TuftsMedicine
Lowell General Hospital

Department of Family Medicine October Meeting Minutes

Date: October 9, 2026
Time: 7:00am
Facilitator: Dr. Sangita Pillai
Attendees: Dr. Joseph Dulac; Dr. Cristen Fragala; Dr. Raymond Lewis; Dr. Cara Marshall; Dr. Margaret Mills; Dr. Patrick O'Neil; Dr. Saurabh Sharma; Dr. Namita Tiwari; Dr. Leigh Weatherly; Dr. Jennifer Wolf; Dr. Marian Younge
Guests: Lowell Community Health Center Residents: Dr. Michelle Melchiorre; Dr. Parth Patel; Dr. Paul Koffi; Dr. Frank Abekah; Dr. Akua Frimpong

I. Call to Order

- Dr. Pillai called the meeting to order at 7:00am.

II. Approval of Minutes

- The department approved the previous minute.

III. New Business

- Dr. Pillai is hoping to have Dr. Montalvo on the next meeting in November to go over current recommendations and safety tips around prescribing for patients with ADHD.
- For the sake of planning and getting the meeting on your calendars, please note- the June 11, 2027, department meeting will be held in person.
- There was a lengthy conversation about EKGs for low risk patients; after following up Dr. Pillai informed the department that there has been a longstanding policy that requires EKGs got men over 45 and women over 50 within six months of surgery involving anesthesia.
- While the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends against these EKGs for low-risk surgeries, the hospital policy remains in effect due to past patient outcomes.
- Dr. Aiudi noted that anesthesia induction often involves significant propofol doses, which justifies some level of risk screening.
- There will be a meeting organized to revisit this policy and decide whether an update needs to be made.
- Dr. Dulac mentioned that the cast room at Drum Hill will be closing soon.

IV. Old Business

a. Medical Executive Committee

- There will be new reference ranges for lab values to align with Tufts Medical Cener, so pay attention to these values as something that could have been shown as poor might now be fine.
- There is a shortage of Vascular Surgeons right now so some days there might not be ER call coverage.
- Eric Bifolk, PA-C is leaving so there will be lack of coverage at the sleep clinic, but you can still put in referrals on Epic.
- Flu Vaccines and N-95 fit testing are to be done by October 31 and note that COVID-19 vaccinations are not mandatory, but you must sign a declination if you have not provided a copy of your vaccination record.
- Gastro Health is not currently admitting patients or performing hospital procedures due to physician recruitment needs and please note that Mass Health patients cannot access colonoscopies at their partner facility, the Northeast Endoscopy Center.
- The hospital is working on getting some of the Tufts Medical Center Gastroenterology physicians' privileges to cover any gaps.
- A new chaperone policy requires clinicians to ask patients if they want a chaperone before intimate exams (e.g., breast or pelvic exams). This is also required for employed practices.
- There is a policy regarding GLP-1 medications, patients scheduled for surgery must remain on clear liquids for the 24 hours prior and should not take a dose on the day of or the day before surgery.

b. Morbidity and Mortality Council

- Dr. O'Neil did not have any significant updates from M&M as there were no cases relevant to Family Medicine.

c. Inpatient Care Update

- There were no updates from an inpatient standpoint, but they are actively working on incorporating the residency program into the inpatient setting.

d. Bridge Clinic

- Dr. O'Neil discussed that they are still seeing a significant rise in the use of kratom and 7-OH despite it being banned at a federal level and becoming a scheduled substance.
- Somehow, it is still widely available in New Hampshire, so it is still a problem since we are close to the border.
- The clinic is starting these patients on buprenorphine because the withdrawal symptoms are similar to opioids.

e. Credentials Committee

- Dr. Marshall had no new updates from the Credentials Committee meeting.

f. Family Medicine Residency Program

- Six residents have started and are rotating in outpatient rotations and inpatient rotations so far with OB.

- Dr. Marshall introduced the first year residents: Dr. Michelle Melchiorre; Dr. Parth Patel; Dr. Paul Koffi; Dr. Frank Abekah; Dr. Akua Frimpong and Dr. Priyan Elangovan.

g. LGH EHR Advisory Group

- Dr. Holmes was not at the meeting to report any updates from the LGH EHR Advisory Group.

h. Labor and Delivery Committee

- Dr. Holmes was not at the meeting to give an update; however, Dr. O'Neil did mention increasing RSV vaccine awareness among pregnant patients between 32 and 36 weeks gestation due to limited pharmacy availability for administration during outpatient visits.
- Dr. Marshall mentioned that Lowell Community Health Center only offers the RSV vaccine at the pharmacy on Thursday mornings.
- Dr. Dulac mentioned a very robust RSV program at Neighborhood Heath in East Boston and if people are interested, he can connect you to the physicians at East Boston's Health Center.

i. Perinatal Committee

- The committee discussed perinatal statistics and transfers to tertiary care.
- There was also discussion on maternal transfers, hearing screening data, and updates on our blood pressure checks for hypertensive deliveries in targeted populations.
- Three policies were reviewed and approved.
- Based on much of the work that has been done in in the hospital, it has been targeting mostly black female populations in terms of getting them a more urgent follow up visit in their respective outpatient care facilities.
- Dr. Lewis mentioned the hospital did hire a new Labor and Delivery Manager, Jennifer Doubleday, who will be starting in November. She is from South Shore Health with over 30 years of experience.

j. MCH Updates

- There were no Maternal Child Health updates.

k. Belonging and Engagement Council

- Diwali celebration on is on Friday, November 13, 2026, from 6:00-10p, at Lowell General Hospital in the Clark Auditorium. Ticket Prices are $100 and RSVPs must be submitted by October 23rd.
- Dress Code: Traditional Indian celebration attire is encouraged
- Disability Awareness Month on October 14th via zoom 12-1pm.

l. Mass Medical Society

- Dr. Dulac provided updates from the Massachusetts Medical Society regarding their advocacy efforts for primary care funding in Congress and physician representation on social media platforms.
- He mentioned local chapter meetings and if anyone is interested in joining to reach out.

V. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 8:05am.

Next Meeting:
Friday, November 13, 2026, at 7:00AM via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,



Maxine Miller
Medical Staff Coordinator

Approved by:

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Sangita Pillai, MD — Date
Chief, Department of Family Medicine