

What's Happening?

A NEWSLETTER

FOR THE MAINE MEDICAL CENTER FAMILY

Clinical trial evaluates new surgical option for lower back pain

Four out of five adults experience back problems at some point in their lives. Many are able to relieve the pain with exercise, weight loss, medication, or other measures. However, when these measures are not appropriate, surgery is often the best answer.

A clinical trial at Maine Medical Center is exploring a new surgical techniques that may relieve the symptoms associated with a particular type of back problem, spinal stenosis of the lower back. The device being evaluated in this study is a titanium implant called the X-Stop. It is inserted under local anesthesia and does not require the removal of bone or soft tissue. The procedure typically takes one hour and the patient goes home the same day.

Lower back spinal stenosis is the most common cause of lower back surgery in adults over 65. Spinal stenosis occurs when the spinal canal or nerve root canals become too narrow. Spinal stenosis often occurs as a result of the natural aging process. In other cases, it is a result of degenerative diseases and conditions.

At present, the only FDA approved surgical procedure for lower back spinal stenosis, de-

compressive laminectomy, requires general anesthesia and may require up to five days in the hospital.

"The X-Stop implant flexes the spine and increases the diameter of the spinal canal," says Thomas F. Mehalic, MD, FACS, the physician leading the study. "We are testing whether or not this increase of the spinal canal, which creates more room for the nerve fibers, will decrease or eliminate the patient's pain."

Patients involved in the study must have mild to moderate symptoms of lower back spinal stenosis. Qualified participants have lower back pain that can be relieved by leaning forward. Study participants in this randomized trial either receive the minimally-invasive X-Stop implant or non-invasive therapies, such as medications and physical therapy.

Maine Medical Center is one of only ten medical centers in the US participating in the clinical trial. To date, Dr. Mehalic has performed ten X-Stop surgeries. The surgeries take place at MMC's Brighton Surgical Center. The study will conclude this summer and then the FDA will evaluate the results.

An evening to honor employees

Maine Medical Center will celebrate the 53rd Annual Honor Night Friday, May 4. Employees with five years or more of service are invited to join the celebration at the Holiday Inn By the Bay in Portland. This year, 3,102 employees are eligible to attend!

The evening begins at 1700 hours with dinner at 1730 hours. Guests are invited to join employees for dancing after the awards ceremony, at around 2000 hours.

Employees who were invited to Honor Night but will be working and unable to attend will have a special dinner in Impressions Cafe at MMC and the Board Room at the Brighton Campus. Evening shift employees at MMC will dine between 1600 and 1900 hours, and evening shift staff at Brighton will have dinner between 1630 and 1830 hours.

Night shift employees at MMC only will be served from midnight to 0200 hours. Tickets for these meals will be available through department supervisors.

Free parking will be provided at three Holiday Inn parking lots. There is limited parking in the garage at the Holiday Inn. There is a Holiday Inn parking lot on Free Street, and a small lot on Pleasant Street. There will be

Heart Fair to focus on careers, health info

The Maine Heart Center at Maine Medical Center will sponsor a Heart Fair Wednesday, April 25, from 1300 to 1700 hours. There will be people to talk to about heart-related careers and school programs, heart health information, and heart science booths. The fair is open to all MMC staff and to high schools participating in the Maine Heart Center Heart Health Education Program.

Come to the fair for booths and information presented by: The American Heart Association, Cardiac Rehabilitation, SMTC Allied Health Programs, USM Exercise & Nursing Programs, a Dietitian, OR & Perfusion, UNE, Stress Lab, EKG & Echocardiography, Cath Lab, General Ultrasound, Respiratory Therapy & Tobacco Cessation, Cardiac Fellows, Physician Assistants, Nuclear Medicine, The Heart Maze, refreshments, and more!

Anecdotes from the Archives

Did you know that in 1873 a state fair was held to help fund the new Maine General Hospital? The fair lasted two weeks, netting \$38,000. It took place in Portland.

During the first year of operation of the MGH, 114 patients were admitted. Two women were employed as Day Nurses; one earned \$18 a month and the other was paid \$15 a month.

Spend a day painting, landscaping, helping!

