

The Committee on Racial and Ethnic Disparities
Minutes October 5, 2006

Present: Joseph Betancourt, Joan Quinlan, Maria Alexander-Bridges, Nancy Connery, Nakela Cook, Karen Donelan, Ellen Forman, Gregory Lewis Fricchione, Suzanne Kim, Jamaluddin Moloo, Roger Pasinski, Angelleen Peters-Lewis, Carlyene Prince-Erickson, Andrea Ewing Reid, Anne Richmond, Allison Rimm, Patricia Rowell, Stephen Thomas, Deborah Washington, Joel Weissman, Katherine Flaherty, Pamela Janairo

1. Committee updates

A. Quality Subcommittee

- a. Disparities Dashboard – Joe reported that the new disparities quality dashboard had been distributed to the quality leaders of the hospital the previous week. This is the first such dashboard that Joe is aware of around the country. Key question: If a problem is identified, what is the mechanism for addressing it? Joe and Joan to follow up. There were also questions about how widely to disseminate the content of the report. There was a suggestion to include a simple definition of “disparities” and explain how to interpret how a population is “doing well” or is in “need for improvement.” Finally, it was noted that the document actually look more like a report than a dashboard, and is there a way to make it a quick read without losing the important content?
- b. Interventions:
 - i. Diabetes Initiative: Joe reported on this initiative which is aimed at improving overall care and reducing an identified disparity in diabetes control between white and Hispanic diabetics in Chelsea. The intervention consists of group visits, coaching sessions, and outreach. There have been 240 patient coaching sessions and 30 patients have been coached on the phone, in their preferred language (English or Spanish). Some barriers that have been discovered are the lack of understanding of diabetes management, language barriers, and mental health/depression. Mental health issues need more attention and research.
 - ii. Colorectal Cancer: Approval of the qualitative IRB that will identify barriers to CRC screening. A group including MGH Chelsea, Gastroenterology, Disparities Solutions Center and Community Benefit are working to design an intervention to improve overall CRC screening rates and to close the gap in screening between whites and Hispanics in Chelsea. Some potential barriers to screening include lack of knowledge of screening process, insurance issues, scheduling, logistics, and transportation. Will be funded by Jane’s Trust and Community Benefit. Additional funding is being sought through the Winikoff Grant. Key contacts are Drs. Alex Green, Sanja Percac-Lima, Sarah Oo, and Angelleen Peters-Lewis. Suggestion were made to contact Karen Lasser at the Cambridge Health Alliance as a resource for her work on CRC and Mental Health, and to search for citations of Dana Farber’s work in this area.
- c. Funding – Jane’s Trust grant approved for \$225,000 – these funds will support the diabetes, CRC screening and depression projects.

B. Patient Experience Subcommittee

- a. Multicultural Advisory Committee – Membership of Committee has been consistent and members are becoming more engaged. Members have no problem with two-

year terms. This Committee can be used as a sounding board for topics and ideas that need to be addressed. At the next meeting the group will hear a presentation on how payer status can affect the patient's experience of care.

- b. Outreach Efforts – As a result of issues identified in the Diversity Retreat, a goal has been established to raise the profile of the MGH in the Boston neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan. The goal is to raise visibility and express an interest. The plan is to spend at least six months assessing community health needs and meeting key community leaders, and to develop a plan from there. There is approval to hire a part time person to do this through Community Benefit. We are also working with MGH marketing to design a survey to assess baseline perceptions of the MGH in Boston minority communities at the suggestion of Peter Slavin.
- C. Education and Awareness Subcommittee
 - a. Annual Event – Topic: Effect of Race/Ethnicity on Clinical Decision Making. Potential speaker: Atul Gawande of BWH's Center for Surgery and Public Health in late fall/early winter (has subsequently declined invitation).
 - b. Poster – 2nd poster is in the early stages. Goal of the new poster is to reinforce message of defining issues of R/E disparities and shows what the Committee is doing. Lowest cost: 1 poster with 3 images of frontline staff, doctors, and nurses. Impression of images: encouraging engagement. Interpreter image will show the dedication to remove language as a barrier to care.
 - c. Bay State Banner/El Planeta – Bay State Banner will alternate between BWH and MGH to release a monthly supplement entitled, “Be Healthy.” El Planeta will feature an article quarterly entitled, “A Day in the Life of.”
- D. Local and National Developments
 - a. Massachusetts Disparities Committee – The future of this Committee is dependent upon the politics of the election in November. Health care reform was passed and requires collection of R/E data in hospitals.
 - b. Federal Legislation – Introduced by Obama, Frisk, and Kennedy on September 29, 2006. The Minority Health Improvement and Health Disparity Elimination Act has five parts addressing Cultural Competency and Communication for Providers, Healthcare Workforce, Education, and Training, Workforce Training to Achieve Diversity, Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students, and Cultural Competency Training.

2. Plans for 2006-7

- A. Where do we take this Committee?
 - i. Joe reported that we have been invited by Cy Hopkins to present at the Partners Ethics Committee. It is an opportunity to raise issues of culture, race and ethnicity and how they affect care or perceptions of care. There was also some discussion about how a new reporting system can be used as a tool to find and address quality issues as they relate to disparities.
 - ii. Gregg Meyer – Gregg is managing the search process for a new VP of quality. This once again is an opportunity to place disparities front and center on the quality agenda.
 - iii. Nancy Connery suggested introducing a “Book/Journal/Article Club” that she used for her frontline staff in which they read The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down.
 - 1. Karen Donelan addressed the concern of the need to educate staff about cancer patients and end of life issues

- iv. Leadership Academy – can be used as a vehicle to reach more MGH employees toward providing more culturally competent care and creating awareness of the issues of disparities.
- v. Disparities website – It was suggested that we create a calendar function to coordinate events and make Committee efforts more visible. Also, more resources and auto searches on website to make it more interactive were recommended.

Meeting adjourned 12:30PM
Next Meeting: December 1st 2006
Trustees Room, Bulfinch 225