Community Medicine
Hospital’s Reach Extends Throughout the District

Let Your Heart Be Your Guide
Increasing Access to Affordable Care
Welcome to another issue of the HUH Check Up, where we encourage a healthy lifestyle for you, your family and the community.

While HUH is physically located in Ward 4, we pride ourselves on offering high-quality health care services to residents throughout the city. Our belief in healthy, vibrant communities is what drives us to provide these services, some of which are highlighted in our cover story. Free screenings, participation in walks to raise money and awareness and food and toy drives are just some of the ways that the Hospital is reaching out to residents in all eight wards of the city.

In this issue, we also examine Howard’s response to the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the health care reform legislation that President Obama signed into law in March. Mary H. Hill, associate dean and professor in the Division of Nursing, describes some of the initiatives that Howard is currently undertaking, and others that are on the horizon, all of which are intended to better meet the needs of our entire community.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month and in a new column called Ask the Doctor, Dr. Shelly McDonald-Pinkett, chair of the Department of Medicine at Howard, answers frequently asked questions about a disease that continues to be so prevalent in our country.

On behalf of the Howard University Hospital community, we hope you enjoy this issue of the HUH Check Up. We remain committed to providing you with relevant and timely information to assist you with your health care needs, and as always we look forward to serving you.

Warmest regards,

Larry Warren
Chief Executive Officer
Howard University Hospital
www.huhealthcare.com
INCREASING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CARE
Rebuilding the Primary Care Workforce

by otesa middleton miles

The Affordable Care Act, which passed in March, has already begun changing the delivery of health care in this country. Designed to make health care available and affordable for more people, the act has prompted numerous changes in Howard University’s Division of Nursing in the College of Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Health Sciences.

Mary H. Hill, associate dean and professor in the Division of Nursing, said the school has launched some programs and has others that are on the horizon in response to the act’s provision, which focuses on “Rebuilding the Primary Care Workforce.”

“Nursing will create the largest number of new health care jobs—a projected 581,500 new registered nurses by 2018,” said Hill, who has a doctorate of nursing and is a registered nurse.

To help meet the demand, the University’s nursing program is expected to increase its enrollment of 233 students in the 2009–2010 school year to 299 students in the 2010–2011 academic year. In 2011–2012, Hill expects about 360 students.

So far, the Division of Nursing has:

- Received $1.5 million in funding for scholarships from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for disadvantaged students in the Division of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences;
- Implemented an online R.N. to B.S.N. program, which started in June. Nurses who have an associate’s degree from a community college can earn a bachelor’s degree in just 12 months while still working;
- Had an 80 percent increase in its enrollment of upper division students entering clinical nursing. The program went from 50 students in fall 2009 to 90 students in fall 2010; and
- Reapplied to receive funding from HRSA to increase the number of high school students interested in pursuing nursing.

Hill also indicates there are planned initiatives on the horizon for the Division of Nursing, which include:

- Resuming the nurse educator track in August 2011 in an effort to reduce the nursing faculty shortage;
- Submitting a grant application to HRSA by the end of the year to fund a 15-month accelerated second degree program for people who want to enter nursing, but have a bachelor’s degree in another field;
- Developing a nursing faculty practice plan that will include establishing a community-based health center managed by nurses who are members of the school’s faculty; and
- Offering a doctorate of nursing practice degree by 2015.

“Our Division of Nursing will make significant contributions to increasing access to affordable care,” Hill said. “We are actively involved in a transformation to keep programs current and to prepare nurses to meet workforce demands and engage in new models of practices associated with the fast-changing technology and society’s needs.”

How should the Affordable Care Act be interpreted and implemented for the Division of Nursing at Howard University? What are the implications for the nursing workforce and the delivery of health care?
There is no doubt that lives are saved every day at Howard University Hospital (HUH), but some may be surprised to know that the Hospital’s impact is just as strong miles away, in all four quadrants of the city.

“We want to provide a medical home to the entire community,” says Davene M. White, director of HUH CARES Public Health Program, which delivers a variety of health care services to area residents.

That means providing free services from its Georgia Avenue facility and taking medical care directly to those in the community who need it most. The Hospital offers free screenings, holds annual food and toy collection drives, organizes and participates in annual walks to raise awareness about particular diseases and operates a literacy program for children.

One group benefiting from HUH’s community outreach is the teenage population. Adolescents often spend little time visiting a doctor since there are few immunizations required for that age group, says Dr. Michal A. Young, interim chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Child Health. As a result, “they become adults who don’t like to go to the doctor,” she says.