This year's United Way Day of Caring is fast approaching! The date is Tuesday, May 22, and Maine Medical Center employees are again invited to participate. We had more than 30 volunteers from the Bramhall, Scarborough, and Brighton campuses participate in 2000 and we would like to have as many help out this year.

This day of work and volunteering in the community is considered a paid day, so if you are interested in participating you will need approval from your manager or supervisor.

Here are the Day of Caring details:

- 1,000 Volunteers will be painting, landscaping, rehabilitating and renovating agencies and more this year (requests for wall murals and computer repair also received).

- Projects will be completed across Cumberland County, including Gorham, New Gloucester, Portland, South Portland, Scarborough and Windham. Forty-three agencies have 88 projects to complete.

- Volunteers from the same company will be assigned in groups of 4-6 (most likely, large numbers of volunteers from the same company will not be working together on the same project). Volunteers will be assigned to sites based on their special skills (as noted on Company Volunteer Roster).

- Generally, tools and equipment will be supplied. Volunteers may be asked to bring some household tools if they are able. All volunteers are will receive work gloves and are asked to wear appropriate clothing for the tasks and the weather.

- Lunch will be provided at the work sites, although volunteers are encouraged to bring water.

- A kick-off breakfast will be held on the day of the event at 7:45 a.m. Volunteers will work at sites from 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Kick Off will be held at the International Ferry Terminal on Commercial Street in Portland.

If you plan to participate, please contact Cindy Bridgham by April 25 in order to get your name to United Way by the deadline.

If you would like more information, please contact Cindy Bridgham at 871-4887 or by email at bridgc@mmc.org. It promises to be a great day of community building and fun for all of us!

HONOR NIGHT, FROM P.1

additional free parking in the Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield lot (formerly BAMICO), which is located next to the Holiday Inn. This lot can only be entered between 1615 and 1800 hours. After those hours, there will not be an attendant present to let cars enter. Employees need only say they are at-

tending an MMC event to gain access to the garage. An attendant does not need to be present for cars to exit the garage. Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield is providing this parking at no cost to MMC.

Remember to return your Honor Night RSVP card to Human Resources by April 20; please be sure you can attend before sending the RSVP.

Caring

TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

What's Caring To Make A Difference all about? It's about people who make MMC special. It's about the folks who are quietly working hard each day to improve themselves, improve their departments, and improve the quality of life at MMC for everyone who enters our doors.



Some Must Sleep While Some Must Watch

Rearranging your sleep pattern so patients can find the answers that will enable them to get a good night's sleep is what the Maine Institute for Sleep Disordered Breathing is all about. The institute, located at 930 Congress Street, is part of the Division of Pulmonary Medicine. The former Sleep Lab, which was on the fourth floor of the Maine General Building, moved to its new location in 1996. The institute is one of

only two accredited sleep centers in the state.

Mark Cole, RRT, who has worked in the institute for four years, became staff supervisor last October. He smiles broadly when describing what a great job he and the other eight members of the team have at the institute. "It's a great job if you are willing to work nights. It's more than just sitting back and watching patients sleep." Using state-of-

the-art equipment such as EEG, cardiac, and respiratory monitoring devices, these diagnostic tools can unlock the secrets to the cause of sleep disorders for hundreds of people every year. Due to many associated risk factors such as age and weight, this field of pulmonary medicine is growing rapidly, so much so that "the demand for qualified polysomnographic technicians has far outstripped the supply,"

Debbie Sanborn, Secretary (left), greets patients who come to the Maine Sleep Institute for sleep studies. Michelle Mistler, RRT, and Mark Cole, RRT, Supervisor, are two of the polysomnographers who help people with sleep disorders. PI Photo.

Mark says.

Because of this growing need, a new Polysomnography Certificate Program was developed as a joint venture between MMC and Southern Maine Technical College. George Bokinsky, MD, Medical Director for the Institute, and Robert McArdle, MD, both board certified in Sleep Medicine, along with Walter Chop, SMTTC, designed the curriculum based on other certificate programs of this kind around the country. Chris Hirsch, Administrative Director for Pulmonary Medicine, wanted to address the increasing demand

and short supply of qualified polysomnographers that would be needed in the years ahead. The first group of ten students has just completed the 16-week didactic portion of the course and is preparing for a 128-hour clinical practicum at MMC and other smaller sleep labs in the state. These students travel as much as three hours one way to attend the course. Mark says this is a great field for new respiratory therapist graduates to enter. Students learn to diagnose and treat a wide range of sleep-related disorders, such as sleep apnea, narcolepsy, restless leg syndrome, insomnia, and some forms of depression.

