



LIONS of MEDICINE

Department of medicine, Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Robert C. Aber, M.D., M.A.C.P

J. Lloyd Huck Chair in Medicine

Professor and Chair, Department of Medicine



The Department of medicine recently underwent an internal and external review to determine the progress, or lack thereof, we have made in each of our missions since the last reviews in 2002. I met with the external reviewers toward the end of their visit, and received positive feedback in many areas as well as practical advice as to how we might address perceived challenges and opportunities. I think the reviewers sized us up pretty well, and am deeply appreciative for their candor with me. Dean Paz will be joining our faculty meeting on march 22 to discuss the findings and recommendations of the reviews—please plan to attend. This issue includes a Research Update by Brian Reeves, a Divisional Spotlight on Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism by Andrea Manni, and a residency program update by our Chief Residents.

See CHAIR'S MESSAGE

(Continued Page 4)

Research Update: Department Review

By W. Brian Reeves, M.D.

The Department of Medicine has made a concerted effort over the past five years to expand its funded research base. This effort has involved both the recruitment of new, funded, investigators, development of junior investigators and support for its established investigators. It is useful to periodically assess the direction, quality, size, costs and needs of the research program in order to plan for its future success. The Department has recently completed two such reviews of its research, and other, missions: a department retreat and the departmental review conducted through the Dean's office.

At the department retreat last fall, a group consisting of Leslie Parent, Marc Kaufmann, Jose Stoute, Cynthia Chuang, Andrea Manni, Chris Sciamanna, Wafik El-Deiry and myself met for two days to identify weaknesses and opportunities in our current research program and to begin to formulate plans to correct those deficiencies and enhance the effectiveness of our investigators. Several needs emerged from these discussions, including:

1. The need to develop a better departmental infrastructure to support investigators in both the pre-award and post-award processing of grant proposals
2. The need for increased availability of pilot grants
3. The need for fundraising efforts specifically targeted for research
4. The need to improve the culture of research within the department

Of these, the first was felt to be our most immediate need. This view was confirmed by a follow-up survey of department faculty which indicated that over 50% of research faculty reported that they received inadequate administrative support in the preparation of grants and management of awards, particularly in the construction of budgets and tracking of research expenditures. In response to these findings, the department hired a second financial analyst, Beth Conner, to join Naveed Sheikh in assisting investigators with the financial aspects of grant administration. We have also met with senior leadership of the College and received approval to hire a third financial analyst who will assist investigators in the construction of budgets for new grant proposals. While these steps address only a portion of the administrative burden facing investigators, they fill an important and immediate need. Planning for how to address the other administrative needs of investigators in an efficient manner, recognizing the fiscal constraints in our medical center, is an ongoing process.

See Research Update: Department Review (Continued on Page 3)

Divisional Spotlight

DIVISION OF ENDOCRINOLOGY, DIABETES, AND METABOLISM

Andrea Manni, M.D., Chief, Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism

The Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism is committed to the institutional goals of enhancing the quality of life through improved health, the professional preparation of those who will serve the health needs of others, and the discovery of knowledge that will benefit all. The Division has recently made great strides in meeting these goals.

Our fellowship training program, under the leadership of Andrea Manni, M.D., Fellowship Program Director, and John Jun, M.D., Assistant Program Director, continues with full accreditation from the ACGME. We receive over 150 applicants for two positions through ERAS and participate in the NRMP for candidate selection.

Our training program offers a two-year track which includes six months of research. Two of our recent fellowship program graduates, Nazia Raja-Khan, M.D., and John Jun, M.D., completed an additional third year of research and were then invited to join the faculty of the Division.

Dr. Raja-Khan completed her fellowship training and joined the faculty in 2007. In January, 2008, she competed successfully for a NIH-funded institutional BIRCHW award, which is targeted for investigators performing clinical research in women related health issues (Dr. Raja-Khan's research focuses on polycystic ovary syndrome). This award provided seventy-five percent salary support for two years, allowing her to have protected time for her research. Dr. Raja-Khan has been very successful and appears to be on the way to obtaining a five-year, K23 NIH Career Development Award.

Dr. Jun completed his fellowship and joined our faculty in 2008. He was accepted into the Physician Scientist Program of the institution, which provides partial salary support for three years, to help him establish his own independent research program. His primary focus is on basic research in the area of mechanisms of endothelial dysfunction in relation to cardiovascular complications in type 1 diabetes. Dr. Jun also serves as Assistant Program Director for the Fellowship Training Program.

