Larsen. "This award reflects her contributions and recognizes her potential as a future healthcare leader."

**"This award reflects  
Abbey's contributions  
and recognizes her  
potential as a future  
healthcare leader."**

*- GWEN LARSEN, EDUCATION  
AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
COORDINATOR FOR TEDY'S  
TEAM CENTER OF EXCELLENCE*

"I think what Gwen and the rest of the Tedy's Team Center have done for the Boston community has been such a great experience for me to be a part of," noted Kroll. "I have learned how I can implement patient education into my future practice as a physical therapist."

The Center of Excellence was made possible thanks to a \$1 million gift by Tedy's Team, the charitable entity that uses running as a platform for stroke awareness and philanthropy. It was co-founded by former New England Patriot great Tedy Bruschi and his wife Heidi after Tedy suffered a stroke at the age of 31. Through his rehabilitation, Bruschi made a stunning return to professional football. The Bruschis are hoping fellow stroke survivors being assisted at the MGH Institute will have the same opportunity for a comeback as Tedy received.

Built on the pillars of community outreach, research, and rehabilitation, the center provides education on warning signs of stroke, supports research on stroke and recovery, and leverages pro bono rehabilitation care through the IMPACT clinical centers for stroke survivors.

# Helping Patients Regain Their Voices at MGH

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

Jason Muise doesn't mind doing double duty at Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Laryngeal Surgery and Voice Rehabilitation. In fact, he welcomes it.

Not only is he helping patients regain their voice, but he's also helping MGH Institute speech-language pathology (SLP) students become proficient at their craft so that they can do what he has been doing since 2011.

A specialist in voice rehabilitation, Muise works with individuals who are voice disordered, either because of something organic going on in their body, such as vocal fold nodules or polyps, or a voice use disorder, such as unbalanced muscular systems that make it tough for someone to talk.

Once a diagnosis has been established, Muise steps in with voice evaluations that include acoustic and aerodynamic assessments of that person's voice. He typically works with patients for an hour a week over the course of a few months.

**"We do a lot of training with the students and then work on having them start to apply that with the clients on our caseloads."**

— JASON MUISE

The genesis of Muise's role goes back 14 years, when he worked at the MGH Voice Center as part of his practicum while a Master's SLP student at the MGH Institute. After graduating in 2011, Muise began working full-time at the Voice Center. For more than a decade, he's also helped guide MGH Institute students during their own clinical rotations there.



MGH Institute Alum Jason Muise, a speech language pathologist at Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Laryngeal Surgery and Voice Rehabilitation, is helping patients regain their voice and IHP students gain hands-on clinical experience.

MGH Institute SLP students spend a three-month rotation at the Voice Center, where they learn to provide voice evaluations and gradually take part in the intervention and the therapy process in a guided and scaffolded manner.

"We'll be training them on different modalities of the therapy that we provide at the center," said Muise. "So, laryngeal massage, laryngeal visualization of the larynx via rigid endoscopy, flexible endoscopy, and skill acquisition of varied facilitative techniques that can help coax out more efficient and healthy vocal postures are areas students will develop during their experience at the Center. We do a lot of training with the students and then work on having them start to apply that with the clients on our caseloads."

And if an MGH Institute student wants to concentrate on voice disorders, that's an option too; Muise is a co-coordinator

for the voice disorders specialization, a role he has held since 2019.

"We typically will invite students to sit in on different lectures for special topics, and we will work with those students on further advancement of their skill set for things like laryngeal imaging and various special topics found in the voice-disordered population that might not have as much attention in the introductory course work," noted Muise. "So I'm teaching them a little bit more in-depth those strategies. We do a little bit more firsthand work there as well."

Muise and his team work almost exclusively with MGH Institute students, who he says bring a lot to the table.

"MGH Institute students are coming in with this desire, this focus, and this knowledge base that they can then build upon," said Muise. "We know what they're coming in with—they're coming in with a solid foundation with which to work."

All of which makes Muise's double duty worth talking about.

# Helping Mold Careers at Salem Hospital

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

For Stephanie Ferraro, teaching and nursing are in her blood, and that's why she loves what she does.

