Rehab Partnership Benefits Residents

The Boston Home has announced a partnership with Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital [BRH], which has a dedicated MS unit for acute care and rehabilitation. Licensed specialists referred by BRH provide an ongoing continuum of care for our residents, working with and reporting to our Director of Rehabilitation Services, Aarjan Vink. Together they establish a comprehensive plan for each resident’s physical, occupational, and speech therapy needs.

Our new partnership builds on a relationship with BRH psychiatrist Dr. Stephen F. Koebel. He is well-acquainted with TBH residents through TBH Spasticity Clinic he established and runs twice weekly.

According to TBH Rehabilitation Services Director Aarjan Vink, “This new arrangement, additional resources and specialized equipment significantly expands the scope of rehab services at our facility. Physical, occupational and speech therapy staff and aides will be on site all day, making it easier to develop personalized plans for our residents and track results.

She explains, “We coordinate and follow up with the nursing staff to get feedback and observe "It’s all part of the overall TBH commitment to give residents the most independence with the highest level of functioning."

serve residents in the context of their daily environment. We can then evaluate the therapy plans and adjust accordingly. It’s all part of the overall TBH commitment to give residents the most independence with the highest level of functioning.”

“We see a reciprocal benefit to this collaboration,” says Teresa Hayes, head of Business

B.Fit! Day Program Expands

While known for specialized, long-term care of residents, The Boston Home has reached out to meet community needs through B.Fit, our outpatient program co-sponsored by the Central New England Chapter of the National MS Society. The on-site wellness and socialization day program continues to grow, being offered to adults with conditions similar to our residents Mondays, Wednesdays (9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) and Fridays (9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.).

Coordinated by Glory Wideman-Hughes, the goal of B.Fit! is to offer our participants a safe leisure experience in a socially enriching environment. Glory had extensive experience working with elders in nursing homes. As she noticed a growing population of younger adults with disabilities in these facilities, she became interested in how to best meet their needs. She came to TBH enthused about expanding our outpatient program, B.Fit! Participants not only find a welcoming community of outpatients and residents—they also find a champion in Glory.

“I’m passionate about my work—it’s very rewarding to help this group of courageous, resilient people to feel less isolated and more empowered,” says Glory. “We have fun. There’s lots of laughter.”

In addition to expanding the hours of B.Fit!, Glory has expanded expectations. She encourages everyone to get involved in planning and customize the program.

Together, they plan safe, structured, creative activities and identify topics to explore. They learn how to be their own best advocates, finding enrichment from each other as well as from speakers and staff. Participants also
Healthcare Reform: Are We There Yet?

As a child riding in your parents’ car, do you remember repeating “are we there yet?” Many people are asking the same question about healthcare reform, since our journey has extended over generations. Just as our parents told us we would get there soon, we hear the same from policy leaders.

What is the relevance of healthcare reform to The Boston Home? Although not in the same spotlight as preventive and acute care, long-term care must be integrated into the nation’s healthcare plan to improve quality.

In Massachusetts, during the recent budget debate, our TBH advocacy team convinced legislators to fund critical services provided by our Home. The budget signed by the Governor maintained funding for our residents’ nursing care. We thank Representative Linda Dorcena-Forry and Senator Jack Hart for their support. We also thank all the residents, staff, volunteers, family members, Trustees, and friends who contacted their representatives and legislators. Your calls made a difference!

Still, we’re not there yet. Current data confirms that we are experiencing unprecedented economic challenges. More than 20% of our residents have health coverage through MassHealth, a State/Federal-funded healthcare insurance program, and we confront difficult decisions as we strive to sustain critical services while we contain costs.

The Boston Home has a long history of innovation in long-term care. We have made enormous progress by advancing our nursing staff to coordinate all aspects of residents’ care. At the same time, we have welcomed new healthcare partners who bring expertise and new services to our residents—BrainTree Rehabilitation Hospital and Codman Square Health Center Dental Department. These and other examples of creative approaches are highlighted in this newsletter.

Thank you for joining us on our journey to fulfill the mission of The Boston Home. As healthcare reform continues to evolve, we still have opportunities to make our voices heard on the State and Federal levels. Please contact Mary Geary, Director of TBH Institute, at mgeary@thebostonhome.org to add your name to our advocacy e-list, and visit www.thebostonhome.org if you would like to make a donation.

Marva Serotkin
President & CEO

Outpatient Services B.Fit! cont.

gain knowledge about best practices for MS care and often tap into the resources at TBH, such as on-site wheelchair assessments and adjustments. The result is a newfound sense of confidence and community.

Outpatients come from metro Boston and as far as Duxbury, Framingham, and Lynn. They travel by personal vans or the MBTA’s The Ride, accompanied by their caregivers.

Programs highlights include:

Wellness: Includes a physical exercise program, games for cognitive function, and nutritional information. Participants learn relaxation techniques.

Socialization: Participants enjoy relaxed conversation during activities and lunches in a comfortable community with common experiences. Participants learn from each other as well as from TBH residents. They are currently involved in writing projects using the computers in our Cyber Café.

Outings: Participants get monthly calendars of accessible events in the community or at TBH. Events have included monthly boat cruises, Harbor Fest, and Night at the Pops.