HUH wants to change that with the opening of the Howard University Health Sciences Enterprise Colts Wellness Center, a new primary care clinic housed on the grounds of Ward 4’s Calvin Coolidge Senior High School. Scheduled to launch this fall, HUH pediatricians, family medicine doctors, obstetricians/gynecologists and dentists will spend two half days per week at the wellness center seeing students.

“It’s designed to reduce students’ time away from school for medical appointments and sick visits,” says White, who is also director of nursing and maternal child health at HUH.

“The Department of Health is excited about the positive impact this school-based health center will have on youth in the Coolidge community and their ability to have...
access to primary and acute health care services,” says Dr. Pierre Vigilance, director of the D.C. Department of Health. “We hope that this site will help improve health outcomes and the quality of life for youth attending Coolidge, by helping make preventative, as well as education and counseling services, more readily available to students.”

The Hospital is even reaching out to a younger demographic. Starting in 2012, the Eagle Academy, a public charter school in Ward 6 for children between the ages of 3 and 8, will house the Howard University Healthplex. The center will provide students with services from pediatricians, family medicine specialists and dentists. It will also feature specialty care providers in areas such as ophthalmology and neurology.

“It will be a one-stop-shop,” White says. “The parents will be able to see the doctors as well.”

Infants and new mothers receive the benefits of HUH’s outreach efforts, too. The Hospital’s W.I.C. (Women Infant Child) program is a supplemental food program for pregnant women and children up to age 5. The National Breastfeeding Support Center also helps new mothers get a head start on their children’s health by providing guidance and information about how to circumvent challenges with breastfeeding.

A FOCUS ON PREVENTIVE CARE

One of the major goals of HUH’s outreach efforts is to provide residents with access to medical care before they get sick, or when it’s early enough to employ the most effective treatment methods. Recognizing that early detection can save lives, the Hospital offers free prostate, mammogram and sickle cell screenings.

And now, thanks to a grant from the D.C. Department of Health and the D.C. Cancer Consortium, the Howard University Cancer Center now offers free colon cancer screenings to residents between the ages of 50 and 64 who don’t have insurance to cover the $1,800 colonoscopies. The program is open to all D.C. residents.

HIV is another disease in which outcomes improve with an early diagnosis. Three percent of District residents have been diagnosed with HIV, but many more don’t know they are infected. The Hospital has provided free screenings to nearly 50,000 residents in the past three and a half years.

Sickle cell anemia is a disease that disproportionately affects the Black community, and each year Howard raises money and awareness by sponsoring in part the Stomp Out Sickle Cell 5k Walk/Run. (This year, the event brought in nearly $10,000.) The Hospital also participates in the American Heart Association’s annual Heart Walk, a national event that raises money for research to treat cardiovascular disease.

PROVIDING QUALITY CARE FOR D.C. RESIDENTS

HUH’s services and outreach efforts continue to make a world of difference in bringing District residents state-of-the-art medical care, and the staff is committed to providing more quality services to residents throughout the city.

Dr. Daphne P. Bazile-Harrison is a member of the new HUH team providing medical services at Coolidge High School.
While many fear the possibility of becoming sick, for others seeking treatment for an illness can be just as heart wrenching. Edward L. Bland, 53, faced that dilemma when, at the urging of his wife and family, he decided to seek treatment after he was diagnosed with cancer. Before coming to Howard University Hospital (HUH), the native Washingtonian was not optimistic about his prognosis.

“I was ready to give up on life,” Bland says. “It was because of my wife and my family that I decided to come to Howard.”

After being admitted to HUH, Bland still struggled with the decision to move forward. “Even after I arrived at Howard, I was still unsure as to whether I wanted the treatment or not.”

However, it was the reassurance and concern expressed by Drs. Ernest Myers and Oscar Streeter that made the difference for Bland. He praises the professionalism and caring he received at the Hospital.

“The doctors and their staff reached out to me and let me know that they wanted the best for me,” he says.

In addition to the communication between family members and the doctors and staff at HUH, Bland says, “You have some of the most influential doctors in D.C. at Howard. They are sincere and seem to genuinely care about me.”

For anyone considering coming to HUH for care, Bland says, “Let your heart be your guide. I trusted them with my life—and I still do.”

by damien t. frierson, m.s.w.
**Ask the Doctor…**

**Diabetes**

What are some of the symptoms of diabetes?
Symptoms may include frequent urination, thirst, hunger and weight loss. Additional symptoms include frequent infections, blurred vision and numbness of the hands and feet. In some cases, diabetes may be present even though there are no symptoms at all.