Many patients are concerned about what testing will involve and whether or not they will be able to sleep in such unfamiliar surroundings. Despite the more than 25 electrodes and monitoring probes that are attached to the patients, most do find that they can sleep almost as well as they do at home. There are four 'bedrooms' at the institute equipped with TVs and double beds. Some patients are monitored by remote access camera surveillance, which can provide additional information for the technologist when diagnosing certain sleep-related disorders. "Our job is to make patients feel as comfortable as possible, just as those who work on the inpatient units would try to do," Mark says.

Part of what makes this specialty so interesting is the explosion of new information and growing treatment options

for patients who have suffered, some for years, with inadequate or poor quality sleep. "You don't realize how important sleep is until you don't get enough," Mark says. "It affects all aspects of your life." He has seen patients almost in tears on the morning after their first good night's sleep. They have almost forgotten how good it feels. This is part of what makes the work so rewarding for the eight technologists (two per shift) who staff the center through the night. Due to an ever-increasing waiting list for sleep studies, the Institute is preparing to expand services to seven nights a week starting in April. They hope to see about 1,000 patients a year

with the additional coverage.

Most of us, at one time or another, have experienced brief periods of sleep disruption. For the increasing number of people who suffer significant sleep-related problems — to the point where their quality of life suffers — it is reassuring to know that we have some of the most qualified and caring professionals located here at MMC, ready to help find the answers to a healthy night's sleep.

The following people staff the Institute: Mark Cole, Supervisor, Technicians Lisa Augusto, Heather Fox, Donna French, Paul Jones, John Murray, Michelle Ouelette and Deneice Tarbox; and Debbie Sanborn, Secretary.

Patient Satisfaction Surveys Expand to Outpatient Areas

Since 1993 MMC has been surveying inpatients to get their impressions of the care they received while at Maine Medical Center. We call these results "The Voice of the Patient" and many of those results have been published in past issues of *Caring To Make a Difference*. Since we care for many thousands of outpatients a year, their feedback and suggestions are also vital to providing the kind of high quality care that MMC is known for. This feedback is critical to department managers and staff as they work to make improvements in areas that are important to our patients and their families.

The staff of the CPQI Department is working with individual outpatient departments to develop a survey tool and process that works for them. The

nice thing about designing the surveys 'in house' is that we have the flexibility to change or add questions as needed. They also find that the quick turn-around time gives them good information that is specific and action-oriented. The questions focus on issues such as access, from how easy it was to get an appointment, to staff courtesy and sensitivity. There is also a space on the mail-back postcard for comments.

If you are interested in discussing survey options for your outpatient area, please call 871-2009 and speak with Cindy Bridgham or Jeff Gregory.

Caring To Make A Difference is a monthly publication of the Continuous Productivity and Quality Improvement Office. Ideas, questions, and comments may be directed to Cindy Bridgham, CPQI Office, at 871-2009, Fax 871-6286.

Treatment of Child Abuse

Common Ground for Mental Health, Medical & Legal Practitioners

Monday, April 30, 0830 – 1200 hours
MMC Dana Auditorium

Initial Interventions in Child Abuse from the Medical,
Legal & Mental Health Perspectives
moderated by Robert M. Reece, MD

Dr. Reece is a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at Tufts University School of Medicine, Director of the Institute for Professional Education, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Editor of "Treatment of Child Abuse".

*Panel participants and contributing authors to
"Treatment of Child Abuse Part II" Physical Abuse"*

Lawrence R. Ricci, MD, Director, Spurwink Child Abuse Program
Anita St. Onge, JD, Research Associate,
Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service
Leslie Devoe, MSW, LCSW, Adjunct Professor,
University of Maine, Trauma Therapist

Registration fee: \$10; Registration and breakfast: 0830 hours
For more information, call Family Support Program, 871-2967



MMC's Junior
Volunteer Program

June 27--August 29

Students must be 14 (and entering freshman year) to 18 years old (if entering senior year of high school).

