



# PACO

## Patient Advisory Committee

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*Patient Centered Outcomes Initiative (PACO)*  
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*Co-Investigators Dr. Michael Weinblatt and Dr. Jonathan Coblyn*  
*Brigham and Women's Hospital, Rheumatology, Immunology, Allergy*

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## Dialogue with Sanjay Pathak, BWH Vice President of Clinical Services

We were fortunate to have Sanjay Pathak, BWH Vice President of Clinical Services, join us for the April 16, 2008 Patient Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Pathak has been with Brigham and Women's since last May, although he has spent many years working with large academic institutions. His objective, he explained, is to rethink administrative policies so that patients are well taken care of. Some of the issues that are being explored revolve around the employees who serve as the "public face" of the hospital, working in settings like the Arthritis Center's reception area. He added, "Patients put up with pain and inconvenience because they need to be [at Brigham and Women's]. We need to think about ambulatory processes that put patients first."

Mr. Pathak attended the meeting in response to a letter signed by members of the Patient Advisory Committee and sent to him with regards to problems with the registration process in the clinic. Among the issues discussed in the dialogue with Mr. Pathak were:

### Registration Process

Members of the PAC found the process difficult because they have to sit and stand multiple times, walk through several reception areas which is difficult with RA, and the process takes extra time and can make them late for their appointment.

Mr. Pathak explained that Clinical Services hopes to improve training for reception employees, eliminate the blue card in favor of simple patient identifiers, and create a system of "concierges" who help patients navigate the process, particularly when the person is not feeling well.

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## Parking

In addition to observing that the BWH garages are often full, PAC members expressed the following concerns:

- Currently, patients have to pay for parking on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor when the Arthritis Center is on the 1<sup>st</sup>. This requires extra walking and effort for RA patients that can be particularly uncomfortable if the person has inflamed joints and pain. PAC members suggested that there be a parking desk in the Arthritis Center.
- A patient has to insert a ticket into the machine as they leave the garage. Inserting the ticket from within the car can be difficult for an RA patient, particularly if their hands are disabled. One member described having to get out of the car to find someone to help, holding up traffic. A suggestion was made to have an attendant at the garage exit to insert the ticket for patients.

Mr. Pathak explained the limitations Clinical Services faces in providing convenient and adequate parking for the hospital. Specifically, because the neighborhood is residential, there are zoning restrictions in place around Brigham and Women's, limited places to have parking, and the narrow streets are prone to congestion. He described some possible solutions, including moving some services out to the 850 Boylston and Faulkner areas (public transportation to these facilities is less convenient), increasing valet parking services, and creating a system in the clinic to alert the valet to retrieve the patient's car when he/she checks out.

Mr. Pathak ended the discussion by promising to pass PAC members' suggestions along to Clinical Services. Since the discussion, PAC members have already reported some positive changes in the BWH parking situation. We will keep in touch with Clinical Services about improvements.



*Mr. Pathak (center) and PAC members discuss the Arthritis Center registration process.*

## PACO Initiative

A collaborative effort between patients and researchers at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, funded by the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation



## Osher Center Experiences

The newly opened Osher Center (*The Osher Clinical Center for Complementary and Integrative Medical Therapies, at 850 Boylston Street; phone 617-732-9700*) generously offered to allow several PAC members to try out their services. The three PAC members who sampled Osher Center services were on hand at the PAC meeting to describe their experiences.



*The front desk of the Osher Center, at Brigham and Women's 850 Boylston Street location.*

- A PAC member started with a one-hour appointment in February, and went on to see Megan Taber, a chiropractor, and Art Madore, a core integration movement specialist, for problems with her neck. She described the Osher Center personnel whom she saw as “very helpful,” and called her visits there “a very positive experience.”
- Another PAC member was impressed that Dr. Levy asked question to gain an understanding of her total health right at the initial consultation which was helpful given the difficulty of coordinating between her different doctors. Dr. Levy talked with her about her acid reflux, even recommending a specific pillow and some non-prescription treatments that he thought would help her. She contrasted her experience at the Osher Center with a holistic practitioner she had seen during a bad flare. Unlike the holistic practitioner, who wanted her to discontinue all of her medications, Dr. Levy and the other Osher Center staff were more willing to work with what she was already doing.
- The third PAC member also saw Dr. Levy and appreciated that he “really listened” and had specific suggestions. She returned after her initial appointment for two additional services: massage and acupuncture. Of the acupuncture, she mentioned being initially skeptical and unsure about it. However, after her first acupuncture session the longstanding pain in her foot was gone, and she was able to climb stairs normally instead of having to place both feet on every step. She found the Osher Center staff very “caring and understanding.”

Respondents also liked how the Osher Center is affiliated with Brigham and Women's, which provides “security.” As one member put it, “You don't have to wonder: is this the real thing?” One PAC member noted, “I'm not sure if everything [at the Osher Center] will be covered by insurance, but it is really worth it.”

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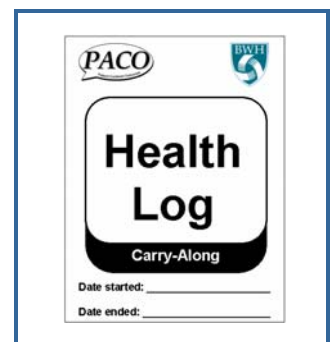
## Updates

### Health Log Pilot Study

During the meeting, we heard from a PAC member who is one of the 26 patients currently participating in a pilot study of the PACO Health Log. She remarked, "*The Health Log prompts me to think about different areas of my life,*" and it is also helpful for her family, who knowing where she keeps it would easily be able to find out what medications she is on if she got sick.

### PACO Resource List

PAC members were asked to comment on a Resource List that PACO created for distribution in the Center, a particularly useful document for newly diagnosed patients or those new to BWH. Feedback and recommendations are being incorporated into a revised version, which will be available in the clinic.



## Seminars

On June 5, Dr. Ronenn Roubenoff gave an engaging and interactive presentation on nutrition as it relates to arthritis and other rheumatic diseases at Brigham and Women's Carrie Hall to around 50 audience members. He described the basic nutritional building blocks, focusing in particular on protein, which is used in excess during times of immune system activation. This excessive protein use can deplete muscle mass, which can exacerbate fatigue and decrease strength. Dr. Roubenoff recommended weight training or other muscle-building exercise every third day, to build muscles and allow muscles the necessary time to repair themselves between times of exertion.

After his presentation, Dr. Roubenoff took many questions from the audience. An audio recording of his talk is available via the PACO website at [http://www.pacostudy.org/?page\\_id=6](http://www.pacostudy.org/?page_id=6)



Dr. Ronenn Roubenoff during his June 5 presentation

**Next PAC Meeting - July 31, 2008**

Thursday from 12:00 - 2:00pm

Location - Bayles Conference Room

(see enclosed map)