



Gift of Health

THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFTS ON THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY



GroupHealth®
FOUNDATION

SPRING 2015

Preventing cancer with HPV vaccines

Keva was 37 years old when she was diagnosed with cervical cancer. “I went in for a routine checkup and the next thing I knew I was getting a phone call telling me I had cancer. My life was turned upside down.”

The cause of Keva’s cancer was HPV (human papillomavirus), a sexually transmitted virus that almost everyone carries at some time during their lives. Most won’t even know it, because their body’s immune system will fight off and kill the virus. But sometimes the virus leads to cancer. For Keva, who is married and has two young sons, that meant a radical hysterectomy and an abrupt end to her ability to have more children.

HPV causes nearly 27,000 cases of cancer every year in both men and women—and the vast majority of cases could be prevented by the HPV vaccine. A series of three shots, recommended for both boys and girls at age 11 or 12, are needed for full protection against HPV. This timing is important because the vaccine will not help prevent cancer in teens who are already infected by the virus. Also, the vaccine produces a higher immune response in preteens than in older adolescents.

“It’s important that children get all three of these cancer-preventing vaccinations well before they become sexually active,” says John Dunn, MD, Group Health pediatrician and co-chair of the Group Health Immunization Team. “Many parents are uncomfortable talking about their young kids becoming sexually active, but the discussion of HPV vaccines as cancer protection resonates strongly with parents.”

Because the vaccine doses must be spread over a six-month period, even the most well-intentioned parents may have difficulty remembering to complete the series, says Dr. Dunn. Also, they don’t realize that the second and third shots are available on a drop-in basis at Group Health clinics. That’s why the Foundation is funding an awareness campaign (see page 2).

Keva, who is now cancer-free, says she encourages every parent she knows to get their children vaccinated for HPV. “The HPV vaccine can save your kids from getting cancer—and maybe even save their lives. What parent wouldn’t want that for their children?”



PHOTO: STEPHEN BRASHEAR

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John Dunn, MD

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Dear Friends of the Foundation,



As I read through the stories in this newsletter, I am once again awed by the powerful impact of people working together toward shared goals. Here

are just a few of your achievements in the last months:

- Because of your gifts, our orthopedic patients have access to ultrasound equipment for diagnosis, and our oncology patients have the most up-to-date infusion pumps for chemotherapy.
- Because of you, the Foundation was able to donate \$80,000 to keep Auburn's only public health clinic open, providing critical women's health, nutrition, and preventive care services not available anywhere else in this community.
- Because of you, we donated 1,500 flu vaccines last fall to the free Seattle-King County Clinic, serving patients in need with medical, dental, lab, and vision needs. More than 1,000 adults at the clinic received flu shots, and about 500 extra doses went to free flu clinics for the homeless.

That's what we do, together, as the Group Health Foundation. We make life and health better for people in communities across our state. We've provided immunizations, emphasized prevention, and helped manage chronic diseases for thousands and thousands of people, and there's still so much more to do.

You make a difference in the lives of many, as part of the Group Health Foundation.

Diana Birkett Rakow
President



Gearing up to boost HPV vaccine awareness

Increasing the number of kids who get fully vaccinated against HPV, a virus that can cause cancer, is the objective of a \$200,000 awareness campaign being launched by the Group Health Foundation this year. The campaign, which is made possible thanks to donor support, is designed to boost awareness of the importance of the HPV vaccine, its ability to prevent cancer, and the need for both boys and girls to receive all three HPV vaccinations when they're 11 or 12 years old.

"Most parents don't hesitate to vaccinate their children against potentially deadly diseases, and protecting them against HPV should be no different," says John Dunn, MD, co-chair of the Group Health Immunization Team.

The HPV vaccine has been available in the United States since 2006, and is part of the immunization schedule recommended by Group Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, only 57 percent of all girls between age 11 and 13 receiving care at Group Health currently get the first HPV vaccine, and only 21 percent of all girls in that age group get all three doses. Vaccination rates for boys are even lower.

The awareness campaign will begin with a pilot program at several Group Health clinics. It will focus on providing educational materials to parents, and reminding parents when subsequent doses are due—and that the vaccines are available on a drop-in basis.

In the latter part of the year, the Group Health Research Institute will study the results of the pilot to determine whether vaccination rates increased by a greater margin at the pilot sites than at other Group Health clinic locations.

