

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A newsletter for the Maine Medical Center family

Painted Lab Coats Offer More Than Just Decoration

When children come to the hospital it can be a frightening time. They don't know what to expect, strangers come in and out of their rooms, and they undergo procedures that are often new to them. Lorraine McElwain, M.D., Associate Chair of Pediatrics and Pe-

diatric Hospitalist, has found a simple way to comfort the young patients she cares for: painted lab coats.

Dr. McElwain has been commissioning the custom hand-painted lab coats for many years. Her friend, local artist Alison Bramhall, is

the painter. It started with one coat with a frog character. The kids loved it and it gave them a conversation starter. Over the years, she has commissioned 11 more coats, each with frogs, fish, or a Maine theme.

"Kids — and parents — like to know who the doctor is, hence the white coat," says McElwain. "I like to have something to talk about with the patient from the get go, and my coats usually have something we can connect on."

Originally, the ideas were hers and Bramhall's, but now Dr. McElwain gets her ideas straight from her patients. They ask for sick frogs or for frogs with conditions like theirs — broken legs, head bandages, etc. The designs make the kids feel more comfortable and less alone with their illness.

Other doctors give her ideas, too. When a fellow physician asked why the frogs were all sporty, she decided to have one made with frogs reading, doing a



Dr. McElwain uses this frog to show patients that x-rays don't hurt.

crossword puzzle, playing chess, and playing a musical instrument to appeal to a variety of personalities.

Dr. McElwain uses the coats for teaching moments, too. She'll show a patient how this frog gets an x-ray and it doesn't hurt, this frog gets a shot and it only hurts a little, or how this frog is biking and wearing a helmet to stay safe.

Now the idea is catching on with other doctors. Pediatric Hospitalist Leah Mallory, M.D., has two painted coats and Shannon Bennett, D.O., has one on the way.



Leah Mallory, M.D., and Lorraine McElwain, M.D., wear painted lab coats with colorful, lively characters, so patients are more comfortable speaking with their doctors.

Happy Holidays!

Holiday Week Reminders for Employees

Holiday Pay Day

The next pay day is Friday, December 26.

Caroling Christmas Eve

- Wednesday, December 24, 3 - 4 p.m.
- Meet at the Chapel, MGB 1st floor, by 2:55 p.m.

All are welcome to join in caroling throughout the hospital on Christmas Eve. Music will be provided, as well as goodies and punch afterward.

Confidentiality Agreement and Security Training

All employees of MMC, MMP, and MaineHealth Corporate are required to complete both the annual Confidentiality Agreement and Privacy and Security Training by January 7, or risk losing your access to MMC systems. See NetNews or the MMC Intranet to access the training.

2014 Annual Mandatory Safety Testing

All employees must complete safety training before January 1. See NetNews or the MMC Intranet to access the training module. *New this year: All employees, including those who recently attended orientation, must complete the test.*

2015 Benefits Confirmation

Your confirmation statements from 2015 Benefits Open Enrollment will be arriving at your home over the next couple of weeks. Please review your statement. Contact the HR Solution Center, 661-4000, no later than December 31 if you have any questions or if your statement does not accurately reflect what you intended to elect for coverage for 2015.

MMC Shuttles Not in Service:

- Thursday, December 25
- Friday, December 26
- Thursday, January 1

Employees may park in the Gilman Garage on those days. There will be shuttle service on Friday, January 2.

Flu Masking Is In Effect

- If you are not vaccinated against influenza, you must wear a surgical mask whenever you are within six feet of a patient. This includes times of direct contact.
- You may still get a flu vaccine. Contact Employee Health, 662-4011, to schedule an appointment.
- Always follow proper hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
- If you are experiencing cold-like symptoms, regardless of your influenza immunization status, you must mask.
- If you have a fever, stay home.



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