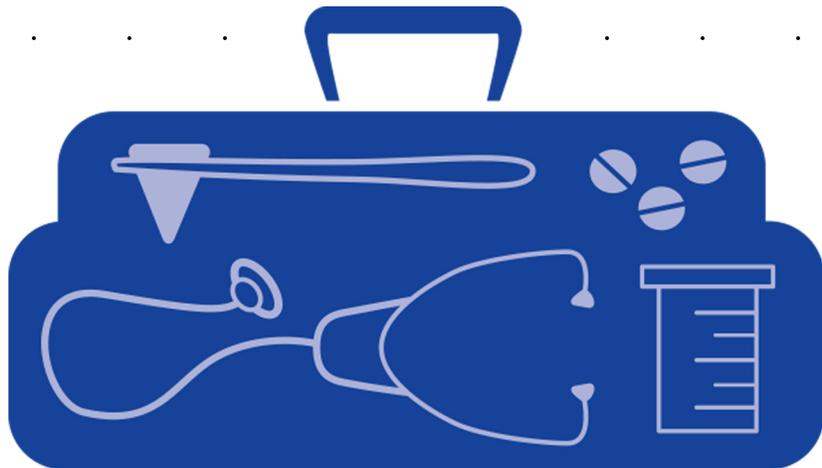


W F C C Q3 2019 NEWSLETTER

A DISPATCH OF THE WORCESTER FREE CLINIC COALITION



accessible healthcare for central Massachusetts



MEMBER CLINICS

- Epworth (Mon 6-8pm)
64 Salisbury St, Worcester
- St. Anne's (Tues 6-8pm)
130 Boston Trnpk, Shrewsbury
- Greenwood (Wed 6-8pm)
215 E. Mountain St, Worcester
- India Society (Wed 6-8pm)
152 W. Main St, Shrewsbury
- Akwaaba (Thurs 6-8pm)
67 Vernon St, Worcester
- Islamic Center (Thurs 6-8pm)
248 E. Mountain St, Worcester

EDITORIAL BOARD

- Filia Van Dessel
- John Romano
- Sahil Nawab
- Jane Lochrie, MD

The Worcester Free Clinic Coalition is a group of free medical programs that provide health care services to uninsured or underinsured in the greater Worcester area.

All programs welcome anyone in need of services.

The opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints presented in this publication are not necessarily those of the sponsoring organizations. For personal health issues, the WFCC encourages readers to consult with qualified health professionals, whether through the free clinics or otherwise.

Letter from the Editor

Communication plays a central role in supporting community initiatives, including the free clinics that support patients in need of free healthcare in the greater Worcester area. As part of our community outreach efforts, we are excited to launch this newsletter, aptly titled *A Dispatch of the Worcester Free Clinic Coalition*.

While the primary goals of this publication are to increase transparency as an organization and enable more direct collaboration with the community, another key aspect is to encourage feedback from patients, volunteers, and others so that we can continue to develop and respond to the changing needs of the community. Creating open dialogue between the clinics themselves, the clinics and volunteers, and the clinics and patients, is critical and we encourage everyone to participate.

From a practical standpoint, we intend this newsletter to become a quarterly publication distributed within each of the free clinics as well as by email to the free clinic volunteer community. The issues will be printed and publically available to anyone interested in reading about the organization.

And of course, being an ongoing project, there may be a number of changes as we learn and grow. Over time we hope to expand the format of the newsletter to include additional information that can support the mission of the organization. Some of the future ideas that we would like to implement are as follows:

- calendar (closures, important dates, etc.)
- staffing issues, volunteer needs, fundraising, etc.
- data highlights (infographics to visually represent data)
- relevant interviews and community discussions
- photo content to bring human connection
- dossier section for further reading / references

This newsletter provides a tremendous opportunity for community outreach and I hope that it will continue to play an important role in improving patient care at all of the free clinics.

