The Neuro Insider

The Practice Newsletter for WSU / DMC Neurosurgery

June 2009: Aphasia Awareness Month

DMC
DETROIT MEDICAL CENTER

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
PHYSICIAN GROUP

Welcome to the Neuro Insider

Good communication is the essence of any well-run business, and it is best provided through multiple forums.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide the staff one more means of communicating with each other. It is meant to be informal and informational, about both our work lives and our outside-of-work lives. Please let us know what you think and if you have something you would like included.

We are all part of the amazing business of academic neurosurgery where great things happen all day all around us. It is as exciting and satisfying as it is demanding and detail oriented. Thank you for all your efforts in making this department work so well.

-The Neuro Insider Team

Congratulations!
To **Dr. Mittal** and his wife **Monika** on the arrival of

Aadesh Mittal

7lbs., 5oz., on **05.26.09**

E-Mail Security

As we all know, making sure information regarding our patients remains confidential is a task that should be at the forefront of thought. By taking a look at a couple of ways we can secure our e-mail messages and address books, we can take a big step towards maintaining patient confidentiality.

A great first step is to use the Tumbleweed Secure Messaging Service. Provided through the Wayne State School of Medicine, it allows everyone to send secure e-mail easily and confidently. All it takes is to add a simple {secure} to the subject line of your e-mail; Tumbleweed will take care of the rest! Check out the complete description at:

http://kb.wayne.edu/index.php?article=935

Using secure services like Tumbleweed is just the start towards maintaining patient confidentiality. We should also make sure that virus protection software is up-to-date on all computers we use for departmental purposes. Additionally, we should also always stay vigilant for "phishing" attempts to obtain user id and password information. Through these practices, we can go a long way in making sure our e-mail with patient information is secure.
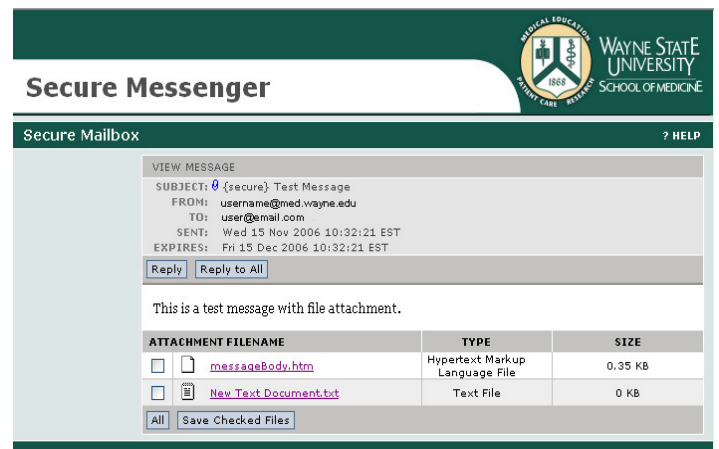
An example of the Tumbleweed system

It's our inaugural issue, please let us know what you think! Contact us below with your suggestions and comments.

Neurosurgery Doesn't Just Educate Residents....

College Students Assist with Docushare

On May 11th, spring made its annual appearance in Michigan, and our office, as in the past, brought six college students, albeit temporarily, to assist us with a special project. **Rachel Bekowies, Garrett Cox, Natalie Iles, Alex Jones, Cassandra Malis,** and **Brent Parschall** are currently working in Medical Records, scanning the final vestiges of inactive chart contents into Docushare. Once this scanning is done these charts can be moved off site for storage, providing essential space in HPOB #509. The students have completed this part of the project, purging 6,000 charts.

Scanning is only phase one of this year's special project. Phase two is merging the scanned documents in Docushare so that we have one digital chart for each patient. This is tedious work, yet it requires a great attention to detail. Mary Sue has been auditing the students' work; with an accuracy record of 100%, she is finding they are doing an amazing job!

