Celebrating 15 Years of Exemplary Geriatric Care at the Martha Stewart Center for Living Uptown

With a mission to provide quality medical care to older adults and to reshape the public’s perception of aging, Mount Sinai established the Martha Stewart Center for Living Uptown in 2007. Established with a generous gift from Martha Stewart in honor of her mother—Martha Kostyra, who lived an active life until the age of 93—the holistic health care center focuses on helping older adults and their loved ones attain the best quality of life possible. The result has been a highly successful model of care in which patients experience half as many emergency room visits as other older adults, shorter hospital stays when admitted, and 50 percent fewer readmissions after hospitalization.

The program has been replicated in a second Martha Stewart location at Mount Sinai-Union Square in 2019, and at Mount Sinai Morningside Older Adult Care in Upper Manhattan. Over the years, hospitals across the United States and around the world have sent teams to The Mount Sinai Hospital to learn how they can model similar programs at their institutions.

The Mount Sinai Hospital, where the Martha Stewart Center for Living Uptown is located, has been ranked No. 1 in Geriatrics in the nation by U.S. News & World Report for three consecutive years. In 2019, the Center for Living was recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as a New York State Patient-Centered Medical Home.

Patients see teams of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, and medical assistants who work together to provide seamless, coordinated care. Everyone, including front desk registrars, is trained to work with older adults and is attuned to their unique needs. Medical teams provide primary care and refer patients to specialists as needed.

An outgrowth of working through the COVID-19 pandemic, which proved especially challenging for this patient population, has been the use of telehealth, which had previously been almost nonexistent at the Center for Living. Now, staff teach patients who have difficulty getting to doctor appointments how to engage in telehealth visits, which resulted in 2,400 such appointments in 2022.

“Our entire team is really dedicated to our mission of caring for the aging population, and we’re all very proud of the work we do,” says Veronica Rivera, MD, Medical Director of the Martha Stewart Center for Living Uptown. “For the past 15 years, we have remained committed to addressing the needs of our older adults, and we pride ourselves in going above and beyond to care for them. It’s such an honor to be part of our patients’ lives.”
A Letter From Martha

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the first Martha Stewart Center for Living at The Mount Sinai Hospital. My mother, “Big Martha,” lived an active life to the age of 93, and it was her example that inspired me to work with Mount Sinai to specifically address the needs of older adults.

In the years since, the Martha Stewart Centers for Living have become the destination for older adults to receive world-class care. The health care providers have achieved important accomplishments, including a second location at Mount Sinai-Union Square, which expanded much-needed care to older adults in Lower Manhattan. The Centers created a comprehensive care model that has impacted the health and wellness of both patients and their caregivers. The Centers have also had a global influence as hundreds of medical professionals educated within have replicated this model of care around the world.

I am enormously proud of my partnership with Mount Sinai and of the teams at the Martha Stewart Centers for Living. Together, we have improved the lives of thousands of older adults and their caregivers and advanced the field of geriatric medicine. I invite you to join me in investing in our older adults, in our future, and in our health system by supporting Mount Sinai and the Brookdale Department. I strongly believe that we start aging the moment we are born. The holistic care offered by the Centers can help many of us to live a good, long life.

Sincerely,
Martha

Geriatric Care for Veterans

The James J. Peters VA Medical Center in the Bronx is the oldest Veterans Administration hospital in New York City. Academically affiliated with the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC) is a geriatrics center of excellence, administered by faculty of the Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine. The Brookdale Department provides care for our nation's veterans, and we are engaged in a wide range of educational and research activities focused on improving health care for aging veterans.

One focus of the GRECC's work has been improving medication use for older adults. This work includes a Center for Medication Safety that compiles best practices in deprescribing and establishes a learning collaborative across the Veterans Administration (VA) nationwide. Studies to assess how telemedicine and the exchange of information could enhance medication use and safety are being conducted.

A project in the first year of a four-year study is evaluating 11 of the VA's hospital-in-home programs, which deliver acute care at home to patients who are sick enough to be in the hospital or a rehabilitation facility, but who prefer to be at home. The programs are similar to the Mount Sinai at Home program.

The team at the GRECC also provides education across the VA health system to ensure that primary care teams, especially those in rural areas, have the knowledge and skills to care for an increasingly aging veteran population. This effort is coupled with a national collaborative of geriatrics teams that provides remote interdisciplinary consultation from geriatrics centers of excellence to rural clinics to improve access to geriatric care.

