Engaging lessons
How one Johns Hopkins Bayview department improved morale and patient care.

Ever wonder what happens to your responses to Gallup surveys after you voice your opinions? The Johns Hopkins Bayview NICU’s experience is proof that strong participation in the survey and swift follow-up can improve how employees relate to each other—and better serve patients and visitors.

After the 2010 Employee Engagement Survey, NICU manager Vicki Minor sat down with her team to discuss which areas they wanted to work on. Though scores had gone up from 3.34 in 2009 to 3.81, Minor says she knew they could do better. They decided to focus on engagement questions related to “employee recognition” and “my opinions count.” Minor discovered that her team wanted a new, immediate way to recognize each other for a job well done. Together, they came up with the “You Make Me Wanna Shout!” program.

Team members placed blank “You Make Me Wanna Shout!” forms throughout the unit, where they could be filled out quickly. Employees were encouraged to nominate each other for anything they felt deserved recognition: initiating a patient safety error, going beyond expectations on a chaotic shift, or intervening during a difficult family situation. And the recognition went beyond clinical staff to include others, such as housekeepers and facilities employees.

At monthly staff meetings, nominees receive a “Superhero in Scrubs” pin (selected by employees) and a purple lanyard on which to display it. The Shout stories are exhibited on a bulletin board for all to read.

Those efforts have borne fruit. The latest (2011) survey figures show a slight jump, from 3.81 to 3.98. That’s right on the threshold of being statistically significant for a group that size, says human resource development specialist Jeff Baronian. And, though Minor says she’d like to see higher scores, she’s pleased that the scores are moving in the right direction. “I think we’re moving in the right direction. We’re starting to feel this.”

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Five questions for:
Richard Huganir, Ph.D., director, The Solomon H. Snyder Department of Neuroscience

Our emotions, intelligence and ability to learn all depend on intricate connections among trillions of nerve cells in the human brain. Over time, these connections can change and affect how we absorb experiences, explains Huganir. Below are some of his insights, gleaned from more than three decades of studying memory and lifelong learning.

Your professional focus—on neuroscience—has been lifelong. Where did it originate?
I always wanted to understand how the brain worked. In high school, I started paying attention to my changing emotions. I was taking chemistry at the time and thought that these intense emotions I was experiencing must have a biological basis. I wanted to know how that occurred.

Fast forward a few decades: What are the big questions now?
How do we perceive, understand, react and remember? How does an experience—like looking at a painting—literally sculpt your brain? How does emotional status determine whether an experience will change the connections between neurons for days, for months or even years?

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The Johns Hopkins Hospital Women’s Board coffee shops have a new name: Grand Grounds. The moniker pays tribute to Grand Rounds, a formal meeting at which doctors discuss clinical cases to teach clinical reasoning skills. Tradition has it that the concept originated at Johns Hopkins. The circular area beneath the dome likely inspired the name.

Renamed Women’s Board coffee shops offer perky drinks and more

Renamed Women’s Board coffee shops welcome at all four Grand Grounds locations: Outpatient Center, first floor; Weinberg lobby; Nelson lobby; and Green Spring Station, Pavilion II. Breakfast, lunch and a variety of sandwiches are also available, except in the Nelson lobby.

Be sure to visit the newly remodeled Outpatient Center location, which reopened earlier this week. New features include a rounded service counter to better manage foot traffic and bright décor, accented by lime green and royal blue tile. The connecting gift shop has also undergone a facelift to better serve customers. Watch for details on a grand reopening celebration, set for Monday, Sept. 16.

Purchases at Grand Grounds not only satisfy cravings; they benefit patient care. The Women’s Board contributes roughly $550,000 annually to help fund Hopkins Hospital projects. Many of these proceeds come from the coffee and gift shops.

The universal Hopkins gift card is welcome at all the shops. And don’t forget to ask for or present a loyalty card. After you purchase 10 cups of coffee, the 11th is free.

—Judy F. Minnove
We're now in our fourth year of offering you the opportunity to participate in the Johns Hopkins Medicine Employee Engagement Survey. With this survey, we've been asking you to share with us "How are we doing? What can we do better?" A hearty thanks to all employees who "made their mark" by responding to the 27 questions—the all-important Q12, which on a 5-point scale measures teamwork, growth, individual contribution and basic needs—and others about change management, diversity and inclusion, supervisor effectiveness and fairness, and respect. It's your input that helps us transform this information into action so we can improve our respective workplaces.

