Cedars-Sinai Medical Group is enhancing systems and adding new technology to maintain a leading-edge operation and provide high-quality diagnosis and treatment. Much of this work remains behind the scenes, but it’s at the forefront in terms of the benefit to our patients. One recent addition that is making a big difference in terms of quality care is the Pyxis® computerized medication dispensing and monitoring system.

“When you administer medication to a patient, particularly by injection, accuracy, patient comfort and convenience are critical factors,” says CSMG Pharmacy Director Karine Azizian, PharmD. “Our recently launched Pyxis system works hand in hand with our dedicated Injection Center to ensure our patients get exactly what they need, when they need it, with the least possible discomfort.”

The system is simple and effective. Prescribing physicians send their orders through our electronic medical records system to Case Management for insurance verification. Orders are then relayed to the Injection Center database, which tracks each patient’s injections and notifies staff to schedule the patient when an injection is due.

When the patient arrives at the Injection Center, a nurse enters the individual identification into Pyxis and retrieves the precise medication and dosage. The clinical pharmacist verifies the medication and dose, and the nurse, who has experience giving quick and relatively pain-free injections, administers the medication to the patient. “So far, our patients seem to love the new system,” Azizian says.
A Message from the CEO

Thomas D. Gordon
Chief Executive Officer

A Culture of Care and Compassion

People who choose health care as a career do it for a variety of personal reasons, but in my years with the Cedars-Sinai Medical Group, I have found there is one common thread that unites us all: a desire to help others. Obviously, we do that through our daily work with our patients, but our Medical Group family is also quite generous and involved in the community.

We have a culture of care and compassion that offers a strong partnership with our patients for your good health. We also reach out to help the underserved by sharing our time, resources and expertise. In fact, on page 5 of this issue of Well-Being, you’ll find a particularly heartfelt story about a young Ethiopian boy whose life and future were completely changed as a result of the generosity and talent of one of our notable plastic surgeons.

Not all of our outreach efforts are quite so dramatic, but they are equally heartfelt and do make a difference to those in need. For example, this past September, in conjunction with our annual Patricia Henson Memorial Picnic, over 600 of our doctors, employees and their families joined together to celebrate our achievements of the past year. At the same time, we all participated in the 9/11 National Day of Service, working together to provide much-needed supplies to local homeless families and to support our military overseas.

At a time when our national healthcare system is under fire and too many are suffering from the effects of unemployment and the economic recession, we are all looking for better ways to direct help where help is needed. At Cedars-Sinai Medical Group, as individuals and as a team, we are committed not only to providing high-quality medical care and service for our patients, but also to using our skills and resources in service to our community. It is the season for care and compassion, but our commitment extends throughout the year.

From our family to yours, we wish you a healthy and happy New Year. We look forward to partnering with you again in 2010 for your good health. 

Medication Technology
continued from page 1

The Pyxis-assisted Injection Center pilot project began in June 2009 at the Medical Group’s two locations on Robertson Boulevard. In that short time, it has already been demonstrated to save time, reduce the possibility of errors, and improve accuracy and patient satisfaction. "Because of the excellent results, we plan to expand the system to include all other Medical Group offices,” Azizian concludes. "That rollout should be completed by the end of the year.”

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group’s Clinical Pharmacy Department has expanded to include a team of five clinical pharmacists, left to right: Irina Avidon, Jennifer Mak, Rachel Mashburn, Leah Movsessian and Karine Azizian.

Cedars-Sinai Families Turn Out for a National Day of Service

On the morning of September 13, 2009, Medical Group physicians, employees and their families gathered at Woodley Park in Van Nuys as participants in the 9/11 National Day of Service. Over 600 in attendance donated bedding, pajamas, bedtime books, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and towels that were used to prepare bedtime care packages for 150 homeless children who find shelter through L.A. Family Housing. They were delivered by Cedars-Sinai’s COACH for Kids and Their Families®. In addition, everyone—especially the children—had a great time creating handmade cards at an arts and crafts table for Military Missions, a nonprofit organization that will deliver the cards in time for the holidays.