While the students are providing an important and much needed service for us, we are also providing them the opportunity to see first-hand how a busy and successful academic neurosurgery practice operates. They are witness to the patients that come to our office, and the intensity of the problems some of these patients face. They also see the detail and effort that goes into providing the care for these patients & the education of the residents that will provide this care in the future. Last but not least, they also observe the administrative efforts that keeps pencils in the pencil jars, calendars from conflicting, and computers from breaking down. In fact, on occasion we can even afford them a glimpse into our surgeries, gammas and laboratories. Even for those students that ultimately find they have no interest in health care, we are providing them the experience of how to behave professionally and respectfully in the work environment. Please thank our great group of summer student workers for their hard work the next time you see them in the hall.

Bring Your Child to Work Day 2009

As part of a nation-wide campaign, the department welcomed six children ranging in age from 5 to 16, into our offices to learn about, and experience first-hand, the world of neurosurgery. Our visitors this year were: **Paige Forcucci, Terrence George, Kennedy Hootman, Tommie Matlock, Trinity Matlock,** and **AJ Leo.**

They were delightful and engaged all day, as a variety of department members provided education in skull and spine anatomy, clinic operations, medical records, scheduling, and billing. The children also learned about compliance issues and secured patient health information.

They went for a mini tour of our campus through the tunnel, enjoyed a pizza lunch, and an afternoon ice cream break. One lucky child was even afforded the opportunity to observe a surgery! This was a terrific opportunity to take part in the education of our future decision-makers.
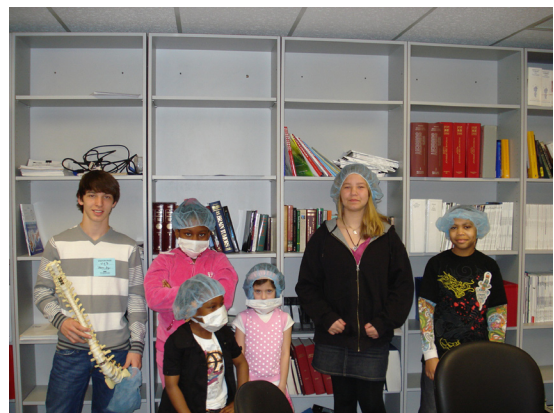
Thanks to everyone that participated for embracing the occasion to teach children about the important work we do!

*Having some fun at **Bring Your Child to Work Day**.*

Brain Food for the Month

Aphasia (from our monthly awareness highlight) is a language disorder associated with lesions of the brain.

Individuals with aphasia do not lose the capability of speech, but gain an impairment that mainly concerns comprehension of language.

Historical individuals that suffered from aphasia include Ralph Waldo Emerson and Robert E. Lee.

What's on Your Mind?
A Corner for all Staff Members & A Contest!

What's on Your Mind? is the place where we want to discover and showcase the ideas, thoughts and achievements of our Neurosurgery team. If you have any interesting news or notes, please send them to Brandon at bjparker@med.wayne.edu, or Marie at mferlito@med.wayne.edu.

Also, this month, **The Neuro Insider** is having a contest to celebrate its inauguration. If you can answer this question, e-mail your answer to Marie by June 30th:

What are the five steps you should take when the OIG come knocking on your door, and what are the three rights you have as an employee?

Working your Brain Muscle:
Upcoming Educational Opportunities

06.17.09
Quarterly Staff Meeting
UHC 6E Conference Room
10:00 am

In addition to the meeting, we will also be having popcorn and a movie, featuring a pair of selections from **Emery King's Health Video Library**.

The videos will document cutting-edge techniques in
Complex Spinal Surgeries & Vagal Nerve Stimulation,
starring our own **Drs. Eltahawy & Mittal**.

Please join us!

Upcoming Dates of Interest:

Father's Day: 06.21.09
First Day of Summer: 06.21.09
Independence Day: 07.04.09

Quick Coding Tips

The cerebellopontine angle tumor referred to in codes **61520** and **61526** may also be called an *acoustic tumor, vestibular schwannoma,* or *meningioma* in medical record documentation.

