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## CHA Community Update, October 28, 2020

*"We all do better when we all do better."* - Senator Paul Wellstone

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

These extraordinary times require resilience and a continued determination, something that CHA staff continue to exhibit on a daily basis. Next week's election will set the course for our future and will impact the health of our patients. Much of the work that is featured in this newsletter highlights our response to accelerated public health risks to our patients. We continue to be dedicated to doing better.

- America's Essential Hospitals, which represents safety-net hospitals and health systems across the country, [featured CHA in a story on its website](#) promoting voter registration among their patients. Family Medicine Physician Rebekah Rollston, MD, MPH, and Kathy Betts, MPH, senior director of **Community Health Improvement (CHI)** discussed CHA's in-person voter registration initiative, an effort to address the health impact of disenfranchised voters that are from historically marginalized populations.
- CHA CEO **Assaad Sayah**, MD, was appointed along with 12 experts and state legislators to serve on the Legislature's [Health Equity Task Force related to COVID-19](#). As well you know, CHA communities were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, specifically among racial and ethnic minorities in our cities and neighborhoods. We are honored to participate and to contribute to this critical effort toward advancing health equity in Massachusetts.
- On October 22, we hosted our third **See, Test & Treat** event, a free cancer screening and health education program that brings the power of diagnostic medicine to our communities. In a single-morning, women

### Achievements and CHA in the News

CHA was ranked as one of the best places to work in the state. It was rated sixth out of 95 Massachusetts businesses by a [ranking compiled by Forbes](#).

CHA received the "LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Top Performer" designation in the [Healthcare Equality Index 2020](#) from the Human Rights Campaign.

CHA received an A+ mark and broke the top 100 of hospitals [ranked nationally](#) in an index from the Lown Institute.

CHA pediatrician **Jeanette Callahan**, MD, received the [Women of Courage and Conviction Award](#).

received a Pap test, HPV test, Mammogram with same-day results, a flu shot, connection to follow-up care, interpretive services, insurance enrollment, educational materials in 3 languages, and healthy food to take home. COVID -19 did not alter CHA's determination to provide this critical screening program to uninsured or underinsured women once again this year. Brava to **Drs. Becky Osgood, Laura Sullivan** and all the staff and providers who made this event possible.

- **Drs. Lara Jirmanus** and **Leah Zallman** presented to the **State's Progressive Caucus** on the essential roles immigrants play in supporting the health of the state's economy. Their research was funded by the CHA Foundation.
- CHA stepped up to help our communities by providing **flu vaccines** in Somerville, Chelsea and Revere both in the community and in senior housing.
- And, CHA continues to work with our communities regarding the eviction moratorium. Community Health Improvement(CHI) created a comprehensive **housing resource document**. CHI will host a **Community Health Advisory Committee (CHAC)** meeting with CHA's Interfaith Council, Foundation Board and Board Committee on Population Health to discuss this devastating news.

Our focus continues to be on our mission to improve the health of our communities. It's an honor to work with a team of professionals who are having a positive impact with innovative and responsive initiatives. The future health of our communities depends on the work that we do every day. It's that important.

Sincerely,



**Mary Cassesso**  
Chief Community Officer  
Cambridge Health Alliance

## CHA's Healthy Voting Initiative!

CHA's Healthy Voting Initiative successfully registered more than 200 new voters and connected hundreds of other people to voting resources. The Cambridge, Somerville, and Everett Hospital campuses are offering in-person voter registration opportunities in the lobby Mondays - Fridays, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. [Click here to view a voter registration handout](#) developed by Community Health Improvement.

Chief of Psychiatry **Philip Wang, MD, DrPH**, participated in an [important conversation](#) with **Representative Marjorie Decker** on children's health hosted by the Museum of Science and GBH.

The [Revere Journal](#) ran a photo and caption titled "CHA to the Rescue in Revere" which highlighted a flu clinic CHA held at the city's senior center.

A team from CHA published a study in [Occupational Medicine](#) which details how universal masking led to a decrease in COVID-19 cases among our employees while the infection rate continued to rise in the community. The [Boston Herald](#) and local NPR affiliates WGBH and WBUR interviewed senior author **Stefanos Kales, MD, MPH**.

