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REPORT TO DONORS



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## A Higher Level of Innovation

Doctors were puzzled by the patient's large lesions and patches of red, numb-to-the-touch bumps. Maybe it was an allergic reaction. Maybe she had contracted a disease. But one thing was certain...they had never seen a condition like hers before.

Like many of the patients who seek medical attention at Danbury Hospital's Seifert and Ford Family Community Health Center, this woman had nowhere else to turn. She had limited income and no health insurance. The questions about this case are twofold: How do doctors diagnose conditions they have never seen? And if an infectious disease outbreak or bioterrorism threat had occurred, how would they know?

**The answers lay with a cutting-edge technology known simply as VisualDx.**



Dr. Dino Messina who is the associate program director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program at Danbury Hospital, was introduced to VisualDx at a scientific meeting. With the world's largest library of over 50,000 images, VisualDx is designed to speed disease recognition for faster, more accurate decision making by doctors.

Dr. Messina understood the importance of helping clinical staff and individual physicians keep up with a vast and growing medical knowledge base. He felt the VisualDx software would not just help patients by speeding diagnoses, but could serve as an excellent teaching tool for his residents and

provide information about disease outbreaks (like pandemic flu) or bioterrorism threats (like an Anthrax scare), to physicians hospital-wide.

When donors Dale and Laura Kutnick heard about this relatively simple opportunity to help, they enthusiastically donated the \$33,000 necessary for the VisualDx system.

According to Dr. Messina, making a differential diagnosis involves identifying several probable causes of an ailment. For example, a rash may appear to be poison ivy, but it can look like many other conditions as well. In the past, doctors researched and cross-referenced medical textbooks and sources. "Thanks to the foresight and generosity of the Kutnicks, we now have a tool that allows us to do that in a visual, user-friendly way", says Dr. Messina. According to Logical Images, the developer of VisualDx, diagnoses with the software are 120% more accurate than traditional methods.

VisualDx also provides Danbury Hospital doctors with instant access to potentially life-saving information through alerts and allows them to report cases to the community at large. "If a disease outbreak, terrorism threat, radiation leak or any type of emergency were to occur, VisualDx would help us to quickly assess, diagnose and treat our patients," says Dr. Jose Pinero, an Internist and Emergency Medicine Physician.

In the case of the mystery patient, Danbury's Seifert and Ford doctors asked questions, ran tests and came to the preliminary and stunning diagnosis of an ailment rarely seen in the United States: leprosy. The doctors used VisualDx to confirm their diagnosis and quickly referred the patient to an infectious disease specialist. The patient was treated, and valuable time was saved. If there had been an outbreak in the community, VisualDx would have also alerted doctors to this crucial information.

**Like so many other success stories that are a result of teamwork, all it took for Danbury Hospital doctors to make a world-class diagnosis and yield a positive outcome was a great idea, an open mind, and a generous donor.**



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