Share your thoughts with us
Please e-mail us at www.wellbeing@csms.org, or call our Patient Services Department at (800) 700-6424 Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
It Takes a Strong Team to Ensure Responsive, Quality Care

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group physicians are celebrating the fruits of their efforts to maintain high standards of clinical care and service for our patients. The Medical Group has received two prestigious quality awards in the past six months—Elite Status from the California Association of Physician Groups and a Top Performer Award from the Integrated Healthcare Association. It’s a great way to usher in the new year and let our patients know there is more to come in 2010.

It’s nice to receive awards, but it’s even better when there is a deeper significance to them than simply a plaque on the wall. That’s why the Top Performance designation means so much to us each year. It’s an important indication that we are providing our patients with exceptional care and service, and that is our top priority.

Inclusion in this prestigious group of physician organizations is based on four important healthcare quality measures: clinical quality, patient satisfaction, enhanced use of information technology to support safer care, and preventive care and chronic care management, particularly coordinated diabetes care.

Our consistent recognition as a leader in the state is the result of a culture of continuous self-improvement and self-assessment. In other words, we are never satisfied. So, although we take time to celebrate our achievements, we know there is much more to be done. In addition to providing the care on a daily basis, we’re expending time and resources to find new and improved ways to offer even better, safer and more responsive care and service.

In the last year alone we have launched the Pyxis electronic pharmaceutical system and established an Injection Center (described on the front page of this issue of Well-Being), introduced digital X-ray and enhanced our electronic medical records system. We have expanded our facilities and services to provide greater access for our patients, adding a significant number of new primary care and specialty physicians and allied health professionals, opened new office buildings, introduced Urgent Care for adults and children, and significantly expanded our disease management program.

There are certainly more technological enhancements and service expansion on the horizon. We will continue to listen to our patients and do all that we can to respond to your needs. Your satisfaction is our reward for the work we do.

Patient Satisfaction is the Reward

Medical Group Honored for Quality Performance

For the fifth consecutive year, Cedars-Sinai Medical Group has been ranked one of California’s top-performing physician organizations by the Integrated Healthcare Association (IHA).

The IHA gives its Top Performance Award to medical groups and independent physician associations that prove to be leaders based on quality performance. Only 20 percent of all physician organizations in the state receive this distinction, and only five different medical groups in the greater Los Angeles area were ranked in this top category.

The IHA is a nonprofit statewide collaborative leadership association that promotes quality improvement, accountability and affordability for the benefit of California consumers.
Medical Group patients who are hospitalized at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center have an entire team of specialists dedicated exclusively to providing inpatient care 24 hours a day. The Inpatient Specialty Program, launched just three years ago, is making a difference in terms of quicker patient evaluations, shorter hospital stays, better outcomes, fewer return hospitalizations and improved patient satisfaction.

Who is the treatment team?

Patients are cared for by hospitalists (internal medicine physicians who focus exclusively on the care of patients in the hospital) and care managers, all of whom are accessible around the clock. And, because they don’t have office practices, they are always close at hand when you need them regardless of the time of night or day.

This team manages your care in partnership and close communication with your primary care physician and specialists, all of whom are kept thoroughly updated throughout your hospital stay.

Why is a hospitalist managing my care?

The 12-member Cedars-Sinai hospitalist team manages their patients’ care in the hospital the same way a primary care physician or specialist manages your care in his or her office. They have a close working relationship with hospital staff and an intimate understanding of hospital processes that enables them to get things done efficiently and effectively for you. Because they have a great deal of experience in the management of acute inpatient illnesses, you can feel confident you are getting appropriate medical care.

Will I see my hospitalist and primary care doctor regularly?

Your hospitalist team is readily available to spend time with you and oversee your care in the hospital. Your doctor may stop by to see you during your stay and will be in regular contact with the hospitalists regarding your progress. Although you may be seen by more than one hospitalist during your stay, there is close communication within the team and ongoing face-to-face and electronic medical records updates that enable any one of the hospitalists to help you when needed.