Interviews held April 17--20 and after school the following week.

Mandatory Orientation:
Wednesday, June 20.
TB screening is required.

For information or to schedule an interview, call Volunteer Services, 871-2205.

The 32nd Annual Spring Surgical Symposium

Friday, May 18, 0800--1600 hours
MMC Dana Center Auditorium

The Isaac M. Webber Surgical Lecture

From Coley to IL-12, an Effective Immunologic
Treatment of Cancer

Jeffrey A. Norton, MD
Professor and Vice Chair, Department of Surgery
University of California, San Francisco

Sponsored by MMC Department of Surgery.

To register or to receive a brochure, contact Kryston Monk,
871-2934 or email monkk@mmc.org.

Scientific Program only, no charge
Scientific Program with lunch, \$20

Free support program for adult caregivers

April 24--June 12
Falmouth Family
Health Center

The MMC Geriatric Center is sponsoring a free eight-week educational program for anyone providing care for an older person. The program, titled "Caring for Aging Family Members", will provide caregivers with information and resources to address medical, legal, financial, and day-to-day living issues. The program will be held Tuesdays from 1730 to 1830 hours at the Falmouth Family Health Center. Please call 871-2847 to register. Space is limited.

Volunteers and sponsors help make CMN a success

With the help of generous and dedicated sponsors and volunteers, The Children's Miracle Network is already halfway to fulfilling its 2001 fundraising goal of \$600,000 to benefit the children and families cared for at The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center. Here's a list of events coming up soon. Some of them still need volunteers; if you can help, call 871-2101.

April 28: The Race In Place, Lifestyles Fitness Center, Scarborough. A stationery bike marathon. Volunteers and riders needed!

May 2 - 4: Book Fair, MMC Bramhall Campus

May 12: Best of Broadway, Merrill Auditorium. The show returns to the stage for its 11th year! Some of Maine's best singers and dancers perform Broadway favorites. Tickets available from Porttix at www.porttix.com or by calling 842-0800. Volunteers needed!

June 1- 3: Children's Miracle Network Broadcast Weekend, WGME Channel 13. Tune in for the annual show, hosted by Kim Block and Dave Eid, joined by Doug Rafferty and Amy Sinclair from CMN Carnival in Biddeford (see below). Volunteers needed!

June 3: The Children's Miracle Network Safe Summer Fun Carnival, Waterville Wal-Mart and Biddeford Wal-Mart. Fun and games, along with "Safe Summer Fun" educational fair. Volunteers needed!

June 4 - 5: Book Fair, Scarborough Campus

June 18 - 19: Book Fair, Brighton Campus

August 5: \$10,000 Miracle Raffle (winner drawn)

August 5 - 6: Maury Povich Open Golf Tournament & Auction, Falmouth Country Club. Volunteers needed!

Some of the sponsors whose efforts help the children cared for at The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital are ACE Hardware, Socks Galore and Hanes, American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, Kiwanis, Key Club International, Archway Cookies, Credit Unions for Kids, Dairy Queen, Hannaford and Shop 'n Save, Maine Professional Logging Association, Portland Marriott, RE/MAX, Rite Aid, Sam's Club, and Wal-Mart.

To volunteer or for more information about any of these events, call MMC's Children's Miracle Network at 871-2101.

Research Volunteers Needed

Maine Medical Center and Maine Neurology are involved in a multi-center research project using an investigational drug to treat individuals with chronic atrial fibrillation who are at risk for stroke and systemic embolic events.

This medically supervised study compares treatment with a direct thrombin inhibitor and Warfarin. Participants are followed for 26 months. Study-related exams and medication are free of charge.

For further information, call Ann Carr, RN, at the MMCRI Clinical Trials Center, 842-7127.

Help MCCP and have a great time!