[WBUR](#) explored efforts to incorporate climate change into medical education curriculums. The story, which included interviews with primary care physician **Gaurab Basu, MD, MPH**, and internal medicine resident **Charlotte Rastas, MD**, also ran on NPR's [All Things Considered](#) and the [Shots](#) blog.

[NBC News](#) covered the latest research from leading expert **Pieter Cohen**,



MD, which found that over-the-counter brain enhancement supplements contain multiple foreign drugs, some at high dosages.

*Pictured are staff from CHA helping patients and members of the community register to vote.*

## See, Test & Treat Saves Women's Lives Again

The See, Test & Treat event on October 22 was a huge success! Over 60 CHA volunteers and clinical staff came together to provide pap smears, breast exams, mammograms, HPV testing, flu shots and more for underserved women in our community. In a single morning, **CHA saw nearly 20 patients** - most of the women had no insurance and others had such limited insurance it created a barrier in the past for them to receive care. STT is a national program sponsored by the College of American Pathologists Foundation to offer uninsured and under-insured women the opportunity to get important health screenings and information.



*Pictured are CHA staff and volunteers at this year's See, Test and Treat event.*

## Housing Insecurity

Many CHA patients are having difficulties with **housing insecurity**. When the eviction moratorium ended over a week ago, their anxiety increased along with their risk for homelessness. CHA's Community Health Improvement (CHI) team put together a resource guide for Patient Resource Coordinators (PRC) to help connect patients to programs that can help. If you know of a CHA patient who is struggling, please ask them to contact their primary care center and request to be connected to a PRC.

## COVID-19 Community Management

CHA is conducting COVID-19 testing for patients and members of the community at the [CHA Assembly Square Care Center in Somerville](#). Individuals must call to set up an appointment using the number **617-665-2928**. Tests are provided at no charge to the patient. CHA does bill insurance for the test and people may get a statement showing this but there should be no out-of-pocket costs.

## Flu Shots

Getting vaccinated can reduce the risk of getting the flu. It also protects others from getting sick. Remember that people with chronic disease, older adults, pregnant women and children are at the highest risk of getting serious flu-related illnesses. CHA patients now have several options to get flu shots. Please visit [the CHA website](#) for the most current information.

## Food Security

According to the Greater Boston Food Bank, **nearly 35 percent of people across Massachusetts struggle with hunger**. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, one in every eleven residents (617,380 people) and one in every ten children (138,760 people) were food insecure. Today, one in seven residents (943,530 people), and one in five children (251,240 people) are food insecure.

In response, CHA is developing a Food Security Strategic Plan to create pathways for patients and members of the community to connect with food resources in the community. In early October, CHA's Board Committee on Population Health met and took part in an ecosystem assessment on food security and health. Themes that came out of the discussion include advocacy at the state and national level, research, coordination and collaboration, and new technologies to combat hunger. Stay tuned for more details as we work with community partners to develop comprehensive strategies to fight hunger.

Additionally, CHA's Revere Care Center Mobile Market continued to operate in October and September. The Market is a partnership between CHA, Greater Boston Food Bank, Tufts Health Plan and Good Measures. Our tremendous thanks to all of the staff, volunteers and community partners who make the Market Possible each month.



*Pictured are CHA staff, volunteers and members of the community at the Revere Mobile Market*

## CHA Services Update

Have you had a telehealth visit yet by phone or video? There's a lot of work behind the scenes to make it easier to connect with CHA electronically. If you have an Android phone or device you can now connect to your video visit from MyCHART. Check out the tip sheet on [our website](#) with step-by-step instructions. When you log into MyCHART to start your video visit, a new "Join Appointment" button will appear in the waiting room when your provider has joined. This makes it easy to start your visit.

Coming to see CHA in-person? With the new MyCHART eCheck-in feature you can update your information before your visit. eCheck-in lets you update your address, insurance, add a preferred pharmacy and much more! Give it a try before your next primary care visit and skip the registration window when you arrive. Have questions about MyCHART? Patients can call CHA's Health Information Management team at **617-381-7266** between 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Or, you can email us at [mycharthelp@challiance.org](mailto:mycharthelp@challiance.org).



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