How did we do? Overall, more than 17,200 JHM employees took the survey June 6 through June 24, giving Hopkins a 63 percent overall response rate. I'd like to especially recognize Sibley Memorial Hospital employees, who participated for the first time under the JHM umbrella, and school of medicine faculty and staff, who took the survey for the first time since 2007.

Each of our member organizations has received their results from the Gallup Organization, which once again administered the survey in the professional and confidential manner that is its trademark. Overall, Hopkins Hospital and Health System Corporation's grand mean score for the Q12 results rose slightly to 3.79.

### The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Corporation Strengths and Weaknesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2011 Mean</th>
<th>SOURCE: The Gallup Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>Grand Mean=The average, on a 5-point scale, across Gallup Q12 items. n=3,875</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I have a best friend at work.</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At work, my opinions seem to count.</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is someone at work who encourages my development.</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what is expected of me at work.</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td></td>
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The results are in!

to 3.84. The school of medicine attained a 3.79 grand mean. To put this in perspective, a score of five is the best we could get. With regard to the engagement ratio, the results show that we have about 2.79 engaged employees for every one disengaged; the school of medicine’s ratio was 2.43:1 when a 4.0:1 is desired.

The Johns Hopkins Hospital and Health System Corporation did not improve at meaningful levels over 2010 (Gallup considers a .1 increase as meaningful), but we did maintain or increase our scores over last year’s for nine of the 12 questions. In these times of economic difficulty and workplace changes and challenges, maybe we shouldn’t be surprised. But we shouldn’t be satisfied. As the graph below indicates, the most significant increases in scores were with the questions “In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress” and “In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.”

What’s next? Certainly, more work is needed. Managers will be taking a close look at their organization’s and department’s results, then work with their teams to create, facilitate and implement the action planning process. With an honest and thoughtful discussion, as well as follow-through and accountability, this important process should drive real change.

It’s important that we each make progress throughout the year.

We hold the power to change our environment. Let’s continue to work together to make Johns Hopkins a place of excellence and an excellent place to work.

Pamela Paulk
Vice President of Human Resources
The Johns Hopkins Hospital and Health System
we’re at a critical point,” says Minor. “I’m starting to see momentum—people are becoming much more involved in professional activities on the unit.”

“The Shout program is really nice because we got direct, immediate feedback from our peers. We’ve done that before, says NICU nurse Ashley Baldwin. Minor credits the initiatives—like Shout—to the work of her shared decision-making council, a group of employees that meets once a month. All employees on the unit are welcome to join the council.

Minor says that her 50-plus person staff has also become more open with each other, which translates into the work that they do. Says Minor, “I’m seeing them act more like caring family members with the patients and their families.” A recent letter from a NICU patient’s parent validates that assessment: “If it weren’t for the whole staff, our grandbaby wouldn’t be here. All of you have special hearts to do this job. Thank you for all of your help and compassion.”

—Sara Becker

Five questions for: Richard Huganir, Ph.D.  
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years or a lifetime? How are long-term memories encoded in neuronal circuits in the brain and maintained for decades?

What is known about how we learn and remember?

Learning and memory happen when communication connections between nerve cells are weakened or strengthened, a process called synaptic plasticity. The sheer number of possible connections gives the brain unthinkably flexible ability—each of the brain’s trillion nerve cells can have a thousand connections to other nerves. My lab is investigating exactly how these nerve-to-nerve communications happen and what molecules are involved in weakening or strengthening two neurons’ ability to talk to one another.

Our approach has been to study molecular and cellular mechanisms that regulate the receptors that detect neurotransmitters—the chemical messengers of neurons. We’ve shown that the addition of small chemical phosphates on one type of receptor, called AMPA, controls synaptic plasticity.

Just how do you test these connections?

We’ve generated a “forgetful” mutant mouse. With this mouse, we discovered a critically important step in storing new memories. When a phosphate couldn’t be hooked onto one part of the animal’s AMPA receptor, which detects the neurotransmitter glutamate, the mice quickly forgot the location of a platform in a pool of water. These phosphorylation-blocked forgetful mice can be used to better understand the mechanisms that regulate these molecules in the brain and maintain for decades.

