



## HEALING THROUGHOUT THE HOSPITAL

**A SIGNATURE INITIATIVE  
OF THE FOUNDATION FOR  
ART & HEALING**

*In collaboration with  
The Montefiore Medical Center  
and the New York Business  
Group on Health*

### Why focus from within?

Hospitals are at the heart of health care delivery for most of our communities. And at the heart of hospitals are its employees, working hard to provide comfort and medical care to their families, friends, and neighbors at times of urgent and critical need. Without the passion, vigor and dedication of hospital employees to do their jobs and do them well, to serve their community and create a source of health and healing that is vital for all of us, the health care system as we know it simply could not exist.

Consequently, the goal of enhancing the health and well-being of hospital employees is of the utmost importance, not just for employees and for the hospital, but for the community. It is in the service of that goal that the Healing Throughout the Hospital initiative is directed.

### But why art? How can creative engagement help with healing?

There is a growing understanding of the intricate relationship between many types of health disorders and the personal experiencing of emotions, stress, attitudes and beliefs. If we can have a positive impact on these factors there is an important opportunity to reduce the burden of illness and the suffering illness causes.

Fortunately, while our understanding of how best to use drugs and surgery to treat and prevent illness is growing, so is our appreciation of the “health enhancing” aspects of a range of important human activities, including engagement with artistic and creative

processes. The rigorous evaluation of the relationship between creative engagement, either in the making of art or the appreciation of it, is still in early stages. However, we do know that creative modalities such as music therapy and relaxation techniques reduce stress and anxiety in patients and there is additional thought-provoking research on other healing capabilities as well.

### Why is NOW the time for moving forward?

It is no secret that the health care delivery system is under enormous stress, and so it should therefore come as no surprise that hospital employees are too! This includes not just the doctors and nurses that are so familiar now from countless television programs, but administrators, pharmacists, medical record workers, dieticians, billing staff, laundry workers, lab technicians, and yes, even the people who tell you where you can park. For some, this stress translates into health risks, as well as a general burden of “ill-ease” that detracts from the lives of those within the hospital community. Fortunately, it appears that with effective outreach and support, much of this risk can be reduced or prevented.

Incorporating much that has been learned already about the benefits of art in preventing illness and generating a sense of well-being, and also by creating new knowledge and insights along the way, the Healing Throughout the Hospital initiative will give the hospital community an opportunity to engage creatively with themselves and with each other. This approach draws on the power of art to discover, explore and share what is most

important to us as individuals and ultimately through that process, to heal. Whether it is expressive writing, music, movement or visual arts, all share the ability to change people’s perspectives, moods, and overall health. There is much that can be done, and now is the time to do it!

The Healing Throughout the Hospital program at Montefiore is chaired collaboratively at the executive level by **Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH**, President of the Foundation for Art and Healing, **Laurel Pickering, MPH**, Executive Director of the New York Business Group on Health, and **Steve Safyer, MD**, the CEO of Montefiore.

We are delighted to have the opportunity to begin this important work at Montefiore, because of that organization’s deep commitment to its employees, the patients it serves, and its community. Working together with creativity and imagination, this initiative will integrate the best of medical science, public health, behavioral health, and humanistic insight, and improve the overall health of the hospital community, on which so much of our own health depends.



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