

The van Ameringen Foundation, a Longstanding Champion of Mental Health Care

Since its founding in 1950, the van Ameringen Foundation has supported direct care, prevention, and education in the field of mental health—especially for disadvantaged populations.

For the last decade, the hospitals of Continuum Health Partners have been fortunate to receive nearly \$600,000 from the Foundation for various psychiatry-related initiatives.

Three of the programs supported by the Foundation break down barriers between physical and mental health care. For example, St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals'

adult outpatient services now feature an onsite primary care physician for patients who face significant psychiatric challenges when trying to secure primary care.

"Patient reaction to having a primary care physician is remarkably positive. We are very pleased to have initiated a comprehensive clinical home for our patients with both medical and psychiatric conditions," said Hunter L. McQuiston, MD, Director of the Division of Outpatient and Community Psychiatry.

In addition, the Department's "Storefront" facility in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood offers its outpatients seeking mental health care the opportunity to receive primary care onsite from dedicated staff members.

At Beth Israel, Foundation funding again bridged physical and mental health care. Through the Primary Care Psychiatry Program, primary care professionals are

trained to make more accurate initial diagnoses of mental illnesses and to provide appropriate preliminary treatment plans.

Beth Israel also received support from the Foundation to launch the BI-SLR HEARTS Program: Healing Emotions and Achieving Resilience to Traumatic Stress, which has since received \$1.2 million in federal funding. "The mission of our program is to integrate cutting-edge expertise in complex trauma into the mental health programs of our sister hospitals," said Jacob Ham, PhD, Supervising Psychologist.

Grants from the Foundation also have supported a mindfulness-based stress reduction workshop program for AIDS patients at the St. Luke's and Roosevelt Comprehensive Care Center and a family group therapy program at the Red Hook Initiative, which is now independent from Long Island College Hospital.

Trustee James Flynn Provides Support for Quality Improvement

Continuum Health Partners Trustee James E. Flynn, who serves as the Chair of the Trustee Committee on Quality Care, recently gave \$100,000 to fund an important quality improvement initiative for the hospitals.



James Flynn

His generous gift will enable Continuum to engage the services of a Clinical Data Analyst for Quality as part of its ongoing Quality Improvement (QI) efforts. By examining

clinical data in real time, this analyst will help the hospitals to address unmet patient needs and make improvements to patient care in a timely manner.

"In order to achieve our objective of being ranked in the top 10%, nationally, in industry-established health care quality and patient safety benchmarks, we continue to meaningfully advance our ability to link our practices and their outcomes," said Mr. Flynn.

Currently, QI staff members review physical records of patient encounters and manually abstract information—a time-consuming process that takes them away from the bedside and interactions with clinicians. In addition, they are analyzing information from prior months and working with only a sample of the patient population of interest.

"We have a lot of experience in using electronic data, but the problem up until now has been that our access to that data is

limited," said Gregg Husk, MD, Chief Medical Information Officer at Continuum. "Our current QI processes identify some recurring problems and may even suggest remedies, but they never alert the clinical staff at the time the patient is receiving care, so that a problem can be turned into a success."

By making the data available in real time and using an analyst to evaluate it, the hospitals will dramatically improve their ability to identify and assess problems and create solutions.

"Through this initiative, we will create the tools we need to better understand our gaps in performance and address them quickly and efficiently," Dr. Husk said. "The support Mr. Flynn is providing will result in improved safety and quality for our patients."

Balm Foundation Supports Integrative Medicine and Complementary Modalities

Committed to healing through integrative medicine and holistic nursing care, the Balm Foundation has awarded nearly \$300,000 over the past ten years to Beth Israel Medical Center and St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals.

"The Foundation has been pleased to support the work of two outstanding holistic practitioners, Aurora Ocampo, MS, RN, CS and Diane Serra, MS, RN, LAc.," said Jeanne Anselmo, Executive Director of the Foundation. "The programs they have initiated address the psycho-social-spiritual needs of patients and provide training for health care providers in the basics of holistic caregiving."

In Beth Israel's neurology and neurosurgery departments, staff is trained in therapeutic touch and imagery, enabling them to re-incorporate personal elements of care in this highly technical field. Neonatal Intensive Care Unit staff integrates therapeutic touch into their care of infants. At



Aurora Ocampo, MS, RN, CS and Diane Serra, MS, RN, LAc with a patient

the Continuum Heart Institute's Center for Cardiac and Pulmonary Health, patients are taught to feel the benefits of greater balance and breathing capacity achieved through yoga.

Another program set up by Ms. Ocampo helps patients prepare and recover from surgery through aromatherapy, guided imagery and controlled breathing exercises. "These therapies help reduce anxiety, discomfort, and pain—allowing patients to return to work earlier," Ms. Ocampo explained. Complementing this program, the Center for Health and Healing created "Preparing for Surgery," an online learning opportunity for patients.

With Foundation funding to Continuum's Cancer Center and Center for Health and Healing, Ms. Serra received her acupuncture license and offers patients this therapy to alleviate the severe side effects of treatment. "Cancer patients say they benefit greatly from acupuncture and other holistic cancer-specific interventions," Ms. Serra noted.

Therapeutic yoga for breast cancer patients is promoted at St. Luke's and Roosevelt's Comprehensive Breast Service. At the hospital's Center for Comprehensive Care, AIDS patients benefit from mindfulness-based stress reduction training—part of the Center's continuum of HIV/AIDS care.

"These services help heal the whole person and create more humanistic care environments," said Ms. Ocampo. "We would not be able to devote ourselves to patients in these ways without the support of the Balm Foundation," added Ms. Serra.

"Other generous donors have been inspired to support the programs that we and others have started," Ms. Anselmo concluded. "Our hope is that more donors will join us."

Continuum Cancer Centers of New York Golf Classic

The sixth annual Continuum Cancer Centers of New York Golf Classic drew 120 golfers to Alpine Country Club in Demarest, New Jersey, on September 21, 2009, and raised \$355,000 for Continuum's cancer programs. Since its inception in 2004, the event has raised more than \$2 million for research, education and patient care.

In addition to the beautiful weather and a great golf course, guests enjoyed brunch, dinner, and a live and silent auction. Barry Fleck won the event's Closest-to-the-Pin Chipping Contest. Louis B. Harrison, MD, Clinical Director, Continuum Cancer Centers of New York,

served as event chair, and sponsors included Amerigroup; Cardozo Plumbing; The Chasanoff Foundation; The Cortec Group; Crestview Partners; The Diller Von Furstenberg Family Foundation; Direct Energy; Emblem Health; Heidell, Pittoni, Murphy & Bach, LLP; MDland; TD Bank; Thomas S. Murphy, Sr.; Tula and George Paxos; Precision Toyota; The Rampart Group; Risk Management Planning Group; Mat Swalling; Union Square Diagnostic Imaging; and Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman Dicker, LLP.



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