The campaign is part of the Foundation's ongoing Childhood Immunization Initiative. The initiative focuses on improving vaccination rates in Washington state by providing educational tools for parents and providers.

Foundation answers call for help in King County

With help from the Group Health Foundation, more than 1,000 people received flu vaccines at Seattle's first-ever Seattle/King County Clinic. The health clinic, which spanned four days, was held at KeyArena last October and provided free medical, vision, and dental care to more than 3,400 low-income patients.

"Three weeks before the event, we got a call from the organizers that their flu vaccine vendor couldn't provide vaccine for the clinic," says Theresa Tamura, executive director, Philanthropy & Community Engagement at Group Health. "Through Group Health channels we located the vaccine, and the Group Health Foundation funded it through our Childhood Immunization Initiative."

Group Health helped in many other ways as well. More than 70 Group Health staff members volunteered at the clinic, including nearly 30 from Lab Services who ran approximately 1,500 lab tests. Group Health Eye Care volunteers helped to provide free eye exams and prescriptions for eye glasses.

Also, Group Health Research Institute evaluated the effectiveness of the clinic, and the satisfaction of patients and volunteers.

"The event shined a spotlight on the profound need for health care services in King County. It was rewarding to see Group Health and the Group Health Foundation play a major role in improving the lives of so many," says Tamura.

Donor dollars funded more than 1,000 flu vaccines given to low income patients at the Seattle/King County Clinic.

Giving back An easy choice for Norm and Ann Gosch

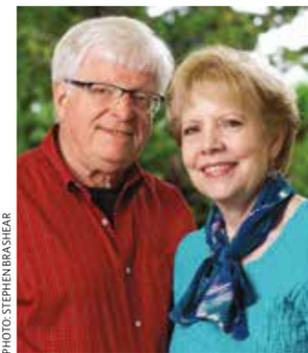


PHOTO: STEPHEN BRASHEAR

Norman Gosch, MD, can trace his positive impression of Group Health all the way back to his childhood in Nebraska. "My aunt's sister became a supervisor in the Surgery Department at Group Health in the late 1940s, and she said good things about the organization," he remembers.

After becoming a physician and working in private practice in Oregon for a number of years, Norm applied for a position at Group Health and was hired as a family physician at the Federal Way clinic in 1985. Until he retired from the organization in 2004, he worked in family medicine and urgent care at several of Group Health's South Sound clinics. He was chief of the Urgent Care Center in Tacoma when the facility opened in the early 1990s.

"My career at Group Health was about providing the best medical care possible, and improving the health of the community,"

Norm says. "When it came time to list beneficiaries in our will, my wife Ann and I both felt that the Group Health Foundation was a good choice. How better could our money be spent?"

They also said "yes" when they were asked if they'd like to make annual donations to the Foundation. Ann says they're impressed with the Foundation's focus on reducing health care costs through innovation, public education on health issues, and the childhood immunization program.

At times, the couple has considered relocating to other areas of the West, but they've always chosen to stay put. "We're reluctant to leave Group Health, where we're comfortable and confident about the health care we receive," says Ann.

➔ You don't need big bucks to designate a gift to the Foundation in your will—an amount can make a big difference. To learn more about planned giving, or to make a donation, call 1-866-389-5532.



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PARTNERSHIP FOR INNOVATION

Seed money brings imaging to the exam room

When he was in private practice, orthopedic surgeon Sean Adelman, MD, had a theory. He believed that he could more effectively diagnose certain shoulder injuries using a portable ultrasound device during patient visits instead of ordering a more expensive MRI. If he was right, he could reduce the number of expensive imaging tests needed, and also save patients' time.

When he joined Group Health in 2010, he found a nurturing environment where clinicians are encouraged to blend science with clinical practice. He applied for a Partnership for Innovation grant and with it launched a pilot project that included the purchase of a \$34,897 portable ultrasound machine. As patients came to him with an upper arm or shoulder problem, based on their symptoms he would decide, MRI or ultrasound?

Group Health Research Institute investigator Paul Fishman, PhD, analyzed Dr. Adelman's pilot and found over a 10-month period that patients avoided 35 MRI exams, saving thousands of dollars. It also eliminated the need for those patients to have follow-up visits—something an MRI would have required.

“There is no way I could have implemented my study without the help of the Foundation’s donors. The seed money from the Foundation has definitely reaped benefits,” Dr. Adelman says.



PHOTO: DOUG OGLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Dr. Adelman uses a portable ultrasound machine to diagnose a shoulder injury.