The 10-year veteran is a psychiatric nurse practitioner at Salem Hospital, where she is in charge of diagnostic evaluations, safety assessment and monitoring, and medication management for the Adult Partial Hospital Program within the Department of Psychiatry. She's also director of the MGH Institute's nurse practitioner student training program at Salem Hospital.

"I have four students at a time; they rotate from me and a few other preceptors in our department," said Ferraro, who has been with Salem Hospital since 2014. "So the students have really good, well-rounded experiences where they get to see different sites in psychiatry."

Training students while also handing one's full-time job can be challenging, but Ferraro relishes the opportunity, especially when she sees what her clinical rotations provide students who may someday be colleagues.

**"It makes it meaningful and purposeful to be able to give back to the students who then give back to the community in these kinds of ways."**

- STEPHANIE FERRARO

"They get to see patients in various settings, various ages, and various circumstances," she observed. "And it's been really nice to have that type of cohesive training program where students get experience in all these different sites. It's great to offer as



Salem Hospital psychiatric nurse practitioner Stephanie Ferraro (l) with Kelsey Tomimoto, a student in the MGH Institute DEN class of 2026.

much exposure as we do because it's easy to go into school and think, 'I want to do this,' but then you get exposure to different types of environments, and you see there are other opportunities."

Ferraro points to her own department as Exhibit A. She helps manage Salem Hospital's Adult Partial program, which is a day hospitalization psychiatric program involving an interdisciplinary team of nurse practitioners, social workers, and mental health counselors.

"I never heard of a program like this until I arrived, and many of my students haven't either. It's primarily a group-based treatment, and I work alongside the case managers and manage the patients," noted Ferraro, a 2012 MGH Institute graduate of the Direct Entry Nursing program herself. "Our patients are there for a two-week program, which is a really great program. They get individual therapy and group-based treatment. They get the diagnostics and medication management from me. The group-based treatment is a little bit of a higher-level focus than patients

typically receive in inpatient settings, because patients in our program aren't as acute."

For Ferraro, her career and attachment to Mass General Brigham is personal; Massachusetts General Hospital is where she began her career, where she met her husband, and where both of her parents worked until their retirements.

"I've always been connected to MGH my entire life—it was such a comfortable place for me," she observed. "My first job out of college was at MGH. My second job was MGH. Then I went to the MGH Institute for school. So it feels like very full circle to be able to stay in the system."

A healthcare system where she's able to care for patients and mold careers along the way.

"I like what I do. I like teaching," concluded Ferraro. "It feels like it connects everything together. It makes it meaningful and purposeful to be able to give back to the students who then give back to the community in these kinds of ways."

# Solidifying Partnership with MGH Institute Physical Therapy Researchers and Faculty

BY SEAN HENNESSEY

The relationship between the MGH Institute and the physical therapy department at Massachusetts General Hospital has always been robust and constructive, with students benefiting from clinical rotations, often landing jobs at the hospital after earning their degree. Now, the Institute—the only degree-granting affiliate of Mass General Brigham—and hospital are building on an already successful partnership by increasing their collaboration. And Noam Segal DPT '14 is at the center of it all.

After a decade as a senior physical therapist at the MGH Chelsea Health Center, Segal recently took a new position as a clinical specialist in the physical therapy outpatient clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital. Here, half his time is spent treating patients with complex presentations, while the other half is geared toward mentoring clinicians with a myriad of experience levels. MGH Institute students and recent graduates are in that mentoring mix, a responsibility Segal said is crucial to the mission of Mass General Brigham.

**“This is a win-win situation where we can deal with clinical questions in a very methodical, scientific way, with the help of the MGH Institute knowledge.”**

— NOAM SEGAL DPT '14

“We want to make sure that we’re able to provide quality care for our patients because this is what they’re coming from all over the country and the world to receive,” noted Segal. “We reach out to students coming into the clinic to



In a bid to build on an already successful partnership, Noam Segal, clinical specialist in the physical therapy outpatient clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital and MGH Institute researchers are focusing on an increase in collaboration.

understand their program, what kind of language, concepts, and frameworks they’re coming in with.”

Segal says IHP students typically have a seamless transition in becoming effective clinicians because of their strong basic knowledge, holistic approach to treatment, and awareness of social determinants of health.