How does the process work?

Working closely with the hospitalists, the care managers act as your liaison and help with care coordination and communication. They coordinate scheduling and preparation for tests and procedures, answer questions, ensure there are no unnecessary delays and that you have the information you need throughout your stay.

What happens after discharge from the hospital?

When you’re ready to be discharged, your hospitalist will discuss further treatment needs with your doctor. Your care manager will help arrange your follow-up care and assist with any home care or medical equipment needs you may have. At that point, you will be placed back into the care of your primary care doctor and specialists for your ongoing medical needs.

Did you know…

If you go to the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Emergency Department for care, a Medical Group care manager and hospitalist will assist you if you need to be hospitalized. Your care manager will be there to support you, acting as your liaison and helping with care coordination and communication, scheduling and preparation for tests and procedures to get you into a hospital bed as quickly as possible.

For your non-emergency illness or injury it’s important to remember that Cedars-Sinai Medical Group offers Urgent Care extended hours for adults and children. Through our electronic medical records, our Urgent Care staff has instant access to your doctor, medical history, medications and allergies.

Urgent Care
8501 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills
Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Saturday-Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
(310) 248-7000
A Surgeon’s Unique Skill Changes the Life of a Child

It was just over a year ago that David Kulber, MD, began a life-changing journey to save the hands of a boy named Werkneh who lives in Ethiopia.

A plastic and reconstructive surgeon with a subspecialty in hand surgery, Dr. Kulber was called upon to help this 11-year-old who suffered from a rare and very severe form of benign tumors. Due to the significant size of the tumors, his hands and arms were nonfunctional. He couldn’t perform the most basic tasks of daily living. He could neither feed nor care for himself. He could not go to school, play or ride a bicycle.

“I had never seen such extensive and aggressive tumors. It was beyond what you see in textbooks,” Dr. Kulber explains. “We were faced with likely amputation, but wanted to first try to salvage some function, if possible.”

A Process of Patience and Courage

Through grants and other generous contributions to assist with travel and housing, Werkneh was brought to Dr. Kulber’s Cedars-Sinai Medical Group office in Beverly Hills and to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Over a period of eight months and six operations, Dr. Kulber and his colleagues removed the tumors and reconstructed both of Werkneh’s hands. Through this frightening and painful process, Werneh maintained a level of maturity rarely seen in adult patients. He became nearly fluent in English, and charmed everyone he met.

“It was impossible not to get personally involved with Werkneh,” Dr. Kulber says. “He has an infectious, warm personality, he’s bright and eager, and he managed to integrate into my life. I think the experience impacted me as much as it did him.”

A Fairy Tale Ending to an Improbable Story

Improbable as it is, the appearance and function of Werkneh’s hands far exceeded anyone’s expectations. He has learned to feed and care for himself, to write, ride a bicycle and do all the things that other children love to do. Where once he was an outcast on the sidelines of life, Werkneh is now an active and energetic 12-year-old. He goes to school in Ethiopia and even plays basketball (better than most). His future is filled with hope, confidence and ambition. He is deeply grateful to Dr. Kulber and many others whose generosity and kindness literally gave him a new life.

David A. Kulber, MD, FACS, is a plastic and reconstructive surgeon with Cedars-Sinai Medical Group and serves as the clinical chief of the Department of Surgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. His office is located at 8635 W. Third St., Suite 990 W, Los Angeles, CA 90048. (310) 423-5900

Medical Assistant Danielle Robinson (left) offers information about H1N1 risks for pregnant women.

CDC recommendations for H1N1 are different and include children ages 6 months to 24 years, pregnant women, health care workers, individuals caring for young children, and adults age 24 to 65 who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications.

You should discuss your personal risk with your doctor. Also, you can go to the CDC Web site, www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm or call (800) CDC-INFO for the most current information about the H1N1 flu.

Are the flu vaccines still available?

