Portraits of Caring

Annual Report 2007-08

View Gavin’s story.

View Andrea’s story.

View the Kiss Hershey Back story.

View the THON 2008 story.

Read it.

Read it.

Read it.

Read it.

Portraits of Caring

Patient Care >

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Harold L. Paz, M.D.
Chief Executive Officer,
Senior Vice President for Health Affairs,
and Dean
It’s my pleasure to present you with the Annual Report for the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and Penn State College of Medicine.

The past year has witnessed numerous exciting developments on our Hershey campus and beyond, many of which are highlighted in this report. This year’s report brings our four missions—education, research, patient care, and community engagement—into focus by profiling people whose stories illustrate Penn State Hershey’s unique role as the only academic medical center in central Pennsylvania.

Our campus and health system continued to grow over the past year. In addition to growth on our Hershey campus, we entered into two major joint ventures—the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute and the Penn State Hershey Rehabilitation Hospital—both of which allow us to grow through partnerships and in ways that will better serve the needs of our patients and the community. In Hershey, our new ambulatory care facility, 30 Hope Drive, opened in March 2008 on the east end of campus. With over 100 exam rooms, the building significantly expands our outpatient clinic capacity, and increases ease of access for our patients.

Several of our patients’ stories are highlighted here, including Gavin Gilhool, who has made an amazing recovery from a life-threatening head injury, thanks to the care he received at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital. It will come as no surprise to anyone who has heard the Gilhool family’s story that our Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital was listed among the nation’s best children’s hospitals by U.S. News & World Report in spring 2008.

We are extremely proud of this recognition for our Children’s Hospital, but it’s far from being the only major recognition we received during the year. In August 2007, we received Magnet Recognition—a designation that speaks to the quality of our nursing staff. In the profile of Kelli Lingg, you will learn more about Magnet status means and about the tremendous effort our nursing staff put into ensuring that every patient we treat receives outstanding, compassionate care. More recently, our Penn State Hershey Heart and Vascular Institute received a Gold Seal accreditation from the Joint Commission for the Ventricular Assist Device (VAD) program. In this report you will meet Tim Ritchie, one of the patients who has experienced first-hand the benefits of this program.

The past year brought success in our research mission as well, with Penn State Hershey researchers securing close to $100 million in sponsored research; this included an increase in funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), despite flat funding at the federal level. Among those profiled are Dr. Gavin Robertson, whose research on melanoma is bringing us closer to a cure for this deadly form of skin cancer, and Dr. Mark Dias, whose work on shaken-baby syndrome has resulted in successful education programs aimed at reducing the incidence of this tragic and very preventable injury.

The individuals profiled represent both our history and our future. Since the year just concluded marked the fortieth anniversary of the College of Medicine, it’s fitting that we profile one of our long-time faculty members, Dr. Cheston “Chet” Berlin, professor of pediatrics, who was recently named an Honorary Alumnus of Penn State University. In these pages, you will also meet the first-year medical students who motivated a whole community to come together to “Kiss Hershey Back,” and whose efforts exemplified a spirit of engagement with the community. Graduate student Andy Beyer, recipient of a prestigious National Science Foundation fellowship, personifies the College of Medicine’s ongoing commitment to educating the next generation of biomedical researchers.

I hope you enjoy the profiles included in this year’s annual report. As we look to the future and welcome new students, faculty and staff, and patients and families to Penn State Hershey, some of the faces and individual stories that make up our community will change—but our overarching story will remain one of hope and discovery.
Near capacity—for much of fiscal year 2007-08, that was the status at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, with many days virtually near filled. With physical constraints in the hospital and the need for more inpatient beds, the Medical Center looked at ways to effectively serve more patients.

Patient Numbers
The Medical Center saw an increase in patient volumes in all areas except hospital admissions which were affected in the second half of the year by the overall worsening economic conditions in our country. Emergency department visits were up by 6.9 percent over the prior fiscal year; surgical cases were up 2.3 percent; and outpatient visits were up 4.4 percent.

Transition
To serve more patients, the Medical Center took several innovative steps. These changes present a win-win for the hospital and its partners. While giving these programs space to grow, new inpatient bed space has been made available and is currently being renovated.

First, the Medical Center partnered with Select Medical Corporation on the new Penn State Hershey Rehabilitation Hospital, freeing up space in the hospital for the addition of adult surgical beds. In a temporary location now, a permanent site has been chosen in Hershey about one mile from the Medical Center for a new forty-four bed rehabilitation hospital.

