Codman Square Health Center
CONNECTION
Spring 2016

# Epic at Codman Square Health Center IS HERE

# NEW EHR BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES

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**Good** service today often hinges on the technology in place behind the scenes. Electronic Health Records (EHR) specifically have transformed the way information is communicated and exchanged across the healthcare industry. It has been shown that the best EHRs improve patient care and coordination, increase patient participation, and improve patient diagnosis/outcomes. That is why on February 23, 2016 Codman Square Health Center upgraded its electronic health record and practice management system to Epic, one of the most powerful and widely used medical systems in the nation. The version of Epic installed at Codman is developed by OCHIN, a nonprofit health care collaborative that specializes in working with community health centers, and is also being rolled out to seven other health centers under the Boston HealthNet umbrella.

The transition to the new system required lots of flexibility and adjustments from both the staff and patients at Codman. Over 95% of staff required training on the new system, and all departments except Urgent Care were shut down the day before the launch day to prepare for the Epic

transition. Overall the transition went very smoothly, with over 30 staff from Boston Medical Center and OCHIN providing support the week of the launch. The health center then operated with reduced appointments in the 3 weeks following the transition in order to allow staff to become comfortable with the new system. Now finished with the initial stages of rollout, Epic is going to allow for new workflow improvements, better communication with partner hospitals and outside health organizations, support for an online patient portal, and more efficient reporting and tracking. Codman looks forward to leveraging this new technology in a number of performance improvement initiatives.

*New exterior signage at the entrance to our main 637 Washington Street location.*

# NEW SIGNAGE DIRECTS VISITORS

**The** best signage is simple, clear and informative. Codman Square Health Center recently went through a top to bottom redesign of all its signage to make the experience of visiting the Health Center even easier. Bringing in outside vendors and expertise, the Health Center devised a comprehensive plan to provide wayfinding signage throughout the large, complex facility at our main clinical 637 location, and on the exterior of our three primary buildings of 637 & 450 Washington Street and 6 Norfolk Street.

The new internal wayfinding signage uses predictable locations and the *Hablamos Juntos* symbols for health care environments to help bridge gaps in language proficiencies and guide patients to the correct department. *Hablamos Juntos* is a national program developed in cooperation with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and is intended to eliminate language barriers and improve the quality of health care provided to patients with limited English proficiency. These new symbols are being used across all of our collateral to further reinforce the new symbols. In addition, Haitian Creole and Spanish translations are used at destinations and directories.

The new exterior signage is designed to more clearly identify the Health Center properties and their different functions. The front entrance to the Health Center has been outfitted with an illuminated sign for the first time, helping patients navigate during the late evening hours when the Health Center is open. The Great Hall has signs directing visitors to the handicap entrance and access to the administrative offices for the Health Center. New signs also help visitors navigate to the newly renamed Wellness & Fitness Center at 450, the home of our partners Daily Table and Healthworks Community Fitness.

Overall the new signage system presents consistent messaging and directions that give visitors to the Health Center more information about the services in the building, and how to navigate to the appropriate destination.

# SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH LAUNCH

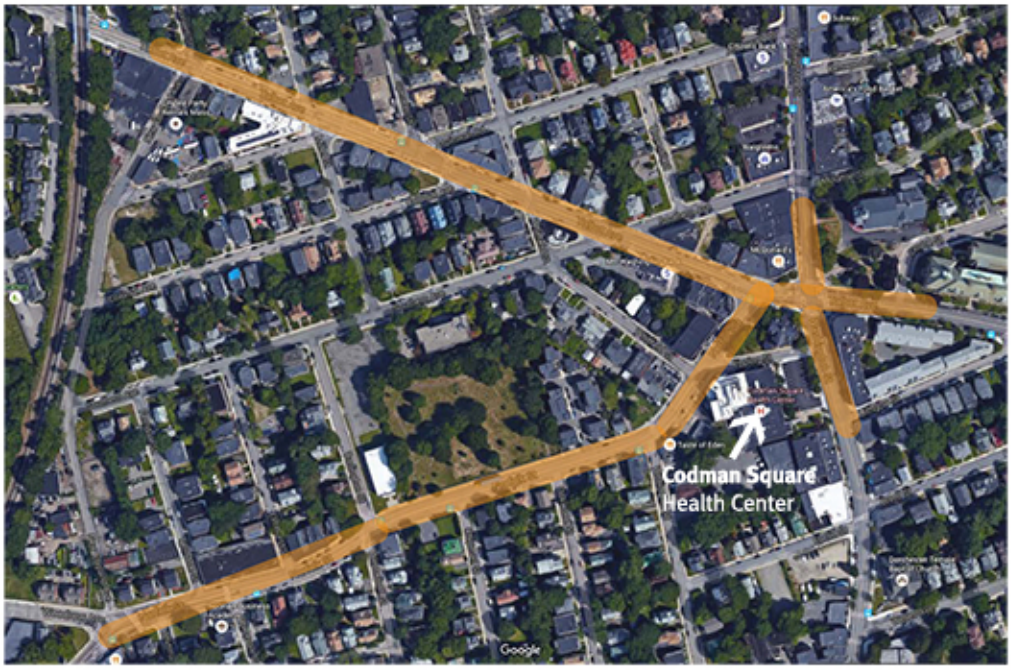
*By Lauren Graber, MD*

**Serving** and supporting families is central to the founding principles of Codman Square Health Center. This often extends out of the traditionally "medical" spheres and into the ups and downs of life, the reality of housing instability, the varying educational opportunities for our children, the ongoing search for sustainable work options, and the need to find ground when faced with tragedy. Science tells us how these stressors can affect the brain development of our children and Codman Square Health Center is dedicated to supporting families through the challenges – so that each child and family can attain their dreams.

The LAUNCH Program supports families through these challenges. Jacqueline Rue, our Family Partner, and Molly Mariano, our Early Mental Health Clinician, work side-by-side with families to address life's hurdles. They meet families where they are – in their medical visit, at home, or in school – and help families with their immediate needs and long term goals. Molly and Jackie help families enroll children in school, find a trusted child care provider, advocate to obtain better housing, and learn how to support children with behavior or developmental concerns. Through the 'Roo Crew playgroup, parents can come together with the LAUNCH team to learn how to enrich their child's development and manage the stresses of parenting.

A Boston-wide study by the Boston Public Health Commission found that Project LAUNCH is meeting its goals to support the social-emotional development of children and reduce parent stress. The results are amazing, showing that children who work with LAUNCH have improved development and behavior. Parents are supported to have less stress and lowered depression scores. Most remarkably, however, LAUNCH works for the families at highest risk. We look forward to expanding our support for families in the next year!

# VISION ZERO IN CODMAN SQUARE




*Map of the Codman Square Priority Corridor.*

**Nationwide**, pedestrian and cyclists injuries and fatalities are on the rise. Here in Boston, pedestrian fatalities are also on an upward trend. The City has recorded 145 crashes, including 23 pedestrian, in the Codman Square/Talbot-Norfolk Triangle area alone from 2012-2014.

In response to this growing trend, the City of Boston has started the Vision Zero initiative. Vision Zero's goal is to eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes in Boston by 2030. In the beginning of March, Vision Zero presented to the Codman Square Neighborhood Council to share the research and proposed plans they have been working on to help improve safety of the roads in the neighborhood. In its first phase of work, Vision Zero identified Codman Square as a Priority Corridor and the Talbot-Norfolk Triangle (part of the Codman Square neighborhood) as a Neighborhood Slow Street Pilot Zone.

Vision Zero has put together a list of proposed improvements to help dramatically reduce crashes and make the roads in our neighborhood safer. Our partner Codman Academy Charter Public School has been collaboratively working with Vision Zero to also propose some changes that would help to make the area safer for all of their students who now use the growing Codman[2] campus. These improvements include Daylight intersections at key problematic areas, improved signal timing for pedestrian crossings, left turn lanes on Washington at Talbot, a few new crosswalks including one on Washington St. at Epping St., bicycle lanes on Norfolk and Talbot streets, 20 mph school zones around Codman Academy, and pick-up/drop-off areas for students.

*A proposed vision for a shared campus on Washington Street, courtesy of Codman Academy.*

As of today, engineers working with Vision Zero are reviewing design plans that were submitted by the consultant. Depending on the comments, Vision Zero will either schedule another community meeting or take the next steps to prepare final design plans for installation this summer. For more information visit www.visionzeroboston.org.