“I think the IHP is exceptionally good at giving students a wider range of practice,” said Segal. “It’s not just our specific clinical skills that need to be top notch; we need to make sure that when we treat, we apply our knowledge, and it’s professional and evidence-based as well as employing a holistic approach. I think the IHP is successfully integrating that into its syllabus.”

As Segal adjusts to his new role, he looks forward to increasing collaboration around research initiatives with MGH Institute faculty. “So far, there’s been naturally occurring collaboration, but both the hospital and Institute would like to see a more structured approach,” he said.

Segal sees an opportunity to create a research panel for Massachusetts General Hospital clinicians interested in research or in asking clinical questions. On the other side would be MGH Institute researchers, who either have the answers or can conduct research to find them. “This is a win-win situation where we can deal with clinical questions in a very methodical, scientific way, with the help of the MGH Institute knowledge,” he said.

“This type of partnership can create a translational effort to bring evidence-based care to the clinic faster to further elevate our practice, while guiding research and generating new or follow-up clinical questions,” noted Segal. “Seeds grow. Being able to cultivate something and have the MGH physical therapy team develop in that way professionally and have the IHP faculty reaching out and teaching us some new things to improve the quality of care, improve our environment, or improve the knowledge of our discipline, will be great.”

# From Boston to Marathon Mastery

BY MAEVE MULLEN

Completing a marathon is a monumental achievement, one Abdulrahman Sabbagh had done 17 times. Crossing the finish line at the 2025 Boston Marathon for his 18th marathon didn't just combine his passion for running with his professional passion by running for the MGH Institute, where he received a Master's in Health Professions Education (HPEd) in 2020. It also brought him back to the city where his running journey began.

During one of his first weekends in Boston, Sabbagh stumbled upon the Adidas RunBase near the Boston Marathon finish line on Boylston Street. Curious about the group runs happening there, he decided to join them the following week. That decision changed his life; Sabbagh was hooked. He considers April 15, 2017, the day he participated in his first-ever race, the



Abdulrahman Sabbagh, HPEd '20, holding medals from some of his 18 marathons. He raised money for the IHP by running the Boston Marathon.

Boston Athletic Association 5K, as his "running birthday."

In April, Sabbagh raised money for the Dr. Charles A. and Ann Sanders IMPACT Practice Center while running the Boston Marathon as a member of Team IHP, supporting the Center's clinical education, which involves working with clients as well as learning with simulated patients. He understands how important it is to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

"The program equipped me with the knowledge and skills to enhance healthcare education and simulation, which has become a major focus of my career," said Sabbagh, an attending emergency medicine physician at Riyadh Second Health Cluster in Saudi Arabia, where he is also a member of the Sports Medicine Training Committee for Sports and Exercise Medicine Fellowship.

# Coming Home to Support Future Students

BY YINGCHU ZHAO

For Olivia Rotelle, OTD '22, running the Boston Marathon wasn't just another race—it was a personal milestone, a return home, and a heartfelt thank you to the institution that shaped her career. On Marathon Monday last April, Rotelle shifted from spectator to participant, crossing the iconic finish line on Boylston Street as part of the MGH Institute of Health Professions' Team IHP.

"I spent five wonderful years living in Boston, witnessing how the marathon unites this city in such a special way," said Rotelle, an occupational therapist at Shirley Ryan Ability Lab in Chicago. Having previously completed the Chicago, New York, and Berlin marathons, Rotelle noted, "Boston is the crown jewel, the one I've always dreamed of adding to the top of my list."

This year, Rotelle ran with a clear purpose—to support the MGH



Doctor of Occupational Therapy graduate Olivia Rotelle raised more than \$8,000 for the Sanders IMPACT Practice Center.

Institute's Charles A. and Ann Sanders IMPACT Practice Center. The Center played a pivotal role in her education and professional preparation, offering hands-on, interdisciplinary training that proved instrumental to her early success as an occupational therapist.

"The experiences at the Center taught me how to work collaboratively, problem-solve with other healthcare professionals, and provide exceptional care," Rotelle recalled. She ran to raise funds so future IHP students can continue benefiting from the same invaluable experiences.

# Class Notes

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

## Bachelor of Science in Nursing

**Olayinka Ajayi, BSN '22**, a surgical acute care nurse at the University of Maryland Medical Center, was presented with the Daisy Award in August. One of Ajayi's nominators said, "Nurse Yinka doesn't just treat patients—she ministers to their hearts."