For the latest information about vaccine availability, refer to our Web site, www.Cedars-SinaiMedicalGroup.org. To make an appointment for your vaccination, contact your physician’s office directly.

What if I get sick?

The tried and true advice of rest, plenty of fluids and chicken soup still holds true, but if you’re having any difficulty breathing or have chest pain, please call your doctor’s office for further advice.
Meet Our New Physicians

As Cedars-Sinai Medical Group expands to provide services responsive to the needs of our patients, some exceptional individuals have joined our care team. We’d like to introduce them to you.

Jeremy Herman, MD
Gastroenterology

Originally drawn to research, Dr. Herman changed his career direction to focus on the practical application of the science and witness the results when he diagnoses the problem, applies the right therapy and helps a patient. “It’s a very challenging and interesting field, and technological advances are making it even more exciting,” he explains. “People with chronic problems often think nothing can be done, but they’re amazed when they begin to feel better. It’s very gratifying to see the results of our efforts.”

Location: 8536 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 202
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(310) 248-8200

Beverly Hills, CA 90211
Location:

Meet Our New Physician Assistant

Elinor Pullen, PA-C
Obstetrics & Gynecology

“Medicine is an art, a science and a community service,” and that’s what Elinor Pullen loves most about her work. “It’s like solving fascinating puzzles that are so individual and unique,” she explains. She was drawn to obstetrics and gynecology because, as a baby boomer, she saw a need for more female caregivers. She is passionate in her devotion to the field. “It’s so fulfilling to really get to know a patient over the years, to watch their lives evolve and be able to help them transition through the stages of life.”

Location: 99 La Cienega, Suite 202
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(310) 385-3380

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group gastroenterologists (above) and their staff (right) are the first occupants in the new 8536 Wilshire Boulevard office building. Sharing the suite are doctors Ted Stein (left to right), Jeremy Herman, Raena Olsen and Enrique Slodownik.

GIs on the Move

As part of our expansion of services and physician access to meet the demands of our growing patient population, Cedars-Sinai Medical Group opened a new office building located at 8536 Wilshire Boulevard late this summer. The first tenants are the Medical Group’s four gastroenterologists (GIs) who have been seeing patients there since August. By early 2010, the building will include expanded space for other specialties and programs.

“Our new office is designed to enhance our goal of excellent patient care and attention to each detail of our patients’ experience,” said gastroenterologist Ted Stein, MD. “In addition to Dr. Raena Olsen, our first female gastroenterologist who joined us two years ago, we have added a wonderful fourth physician, Dr. Jeremy Herman. They bring great skills and warmth to our group. With an increase of five more exam rooms, we’re able to offer patients appointments with significantly shorter waiting times. Our new location also provides an ease of automobile entry and departure onto Wilshire Boulevard, making the experience from beginning to end more user friendly.”

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Cedars-Sinai Medical Group: One Network for all Your Healthcare Needs

Since our inception in 1985, Cedars-Sinai Medical Group has focused on providing a full range of quality healthcare and disease prevention services for the entire family.

As a patient in our medical network, you benefit from convenient access to over 100 primary and specialty care physicians and seamless coordination of your care between them. While each doctor manages particular aspects of your care, they all work together as a team to deliver a comprehensive treatment plan.

The physicians and staff of Cedars-Sinai Medical Group are your partners in quality healthcare. We are part of the nationally renowned Cedars-Sinai Health System, so should you need to be hospitalized, you have access to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center which is consistently recognized as one of the finest hospitals in the country.

Same-Day Care for Your Urgent Needs

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group’s Urgent Care Center is designed to help you meet your unexpected medical needs when your primary care doctor is not available. The Center’s primary care physicians are members of the Cedars-Sinai Medical Group and provide the same standard of excellence in patient care to diagnose and treat your flu, cold, fever or any illness that needs immediate attention.

Same-day appointments and after-hours care are available at the Center, 8501 Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday through Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Of course, if you have a serious health problem, call 911 or go to the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center emergency department.