What is the difference between Type 1, Type 2 and gestational diabetes?
Insulin is the hormone that is needed to convert our food into energy. In Type 1 diabetes, the body does not produce insulin. Type 1, which was referred to as juvenile diabetes in the past, is typically diagnosed in children and young adults.

In Type 2, which is more common, the body does not produce enough insulin or the insulin is not working well in the body. It is more common in African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans and in older people.

Gestational diabetes may occur during pregnancy in women who have never been diagnosed with diabetes. The body either does not produce enough insulin or is unable to use the insulin that it makes effectively.

What is a healthy blood sugar level for someone who has diabetes, and how can diabetics control their blood sugar levels?
There are different measures of the “sugar” or glucose levels in diabetes. Typically the glucose levels may be determined prior to eating, called preprandial, or after eating, postprandial. Also, an estimate of the level over three months can be determined by measuring the hemoglobin A1c. Every person should have individualized care directed by their physician and a diabetes educator. All diabetic patients should monitor their diet, exercise and receive vaccinations. The typical glucose ranges for a diabetic patient is 70–130 mg/dl before a meal and less than 180 mg/dl after meals. The hemoglobin A1c should be less than 7 percent.

Is diabetes hereditary?
There is no easy answer to this question. Diabetes is not simply inherited, although there are some people who are more likely to get it than others. There may be a predisposition to the disease and something in the environment to trigger it. For example, obesity is a strong risk factor for Type 2 diabetes, and overweight women are more likely to develop diabetes during pregnancy.

Is there a cure?
Scientists are working toward a cure; however, you can prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes through a healthy lifestyle. The best way to lower your risk is to maintain a diet that is low in fat and includes fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Maintain a healthy weight and increase your level of activity. You should also see your physician for regular checkups to include screening for diabetes.

What are some ways that the Howard University Diabetes Treatment Center is working to decrease the number of new cases of diabetes and helping those who have diabetes manage it?
The Diabetes Treatment Center, under the leadership of Dr. Gail Nunlee-Bland, conducts educational workshops and provides treatment for those already diagnosed with the disease, while continuing to spread the message about prevention through healthy eating and exercise. Diabetic patients are counseled by diabetic educators, and receive specialty care, such as eye examinations, vaccinations and preventive screenings. They also receive on-site analysis of self-blood glucose monitoring, nerve screening and glycosylated hemoglobin testing for immediate feedback regarding overall diabetes control.

Dr. McDonald-Pinkett is the chair of the Department of Medicine at Howard.
SCREENINGS, SERVICES and GROUP SUPPORT

**Bariatric Surgery & Medical Weight Loss Information Session**
Monthly, Third Thursday
6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.
HUH, Freedmen’s Hall
Call 202-865-1286

**Bariatric Support Group**
Monthly, Third Thursday
6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
HUH, Bldg., Suite 4100-B
Call 202-865-1286

**Cancer Support Group**
Monthly, Fourth Tuesday
10:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.
HUH Cancer Center, Room 209
5th and V Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
Call 202-865-4655

**Crohns and Colitis Foundation**
Monthly, Third Saturday
1:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
HUH, 2038-B
Call 301-260-7591

**Diabetes Support Group**
Monthly, Fourth Tuesday
6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
HUH, Towers Auditorium
Call 202-865-3350

**Grief and Loss**
Monthly, First Thursday
7:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
HUH Chapel, First Floor
Call 202-865-1587

**HIV Screening and Support Group**
Monday–Friday
9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Monday–Thursday
2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
HUH, Room 1124
Call 202-865-4853

**HUH WIC Family Center and Beautiful Beginnings Club**
Monthly, Second Wednesday
1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.
HUH, Room 3J14
Call 202-865-4564

**Prostate Cancer Screening**
Monthly, Third Wednesday
1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.
HU Cancer Center, Radiation Oncology Room
5th and V Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
Call 202-806-5539

**Smoking Cessation**
Monthly, Third Wednesday
7:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
HUH Chapel, First Floor
Call 202-865-1587

**Survivors of Homicide, Inc.**
Peer Support Group
Weekly, Thursday
7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.
HU Mental Health Clinic
530 College Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
Call 202-806-7706

**Survivors of Suicide**
Survivors Circle Support Group
Monthly, Last Tuesday
6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
HU Mental Health Clinic
530 College Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
Call 202-806-7706

**Sickle Cell Screenings**
Weekly, Wednesday
9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
HUH, Main Lobby
Call 202-865-4443

**Transplant Group**
Weekly, Thursday
9:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m.
HUH, Room 5J17
Call 202-865-1443