Thank you for supporting this critical mission,
Sahil

SAHIL A. NAWAB
Media Coordinator, WFCC

FILIA VAN DESSEL
Co-President, WFCC

JOHN ROMANO
Co-President, WFCC

Minutes from the Meetings

The Worcester Free Clinic Coalition (WFCC) hosted its first annual Symposium on a chilly Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January 2019. We saw over 50 members from across the community join together at the University of Massachusetts Medical School for an evening of discussion about the free clinics and ways to work together to improve patient care for the community.

A recurring theme of the event was to foster increased collaboration between the clinics. One of the proposed mechanisms was to create a task force with representatives from each clinic that can work across clinic boundaries. Once a month, the task force meets to discuss updates, collaborate on new ideas and suggestions, and determine the best way to address issues that the clinics face.

The Steering Committee was assigned to better understand the role that the clinics play within the greater Worcester community and determine the mission and values of the Worcester Free Clinic Coalition as an organization. After much deliberation, the Committee arrived on the following mission statement.

The Greater Worcester Free Medical Consortium is an alliance of free medical programs that provide compassionate, culturally sensitive health care to those who are uninsured, underinsured, or otherwise lack resources and strives to connect patients to primary care and social services.

Some of the other discussions are outlined below:

Discussion: What else do we want to accomplish as a task force?

A. Communication about services, referral system

- Some clinics have been having issues with referrals from other clinics and not being able to provide services. For example, at St. Anne's they recently had a patient who needed to see a dermatologist, but there is no dermatologist on staff at the clinic.
- We have a sheet about services that each clinic provides
- We will be developing an on call system
 - Primary Clinic Coordinator (student) phone number 6-8pm
- What merits a call?
 - If you are sending a patient for any services, ask if these services are available.

Action Items:

- Primary clinic coordinator policy on being on-call 6-8pm 3 times per week
- Send out a list of primary clinic coordinator phone numbers; a prioritized list
- Medical directors & primary clinic coordinators: what questions would make you uncertain?

B. How do we get patients from Akwaaba to WICSS?

Action Items:

- Connect WICSS and Akwaaba leaders

C. Followup for Positive PPDs

- Currently no follow up for positive PPDs. 1.5 years ago, the Getchell Clinic at UMass would take patients for Chest X-rays; however, they are now unable to see patients without insurance.
- Ideally, we would have patients who receive a positive PPD get a Quantiferon Gold test; however, these cost approximately \$75. If the Quantiferon Gold is positive, we would have patients get a chest x-ray (also approximately \$75).
- St. Anne's approximates that we have 2-3 patients per week with positive PPD. $3 \times 75 = \$225 / \text{week} \times 52 \text{ weeks} = \$11,700 \text{ per year.}$

Solution Ideas:

- Apply for grants to pay for patients to receive these services or to buy the quantiferon gold test.
- Go to the companies that send patients for work physicals and ask for donations; these donations can pay for PPD followup.

Action Items:

- Look into cheaper xrays / tests: ex. ReadyMed Xrays cheaper? \$40; other options
- Compilation of work physicals
- Talk to companies

D. Expanding Other Services

1. Food

- Nutritionists who would be interested in leading this?
- St. Anne's has a food bank
- Epworth food bank?

2. Worcester Aids Project

- St. Anne's – first Tuesday at each month
- Awkaaba
- Does any other clinic want them to come?

3. Worcester Housing Authority

- At St. Anne's gives patients information about housing in the waiting rooms

4. CHOP

- Hands only CPR training @ St. Anne's

5. Dental Education & Dentists:

- Epworth 2nd Monday of each month
- WICSS Dentist consultations
- MCPHS – sliding scale; cleaning & consultations for free
- EMK has a dentist – sliding scale

6. Pharmacist

- Pharmacy students; meet with MCPHS reps for potential collaboration
- Pharmacy students can fill out forms / research which is least expensive – to get cheaper medications

We welcome any questions, comments, suggestions, and ideas!