**Diana Barlaam, BSN '20**, a cardiac surgery ICU nurse at Tufts Medical Center, was presented with a Daisy Award in May for the compassionate care she provided to a patient over several years. A presenter at the ceremony noted, "She spent countless hours by his side, kept him comfortable, and made sure his family felt supported through his final days."

**Julika Wocial, BSN '19**, was awarded the Excellence in Nursing Education award by the American Nurses Association - Massachusetts at the 2025 ANAMASS Awards and FNAMA Scholarship Gala in April.

## Masters in Nursing

**Donna Barry, MS-NU '01**, passed away on March 20, 2025.

## Doctor of Nursing Practice

**Orla Brandos, DNP '13**, has been named the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nursing Officer at the Hospital for Special Care in New Britain, CT.

**Valerie Fuller, DNP '08, CAS-NU '10**, assumed the role of President of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) at the AANP Conference in June. During her speech, Fuller said, "My priorities are clear: to eliminate outdated barriers to practice, fight misinformation about our profession and elevate the next generation of NP leaders."

**Stephanie Pitts, DNP '22**, was quoted in The Nursing Beat article, "New Survey Reveals Nearly 75% of Nurses Unaware of Potential Health Risks in IV Bags," emphasizing the importance of raising awareness of the study, the passing of California's Toxic-Free Medical Device Act, and supporting nurses who want to explore alternatives.

**Timothy Quigley, DNP '16**, was awarded the Living Legends in Massachusetts Nursing award by the American Nurses Association - Massachusetts at the 2025 ANAMASS Awards and FNAMA Scholarship Gala in April.

## Communication Sciences and Disorders

**Jenna Muri-Rosenthal, MS-SLP '09**, founder of Fit to Function Recovery, was on the podcast *Waves*, the official podcast of APTA Michigan, to discuss her innovative approach to combining rehabilitation with fitness training to help neurologic patients exceed their therapeutic goals.

**Laura Nagy, MS-SLP '22**, wrote an article on increasing communication access for adults with intellectual disabilities and autism, which was featured in *Autism Spectrum News*. The article highlights the importance of communication access for adults with intellectual disabilities and autism, as well as provides valuable insights and recommendations for improving communication access.

## Genetic Counseling

**Kate Donahue, MS-GC '24**, a reproductive genetic counselor at Massachusetts General Hospital, has recently become a member of the Genesis Foundation's Young Professionals Committee.

## Occupational Therapy

**Lauren Fields McMahon, OTD '17**, an occupational therapist and assistive technology professional in the Augmentative Communication Program at Boston Children's Hospital, is the first occupational therapist to be certified as a patient gaming technology specialist through Child's Play Charity.

**Laura Magee, OTD '20**, has opened her own small business called Psych Safe Supplies ([www.psychsafesupplies.com](http://www.psychsafesupplies.com)), which sells adult-oriented leisure and coping products for adults who are patients in adult psychiatric inpatient facilities. Magee's hope is that these products will help maintain the patients' dignity while they engage in meaningful and self-regulating activities.

## Physical Therapy

**Bobby Belarmino, DPT '06**, has been appointed to the editorial board of the

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*Journal of Acute Care Physical Therapy* as associate editor.

**Naseem Chatiwala, DPT '07, MS-PT '04**, discusses the community exercise program, "Power Talk Your Walk," created by Chatiwala and her team at Rehab Health 360, in the article, *Physical Therapists Take Exercise Outside*. The program is designed so that clients can practice using their brains to dual task in a safe environment with physical therapists to help.

**Laura Foley, DPT '09**, of Spaulding Rehabilitation Braintree, received a 2025 Winning Outpatient Ways (WOW) Award.

**Jason Levine, DPT '17**, shared his expertise on the connection between mind fog and one's physical state on the *Mindful Moment Workout Series*, which is part of the *Modern Mind Interview Series* podcast. The interview includes a short exercise that you can do at your desk to jumpstart both your body and your mind.

**Marilyn Moffat, DPT '06**, Professor of Physical Therapy at the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, gave the keynote speech at the 7th International Conference on Vocational Education Applied Science and Technology in September.