In research news, Dr. Manni, Principal Investigator, along with Dr. Karam El-Bayoumy (Penn State Cancer Institute), Co-Principal Investigator, continues his research program, a five-year, \$7.5 million Promise Grant from Susan G. Komen for the Cure. This grant, titled, "Combination of low-dose antiestrogens with omega-3 fatty acids for prevention of hormone-independent breast cancer" is a collaborative effort, involving several other investigators at Penn State College of Medicine, University Park, Fox Chase Cancer Center and Colorado State University. This research includes preclinical models of mammary carcinogenesis as well as a clinical trial in postmenopausal women at increased risk of breast cancer because of high breast density.

Robert Gabbay, M.D., Ph.D., has been helping to lead an effort to transform primary care across the state of Pennsylvania with an initial focus on diabetes. The Pennsylvania Chronic Care Initiative involves over 150 practices across the state (including several at our institution) and is the largest statewide multi-payer Patient Centered Medical Home effort in the country. His recent Agency for Healthcare Quality Research grant focuses on better understanding the transformation process.

Dr. William Kovacs, Professor of Medicine, was recruited from the University of Texas in July, 2010. Dr. Kovacs is a clinician scientist with a research interest in androgen modulation of immune response. He has an ongoing collaboration with Dr. Nancy Olsen, the newly recruited Chief of Rheumatology. Dr. Saima Durvesh and Dr. Ariana Pichardo-Lowden have recently been recruited from our Fellowship Program as part-time clinicians, also involved in education and clinical research. Jennifer Young, MSN, RN-BC, joined our team of Diabetes Nurse Educators in December, 2010.

LIONS of MEDICINE

The internal department review was chaired by Chris Sciamanna. The committee reviewed progress made since the previous review in 2002 and included recommendations for future growth. A substantial, almost 300%, increase in extramural research funding occurred between 2002 and 2010. Over that time, eighteen physician scientists and 29 basic scientists were recruited to the department, often tied to the recruitment of new division chiefs. The number of NIH RO1 awards has tripled and the number of NIH career development awards has increased from one or two to seven. The latter is reflective of our emphasis on early career development and hopefully will translate into RO1 level funding in the coming years. At the same time, the committee noted external forces, such as decreasing NIH pay lines and a decrease in the physician-scientist pipeline, which threaten our continued growth and success. They offered several recommendations to deal with these threats:

1. Improve the administrative support for submitting and managing grants.
2. Increase research funding for pilot studies and bridge funding.
3. Increase protected time for research for faculty members without grants when likelihood of future funding is high.
4. Recruit and provide support for more clinician scientists.
5. Diversify the research funding portfolio
6. Improve the research mentoring of junior faculty.
7. More closely monitor and think proactively about research space

Clearly, that group identified many of the same concerns which were noted at the departmental retreat. The external review group visited our department in January and its report is not yet available. However, one question which they asked repeatedly was ‘what is your vision for your research program and how do you intend to reach it?’ This is a fundamental question which we have not tackled as a department.

In summary, we have made great progress as a department in building a strong and vibrant research base. However, many challenges remain which will require the wise advice and dedicated effort of all of our department investigators to solve. We are in the process of defining a departmental structure to facilitate such a broad-based effort and I look forward to everyone’s participation.

Research Notes

Department of Medicine Research Day will be held Tuesday May 31 in the University Conference Center. Please mark your calendars. This year we will team with the Department of Public Health Sciences. The announcement for on-line abstract submission will be issued shortly.

The Center for Integrated HealthCare Delivery Systems (CIHDS) is sponsoring a workshop on March 28 at the Nittany Lion Inn. CIHDS has worked with HMC on the redesign of its ED and is currently working with Dr. Carol Freer to optimize the ED-inpatient transition. CIHDS was recently awarded a \$1 million grant from NSF to continue its research into solving problems of access and quality in healthcare. The workshop will help to determine priorities for the research and education activities of the Center. Those interested in attending the workshop can get more information at <http://www.healthcaredelivery.psu.edu/Workshop/Workshop2011.html>

Departmental Research Conferences are held the first Friday of each month at noon. Please try to attend.