Get a team of four together for a fabulous scavenger hunt throughout the Scarborough area Sunday, May 6, from 1300 to 1800 hours. You will solve puzzles, anagrams, WHATEVER to lead you to the end of the trail. You will compete against other teams by traveling the course in the shortest amount of time and win prizes like: tickets to a luxury box at the Fleet Center (game to be decided), tickets to a Red Sox game, restaurant gift certificates and more! Registration fees will be donated to the Maine Children's Cancer Program.

The event is limited to 40 teams! Registration fee is \$100 per team. You must pre-register before April 13. You can obtain a form by calling Christi at 871-6274 or by emailing chasech@mmc.org.

The deadline for entries to this year's Employee Photo Contest is Friday, April 13. Entry forms are available at home.mmc.org or outside Public Information.



Get Focused!

Marketplace

In order to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to use the Marketplace, ads may be placed *once only*. Repeats will be permitted only on a space-available basis.

FOR SALE

Black wicker couch, yellow cushions. \$50. Regency 20 channel programmable scanner \$15. Latham Time (punch clock) recorder with extra ribbon, key, instructions. \$75. Oak round pedestal dining table 42" diameter with 18" leaf and 5 oak ladder-back chairs. Exc. cond. \$500. Outdoor plastic table & 4 chairs (tan) \$30. Concrete steps: 60x50 landing, 4 steps w/railing. \$75 or BO - you haul. Obermeyer ski outfit-purple pants (never worn) with red and purple jacket. \$85. RCA 13" color TV. \$20. Linen lace blinds (off white) 3/23" x 1/43". \$40 for all or \$10 each. Small wood stove. \$100 or BO. Call 878-2025.

Two fish tanks. 45-gallon corner tank with wood stand. 2 YO. \$300. 55 gallon long tank with iron stand. 1 YO. \$250. Both come with everything -- including fish if you want! Call 892-4425 after 4:00 PM.

Oval maple table (Formica top) with 2 chairs. Good cond. \$75. Call evenings 767-6575.

Slate top bumper pool table, balls, instructions and 2 cues. \$75 or BO. Call 854-4474.

Motorola Digital StarTac S7867W Dual Band Sprint PCS wireless phone, AC adapter, battery and leather carrying case. \$100. Call 854-0311 after 5 PM.

2000 Viking Epic 1706 Pop-Up Trailer. Sleeps 4+, 15 gallon fresh water tank, 16000 BTU Furnace, 12amp power converter/charger, hand water pump with city water hookup, stainless in/out two burner range, 20 lb. propane tank, spare tire with cover, 2 crank down BAL jacks, 12VDC lights and 120VAC electric receptacles. \$3400 or BO. Call 854-0311 after 5PM.

1977 GMC Sierra. Ext. cab with 3rd door. Loaded. 84K miles. \$18,000. Call 650-1191.

1998 Black Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo. 6 cyl., auto., 4WD, power windows & locks, keyless entry, A/C, AM/FM/Cassette, overhead console, new breaks and tires. 69,500 miles. Well maintained. \$13,000. Call 499-2480.

1998 Black Eclipse GSX. AWD, mint, garaged, 25K miles. \$15,450. Call 879-8005 or 854-5591.

1989 Honda CRX 2 door hatchback. 162K miles. Good cond. Asking \$2,500. Call 761-7237.

Portable sewing machine. Paid \$180, never used, will sell for \$100. Wooden extension ladder, 16' x 32', like new, \$150. Call 828-4421.

3 BR, 2.5 BA townhouse condo. Quiet, convenient N. Deering area. Fireplace, HDWD floors, natural gas heat, deck, highbush blueberries. July 1 occupancy. \$170,000. Call 878-5708.

1980 26' Tanzer sloop. Well maint., many extras. \$15,500. Call 284-7078.

FOR RENT

Portland House Eastern Prom condo. Furn. or not. 1 lg BR, one BA, LR/DR combo, sm K, laundry room, pkg and 24 hour security. VIEW! \$1,000/mo. Call 885-5755 or 838-2580.

Waterfront vacation cottage, Little Sebago Lake. Remodeled, furn., sleeps 5. Screened porch. W/D. Walkway to sm private island with boat dock, fireplace, picnic table. Swim, fish, sunsets. 30 minutes to MMC. \$575/wk or \$495/wk for 4-week rental. Call 426-3828 evenings or weekends.