# IN MEMORIAM SEABORN SCOTT

**Seaborn** Scott, one of the founding board members of Codman Square Health Center, passed away on April 19, 2016. Seaborn grew up on a farm in Milledgeville, Georgia, and during the Great Migration, his family moved to Bellingham, Massachusetts and then settled in Boston. Seaborn always fondly remembered his high school years at English High School where he was the co-captain of the track and field team and he began his love of U.S. Presidents and public speaking. Magnificent orators, like Malcom X, fascinated him to a point that Seaborn became a family friend of Malcolm and his sister, Ella. He was extremely proud of a photograph of himself sitting in the front row at Malcolm's funeral that appeared in a 1960's edition of Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. The late Thomas Atkins of the NAACP, another fantastic speaker, inspired Seaborn to become a Vice President of the Massachusetts branch of the NAACP during the 1970s.

Seaborn was one of the first black letter carriers in Boston, and he earned his B.A. in Liberal Studies in Sociology from Boston University and a M.Ed. from Antioch University. He received numerous awards including the Superior Civilian Service Award and the

Meritorious Civilian Service Award from the Defense Logistics Agency. He was a man known for a tender heart, who had a deep appreciation of history and the arts. He spent much of his time in retirement serving local museums and giving historical tours to children. He was always willing to help someone in need and was a tremendous support to the Health Center throughout his over 25 years on the board.

# ONE KEY QUESTION®

**One** of the most disruptive events for a woman can be an unintended pregnancy. Within the U.S., low-income, women of color have the highest rates of unintended pregnancy. In 2006, 3.2 million pregnancies in the U.S. were unintended, almost half (49%) of all pregnancies. Black women had the highest unintended pregnancy rate among all racial and ethnic subgroups (91 per 1000 women aged 15-44), more than double that of non-Hispanic white women (36 per 1000 women aged 15-44). The rate for poor women was more than five times the rate for women in the highest income level. Here at Codman Square Health Center, rates of unintended pregnancies are perhaps even higher in our patients, as a representative sample of data taken at initial prenatal visits indicates 60% of newly pregnant patients reported their pregnancy was unplanned. Only 10% reported that their pregnancy was planned, and the remaining 30% of patient charts indicated no response, implying the percentages could be even higher.

Poor or non-existent preconception care is common, and pregnancy outcomes are worse for the population that we serve. This makes reproductive health care, and thus reproductive health screening, incredibly relevant and essential to the care of our patients. Thus, Anna Groskin, M.D., one of Codman's staff participating in the Kraft Center for Community Health Practitioner Program, started a project to improve reproductive health screening through use of One Key Question® (OKQ) here at Codman Square Health Center. The question, "Do you want to become pregnant in the next year?" will be used by Codman staff at each visit with women of reproductive age to document pregnancy intentions, initiate a discussion about reproductive health, and hopefully prompt a plan addressing these intentions.

In the long run, by ensuring that women of reproductive age are asked about their pregnancy plans regularly, more pregnancies will be planned and wanted through the use of effective contraception and pregnancy outcomes will be improved due to well-timed and comprehensive preconception counseling. In the short term, by using OKQ, Codman providers will be prompted to include reproductive health in their patient visits, improving the chances that women will receive counseling about contraception and contraception prescriptions if they do not wish to be pregnant, and preconception counseling and prenatal vitamins if they do wish to be pregnant.

# ADDRESSING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

On March 11, 2016 Codman Square Health Center was awarded $352,083 in supplemental funds from the federal government for substance abuse services. The funds will be used to improve and expand the delivery of substance use services at Codman with a focus on a) medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorders and b) screening for and treatment of alcohol use disorders in primary care. The program will augment Codman's efforts to integrate substance use, behavioral health and primary care services.

Statewide in Massachusetts, there were an estimated 1,256 unintentional opioid overdose deaths in 2014, a 15% increase over 2013 and a 57% increase over 2012. Here within Codman's neighborhoods there is also a growth of concern around substance abuse. Our community health needs assessment in 2013 identified substance abuse problems as the fourth biggest problem facing the neighborhood, after only diabetes, obesity, and mental health, and over a third of community members said it was a significant community problem. With these new funds Codman will be able to address this issue head on through leveraging our existing Behavioral Health Integrated Therapist infrastructure and implementing the SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) model for screening for alcohol and substance use disorders.

Overall, Health and Human Services announced a total of $94 million that they are giving to health centers across the country to help treat the prescription opioid abuse and heroin epidemic in America. Codman Square Health Center is among twenty Community Health Centers in Massachusetts to receive this grant, and we are proud to be a part of this work. Moving forward, this grant will be added into our federal base grant to keep this work sustainable into the future.

Codman Square
Health Center

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