Monday Memo – July 9, 2018

Medical School Orientation

- Clinical faculty needed to orient incoming medical students to primary care: To enhance primary care visibility during the first two years of medical school, MassAHEC will be hosting an orientation session for incoming students, Community Vital Signs, scheduled for Wednesday, August 8, 2018. The afternoon session, co-led by Linda Cragin and Suzanne Cashman, will introduce students to primary care, community health and the role of social determinants of health. We are looking for physicians to meet with these incoming students in small groups for discussion during a dinner session that evening from 6-8 pm. If you can join us, please contact Lorna Chiasson at Lorna.Chiasson@umassmed.edu or 774-442-3924. We need to showcase you and your work as these newly entering students begin their medical education.

Chair’s Corner

- A tribute to the staff at Plumley Village Health Services: I’m writing today to pay tribute to the staff and faculty at Plumley Village Health Services, which saw its final patients June 30 and which will cease all administrative operations tomorrow. For 26 years, this small but dedicated program has provided critical community-based health, education and outreach programs.

The program was started in 1992, when Memorial Hospital established it as an outreach clinic at Plumley Village, a housing project serving a low income multicultural and multiracial population in downtown Worcester. The clinic was established in partnership with the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and with Community Builders, a not-for-profit organization devoted to the development and preservation of affordable housing.

Clinical services began under the leadership of Randy Wertheimer, MD with a maternal and child health outreach program that included a nurse and a community outreach worker. Over the years the program continued a broad range of outreach activities as it expanded as a Family Medicine practice, with a healthy obstetrical and newborn component. Since its inception, fundraising for outreach totaled over $345,000 to support immunization, teen pregnancy, health education, childhood obesity and cancer screening programs, as well as health and literacy fairs.
The program started in a barbershop, and over the years hopscotched to a basement apartment (until recently, still used for community outreach activities) and then to its current location on Belmont Street. It also served as a student and resident training site, serving as a model for the integration of clinical medicine and community health. As UMass Memorial Health Care entered into a variety of insurance arrangements devoted to quality and access, the program easily demonstrated its high clinical standards while maintaining its reputation for personalized and compassionate care delivered in a multicultural and multilingual setting.

Today, as UMass Memorial Medical Center is closing the practice, I’d like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the program’s dedicated staff and clinicians who have made a difference. Staff members include Maria Collazo, Yadira DeJesus, Leesandra Gonzalez, Laura Lopez, Mary Opatka, Magda Rodriguez, and Julie Wholey. Faculty include Katharine Barnard, Mary Flynn, Ken Peterson, Ellen Ruell and Mary Sullivan.

Thanks for making a difference.