



The Arnold P. Gold Foundation Fostering Humanism in Medicine

Fall 2009

What It Means to Be Human – A Patient Voice

“This book of poetry is by a poet who happens to be a patient, and I am her psychiatrist. . . . Her efforts have contributed greatly to the understanding of what it means to have schizophrenia, what it means to have a psychiatric illness. But more importantly, Pam writes about what it means to be human.”

Mary B. O’Malley, MD, PhD



Mary B. O’Malley, MD, PhD
with Pamela Spiro Wagner

The language of illness is a powerful vehicle to develop an awareness of the suffering of another and to fuel the desire to relieve it. Patients have particularly powerful voices.

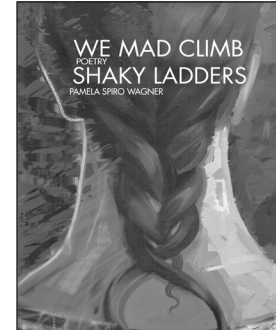
The Gold Foundation strives to bring the patient’s perspective and experience into physician education – to bring the voice of the patient to the ear of the doctor.

Our goal is to improve the understanding and communication between patient and physician. That is why we partner with Joan Handler, publisher of CavanKerry Press, to produce a series of poetry and prose on the lived experience of illness.

Last month, at the New York Academy of Medicine and at Holy Name Hospital in New Jersey, The Gold Foundation hosted a reading by a particularly vibrant voice, poet and artist Pamela Spiro Wagner, and her former psychiatrist, Mary O’Malley. Before an audience of physicians, medical residents and supporters, Pam read from her new book, **We Mad Climb Shaky Ladders**.

After the reading, Pam wrote us: “That my poems meant something to you and to the audience makes me very happy. As a poet, of course, that is all I ever wanted. But – and this is important, especially given the Gold Foundation’s mission – you could say the very same thing about me as a patient, even when psychotic: all I ever asked was to be granted approval from the start and to feel that someone was listening and that what I had to say mattered.”

Ed. Note: **We Mad Climb Shaky Ladders** is available for purchase from major booksellers.



The Catatonic Speaks

*At first it seemed a good idea not to
move a muscle, to resist without
resistance. I stood still and stiller. Soon
I was the stillest object in that room.
I neither moved nor ate nor spoke.
But I was there all the time;
I heard every word said,
saw what was done and not done.
Indifferent to making the first move,
I let them arrange my limbs, infuse
IVs, even toilet me like a doll.
Oh, their concern was so touching!
And so unnecessary. As if I needed anything
but the viscosity of air that held me up.
I was sorry when they cured
me, when I had to depart that warm box,
the thick closed-in place of not-caring,
and return to the world. I would
never go back, not now. But
the Butterfly Effect says sometimes
the smallest step leads nowhere,
sometimes to global disaster. I tell you
it is enough to scare a person stiff.*

See note from Jennifer Ashton, CBS News Correspondent, page 2
Please take our Patient Satisfaction Survey, page 3

Dear Gold Foundation Friends,

You may be familiar with my work as a medical correspondent for CBS. I hope you also recognize me as a practicing physician AND as a proud trustee of the Gold Foundation. I joined the Foundation's Board because I know how important it is that you and your family have a compassionate doctor at your side when you need one. But these economic times are jeopardizing humanistic healthcare. I'm seeing it threatened every day.

If you're worried about the risks to quality healthcare, too, then you understand that the Gold Foundation's work is critical. Please send your 2009 contribution today so this ground-breaking work can continue.

My fellow trustees join me in thanks, and we wish you a happy holiday season.

Jennifer



Jennifer Ashton, MD, Ob-Gyn,
CBS News Medical Correspondent

He Was There, and Now He's Our Winner



Photo: Vernon Doucette/Boston University

Dr. Jonathan Woodson with medical students at Boston University.

He was there when the twin towers fell. He was there for our troops in Saudi Arabia. He's there for his community and he's an esteemed role model for his students.

He's **Dr. Jonathan Woodson** and now he's the winner of the inaugural **Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award**. This student-nominated award honors a

faculty physician who is a caring and compassionate doctor and mentor. It was recently presented at the 120th annual meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

Dr. Woodson is Boston University School of Medicine's Associate Dean for Students, Diversity, and Multicultural Affairs and Associate Professor of Surgery. He holds the rank of Brigadier General in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Below are excerpts from Dr. Woodson's talk to medical students at the annual AAMC meeting last month.