Second, the Medical Center partnered with PinnacleHealth for the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute (PPI) to provide adult and child psychiatry inpatient services. Located in Harrisburg, PPI improves access to behavioral health for at-risk and medically underserved populations. At the same time, it frees up space in the Medical Center for additional intensive care unit (ICU) beds and operating rooms.

Our 30 Hope Drive outpatient clinic building also opened this year. Located on the Medical Center’s East Health Campus, this building is home to such services as orthopaedics, sports medicine, neurosurgery, Penn State Hershey Breast Center, and radiology, and features more than 100 exam rooms, CT and MRI, and a rehabilitation suite.
Building Continues

Construction of the Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute continues, with a projected opening of Spring 2009. This building will unite under one roof outpatient services for our cancer patients with our promising cancer research. In addition, it will be an important development in achieving National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation—the hallmark accreditation for comprehensive cancer centers.

The free-standing Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital moved another step closer this year, with ground-breaking slated for 2009. When completed, the number of inpatient beds and operating rooms at the Medical Center will significantly increase, while at the same time offering a more family-centered environment to care for our youngest patients.

Honors And Awards

Despite being a “hospital within a hospital,” Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital received impressive accolades this year when *U.S. News & World Report* named it one of America’s best children’s hospitals for treatment of respiratory disease.

Our nursing staff was recognized as part of an elite group when Penn State Hershey Medical Center was granted Magnet™ Recognition from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. Less than 5 percent of health care organizations worldwide have received this recognition.

One quarter of our doctors—140 of them—were named to the Best Doctors in America® list, more than any other hospital in the area. In addition, an impressive seventy-four of our healthcare providers were recognized in the 99th percentile nationwide in patient satisfaction scores based on data from consulting company Press Ganey.

In December, the Medical Center received full re-accreditation from the Joint Commission, an independent organization that accredits or certifies health care organizations and programs in the United States. In addition, our stroke program was awarded the Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval™, as was our ventricular assist device, or VAD, program.

The Medical Center was also ranked in the top 100 in Cleverly and Associates’ National Community Value Index™ listing for a second straight year. The index measures the value a hospital provides to its community by demonstrating low costs, low charges, and efficient use of financial resources. One of only four hospitals in Pennsylvania selected, the Medical Center also earned a Five-Star distinction.
Gavin Gilhool fell thirty feet out of his parents’ bedroom window. Only eleven days later, lying in a hospital bed, the 5-year-old was choosing to wear a red shirt.

The Gilhools are quick to credit the care Gavin received at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital for his recovery.

On August 18, 2007, Gavin’s fall left him lying on the pavement below.

“The window was only open for thirty seconds,” Gavin’s father, Patrick, remembers. “I saw the screen pushed out and knew that Gavin had fallen.”

“In a split second, I heard my husband scream. ‘9-1-1. He’s out the window.’” Gavin’s mother, Kristin says. Patrick ran to his son’s side.

“I saw Gavin in a fetal position,” Patrick remembers. “I got down on my knees and I just held his head and cradled him and said ‘hey buddy, how you doing?’”

White spinal fluid leaked from Gavin’s ear.

“I knew this was bad,” Patrick says.

Kristin looked down from the window, saying words that no parent should have to: “Is he dead?”

“I said ‘No, not yet, but I thought he was . . .’” Patrick says.

Gavin was rushed by Penn State Hershey Life Lion to the pediatric intensive care unit at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital.

In a coma with his left side skull bones broken, doctors admit, it didn’t look good.

“When Gavin arrived at the hospital he was critically ill,” Neal Thomas, M.D., explains. “He had a severe head injury. We were concerned he wasn’t going to survive. While we never take hope away, we want to make sure they understand the reality of the situation.”

Kristin would sit by her son, hoping he could hear her.

“All I did was hold his hand and keep believing that he was going to make a full recovery. I never lost faith and hope,” says Kristin.

Which led to the choice of shirts. Despite being unresponsive, hospital staff had suggested Gavin be changed into play clothes. With a blue shirt in one hand, and a red in the other, Kristin asked if he’d like to wear the blue one.

Gavin shook his head no—he wanted the red one. His road to recovery was beginning.

“Children are resilient,” Thomas says. “They bounce back pretty quickly. An adult wouldn’t have had the same recovery.”