Congratulations to Wafik S. El-Diery, Rose Dunlap Chair and Chief of the Division of Hematology/Oncology upon his receipt of the Kuwait Prize in Applied Sciences by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

DIVISIONAL SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Goals for the future include optimizing the mentorship of junior academic faculty so they can be successful in obtaining extramural funding. The implementation of a well structured mentoring team mechanism has already paid off with the likely upcoming extramural funding of Dr. Nazia Raja-Khan. We are also focused on recruiting academically oriented fellows and providing them with the necessary mentoring for them to become successful independent investigators. We continue to be committed to teaching and providing optimal care to our patients.

Chief Resident Update

New Era for Internal Medicine

Matthew Evans, M.D., Jason Stepp, M.D., and Nathan Yeasted, M.D.

A new era is quickly approaching for the Internal Medicine Residency Program. Not only are we about to introduce the most sweeping changes to our ward services in the past decade, but we have also come to the end of one of the most competitive interview seasons to date.

As we continue to pride ourselves in our mission statement to educate and train superior physicians, we are excited to introduce an entirely restructured Internal Medicine ward service effective March 1st. With a continued focus of providing the best in quality patient care and educating our resident staff, preparations for teams with lower overall census numbers, greater focus on intern participation in admissions and more time available for each admission allowing greater teaching and patient care was envisioned over one year ago. Through the efforts of the residency administration and current resident staff, a totally revamped system is quickly approaching. As of March 1st, we will introduce a relatively innovative drip system for our admission process in which admissions are equally distributed among the three teaching and our non-teaching services. The new admission system will allow for multiple teams to work on admissions on each day, expediting the admission process when multiple admissions are requested. Additionally, by increasing the capacity and capability of our non-teaching service, we plan to introduce lower team caps, allowing for more educational time between teaching faculty and residents. These changes will also enable us to create a different team structure with only one senior resident on each teaching team, allowing each of our third year residents one additional month of elective opportunity.

In March, we will also introduce new ward structures and call schedules for our VA and MICU rotations to accommodate the new ACGME hour requirements for first year residents.

All of this is in preparation for what we anticipate to be an exciting Match Day for our incoming interns on March 17th. We have had the opportunity to interview an incredibly well-qualified group of candidates this year and would like extend our warmest gratitude to all involved with the interview process, from current and past residents to faculty. We have had tremendous feedback from many of our candidates that interviewed here and we anticipate that this exceptional recruiting season will translate once again into an excellent future class of first year residents.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR (Continued from Cover)

Carol Freer, April Armstrong, and David Marsch organized our inaugural Anesthesia, Medicine and Orthopaedics multidisciplinary Morbidity and Mortality Conference which was well attended and addressed important issues of communications, responsibilities, and transitions among services. I can't help but believe this will build respect and trust among our colleagues, and continuously improve the care we provide our patients. Thank you all for all you do to make this a better place to work each and every day!

LIONS of MEDICINE

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE EMPLOYEE OF THE FOURTH QUARTER



Mary Maiolo

Mary Maiolo received the Employee of the Fourth Quarter in the Department of Medicine for 2010. Mary has been an employee of the Penn State Hershey Medical Center since November of 1992 where she joined the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology. Mary is a dedicated and compassionate employee to both her division and the department. She is a team player and performs at an outstanding level, providing administrative support and demonstrates true leadership in her work making sure the office is running smoothly and efficiently. Mary displays outstanding customer service while exhibiting friendliness, professionalism and loyalty. Her accountability is of high caliber due to her sufficient job proficiency and attention to detail in everything she does. Mary is considered to be an extreme asset to the division. She is well deserving of this award.

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE EMPLOYEE OF THE FIRST QUARTER



Tracey Erickson

Tracey Erickson has been awarded employee of the First Quarter from the Department of Medicine Rewards and Recognition Committee. Tracey is a devoted employee who works non-stop dealing with difficult situations within her division on a daily basis. She is always the first to step up to do whatever is necessary within the division or department. She is always positive, polite and very professional. In addition to her normal divisional duties, Tracey agreed to assist with the Promotion and Tenure process during the transition of the Department of Medicine Coordinator of Administrative Support. Her willingness to perform this additional duty has been a tremendous asset to the department. Please join me in congratulating Tracey for her outstanding performance.

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

WELCOME TO OUR NEW FACULTY & STAFF



Hyacinth DePamphilis, M.D.
General Internal Medicine
State College



Nancy Parson, PA-C
Infectious Disease

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