Voice of the Customer Program: WE CARE

Our goal is to provide you with high quality medical care, excellent customer service and a strong mix of programs and services responsive to your needs. Our team of physicians, caregivers and support staff are all focused on serving you.

In order to achieve our quality care and service goals, we need to hear from you. Your concerns, suggestions and general feedback about the quality of care and services you receive will help to make us even better at what we do.

Should you have any issues at any time, our care team meets bi-weekly to investigate and resolve your concerns and to fine-tune our policies and procedures to better serve you.

Please call our Patient Services Department at (800) 700-6424 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with any issues you may wish to discuss.

Learn More about Us

At Cedars-Sinai Medical Group, your good health is our first priority. We view ourselves as your partner, there to support you in your wellness and preventive efforts, as well as to treat and care for you when illness or injury occurs.

To learn more about any of our Cedars-Sinai Medical Group physicians, specialty services, wellness classes, physician office locations and phone numbers, please visit our website at www.Cedars-SinaiMedicalGroup.org. Or, call our Patient Services Department at (800) 700-6424, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Fighting the Flu
Two viruses and two vaccines. What can you do?  
See page 1

Medication Milestones
Clinical Pharmacy uses technology and technique for safer injections. See page 1

Positive Performance
Cedars-Sinai Medical Group is named a top performer in California. See page 3

Physician Profiles
Meet the newest members of our care team. See page 6

Happy Holidays!
From our family to yours, we wish you good health in the New Year.

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group Wants You to Know…

Drinking Can Help You Dry Out
Drinking eight glasses of water daily helps you manage water retention... and also lose weight... right along with cutting down on your salt intake. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, too. Just be sure to get lots of good aerobic activity, and never take a diuretic without checking with your doctor.

Surfing Keeps You Young
Researchers have found the activity of searching the internet for answers benefits the brains of those who are middle aged and older. Research indicates that the process stimulates parts of the brain that control decision-making and complex reasoning, possibly preventing or reducing brain cell shrinkage.

Keep the Flu to Yourself
If you are unlucky enough to get the flu, help prevent passing the virus along to others. Stay home as much as possible. Avoid crowds, keep your distance when talking with others and don’t shake hands or hug hello. Do the “Dracula sneeze” or cough into the crook of your elbow rather than into your hands, which are most likely to carry the virus to others through direct contact or on surfaces that others will touch.

Be Careful When You Barbecue
New studies show that eating charred food may raise the risk of prostate cancer in men and breast cancer in post-menopausal women by creating chemicals that may increase cancer risk. To make your grilled meals as healthy as possible:

- Scrape off charred portions of your food.
- Lower grill temperature and raise your barbecue racks.
- Microwave meat before barbecuing to reduce time on the grill.

Walk Fast...Stay Healthy
If you want great exercise, speed walking can increase your caloric burn rate without the joint-jarring effects of jogging. Walking 4.5 mph on level terrain burns about 440 calories per hour.

Insomnia is Hard on Your Heart
Insomnia raises your blood pressure and can contribute to heart problems. To avoid insomnia, don’t watch television, eat or read in bed. Never turn in until you’re sleepy. If you’re not asleep within 20 minutes, get up and read or watch TV for about 15 minutes until you are sleepy. Turn your clock around so you can’t see it. Finally, wake up at a regular time...and no naps longer than 10 to 15 minutes!

Potted Plants Don’t Just Sit There
Certain indoor plants can be effective in removing harmful gases, such as formaldehyde, benzene, and carbon monoxide from the air. The leaves, roots, and soil bacteria of specific indoor plants—like snake plant, peace lily, bamboo palm, English ivy, pot mum, and corn plant—help clean indoor air.

Lifestyle Can Increase Breast Cancer Risk
A new study has found that obesity, alcohol use and smoking all significantly increase the risk for one type of secondary breast cancer among breast cancer survivors. Obese women had a 50% increased risk. Those who consumed seven or more alcoholic drinks per week had a 90% increased risk. Survivors who smoked had a 120% increased risk.