Why do we need to emphasize Humanism in Medicine? No physician consciously starts out aspiring to deliver impersonal care that neglects the emotional needs of their patients. So what happens? What happens, as you know too well, is that the insidious facts of life as a student, resident or practicing physician erode our discipline to adhere to our core values.

So how as a student or physician do you swim against the tide? First, I believe you must understand what your core values are, reflect upon them frequently and discipline yourselves not to deviate.

Humanism in Medicine and its core values - respect for patient autonomy, culture, and background, selflessness, integrity and empathy... should be the pillars of our profession and constantly guiding all of our actions and interactions.

Dr. Woodson concluded his remarks with **Woodson's Top Ten**.

Woodson's Top Ten

Advice to medical students for keeping the patient at the center of the healthcare process

1. Treat each patient as if they were your family member.
2. Involve patients in decisions/understand their values.
3. Look patients in the eye. Don't be distracted by the computer screen.
4. Learn some personal facts about your patients. Refer to this information on subsequent encounters as this helps to build trust and enduring relationships. Understand who the patient considers important in their life and care.
5. Sit down when interviewing patients. (It may be the same five minutes, but it will seem different to the patient.)
6. Humor helps. "Would you like the incision that gets you 3 days or 4 days of sympathy?" or "This incision allows him to whine for only 2 days."
7. Never forget that someone is watching what you do and your action will be emulated or described as typical for the profession.
8. Remember that patients are complex "human" integrated systems - you don't get to select only one part and ignore the rest.
9. The patient is in charge - you are their agent. Educate don't dictate.
10. Identify and reflect regularly on your core values. They will be your life's compass when difficult decisions and times come.

Patient Satisfaction Survey

The Gold Foundation is very interested in your experiences with your doctors and plans to share the results of this survey with medical school deans and educators and with others who are in positions to influence the healthcare we each receive. After completing the survey please detach this page and return it in the enclosed envelope.

The deadline is January 15, 2010.

1. If anything, which among the following options would you change about the physician interactions you most frequently experience?

Please choose one.

- Their communication skills or 'bedside manners'
- The quality of their office equipment
- The wait time at their office
- The amount of paperwork I usually have to fill out
- The comfort of their facilities (waiting room, examination room, etc.)
- The opportunity to adequately discuss my concerns and questions
- There is nothing I would change
- Other (please specify) _____

2. Which of the following describe your doctor's demeanor at your last visit?

Please choose all that apply.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Attentive | <input type="radio"/> Overbearing |
| <input type="radio"/> Efficient | <input type="radio"/> Condescending |
| <input type="radio"/> Distracted | <input type="radio"/> Compassionate |
| <input type="radio"/> Businesslike | <input type="radio"/> Communicative |
| <input type="radio"/> Caring | <input type="radio"/> None of these |

3. Thinking about all of the doctors you've ever visited, what percentage of them did you believe were truly interested in your overall well-being as a whole person and not just as a patient with a specific medical issue? (Best guess is fine.)

- none were interested
- up to 25%
- up to 50%
- up to 75%
- up to 90%
- all were interested

4. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

I wish that doctors today had better communication skills and 'bedside manners'.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. Which of the following, if any, have ever happened to you at a doctor's office?

Please choose all that apply.

- My doctor making me wait a long time to see him/her
- My doctor not knowing me by name
- My doctor was distracted by typing notes on a laptop computer
- My doctor providing too little opportunity to discuss my concerns and questions
- My doctor not making any eye contact with me
- My doctor speaking in medical terms that I couldn't understand
- My doctor being rude or condescending to me
- My doctor making me feel rushed
- My doctor's 'bedside manner' making me cry or leave the office upset
- None of the above

6. Are you involved in any of the following fields?

Please choose all that apply.

- I am a doctor.
- I am a nurse or nurse-practitioner.
- I am an allied health professional.
- I am a medical student.
- I work in medical education.
- I am not involved in any of these fields.

7. What is your gender?

- Female Male

8. What is your age?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 18-24 | <input type="radio"/> 55-64 |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-34 | <input type="radio"/> 65-74 |
| <input type="radio"/> 35-44 | <input type="radio"/> Over 75 |
| <input type="radio"/> 45-54 | |

9. Please provide your e-mail address if you would like to receive the results of this survey.

Thank you for your participation!