Despite rehabilitation to relearn how to walk and talk, and a future surgery to address hearing loss, Gavin’s made a significant recovery.

The only change? Before his fall, Gavin was a Pittsburgh Steelers fan. After? Philadelphia Eagles.

The Gilhools are thankful for Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital, and the expert care it provides.

“They saved his life,” Kristin says. “They saved his life.”

—Matthew G. Solovey

Create a Home for Hope

Central Pennsylvania is one step closer to a free-standing children's hospital. In May 2008, it was announced that $50 million had been raised towards the construction of a new building for Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, currently located on the seventh floor of the Medical Center.

"With continued strong support from the community, we look forward to completing construction of a new free-standing children's hospital by 2012," Harold L. Paz, M.D., CEO of the Medical Center, said.

The new facility will provide more physical space for patients. Completely child/family-focused, the rooms will allow for more privacy. It will be designed for the full integration of pediatric services to allow for seamless patient care.

The Best in Care

Children's Hospital was ranked among the best in the nation for the treatment of respiratory disease in June 2008 by being listed in U.S. News & World Report's 2008 edition of America's Best Children's Hospitals.

The listing is especially noteworthy since others listed are free-standing facilities.

"Despite our space constraints, we continue to stretch as much as we possibly can," said A. Craig Hillemeier, M.D., medical director, Children's Hospital. “Our services and program continue to grow for the benefit of our patients and their families. This new recognition further supports the need for our future facility to benefit our community and beyond.”

The rankings were based on a methodology that weighed a three-part blend of reputation, outcome, and care-related measures including nursing care, advanced technology, and credentialing.
The Medical Center partnered with PinnacleHealth System to establish the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute (PPI), a new organization devoted to enhancing access to psychiatric care and laying the foundation for potential expansion of mental health services in central Pennsylvania.

Beginning operation in April 2008, the new not-for-profit institute features the services of more than two dozen board-certified psychiatrists and separate units dedicated to the care of elderly, adult, and pediatric/adolescent behavioral health patients.

PPI also will foster enhanced study and understanding of mental illness, diagnosis and treatment, and intends to establish research programs that are vital to offering the highest quality of psychiatric care.

The Medical Center partnered with Select Medical Corporation to create the Penn State Hershey Rehabilitation Hospital, a state-of-the-art, medical rehabilitation hospital that increases access to and enhances the quality of adult inpatient rehabilitation care in central Pennsylvania.

Until a new facility is built in Hershey, the hospital is temporarily located at the Memorial Building at Polyclinic Hospital in Harrisburg.

The Medical Center’s third floor rehab unit will be converted to serve as additional medical/surgical space, increasing the amount of acute care hospital beds available for patients at the Medical Center.
Walking down the halls of the American University of Beirut Medical Center, Kelli Lingg, M.S., R.N., C.E.N., N.E.-B.C., finds herself half a world away. Although Kelli may be a stranger to this new world, where farm lands are replaced by deserts, armed military soldiers line the streets, and the threat of violence is a constant, Kelli is not a stranger to the work she is doing there. That’s because it is Kelli’s tremendous work and extensive experience as Penn State Hershey Medical Center’s Magnet™ project director that encouraged the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) to contact her for guidance on its own Magnet Recognition journey.

Although Penn State Hershey Medical Center’s journey to becoming Magnet, like all hospitals, was not easy, becoming the first to gain accreditation in the Middle East comes with added complications.

“They definitely have their challenges,” Kelli says. “The competition for nurses by wealthier and more peaceful Arab nations puts them at a disadvantage, and so does the lack of nurse practice standards and specialty certification exams that exist for nurses in Lebanon.”

It would be easy to imagine that an institution faced with such challenges through this long journey would become jaded and pessimistic, but Kelli says the nurses and employees of AUBMC are exactly the opposite.

“The feeling becomes almost tangible when you’re around people who are so passionate about what they’re doing. They know their surroundings and the violence that goes on and they truly don’t take life for granted.”

For the three days that Kelli spent in Lebanon reviewing their Magnet application and offering suggestions and advice, the nurses at AUBMC made sure to express their gratitude.

“They were so kind and generous. I had to buy a new suitcase just to hold all of the gifts they had given me.”

Kelli’s experience abroad has given her memories as well as new perspective on life.

“I think sometimes we just get caught up in the same routine day in and day out and it becomes easier to forget how truly fortunate we are. We are so blessed to be apart of an institution that provides wonderful care and to have access to the resources we need to achieve excellence.”