TBH Resources: Participants enjoy our accessible garden, Kai pond, and computer lab. They can arrange to use other resources at TBH, including our wheelchair assessment and physical therapy programs.

A great reward is a change in the relationship between caregiver and outpatients. “They learn from each other and become more comfortable in their role,” says Glory. “It empowers caregivers when they learn new ways they can help, and they, too, feel less isolated in their work.”

New participants are welcome to B.Fit! on a space-available basis. The cost is on a sliding scale, and so far no one has been turned away due to financial limitations.

Indeed, Glory sees no limit to new opportunities for B.Fit! She is encouraged by the program’s success and hopes it will expand to a full week in the future. For more information call Glory Wideman-Hughes: 617.326.4300 or gwideman@thebostonhome.org.

The Boston Home Institute

Frequent visitor to TBH, Boston City Councilor Maureen Feeney spoke to a group of residents about Ashmont Station progress and improved accessibility on Dorchester Ave.

Left: Councilor Feeney with resident Marilyn MacDonald

TBH Institute Calendar Educational Outreach & Training

- **September 30 – October 2:** “Optimizing Nursing Care for the Severely Involved Patient with MS.”* Co-sponsored by TBH and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS). 40 registered and licensed nurses from 12 states will be trained by faculty from TBH staff. The conference is underwritten by the NMSS’s John Oystel Fund. *(conference is at maximum capacity)*

- **August 12 – 14:** Clinical Director Cynthia Walsh presented at the Pioneer Network National Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. The conference focus: “culture change” for resident centered care in a homelike, less institutional environment.
Art lovers and friends of TBH gathered for a magical May evening of art, music, and dance at the 6th annual “At Home with the Arts” fundraising reception. TBH Assistive Technology Specialist Don Fredette was available to demonstrate custom devices that make applied art possible for our resident artists. Their work was offered for sale in support of TBH arts program. Garden panels by guest artist Holly Alderman provided a dazzling backdrop for a performance by Boston City Singers youth chorus, while NYC Dance Gang danced among delighted guests.

above Victoria Williams, her grandson Kobe, with Activities Airector/Arts Program Coordinator Kerry Donohue.

left TBH President & CEO Marva Serotkin with TBH Board Chair Holly Bumnes.
Words on Wheels


above Behind Theo May: Kathy Allen, wife Dorothy May, Carol DeLeitis.
below Ginny Soybel read excerpts from a book by her husband, resident Tom Soybel.

right Resident artist Tracy Jones with husband Terrance and son Kobe.

below Resident artist Mary Jo Montani with friend Jean Knox.
The Boston Home welcomes Lauren Maloney back to TBH as Evening Coordinator. Ms. Maloney worked at TBH for ten years, most recently in the Activities Department. She is familiar to residents and staff and brings an energetic efficiency and good humor to her new position.

**Kudos to Staff!**

**TBH Earns Two Top Ratings**

Marva Serotkin credits TBH’s highly skilled and dedicated staff for maintaining standard of excellence every day. “It is great that we have been recognized by both Massachusetts Department of Public Health [DPH] and Medicare.”

TBH earned Medicare’s 5 star rating based on data gathered from inspections, on staffing, and quality measures. For the fourth time TBH has earned top grades – “deficiency free” from DPH for compliance to hundreds of clinical standards and safety code requirements – and the staff was again praised for dedication and teamwork.

**Rehab continued.**

Development for Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital. “Both organizations are committed to excellence, and there’s a lot we can learn from each other that will result in improved care for those with MS.” To see these rehab services in action, please refer to the accompanying photos of Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapies.

Resident Maureen Butler works to make her speech audible and articulate by listening to playback of her words spoken into special computer mic. Speech Therapist Alex Burnham gives her strategies to make improvements. The computer program feedback reinforces her progress. Speech therapists also help residents learn safe swallowing techniques.

Physical Therapy GYM is a center of activity Monday - Friday. In the foreground, PT aide Jennifer Forbes-Reid helps resident Sara Conners with arm range of motion while PT aide Sean McCarthy works with resident Carolyn Lang under the supervision of Arian Vink (standing). In the background, Seating Specialist Faith Saffler-Savage assesses a wheelchair for a resident. PT focuses on restoring function, lessening pain, and reducing the effects of MS-related spasms.
FLU SEASON ALERT

The flu season is upon us. We ask that everyone who is an employee, regular visitor, or volunteer at our facility to please get your flu shot as soon as it is available. In light of the serious nature of the H1N1 virus, we ask our friends and families to help us in our rigorous precaution on behalf of our residents. We thank you in advance!

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Happenings at Home

September 30 – October 2: 2009 TBH Institute Nursing Conference

Dorchester Arts Collaborative Open Studios Events at TBH:

October 21: Panel Discussion 6:00 – 7:00: “Adapting for Art: Supporting Self-Expression” Susan Krause, Evelyn Berde, Don Fredette

October 24 – 25: TBH Pavilion group site. 12 - 5.

above Author Theo May & TBH Spirituality Coordinator, Sr. Bridget Haase, [story page 4]

The Boston Home
Residence & Center for Care of Adults with Advanced MS & Other Progressive Neurological Diseases

Notes from Home | SUMMER 2009

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