

Renovations rebuild mind, spirit

When domestic violence victims and patients with mental health issues and substance abuse problems seek help, their comfort and privacy are especially important. At Brookside Community Health Center, a Brigham and Women's affiliate, renovations to the Family Services department have been tailored to suit their needs.

Visitors now enter Family Services—and its secluded waiting area—through a private entrance. Small offices and conference rooms allow patients to meet discreetly with counselors, either one-on-one or in small groups.

“Pain is not always physical in nature,” says Judith Lischetti, LICSW, Family Services' interim director. “Because our space was redesigned to offer more privacy, we've reached people who otherwise might not have sought our help.”

These recent improvements are part of a major renovation at Brookside: Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics/Gynecology, and Dentistry have all had facelifts. However, Brookside still needs \$1 million to finish upgrading the Nutrition area and the center's parking, plumbing and lighting.

“The renovations reflect our commitment to comprehensive, holistic care,” says Paula McNichols, the center's executive director. “We're making the investment to help our patients reach their full potential.” ♦

To find out how you can support Brookside Community Health Center, contact Development Associate Maggie Hayden at (617) 732-5008 or mhayden@partners.org.



Judith Lischetti (above, center) with colleagues in the Family Services waiting area



A patient with a uterine fibroid lies on a table outfitted with focused ultrasound equipment. She will be positioned inside the MRI machine, which will take pictures of the fibroid to verify that repeated bursts of high-frequency sound waves have hit their target precisely.

The dawn of bloodless surgery

FIRST U.S. FOCUSED ULTRASOUND CENTER OPENS

Imagine a tool that could eradicate a uterine fibroid or breast lump without breaking the skin. Bloodless surgery, long the dream of BWH researchers, physicists and engineers, will become reality early in 2003.

That's when the hospital will unveil a suite dedicated to treating benign tumors using high-energy ultrasound waves. These sound waves, like those used to create pictures of babies inside the womb, pass safely and painlessly through tissues. At high frequencies, however, they generate enough heat to destroy abnormal cells.

How does focused ultrasound, or FUS, work? Sound waves pass through the body at varying angles, uniting at a focal point, where they raise the temperature by 20 to 30 degrees. Like spokes of a wheel, the waves converge upon their target—say, a uterine fibroid—and destroy it.

Physicians use magnetic resonance imaging to determine where to focus the energy, monitor temperature changes, and assess exactly how much tissue is destroyed during the one to two hours it can take to treat a mass measuring up to 4 centimeters in diameter. When tiny, overlapping areas of the tumor have all been zapped and the entire mass has turned from light to dark on an MRI scan, treatment is over. Patients, lightly sedated to help them lie motionless, are usually ready to go home an hour later.

According to Ferenc Jolesz, MD, Director of MR and Image-Guided Therapy, the new center is the first in the world. It has come about through a partnership between the hospital and InSightec, which developed FUS with the prototype's inventor, Kullervo Hynynen, PhD, director of Therapeutic Ultrasound Research at BWH. Initially the suite will accommodate patients enrolled in a clinical trial for women with fibroids overseen by BWH gynecologist Elizabeth A. Stewart, MD, and conducted by interventional radiologist Clare Tempany, MD. The center will open to other patients, however, once FUS therapy receives Food and Drug Administration approval, expected early in 2003. ♦

Taking minimally invasive therapies to the max

A host of blood-vessel and other problems that once required major surgery can now be repaired using minimally invasive techniques. Instead of cutting deep into tissues to reach a tumor, blood clot, blockage or aneurysm, physicians route catheters and other instruments through blood vessels to reach diseased areas.

In September, caregivers in the Division of Angiography and Interventional Radiology began performing these delicate procedures in a new operating room designed to minimize incisions called an endovascular suite. Guided by its sophisticated X-ray equipment, physicians can, for example, snake tiny instruments up through an artery to break up atherosclerotic plaques. They can also shrink tumors by inserting gel particles to shut off their blood supply.

Even life-threatening aneurysms can be fixed without surgery, according to the division's new chief, Richard Baum, MD. "We insert a synthetic piece of flat tubing into the affected artery and snap it open, securing both ends to healthy areas of the vessel wall, above and below the aneurysm," he explains. The result? A strong, durable repair, and a speedy recovery. ♦

For more information, visit www.brighamir.com.



In Brigham and Women's new endovascular suite, one of the most advanced ORs of its kind in the U.S., are members of the BWH Angiography and Interventional Radiology team (left to right): Lisa Thoms, JD, MSN; John Marston, BSN; Jennifer Star, physician assistant; Jennifer Look, radiologic technologist; David Rosenthal, physician assistant; Asheu Rao, MD; Megan Chew, BSN; Christoph Binkert, MD; and the division's Herbert L. Abrams Director, Richard Baum, MD.



Vacanti named head of Anesthesiology

Charles Vacanti, MD, a renowned anesthesiologist and global pioneer in tissue engineering, was named chairman of Anesthesiology, Perioperative and Pain Medicine at Brigham and Women's in September. He succeeds Simon Gelman,

MD, PhD, who had led the department since 1982.

No stranger to Partners HealthCare System, Vacanti served as an anesthesiologist at Massachusetts General Hospital for more than a decade. For the past eight years, he worked at UMass Medical Center in Worcester.

Vacanti holds seven patents related to tissue engineering, and more than a dozen are pending. He also co-founded the international Tissue Engineering Society, an organization of scientists whose lab-grown organs may one day be transplanted into humans.

"Dr. Vacanti's exceptional experience and groundbreaking accomplishments will be an important asset," says BWH President Gary Gottlieb, MD, MBA. "His presence will provide additional depth and expertise to our already outstanding Anesthesia Department." ♦

Bucking a trend

HOSPITALS EXPAND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Health care facilities across Massachusetts are scaling back inpatient psychiatric programs in an attempt to staunch their fiscal bleeding. In Boston, Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center has taken 35 beds out of service. Sixty more were lost in Wellesley when Charles River Hospital closed last year.

But Brigham and Women's and its partner, Faulkner Hospital, are expanding their joint program. "You aren't fully treating patients if you don't also address their mental health needs," says Jonathan Borus, MD, chairman of Psychiatry at both institutions.

To ease the space crunch, BWH has been expanding its services at Faulkner. Faulkner's psychiatric unit, which had just 14 beds in 2000, now has 17 and plans to expand to 24 next year; it reserves another 15 beds for patients overcoming addictions. Faulkner also offers outpatient and partial-hospitalization programs in psychiatry and substance abuse. At both medical centers, psychiatrists work closely with other specialists to avoid prolonged hospital stays for inpatients needing psychiatric or substance-abuse services in addition to surgery or medical care.

Although psychiatric services have traditionally sapped revenue from hospitals, BWH and Faulkner remain committed to providing psychiatric care. To boost the bottom line, Partners Psychiatry and Mental Health, which includes BWH and Faulkner, has improved billing procedures and negotiated fairer reimbursement rates from insurers. ♦