**Kristin Parlman, DPT '03**, a physical therapist at Massachusetts General Hospital, was recognized as the Leader of the Pack by the Boston Red Sox during a recent pregame ceremony. She was nominated by MGH PT and OT for her 33 years of service.

**Ann Rhinesmith Jampel, MS-PT '01**, passed away on March 24, 2025.

**James Zachazewski, DPT '03**, received the Ronald G. Peyton Award from the American Academy of Sports Physical Therapy, which honors members who have made a distinguished contribution to the specialty.

## Physician Assistant Studies

**Brock Bodily, MPAS '19**, a specialist in personal injury care, shared his expertise navigating the intersection of medicine and legal considerations, discussing how advanced practice practitioners play a vital role in patient recovery and advocacy on *The Many Minds Podcast*.

**Christian Sorensen, MPAS '22**, has been selected by his peers to serve a two-year term as APP Member at Large within the MaineHealth Executive Committee at MaineHealth.

## Health Professions Education

**Josh Hartzell, MS-HPEd '17**, shared his expertise on healthcare, leadership, and well-being during Marcel Schwantes' *Love in Action Podcast*. The main themes within the conversation included self-awareness, aligning leadership with personal values, listening deeply, and shaping cultural intentionality.

**LAST WORDS: MICHAEL MENDES, MPAS, PA-C**

# A Physician Assistant's Look Back, and Forecast Forward

The Physician Assistant program at the MGH Institute of Health Professions was the hardest two years of my life, with the school-life balance heavily favoring school. But looking back, they were the most rewarding years too.

As I approach one year as a practicing Physician Assistant at the Brigham & Women's Emergency Department, I often tell myself I wouldn't be the clinician that I am when it comes to ordering tests, interpreting results, diagnosing conditions, and treating patients, without my interprofessional experience at the IHP.

The team-based learning model placed us with students from different ages, ethnic backgrounds, and clinical experience. Despite our differences, we navigated complex cases and held each other accountable. For example, we challenged each other prior to the daily quiz to encourage positive reinforcement of the course material. My teammates were the closest thing to family while in school, and we now share lifelong friendships.

Additionally, the intense curriculum provided a strong foundation of knowledge across the spectrum of patient demographics and disease states, all of which prepared me to handle the complex, high-pressure situations I see daily. Recently, a patient of mine took too much of his Metformin, and I quickly remembered from school that too much of this drug can cause fatal lactic acidosis. My patient had an extremely toxic lactate level, but we transferred him for emergent dialysis, saving his life.

The MGH Institute's focus on interprofessional medicine highlighted the importance of collaborative medicine



and patient care. Specifically, IMPACT placed us with students from nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and genetic counseling. This experience paid dividends because in my current role, I routinely engage with nursing, consult services, and connect with outpatient providers for continuity of care. Just a few weeks ago, I consulted surgery, gastrointestinal, palliative care, and case management for one single patient, who was then admitted to the oncology service where our former class president was the responding clinician.

While significant learning took place in the classroom and from my peers, much of the skills that I hold today came from my clinical rotations at Mass General Brigham sites. Training with physicians, fellows, and residents from Harvard Medical School in real-world medical scenarios sharpened my skills and facilitated hospital

**The MGH Institute gave me a chance, and through a rigorous curriculum, focus on interprofessional medicine, and clinical placement sites, helped me become the provider I am today.**

relationships, which helped me secure a job at Brigham & Women's Hospital.

The MGH Institute gave me a chance, and through a rigorous curriculum, focus on interprofessional medicine, and clinical placement sites, helped me become the provider I am today.

After all I received from the Institute, I return the favor by mentoring, overseeing practicals, interviewing accepted students, and engaging with alumni. I try to push current students out of their comfort zone by encouraging critical thinking beyond the textbook, much like my professors did for me. Through this supportive ecosystem, we will continue to attract, develop, and retain leaders of tomorrow who lean on the Institute's foundation to deliver high-quality care.

*Please email [alumni@mghihp.edu](mailto:alumni@mghihp.edu) if you are interested in sharing your first-person story with the IHP community.*

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## Alumni: Let's stay connected. Update your alumni record.

Wherever life takes you in the world, the IHP wants to stay connected! Now is a great time to refresh your record.

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To all those who helped make IHP Giving Day 2025 a success, THANK YOU!

While this campaign ended, you can still make a gift to support our students:



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