TO: Students Entering the *Pathways* Curriculum in August 2016  
FROM: Edward M. Hundert, MD, Dean for Medical Education  

Welcome to Harvard Medical School! One of the centerpieces of the *Pathways* curriculum is the *Practice of Medicine (POM)*, a weekly longitudinal course in which you will begin seeing patients with a primary care preceptor early in medical school. Students are assigned to an education-medical “home” within one of our teaching hospitals, where they are integrated into a primary care/ambulatory practice and become a member of the medical team. An innovative feature of this introductory clinical course design is the effort to continue the experience at the same clinical site into Year II of the MD program, the *Principal Clinical Experience (PCE)*, providing two years of continuity experience with a group of clinicians and patients into the longitudinal Primary Care Clerkship (PCC). Indeed, we hope many students will choose to return to this same clinic, where lasting relationships will have been formed, during Years III and IV, both to teach and mentor first-year students and to help the clinical practice work on quality improvement projects.

The Practice of Medicine course is based in one of four Harvard-affiliated clinical systems that also host the second-year PCE, during which students complete their core clinical clerkships (medicine, surgery, ob/gyn, pediatrics, neurology, psychiatry, and radiology). These four sites are Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH), Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). HMS students have done all their core clerkships at one of these four sites (students at BIDMC and BWH do pediatrics at Boston Children’s Hospital) for over a decade, and the quality of the education has been shown time and again to be outstanding and equal. In the *Pathways* curriculum, there is ample time in Years III and IV to take elective clerkships at any or all of the Harvard-affiliated hospitals.

One of the PCE sites, Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), organizes its PCE in a qualitatively different way than the other three, so we are writing to offer the opportunity to enter a lottery for assignment to CHA for both the POM and the PCE. In the *Pathways* curriculum, 12 MD students will be enrolled at CHA in POM in Year I and in the PCE in Year II. The PCE at CHA is known as the “Cambridge Integrated Clerkship” (CIC) because the clerkship disciplines are experienced longitudinally throughout the year, rather than in discipline-based blocks, as they are in the PCEs at BIDMC, BWH and MGH. All sites have longitudinal case conferences and seminars, but in the CIC, students follow medical, surgical, pediatric and other types of patients longitudinally over 12 months through all phases of diagnosis and treatment, all services, hospitalizations, and follow-up after discharge. CHA is also the only public sector hospital system of the four, while the others are research-intensive, tertiary care hospital systems. The stated vision of Cambridge Health Alliance is to be the premier academic public health institution in the nation. Medical students who seek clinical experiences at CHA are often those interested in health system transformation, global health, underserved populations, public health and medical education reform.

All Pathways students will be randomized to one of the three block-rotation sites unless they request to enter the lottery for the CIC. If you would like to be included in the lottery for CIC, please register for the lottery [here](http://ecommons.med.harvard.edu/pub_forms.asp?sid=HMS_4035) no later than JUNE 13th. We will inform the class of their POM site assignments mid-July.

To learn more about all of Harvard’s Affiliates, please visit their [web sites](http://ecommons.med.harvard.edu/pub_forms.asp?sid=HMS_4035).