We also created a mouse with the opposite mutation. By mimicking constant phosphorylation, we created an animal model in which the AMPA receptor is always primed, resulting in a mouse that we predict will be very smart but also very anxious—and likely prone to drug addiction.

— as told to Maryalice Yakutchik

To learn more about Huganir’s work, visit http://www.bi.jhmi.edu/neuroscience/huganir/index.htm.

Improving the Quality of Handoffs  
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Hopkins providers online, on video and at an upcoming workshop.

The grand rounds and other resources were developed to meet new graduate medical education requirements on handoff training and education. For additional information, contact Rosen at mrosen44@jhmi.edu.

—Linell Smith

Five questions for: Richard Huganir, Ph.D.

Note-worthy info and events

Periodic travel restrictions on Madison and Fayette streets

On Saturday, Aug. 26, from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m., Madison Street will be closed to through traffic between Wolfe Street and the Rutland Garage entrance. The Rutland Garage entrance will be open and the main entrance will be accessible from Rutland Avenue only. Street parking will not be allowed between Wolfe Street and the Rutland Garage entrance. The sidewalk on the south side of Madison Street will be closed to Wolfe Street and the Rutland Garage entrance. Other sidewalks will be open.

On Saturday, Aug. 27 through Sunday, Aug. 28, from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m., Fayette Street will be closed to through traffic between Wolfe Street and Broadway. At the Orleans Garage, the third floor exit to Fayette Street will be closed and the second-floor entrance/exit to Fayette Street will be closed (normal status). Street parking will not be allowed between Wolfe Street and Broadway. Sidewalks on the north side of Fayette Street between Broadway and the JHH loading dock (opposite Ann Street) will be closed. All other sidewalks will be open.


Johns Hopkins Hospital FY 2011 Community Benefit Report

All departments are required to submit data on their hospital-sponsored programs and activities that benefited the community during FY 2011 no later than Friday, Sept. 23. Department-specific information should be submitted on the community benefit reporting website at http://edc.johns Hopkins.edu/chc. Please only include community benefit initiatives sponsored by the JHHCJHHS.

Info: http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/communityservices/community_benefit_report.html For questions, contact Zahra Hospedales at chr@jhmi.edu or 410-614-2460, ext. 5.

HIPAA and HITECH—Are you ready?

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the enforcement agency for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, have recently hired the audit firm KPMG to audit 150 covered entities of varying sizes by the end of 2012. Noncompliance with HIPAA and HITECH requirements risks possible regulatory investigation and potential liability (i.e., civil monetary penalties) to Johns Hopkins. Use the HIPAA Office’s self-assessment tools to help determine the level of compliance in your area, department or clinic.


Make a big splash for Kimmel Cancer Center research

Dive into the Chesapeake Bay or take part in a one-mile pool swim fundraiser on Sunday, Sept. 18, at 8 a.m., concurrently at Chesapeake Bay Open Water (William Streetick Farm, near the Gibson Island Yacht Club) or Meadowbrook Aquatic and Fitness Club in Baltimore. Proceeds to benefit the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center.


Staff and institutional kudos

Cardiology honoree. Lewis Becker, M.D., Robert L. Levy Professor of Cardiology with a joint appointment in General Internal Medicine and The GenSTAR Research Program, received The Distinguished Fellowship Award of the International Academy of Cardiology at its plenary sessions in Vancouver, BC, on July 21. Becker was cited for the scope and excellence of his work, ranging from basic research on regional myocardial perfusion, to translational research in nuclear cardiac imaging, and recent genetic studies on the role of platelet function in coronary artery disease.

Epic director. Linda Kline, senior director of patient financial services, has been named executive director for the implementation of Epic, the planned Johns Hopkins Medicine-wide electronic patient medical record system. In her new role, Kline will provide executive oversight of the scope, cost, scheduling and quality of the project and will report to the executive committee. A health system employee since 1999, Kline has handled patient finance operations, including responsibility for the Central Business Office.

From the Editor

Inside Hopkins is published biweekly on Thursdays. Deadline for submission is noon the Thursday preceding publication. Email your submissions to jminkovz@jhmi.edu. They will be published in the most appropriate issue (space permitting). Upcoming publication dates are Sept. 1 and Sept. 15. Be sure to include the sponsor and department, with a contact name and phone number. Please direct questions and comments to the editor, Judy Minkove, at jminkovz@jhmi.edu.