While Kelli continues to work to maintain Penn State Hershey Medical Center’s Magnet status by constantly rising to meet growing expectations, she can only hope that the American University of Beirut Medical Center will be as fortunate.

“I can’t wait to go back there to celebrate with them next year if they make it. That would be awesome.”

To date there are only 293 healthcare organizations that are recognized by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Magnet for nursing excellence—with Penn State Hershey Medical Center being named last August. Of those, only two are outside of the United States.

—Brittany Schwartz
Celebration

The Medical Center—and its dedicated nursing staff—learned it is one of an elite group of 256 health care organizations worldwide, when it received the nursing profession’s highest honor: Magnet recognition through the American Nurses Credentialing Center. The announcement was made in front of a packed hospital auditorium on August 15, 2007 and was the culmination of a more than three-year journey.

“I am so very proud of who we are and what we have become through our Magnet journey,” said Donna Reck, M.S.N., R.N., C.N.A., B.C., chief nursing officer of the Medical Center.

The Medical Center submitted a 2,200 page application and hosted a four-day site appraisal to be considered for Magnet status.
Service Excellence
In October 2007, the Medical Center recognized seventy-four care providers named to the Dean’s List for scoring in the 99th percentile nationwide for patient satisfaction during fiscal year 2006-07. Twelve providers were honored the year prior.

In addition, another fifty-nine providers earned scores in the 95th to 98th percentile, while thirty scored in the 90th to 94th percentile nationwide. The scores are derived from patient satisfaction surveys conducted by consulting firm Press Ganey for hospitals across the country.
Unless they are healthy enough to be eligible for a heart transplant and lucky enough to find a suitable donor, nearly all heart failure patients needing a mechanical heart pump to survive will need it for the rest of their lives—it is considered their destination therapy. But experts within Penn State Hershey Heart and Vascular Institute are finding ways to nurse ailing hearts back to health.

On June 10, 2008, six months after surgeons implanted a ventricular assist device (VAD) in Tim Ritchie to support his failing heart, the 34-year-old walked out of the Medical Center with a recuperated heart and no heart pump.

The fact that Tim’s pump was removed after his own heart resumed its full circulatory capacity was a significant milestone in his life and in the history of the Medical Center’s use of mechanical circulatory support. Of the more than 350 heart pumps implanted in Hershey, only one other patient was able to recover full function of her own heart.

“Only a small percentage of patients suffering the same type of heart failure Tim experienced are able to be removed from VADs after recovering full function of their hearts,” explained Walter Pae, M.D., Tim’s surgeon and the Heart and Vascular Institute’s director, cardiac surgery. Tim’s doctors aren’t certain what originally caused his heart to begin failing in October, 2007, but they believe it may have been a virus.

“It was kind of overwhelming to think that it was possible that my own heart would heal,” Tim said.

“Now to be going home without the need for a transplant feels pretty good.” Tim is once again leading a full life with his wife and three young daughters in Jonestown, Pa.

Healing hearts

“We’re working very hard on therapies that will essentially give a distressed heart the rest it needs to recuperate or to at least tolerate other life-saving interventions,” stated Heart and Vascular Institute Director Lawrence Sinoway, M.D. Sinoway credits his program’s multidisciplinary approach with making such a lofty goal even possible.

One therapy, coined TECMO (therapeutic extra-corpeal membrane oxygenation), is being championed by Aly El-Banayosy, M.D., an international heart pump expert who joined the Heart and Vascular Institute last spring. TECMO utilizes existing technology to circulate oxygen-rich blood throughout the body while bypassing the heart and lungs. Banayosy explained, “We’re able to successfully stabilize critically ill heart patients and give their bodies a chance to regain the strength they need to survive implantation of a heart pump or a donated human heart.”

Similar to Tim’s remarkable recovery through the support of a VAD, some patients receiving TECMO are able to regain full function of their own heart as a result of this therapy.

—Brent Heard
Blues Distinction

The Medical Center was named a Blue Distinction Center for Complex and Rare Cancers and a Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery. Blue Distinction, awarded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies, is designated to medical facilities that have demonstrated expertise in delivering quality health care.

Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery have well integrated programs that help promote patient safety and provide cross-functional team support to bariatric surgery patients. The Blue Distinction program has two goals: to engage consumers to enable more informed health care decisions and collaborate with providers to improve quality outcomes and affordability.

Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers are focused primarily on multidisciplinary treatment planning and complex, major surgical treatments. Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute partner Lehigh Valley Hospital earned the same distinction.

Certified Excellence

In May 2008, Penn State Hershey Heart and Vascular Institute became one of only a handful of programs nationwide and the only program in central Pennsylvania to earn the Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval™ for implanting VADs as destination therapy for patients with advanced heart failure.

Already considered a leader in research, development, and clinical use of heart pumps, the Heart and Vascular Institute voluntarily pursued this comprehensive, independent evaluation to enhance the safety and quality of its VAD program. The program underwent an extensive on-site review by a select team of Joint Commission professionals that evaluated performance in areas that affect patient care. Certification was then awarded based on the findings in the review.

The Only Trauma Accreditation

Penn State Hershey Shock Trauma Center was newly accredited as a Level I Pediatric Trauma Center and received renewal of its accreditation as a Level I Adult Trauma Center by the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation (PTSF). Penn State Hershey Shock Trauma Center is the only medical facility in Pennsylvania to be accredited as both an adult and a pediatric Level I trauma center.

“Nearly 2,700 adults and children are evaluated by Penn State Hershey Shock Trauma Center staff each year,” said Robert Cherry, M.D., adult trauma program medical director. “Our team of specially trained physicians and nurses rapidly treat severe and life-threatening injuries caused by motor vehicle accidents, falls, and other types of traumatic injury to reduce the risk of long-term disability and death.”
Joan L. Pitcher, R.N., M.S.N., M.B.A.
Joni Pitcher has been appointed chief operating officer for Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute.

As chief operating officer, Pitcher provides administrative leadership for the Cancer Institute. She is responsible for clinical programs and services, promoting excellence in education and training programs, and supporting translational research and basic science programs.

Pitcher has more than twenty years of cancer center experience, most recently as vice president of cancer services at UMass Memorial Health Care. She also spent twelve years at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, most of that time as its clinical administrative director.

Peter W. Dillon, M.D., M.Sc.
Peter W. Dillon, M.D., M.Sc., Ballantine Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, Division of Pediatric Surgery, was appointed John Anton and Marion Trescher Waldhausen Professor of Surgery, chair of the Department of Surgery. Dillon had served as interim chair since June 2006. He joined the Medical Center and College of Medicine in 1990.

As chair, Dillon oversees the education, research, and clinical programs of the ten divisions within the Department of Surgery, including artificial organs, cardiothoracic surgery, colon and rectal surgery, general surgery (minimally invasive surgery, surgical oncology, trauma/critical care surgery), otolaryngology/head and neck surgery, pediatric surgery, plastic surgery, transplant surgery, urologic surgery, and vascular surgery.

Christopher DeFlitch, M.D., F.A.C.E.P.
Christopher DeFlitch, M.D., F.A.C.E.P., vice chair, clinical services, and director, Department of Emergency Medicine, was appointed the Medical Center’s first chief medical information officer (CMIO).

In this new role, he will guide clinical information technology enhancement across the Medical Center, including advancing Connected™—the hospital’s enterprise-wide electronic medical record system, expanding partnerships with health care information technology suppliers, and overseeing critical organizational initiatives related to quality and performance improvement.
After surviving three Florida hurricanes, 70-year-old Ed Miller thought he had faced his biggest challenge. A former retired corporate pilot, Miller had weathered many storms, but none as big as a brain tumor.

Five years ago, Miller was diagnosed with acoustic neuroma, a non-malignant tumor that causes hearing loss, dizziness, and other symptoms related to the brain.

“I lost hearing in my right ear and I got a little wobbly,” said Miller. “I saw lots of doctors and some had the bedside manner of a rattlesnake. I went to Baltimore and doctors there couldn’t agree on how to treat the tumor.”

One night, Ed and his wife Carolyn were watching TV at home in Mechanicsburg, when they saw a commercial for the Medical Center’s Gamma Knife. The Gamma Knife is a radiosurgical treatment that delivers a dose of gamma radiation to the tumor with surgical precision. Although it’s called Gamma Knife, there is no blade or blood involved in the procedure.

The Millers had heard about the Gamma Knife during several of their physician visits at other hospitals, but none of those teams ever fully explained the treatment or recommended it as an option for Ed’s tumor.

“That TV commercial changed our lives,” said Miller. “We called the number and everyone was so nice and really took the time to explain the procedure to us. We got in to see a doctor within a few days and the treatment was scheduled within a week. The best part—we were able to go out to lunch just hours after the procedure.”