Neal Street, West End. Lg 1-2 BR, W/D hook up, porch, yard. \$750/mo. heat & water incl. NS, no pets. Dep. and refs. Avail. now. Call 233-1792 after 7 PM.

The deadlines for announcement-length items and **MARKETPLACE** are April 13 for the April 23 issue and April 27 for the May 7 issue.

All items must be in writing and may be sent by interoffice mail to the Public Information Department, by e-mail to barstj, or by fax to 871-6212.

1 BR apt. Walk to work. Bright, historic townhouse with view. NS, no pets. \$700/mo. 1st/last sec. Dep., + utils. Call 772-5156

West End, perfect for medical resident. Sunny, 1 BR, on quiet street, 5 min. walk to MMC. Pkg, deck, gardens, nice yard. \$675/mo. Avail. now. Call 822-2268.

Art museum area condo. Heated. 1 BR, LR, K, BA, spacious hall. Historic bldg. NS, no pets. Sec. dep. \$700/mo. Call 772-6495.

2 BR house. West End, short walk to MMC. 2 lg BR, office space, LR, DR, K. Deck, courtyard. HDWD floors. Pkg. \$925/mo. + utils. 1 year lease, sec. dep. Avail. May 1. Call 879-1467 evenings and weekends.

ROOMMATE WANTED

Resp., good-hearted M or F to share cozy 2 BR apt on Vaughan St., 3 blocks to MMC. Sm. K and avail. BR, you get own sitting room. 2 BA. \$400/mo. incl. all except phone and cable. Call 842-6087.

WANTED

Used, working exercise bike. Call 772-5243, leave message.

2 exterior doors, reasonable price. Call 775-0331.

SERVICES

Shrubs and trees pruned. Certified arborist with 30 years experience. Reasonable rates. Call 828-4421.

What's Happening?

at Maine Medical Center

- All month** **Healthviews.** Comm. TV Network TV 4, Thursdays, 1400 and 2000 hours; Fridays, 0700 hours.
- April 13** Photo contest deadline.
- April 22** National Volunteer Week
- April 25** Heart Fair, Dana Center, 1300-1700 hours.
See p.2
- Apr. 29** March of Dimes Walk. Join the team! Call Robin Peckham, 871-2589.
- April 30** Treatment of Child Abuse, 0830-1200 hours.
See p.5 Call 871-2967.
- May 2** Research 2001, through May 3. Call Tory Kinney, 885-8122 FMI.
- May 4** Honor Night, Holiday Inn By the Bay.
See p.1
- May 7** Photo contest display, through May 18. Dana Lobby.
- May 8** Alexander Cairns Symposium and Conference.
- May 18** 32nd Spring Surgical Symposium, 0800-1600 hours. Call 871-2934.
See p.5
- May 22** United Way Day of Caring. Call 871-4887.
See p.2

The Alexander Cairns Symposium

Compassionate Care at the End of Life: *Physicians, Health Care Providers and Clergy Working Together*

Tuesday, May 8, 0800-1630 hours

MMC Dana Health Education Center

featuring

Edwin R. DuBose, PhD

Park Ridge Center for the Study of Health, Faith and Ethics, Chicago

Open to all hospital staff & community clergy.

FMI or to register, contact the

Department of Pastoral Services, 871-2951.

*Presented by Maine Medical Center and
Maine Council of Churches*

MENTORING: Touching the Future

Become one of MMC's mentors to a Portland High School student.

To learn more, contact Elisa Chadwick at 871-2088 or e-mail chadwe.

For a listing of MaineHealth classes, call 781-1730.

About People

• **Robert C. Owens, Jr., PharmD,** has published "Risk Assessment for Antimicrobial Agent-Induced QTc Interval Prolongation and Torsades de Pointes" in the journal *Pharmacotherapy*.

What's Happening is published every other week at Maine Medical Center for members of the hospital community and for friends of the institution throughout Maine and northern New England. Comments, questions, and suggestions may be addressed to the Office of Public Information, MMC, 22 Bramhall Street, Portland, Maine 04102-3175. (207) 871-2196. Editor: Wayne L. Clark.

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