The Arnold P. Gold Foundation

619 PALISADE AVENUE, ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, NJ 07632



*To preserve the "care" in healthcare
please contribute to
The Arnold P. Gold Foundation*



The Arnold P. Gold Foundation, Inc.
Tel. (201)567-7999 Fax (201)567-7880
Email: goldfdtn@gold-foundation.org
Website: www.humanism-in-medicine.org

Board of Trustees

Jordan J. Cohen, MD, Chairman
Sandra O. Gold, EdD, President/CEO
Norman Seiden, Vice Chair
Myron Rosner, Esq., Secretary
Jeffrey L. Saltzer, CPA, Treasurer

Elaine Adler	Herbert R. Mayer
Jennifer Ashton, MD	Robert B. Mellins, MD
Brian E. Benson, MD	Robert O. Owens
Robert M. Berkowitz	John W. Rowe, MD
Arnold P. Gold, MD <i>Chairman Emeritus</i>	Jonathan D. Seelig Mark Seiden
Joshua E. Hyman, MD	Samuel Silverstein, MD
Lisa Kravet, Esq.	Michael Sonnenfeldt
William J. Lippman	Reed V. Tuckson, MD
Marsha Levine, PhD	Barry C. Waldorf, Esq.

Ira H. Lustgarten, Esq., David E. Rogers, MD
Deceased

Medical and Professional Advisory Council

Norma E. Wagoner, PhD, Chair

Ronald A. Arky, MD	Brett Harris, Esq.
Herman Aronson	David C. Leach, MD
RADM Susan J.	Sherwin B. Nuland, MD
Blumenthal, MD, MPA	William J. Peace, PhD
Benjamin S. Carson, MD	Rachel Naomi Remen, MD
Rita Charon, MD, PhD	Steven A. Schroeder, MD
Carl Epstein	Kenneth I. Shine, MD
Ruth L. Fischbach, PhD	David T. Stern, MD, PhD
Steven K. Grinspoon, MD	J. Robert Suriano, PhD
Jerome E. Groopman, MD	Daniel T. Williams, MD

John H. Peace, John Stone, MD - *Deceased*

Staff

Barbara Packer Managing Director/COO	Harriet Turner Program Associate Gold Humanism Honor Society
Ann G. Bruder Director of Programs	Robert Gurmankin VP of Development
Lisa M. Podhayny Program Associate	Karen Secular Director of Development
Jacqueline Mintz Executive Director Gold Humanism Honor Society	Kelly Tanis Development Associate
Mary Meehan Bookkeeper (Pro Bono)	



Dr. Santosh Kesari, Gold DOC

Gold DOC: Beyond the Call

When Dr. Santosh Kesari received his Gold DOC recognition he wrote to us: "I cannot tell you how pleasant a surprise this was and is more valuable than any research grant that I have received."

To give patients a way to recognize and honor doctors who practice medicine that is consistently compassionate, who make a profound difference in the lives of the patients and families they work with, the Gold Foundation established its Gold DOC (for Doctors of Compassion) program. In this issue, we highlight Dr. Kesari, Associate Professor, Neurosciences Cancer Biology Program and Director of Neuro-Oncology at the University of California – San Diego.

Dr. Kesari's nomination was submitted by Stewart Lustgarten, a cousin of the late Gold Foundation board member Ira Lustgarten. It reads, in part,

... at the time [Dr. Kesari] was treating my late wife...he went far beyond the call of duty numerous times, especially when other treating physicians were either deaf of ear or numb of brain. One incident I vividly recall is when Susan was placed in an examination room in tremendous pain for over an hour, waiting for her general oncologist to arrive. Her loud screaming and crying during this long hour went unnoticed by staff and other doctors.... My numerous attempts to find someone who cared to put her out of her pain went disregarded.... My last resort was to call Santosh, who ran down the stairs of another building down the street then ran up the stairs and placed Susan out of her pain and stayed, comforting her, until her treating oncologist finally arrived, about an hour past that...

Shortly after sending our congratulatory letter, Gold DOC plaque and Humanism in Medicine pin to Dr. Kesari we received a letter from the parent of another of his patients. *On one occasion I called him first (before taking my daughter to our local emergency room) and he walked me through what should be done in the ER. He phoned me at 10:30pm and at 6:00am to check on her progress.... He truly is the essence of humanity, compassion and excellence.*

Do you have a physician who embodies humanism in medicine? Send us a letter of nomination by regular mail or by e-mail to GoldFdn@gold-foundation.org. Perhaps your doctor will share Dr. Kesari's reaction: "It put a smile on my face and warmth in my heart."

We apologize to these generous donors. The last edition of DOC misplaced them in the Donor Listing:

Lee Langbaum should have been at the Sustainer level

Nancy & Peter Brown should have been listed under the Eric Brown Foundation at the Sustainer level

Nancy & Howard Brown should not have been listed under the Eric Brown Foundation