When it comes to health care, Anubhav “Anu” Kaul, MD, MPH, wants to learn it all. From immunotherapy research to internal medicine to health care policy to hospital administration, there's nothing he won't tackle. His thirst for knowledge and eagerness to teach others has made Kaul an energetic, effective advocate for right care.

Since joining the Right Care Alliance (RCA) about two years ago, Kaul has been very active in both the Health Care Education Council and the Right Care Boston chapter. As a medical resident in internal medicine at the Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Burlington, MA, Kaul has organized numerous RCA events, including Right Care Rounds, Listening Sessions, and an annual Right Care Action Week lecture series. Throughout all his work with the RCA, Kaul embraces community engagement and a holistic view of medicine.

Kaul’s career in health care began after college, when he decided to move from economics to the “hard” sciences, with the goal of being a researcher. However, he missed working with people and shifted to medicine, enrolling at Ross University Medical School in the Caribbean. Most of the island community was impoverished and in great need of care, demonstrating to Kaul the importance of serving and engaging with the community. However, in his training at a hospital in New York, Kaul recognized another problem - excessive management and medical

Promoting healing through healing spaces: The fight to save the Prouty Garden

“If we're going to promote healing, we need healing spaces!” This was the rallying cry of protesters who gathered in late October to save the Prouty Garden. A beautiful green space within the Boston Children's Hospital (BCH), Prouty Garden has been a refuge for sick children and their families for over half a century. However, the garden is slated for destruction in order to make way for the expansion of BCH. While access to health care for children is paramount, a further look at the expansion plan reveals it has more to do with increasing the hospital’s market share than providing needed services. Friends of the Prouty Garden, the advocacy group seeking to save the garden, hoped to stave off the voting process for a few months so administrators could create a new plan that would keep the garden intact. They sent out the call for the public to show support at the statehouse; doctors, patients, and advocates – including Lown Institute staff – answered the call.

Vikas Saini, MD, president of the Lown Institute, made connections between the BCH expansion and larger systemic problems in the health care system. “We need to ask ourselves, how and why do these decisions get made? Too often, it's the bottom line,” Saini said. “This goes to the heart of how the system works.”

The rally took place during Right Care Action Week, which, although a coincidence, fits with the theme of taking action and demonstrating the right care. The fight for the Prouty Garden is about putting patient needs above profit by emphasizing the healing spirit in medicine. “Many other hospitals have come to the conclusion that access to nature is essential for wellness,” said Thomas Paine, architect and activist from Friends of the Prouty Garden. “Boston Children's is on the wrong side of medical science.”

Despite the outcry from protesters, the Massachusetts Public Health Council voted later that day to approve the BCH expansion and destroy the garden. But this does not mean the fight is over. Supporters of the Prouty Garden will be appealing the decision in court. And at the October Right Care Boston chapter meeting, attendees brainstormed other ways to help raise awareness of the issue, and stop this from happening to other green spaces. The Right Care Alliance will continue to stand with Friends of the Prouty Garden to help save this unique healing space.
procedures that didn’t improve patients’ quality of life.

“They [hospital administrators] made sure that doctors did a certain number of procedures each year,” said Kaul. “You do as much as you can to make up for the losses on uninsured patients. It’s not just that hospital - it’s systemic.”

From his experiences during training, Kaul decided to learn more about the systemic problems of overuse and underuse in the Master of Public Health program at the Dartmouth Institute. But that wasn’t enough. Kaul started working with the Right Care Alliance to address structural health care issues on a grassroots level and foster understanding between clinicians and patients.

“I want to help patients realize what it’s like to practice,” said Kaul. Residents have to balance conferences, rounds, electronic records, and a patient workload, all under time constraints and intense pressure. “There’s a lot behind the scenes that the patient does not see,” said Kaul. Kaul is looking forward to engaging health professionals and community members in a dialogue by holding listening sessions with residents and writing editorials for local news media.

That was the Right Care Action Week that was!

Right Care Alliance members all over the country were hard at work this month organizing events for Right Care Action Week – and that hard work paid off! This year the Right Care Alliance organized more than 100 events with thousands of participants across 26 states (plus DC), including 33 listening booths, 18 story slams, 39 “What Worries You” activities, and many other listening-related events. They partnered with 20 organizations, sent out 550 tweets with the #RCAW hashtag, and reached more than a million people on Twitter. Here are a few highlights from RCAW events:

- **Robin Cogan, RN**, organized a listening circle with 26 parents at a day care center in Camden, NJ. The session was conducted mostly in Spanish. Parents spoke about the lack of translation services at doctors’ offices, difficulty securing follow-up appointments with pediatricians, and being unable to express their frustrations in an effective way.

- **Corinna West**, patient advocate and member of both the Behavioral Health and Healthcare Education councils, organized four story/poetry slams in cities throughout the Midwest. Many participants felt that health care costs are out of control and that they are being preyed upon by the health care system. You can watch videos of participants’ stories from one of the events [here](#).

- **Jad Al-Danaf**, a resident at Thomas Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia, set up a listening booth in a Metro station to hear community members’ health worries (pictured on the left). Of primary concern for those who spoke to him: Not having a trusting relationship with doctors, insurance limiting health care options, and disparities in care based on socioeconomic status.

- **Maia Dorsett, MD, PhD**, built on last year’s “What Worries You” activities by distributing cards printed with those words to medical residents at six facilities across the nation and inviting them to distribute them to their patients. She was also featured in a [STAT] column for her RCAW events.

