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Massachusetts General Hospital, a
900-bed academic medical center located in
Boston, is a founding member of Partners
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ing affiliate of Harvard Medical School.

This magazine is intended to present advances in medicine
and biotechnology for general informational purposes. The
opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed in this publica-
tion are not necessarily those of the MGH. For personal
health issues, the MGH encourages readers to consult with
a qualified health care professional.



About the time this issue of *Proto* reaches your door, the ABC News documentary *Boston Med* will be wrapping up its summer run. For eight consecutive Thursday nights, millions of viewers will have had an intimate look inside three Boston hospitals—Massachusetts General, Brigham and Women’s, and Children’s—and been riveted by moments ranging from heart-wrenching to humorous, from devastating to heroic. Critical response to the series has been overwhelmingly positive, and feedback from patients has been gratifying.

Still, some people have wondered why we would invite cameras to record very personal scenes, when patients, families and our staff were at their most vulnerable. Protecting patient privacy was our foremost concern, and those who chose to participate had the opportunity to opt out even long after the film crews had gone. We decided to take part because a prime-time documentary series could help demystify what goes on at places such as the MGH for an audience we might not otherwise reach.

Amid calls for health care “transparency,” *Boston Med* gave us a unique opportunity to go beyond revealing numbers—about costs, quality measures, statistical trends—to show the inner workings of what we do, enabling us to complement the stories we tell in our press releases, presentations and media interviews. *Proto* serves a different audience, of medical professionals, policymakers and others who want to understand the latest developments in biomedical science, clinical care and health policy. Yet like *Boston Med*, *Proto* is a one-of-a-kind vehicle for describing not just what we achieve but also what’s happening in the world of medicine beyond our walls. In this issue, for example, we feature researchers from across the country who are exploring whether computerized algorithms could improve medical decision-making. We also consider how new research into post-traumatic stress disorder may help thousands of troops returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan with memories that continue to haunt—and in this case, one important part of the story is unfolding here, in a program called Home Base that we have established with the Red Sox Foundation. While supporting research into the disorder, Home Base also encourages veterans to seek treatment, working with their families and raising awareness of PTSD among physicians.

One of our responsibilities is to teach, and if that mandate is to take us beyond students, interns and residents, then we must be open to using unconventional, even risky means. *Boston Med* let us open our doors to a public fascinated by the people and the processes that shape medical care. *Proto* allows us to leverage our position as a research leader to deliver chapter after chapter in the larger, never-ending story of medical progress. Not every story has a successful ending, but they all need to be told.

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