

For a **WEB EXTRA** with a slideshow featuring more photos of the meeting of the bone marrow donor and recipient, see dartmed.dartmouth.edu/w10/we03.

BRIGHT IDEAS: Healthspottr.com (“we believe in the future of health care” is its mantra) recently named the top 100 health-care innovators in the United States. Three are from DMS: Drs. Jack Wennberg (#7), John Wasson (#14), and Elliott Fisher (#18).



FARM-ACOLOGY INITIATIVE

Say “migrant farmworker” and most people think of picking lettuce in California, not milking cows in New England. But many area dairy farms can’t hire enough labor locally and so use migrant workers. Exact numbers are hard to come by, but there may be over 2,000 in Vermont and New Hampshire.

Something else that’s hard to come by, for the workers themselves, is health care. But thanks to two Dartmouth medical students, Karl Dietrich and Holly Schroeder, that’s changing.



With funding from an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, they’re reaching out to workers on dairy farms throughout the Upper Valley. They’ve met with about 40 so far and expect to reach many more. They’re conducting health screenings and making sure workers are aware of the resources at Little Rivers Health Care, a Bradford, Vt.-based federally qualified health center.

“Most of the migrant workers we’ve met don’t know that 10 minutes away there is a federally qualified health center that will see them for free,” Dietrich and Schroeder explained in an e-mail. And, they added, the workers “are reluctant to do anything that takes them away from making the money they need to send home.” So they’re now tackling those problems, as well as creating a DMS interest group to sustain the effort. K.R.

SIGNATURE OF THE TIMES

When Dr. Ira Byock asks a patient to sign an advance directive, sometimes the patient’s eyes will widen in surprise. “I’m not dying,” he often hears. But *everyone* should have an advance directive, Byock believes, not just those who are close to death. He has one, as do his wife and two adult daughters.



An advance directive is simply a document that takes effect if people are unable to make decisions about their own care as a result of injury or illness. It can state their individual preferences regarding the kinds of treatments they would want, such as whether they’d want CPR if they were terminally ill. Or the document can simply designate someone else to make those decisions.

Byock’s persistence is part of an effort to get every DHMC patient who undergoes a procedure requiring informed consent, as well as every employee, to sign an advance directive. The effort puts DHMC in the vanguard of a national trend. “Asking about an advance directive isn’t a hidden message that somebody is ill,” Byock says. “It’s a clear message that, at DHMC, we think this is part of giving the best care possible.” A.E.

Men share marrow—and a love of baseball

Gerry Best and Kevin Ireland have been “blood brothers” for two years. But until a few months ago, they’d never met.

In fact, most bone marrow donors don’t meet the patient who benefits from their gift. But on a sunny Saturday in October, the two men and their

Their meeting was shown during the game’s national broadcast.

families met—at Fenway Park in Boston, just before a Red Sox-Yankees game. Best, who lives in Claremont, N.H., is a Sox fan, and Ireland, of Norwalk, Conn., roots for the Yankees.

The stage for the meeting was set in 2008, when doctors at Dartmouth’s Norris Cotton Cancer Center gave Best some of Ireland’s bone marrow; Best’s leukemia has been in remission ever since.

Seats: Their shared love of baseball emerged in the course of a phone-in radio interview after Best’s recovery. So with help from the Red Sox, the men and their families were treated to a pregame tour of Fenway and seats behind home plate. The meeting was even filmed by Fox Sports and shown during the game’s national broadcast. A poignant coincidence was noted by announcer Tim McCarver: it was Mike Lowell Day at Fenway, and the retiring Sox third-baseman is also a cancer survivor.

Over 137,000 people in the U.S. will be diag-

nosed with blood cancers in 2010—9% of all new cancer cases. Norris Cotton’s nationally recognized Bone Marrow Transplant Program offers all types of marrow and blood stem cell transplants on both an inpatient and outpatient basis.

Ireland says that meeting Best helped him fully grasp his donation’s impact. “There’s no feeling like it,” he says.

“He gave me my life,” Best responds. But some things haven’t changed. “I guess I’ve got Yankee blood in me now,” Best says, “but I’m still for the Red Sox.”

STEVEN P. BJERKLIE

CARLEEN GODFREY



“Blood brothers” (and baseball rivals) Gerry Best, left, and Kevin Ireland met at Fenway.