- **The Right Care Boston** chapter partnered with Massachusetts Farmers Markets to hold listening booths in farmers’ markets in the Greater Boston area. Cost, access, and limited time with their doctors were a few of the dominant themes that came up. Even community members who were happy with their care expressed concern about their ability to get affordable care in the future if they moved out of state or lost their job.
My Right Care Journey – Selwyn Rogers

Selwyn Rogers, Jr. MD, MPH, FACS, acknowledges that some surgeons have a “god complex.” “It’s like in the movie Malice with Alec Baldwin,” says Rogers. "Who do you think the patients are praying to?" Rogers quotes Baldwin’s corrupt surgeon character. The things surgeons can do are so remarkable, it’s no wonder they feel powerful. “But just because we can do these procedures, doesn’t mean that we should,” says Rogers.

Rogers grew up in St. Croix, “a small town boy on a small island.” Not knowing much about the college application process, Rogers believed he could do anything – the “audacity of ignorance,” he now calls it. His confidence wasn’t misplaced though, because he got accepted to Harvard University for both undergrad and medical school. Rogers was drawn to surgery because he liked seeing the results after a procedure. “In primary care or internal medicine, you manage conditions. I wanted to cure things!” says Rogers. After medical school, Rogers did his surgical residency in Boston, ironically not far from the hospital where Baldwin’s fictional surgeon reigned. Despite being a good surgeon, Rogers “still didn’t know much about public health, or how structural factors affect health care delivery and outcomes.”

All that changed when Rogers started a fellowship and studied public health at Vanderbilt University. Being both a trauma surgeon and a student in the South got him interested in health care disparities and patterns of illness. “You can repair someone’s gunshot wound in their heart but then see them the next week in the ER with a gunshot wound in their head,” said Rogers. This example is not hypothetical – one of Rogers’ first

Council News

On top of organizing nearly 100 Right Care Action Week events, Right Care Council members made significant strides on other initiatives.

Science and Evidence Council Organizes Petition to Stop False Reporting

Doctors rely on information from medical journals to evaluate the effectiveness of drugs and medical devices. However, most clinical trials are funded by pharmaceutical and medical device companies who abuse a loophole in the reporting process to publish misleading or exaggerated results. Three members of the RCA Science and Evidence Council created a Change.org petition to help close this loophole, and they are calling for more signatories.

Currently, corporations that run clinical trials are required to report study protocol, methodology, and other information to the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health Clinicaltrials.gov site. The lack of coordination between these two agencies makes it easy for biased studies to be published in the journals because editors and peer reviewers only have access to NIH information, which is often incomplete. The petition asks Congress to require the FDA and NIH to coordinate and regulate the reporting process and to increase transparency.

The Council hopes to reach their goal of 500 signatures in time for the FDA hearing about off-label drug and device use on November 9-10. Drug and medical device companies frequently market their products to physicians for unapproved uses, which can be extremely dangerous for patients. Registration for the event is currently closed, but you can watch a live webcast of the hearing here. And check back for a full report on the FDA hearing in next month’s Messenger!

Children’s Health Council Completes Right Care Top Ten

Since the last Lown Institute Annual Conference, the Right Care Alliance Councils have been working on Right Care Top Ten lists to help define right care in their specialty. The Children’s Health Council is the first to complete the process of brainstorming, voting, and finalizing their ten most critical “do’s and don’ts” of how to practice right care. Their top ten recommendations emphasize holistic solutions and preventive care, such as promoting childhood literacy and contraception for teens. The council also advises against unnecessary antibiotic use and screenings, such as a head CT for minor head injuries. Which council will be next to complete their Top Ten? Stay tuned to find out!

New Community Engagement Council Chairs

We are pleased to announce the new Community Engagement Council chairs – Casey Quinlan (pictured to the left) and Ben Moulton, JD, MPH. Quinlan is a writer and patient advocate from Virginia who became involved in the Right Care Alliance after meeting Shannon Brownlee, MSc, vice president of the Lown Institute, at a patient engagement event. Moulton is a professor at Boston University Law School, specializing in health law in clinical practice, and senior vice president of the Information Medical Decisions Foundation. Moulton was eager to get involved with the RCA, as the IMDF and RCA share the mission of promoting informed patient decision-making. Since their appointment as co-chairs in mid-September, Quinlan and Moulton have been working on Right Care Action Week events and the council’s Right Care Top Ten list.
patients was a high school student who luckily survived a gunshot wound, only to come back two months later with another injury from gunfire. “I don’t know what happened to him after that, but at that rate he wouldn’t make it to his 21st birthday,” says Rogers. “How can I help that kid?”

These experiences encouraged Rogers to be more engaged in the community outside the hospital. Part of this effort is as co-chair of the Right Care Alliance Surgery and Preoperative Care Council. Most recently, he and co-chair Gretchen Schwartz, MD, MPP, associate professor of surgery at University of Wisconsin, organized a breakfast meeting at the American College of Surgeons’ annual conference. They brought together a small but passionate group of surgeons to brainstorm strategies for reducing medical overuse and building a broader movement for right care. Most surgeons see unnecessary procedures happen regularly, but knowing how to communicate to patients and peers about it is not simple. These discussions are crucial for sharing strategies and deciding what initiatives to pursue going forward. “It’s up to the group where we go next,” says Rogers.

Announcements

- The 5th Annual Lown Institute Conference will be held May 5-7, 2017 in Boston MA. Friday, May 5, is dedicated to a Research Symposium highlighting research that enhances our understanding of right care. On Saturday, May 6, attendees will get a mix of speakers and skill-building workshops that will engage health professionals, patients, patient advocates, and community leaders. We are currently calling for abstracts for the Research Symposium and proposals for workshops. Deadline for both submissions is December 18.

- There will be an RCA Leadership Summit on January 14-16, 2017 in Boston, MA.

- Our Young Innovator Grant program and Vignette Competition will be sending out calls for proposals soon! Be on the lookout for more on the application process for both of these programs.