“The work of the GRECC at the VA Medical Center has profoundly improved the health care of our older veterans,” says R. Sean Morrison, MD, Ellen and Howard C. Katz Chair of the Brookdale Department. “I could not be prouder of the contributions that the center has made to those veterans who have contributed so much to the safety of this country.”
Provider Spotlight: William Hung, MD, MPH

The dedication of William Hung, MD, MPH, to treating older adults is apparent in all his work in clinical, research, and educational settings. Recently appointed Director of the Geriatrics Research, Education, and Clinical Center at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, Dr. Hung’s focus is on developing improved inpatient and outpatient models of care for geriatric patients everywhere, from rural areas to cities.

Towards that end, he has conducted research in a wide range of areas, including on medication management, the health needs of aging first responders to the attack of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center, the relationship between chronic diseases and impairments in older adults, and telemedicine consults for geriatric patients in remote areas with limited health care opportunities.

Dr. Hung, Professor of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, joined the Brookdale Department in 2006 as a two-year geriatrics fellow before his appointment as Assistant Professor and Physician Investigator at the Geriatrics Research, Education, and Clinical Center. He has published extensively and is the recipient of many prestigious honors and awards.

“Caring for patients with complex conditions is intellectually challenging and personally fulfilling,” says Dr. Hung. “One of the best things is that it gives me the opportunity to hear the many interesting life stories of older adults.”

An active member of the American Geriatrics Society, Dr. Hung chairs the Public Policy Committee, where his focus is on advocacy for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Kudos: Special Faculty Awards and Achievements

Claire K. Ankuda, MD, MPH, MSc, received a Distinguished Scholar Award from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, sponsored by the Office of Gender Equity in Science and Medicine and with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Fund, to retain clinical scientists for her project “The Role of Medicare Advantage Plan Structures on Shaping End-of-Life Care for Older Adults With Dementia.”

Nathan E. Goldstein, MD, and the Palliative Care at Home team were awarded a National Institute of Aging grant for their project “Palliative Care at Home for Patients With Dementia.”

Mount Sinai Health System and the James J. Peters VA Medical Center both received the American College of Emergency Physicians Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation.

Ravishankar Ramaswamy, MD, was invited by the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) Board of Directors to serve another three-year term as a member of the AGS/ADGAP Education Committee. He was also invited to serve on the Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine’s Clerkship Directors in Internal Medicine Survey and Scholarship Committee.

Ravishankar Ramaswamy, MD, and Vanessa Rodriguez, MD, were accepted to the 2023-24 Tideswell AGS Emerging Leaders in Aging Program, which provides training focused on the unique needs of leaders in aging-specific environments.

Rebecca Rodin, MD, MSc, Lihua Li, PhD, and R. Sean Morrison, MD, were awarded a National Institute on Aging grant for their project “Deploying High Value Longitudinal Population-Based Data in Dementia Research (DEVEL OP AD Research).”

Vanessa Rodriguez, MD, was named Fellow Educator by the Institute for Medical Education at Icahn Mount Sinai.

Siobhan Sundel, DNP, received a 2022 Cullman Family Award for Excellence in Physician Communication.
Committed to Education and Equity: **Reena Karani, MD, MHPE,** the New Chair of the National Board of Medical Examiners

**Reena Karani, MD, MHPE,** Director of the Institute for Medical Education at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, was elected chair of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) Board of Directors. She is the first woman of color and the first geriatrician to serve in this role in the organization’s 108-year history. The nonprofit organization develops and administers assessment tools for health professionals across the continuum of education, training, and practice.

Throughout her career, Dr. Karani has educated learners at all levels and has served in a variety of educational leadership roles. She has mentored hundreds of trainees and faculty members who are now renowned scholars and change leaders. At NBME, she will continue her commitment to advancing medical education and scholarship, while addressing bias and inequity in the learning environment.

“NBME is fully invested in offering evidence-based, patient-centered, and bias-free assessment tools for health professionals,” she says. “My new role represents an opportunity to strengthen our commitment in mitigating bias and advancing the assessment of critical competencies necessary for health care practice in the 21st century.”

Dr. Karani also plans to continue integrating geriatrics and palliative medicine into the medical curriculum. “No matter what field of medicine an individual practices, they will care for and connect with older people. The key competencies in palliative medicine of providing quality care to those with serious illness are critical no matter the field of study. We have a responsibility to teach and assess the skills and behaviors necessary to care for older adults and those with serious illnesses across the continuum of medical education.”