



## **Partners HealthCare supervisor Jessica Gayden ‘pays it forward’**

Two years ago, Jessica Gayden felt like her professional life was going nowhere. Today, she’s a hospital supervisor, helping others start careers in health care.

**Jessica Gayden, a health care supervisor at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, is just two years removed from feeling like her career was in limbo. Today she supervises 11 people and assists others in obtaining jobs in the health care field through the program that helped her get her start, the Partners Career and Workforce Development Program (PCWD). (File photo)**

Gayden got her start through the Partners Career and Workforce Development Program (PCWD), a three-year old initiative started by Partners HealthCare that has helped nearly 600 Boston residents get entry-level jobs or advance up the career ladder at Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH), Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH).

After hearing about PCWD from a family member, Gayden completed the five-week job readiness training program in September 2005. Two months later, she was hired as a coordinator in the Weiner Center for Pre-Operative Evaluation at BWH, with responsibilities including checking patients in for pre-operative appointments, scheduling their surgeries and other administrative tasks. Gayden was promoted less than a year later, and today she supervises 11 people — some of whom are other PCWD graduates.

“Without this program, I wouldn’t be here,” said Gayden. “The support, encouragement, motivation and content of the PCWD Program gave me the confidence I needed to get here.”

In addition to the support of the PCWD staff, Gayden’s managers at BWH, Chris MacIver and Brian Roux, have provided the leadership, motivation and foundation for her success. Less than three months after Gayden started her job, her oldest child became ill and needed to be hospitalized. MacIver, her manager at the time, gave her the time off she needed to be with and care for her son. That vote of confidence and understanding has given Gayden the strength and security to remain a dedicated and hardworking employee.

In collaboration with the three hospitals, Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) and Project Hope, Partners runs the PCWD pre-employment program four times a year and accepts 10-12 participants in each cycle. Applicants should be Boston residents, have graduated high

school, have at least one year of consecutive work experience and be interested in a career in health care.

The first two-and-a-half weeks of training are in a classroom setting, and include training on customer service skills, medical terminology, resume writing and interviewing skills. The students then intern within the Partners hospitals as office assistants, operating room instrument technicians, laboratory aides and other entry-level positions.

After graduation, PCWD graduates receive job placement assistance. After they are placed, PCWD continues to support their career development and work-life balance issues, such as housing and childcare advocacy.

Cynthia Briggs, director of PCWD, says Gayden's story is not unique.

“As the largest health care employer in Massachusetts, Partners HealthCare is deeply committed to helping low income residents get jobs with family-supporting salaries and benefits,” Briggs said. “Providing economic opportunity for Boston residents is part of our mission, but it also makes good business sense as we work to build a health care labor force for the future.”

Jan. 22 is the deadline to apply for the next PCWD class, which begins Feb. 26. For more information on the PCWD program visit [www.partners.org/pcwd](http://www.partners.org/pcwd).

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