249
total volunteers



6,474
quarterly hours

Average number of physicians, medical students, nurses, administrative/clerical staff, and immunization staff from all member clinics combined, per quarter Note: data from 2018-19



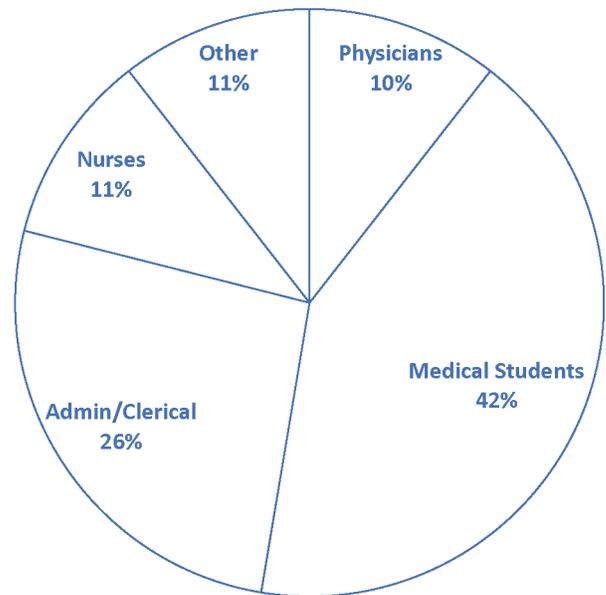
2,587
patient contacts

Estimated total patient contacts across all clinics, including sick visits, immunizations, & lab tests/readings Note: data from Q1 2019

Volunteer Highlights

John Romano, UMass Medical Student

“For me, the free clinics have helped me become comfortable with history taking, physical exams, and presenting findings to physicians. But more importantly, when I’m burnt out from long days of studying, volunteering at the free clinics reinvigorates my passion for medicine. There’s nothing like the joy of a patient who cannot access care through traditional means thanking you for helping them, knowing you are providing care for free. Volunteering at the free clinics not only sharpens clinical skills, but also warms the heart.”



Filia Van Dessel, UMass Medical Student

“I was a little nervous opening the wooden doors at St. Anne’s with my white coat in my hand and my stethoscope around my neck. There was already a long line of patients waiting for the clinic to open. We had just started learning to take a patient history a couple of weeks earlier, and I barely knew how to use my stethoscope properly. Soon my anxiety took a backseat as a second-year student and I saw several patients, including a young boy from Brazil for a school physical, two children from South Africa who needed vaccinations, and an elderly woman from India who needed help managing her diabetes. One of our patients had taken public transportation for a whole hour and a half to come see the physician and talk to case management.”