A new code **(62267)** has been added to *CPT 2009* to report percutaneous aspiration within the nucleus pulposus, intervertebral disc, or paravertebral tissue for diagnostic purposes. Imaging guidance is reported with codes **77003** and **77012.**

The 2009 version of the departmental *Code Book* is available on the N Drive! It has an interactive index that allows easy scrolling to any section. It also includes **Category III codes**. Check it out today at:

N:\Neurosurgery Code Book

Neuro News & Notes
Priority Health Announces Changes

Priority Health has announced that prior to seeing a surgical back pain specialist, the patient must first go to a **Priority Health Spine Center of Excellence (COE)** for evaluation. These evaluations must receive prior authorization from Priority Health, except in a case of one of the following possibilities, where a visit to a COE is not required :

- **The patient is currently receiving treatment (any visit between 01.01.09 & 04.30.09).**
- **They have suspected trauma, infection, tumor, or new onset of bowel or bladder dysfunction or progressive myelopathy.**
- **They require emergency department or inpatient care follow-up.**
- **They are 18 years of age or younger.**
- **Their problem is not spine related.**

Further details about the Spine COE Program, along with a complete list of centers, can be found at:
http://www.priorityhealth.com/provider/manual/auths/coe/spine-coes/
For additional information, contact Susanne Schornak, LPN at 248.324.2834.

On the Brain for June....
E-mail Etiquette

These days, e-mail is the primary form of communication for many during the work day. However, many of us don't know a polite and efficient way to send a message electronically. Here are a couple of tips to help make your e-mail courteous and easy to read:

1. Be concise and to the point.
Do not make an e-mail longer than it needs to be. Remember that reading an e-mail is harder than reading printed communications and a long e-mail can be very discouraging to read.

2. Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation.
This is not only important because improper spelling, grammar and punctuation give a bad impression of your company, it is also important for conveying the message properly. E-mails with no full stops or commas are difficult to read and can sometimes even change the meaning of the text. If your program has a spell checking option, why not use it?

3. Answer swiftly.
People send an e-mail because they wish to receive a quick response; therefore, each e-mail should be replied to within at least 24 hours, and preferably within the same working day. If the e-mails is complicated, send an e-mail back saying that you have received it and that you will get back to them.

4. Do not attach unnecessary files.
By sending large attachments you can annoy customers and even bring down their e-mail system. Wherever possible, try to compress attachments and only send relevant attachments.

5. Use proper structure & layout.
Since reading from a screen is more difficult than reading from paper, the structure and layout is very important for e-mail messages. Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph. When making points, number them or mark each point as separate to keep the overview.

6. Do not write in CAPITALS.
IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. This can be highly annoying and might trigger an unwanted response from an annoyed recipient.

7. Read the e-mail before you send it.
A lot of people don't bother to read an e-mail before they send it out, as can be seen from the many spelling and grammar mistakes contained in e-mails. Apart from this, reading your e-mail through the eyes of the recipient will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings.

8. Do not overuse Reply to All.
Only use Reply to All if you really need your message to be seen by each person who received the original message.

9. Take care with abbreviations and emoticons.
Try not to use abbreviations such as BTW and LOL; in business e-mails, these are generally not appropriate. The same goes for emoticons, such as the smiley :-). If you are not sure whether your recipient knows what it means, it is better not to use it.

10. Do not forward chain letters.
Do not forward chain letters; they are primarily hoaxes. Just delete the letters as soon as you receive them.

11. Be careful with formatting.
Remember that when you use formatting in your e-mails, the sender might not be able to view formatting, or might see different fonts than you had intended. When using colors, use a color that is easy to read on the background.

12. Do not use e-mail to discuss confidential information.
Sending an e-mail is like sending a postcard. If you don't want your e-mail to be displayed on a bulletin board, don't send it.

13. Use a meaningful subject.
Try to use a subject that is meaningful to the recipient as well as yourself. It is better to mention the actual name of the product, e.g. 'Product A information' than to just say 'product information' or the company's name in the subject.

16. Avoid long sentences.
Try to keep your sentences to a maximum of 15-20 words. E-mail is meant to be a quick medium and requires a different kind of writing than letters.

17. Don't send or forward e-mails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks.
By sending or even just forwarding one libelous, or offensive remark in an e-mail, you and your company can face court cases resulting in multi-million dollar penalties.

Information taken from www.emailreplies.com

Interested in playing organized or pick-up sports with coworkers at the 06.27.09 picnic? Choices include: basketball, volleyball, shuffleboard, tennis, football, and soccer. If so, let Mary Sue know at mforni@med.wayne.edu

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