Featurette: Stress and the Stoics

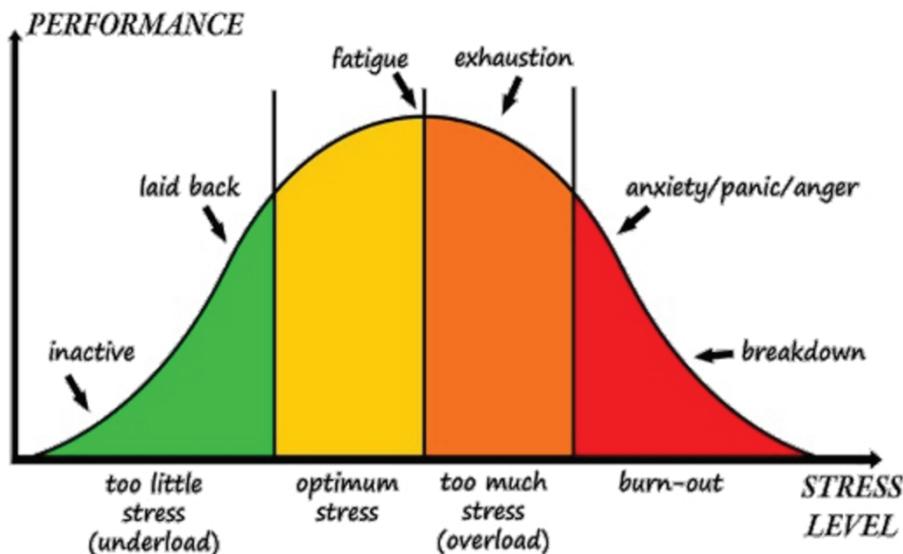
By Sahil Nawab

Dealing with stress is an integral part of the modern human experience. We all struggle with health-related issues, financial difficulties, family disagreements, and many others. There are a number of negative effects associated with high levels of stress, from headaches and depression to even physical health issues and increased recovery times. Therefore, it is crucial to have healthy and productive coping mechanisms to manage our stress.

In a brilliant TED Ed video, Massimo Pigliucci discusses the Stoic philosophy and its origins in the teachings of Zeno of Cyprus when he became shipwrecked off the coast of Athens and lost all of his wealth and possessions.

Today the term *stoic* has developed its own meaning as an adjective to describe someone who endures difficulties while remaining calm and collected, or someone who rarely shows emotion in the face of adversity. However, the original philosophy goes much deeper, and is in fact much more applicable in our daily lives to help recognize and handle stress.

“While we may not always have control over the events affecting us, we can have control over how we approach things.”



This statement concisely summarizes the Stoic philosophy. But while this captures the essence of Stoicism, how can we actually apply it to our lives?

Pigliucci describes the four core tenets of Stoicism that we can follow:

- * Practical wisdom — the ability to navigate complex situations in a logical, informed, and calm manner;
- * Temperance — the exercise of self-restraint and moderation in all aspects of life;
- * Justice — treating others with fairness even when they have done wrong; and
- * Courage — not just in extraordinary circumstances, but in facing daily challenges with clarity and integrity.

Often people conflate Stoicism with having a nonchalant attitude towards life. However, that is an incorrect characterization. Stoicism is not about discounting or not caring about issues, but rather it is about understanding that these issues should not cause unhealthy levels of stress. We should instead focus our efforts on the matters which we can actually address through our own actions.

In fact, a nonchalant attitude can be quite counterproductive. Stress is an effective motivator for action. Modern psychologists describe this through the stress-productivity curve, or more formally known as the Yerkes-Dodson Law.

Perhaps this response arises from evolutionary pressure. Stress may have been an action-motivator to our evolutionary ancestors. During primitive life, actions

Featurette: Stress and the Stoics (continued)

were likely conducted over much larger timescales. Consequently, stress arising from situations such as limited food availability or lack of social contact may have pushed early humans to act, potentially providing an evolutionary advantage to a stress response.

Therefore, when well-managed, stress can provide an excellent way to push ourselves to do better — just the right amount can make us more productive and compel ourselves to address the challenges that we face and move forward.

The first step is to know and recognize stressors before they become stressful. If you can recognize that certain matters are out of your control, you can begin to address those that are *in* your control. Shifting this perspective can allow you to act calmly to actually address those factors and reduce the stress.

By incorporating elements of Stoicism into your own personal philosophy, you can become self aware and more conscious of how external events affect your emotions and mental state. It then becomes much easier to deal with those challenges and develop healthier stress coping mechanisms. Let me end with an interesting thought to ponder:

“Suffering stems not from the events in our lives, but from our judgements about them.”

— Epictetus

Discuss how you deal with stress with our volunteers. Our physicians and medical volunteers are always happy to help suggest effective coping mechanisms and provide medical guidance.

Dossier

“The Philosophy of Stoicism,” by Massimo Pigliucci, June 19, 2017.

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-philosophy-of-stoicism-massimo-pigliucci>

This is an animated video lesson explaining the history and general philosophy of Stoicism in an entertaining story format.

“Are You Too Stressed to Be Productive? Or Not Stressed Enough?” By Francesca Gino, April 14, 2016.

<https://hbr.org/2016/04/are-you-too-stressed-to-be-productive-or-not-stressed-enough>

This is an article from the Harvard Business Review that provides some practical advice to improve your performance from related stress.