“We were ready to sell our house because I was afraid that Ed’s health would go down hill and he wouldn’t be able to walk up and down the stairs. But, after meeting with Dr. Jonas Sheehan, and the Gamma Knife team, we realized we should have done this five years ago,” said Carolyn Miller, Ed’s loving wife of twenty-two years.

Today, the Millers no longer have to worry about searching for the best treatment—they already found it.

“The whole experience at the Medical Center was beautiful,” said Miller.

—Heather Zell
Convenience

The new outpatient care center on the Medical Center's campus is 30 Hope Drive, which opened in March 2008 with a successful community open house featuring physicians’ talks.

The 165,000 square-foot center is designed to serve 150,000 patients during its first year of service. The new facility provides increased convenience and comfort for patients with a heightened level of collaboration between many different clinical services, providing patients with comprehensive care from some of the nation's finest physicians and surgeons, all under the same roof.

30 Hope Drive is home to:

- Penn State Hershey Neuroscience Institute (including integrated services for neurology and neurosurgery)
- Rehabilitation
- Penn State Hershey Bone and Joint Institute (including orthopaedics, rheumatology, sports medicine)
- Therapy services (including physical, occupational, and speech therapies)
- Penn State Hershey Breast Center
- Radiology, including state-of-the art MRI and CT
- Pharmacy
- Penn State Hershey Spine Center
Building a Healthier Tomorrow

The five-story, 175,000 square-foot cancer center will serve as the centerpiece of the Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute, a statewide network of hospitals dedicated to providing the latest therapies and advanced care to cancer patients. The new facility will bring together leading-edge cancer treatment with ongoing cancer research in one complex. It will position the Medical Center to earn National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation—the hallmark accreditation for comprehensive cancer centers.

The building provides three floors of patient care and two floors of research, lab and office space. Construction began in January 2007 and the anticipated opening of the building is spring 2009.
Annual Report 2007/08

Fiscal Years '04, '05, '06, '07, '08 (in thousands of dollars)

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NOTE: This summary schedule reflects selected information from the Penn State Hershey Medical Center audited financial statements.
### Summary of Inpatient and Outpatient Utilization

Fiscal Year 2003/04 through 2007/08 actual

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<td><strong>Average Length of Stay</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Surgical Cases</strong></td>
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</table>
Penn State College of Medicine continued to attract the best and brightest medical students as it celebrated its fortieth anniversary.

Matching trends nationwide, more than 7,000 students applied here, marking a 4 percent increase over last year. With about 42,000 applicants to medical school, one out of six applies to Penn State College of Medicine.

Those applying to the College of Medicine continue to show high academic credentials. Our incoming class for 2008-09 had an average GPA of 3.67 and scored an average of 9.76 on their Medical College Admission Tests (MCAT). Demographically, 43 percent are from Pennsylvania, and the class is split equally between men and women.

The college’s graduate programs also attract high-quality applicants. The forty-three graduate students have increased average Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) scores. The twenty-three women and twenty men have a quantitative average of 692, up from 691 last year; and a verbal average of 529, up from 517.

This year, the 2006-07 United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step One test results confirmed the quality of our students. With a 98 percent pass rate, Penn State College of Medicine students far exceeded the national average of 94 percent.
At the annual Match Day, where medical students discover which residency program they have been matched to, 117 graduating students took the next step in their education. Of the 125 graduating students who accepted residency program offers, 28 percent will remain in Pennsylvania, and 14 percent will remain at Penn State Hershey Medical Center. In addition, 51 percent will enter primary care.

Residency programs here also had much success. All but one program filled allotted spaces. Our 94 percent fill rate was significantly higher than the national average of 90 percent.

At the College’s thirty-eighth commencement, 125 medical students and forty graduate students received degrees. This class is the second largest in the College’s history, and featured the awarding of our first three master of homeland security degrees.

To date, the College of Medicine has presented 4,483 degrees, including 3,623 medical degrees and 860 graduate degrees.
Looking around the microbiology lab, the small room is occupied by scientists in white lab coats peering through microscopes or working on computers; faint music emanates from the radio, and Andrea Beyer carefully measures chemical reagents into a beaker. While a typical day for a graduate student, one would never know behind Beyer’s safety glasses is an award-winning community member.

On April 6, 2008, Beyer was awarded the 2008 Graduate Student Service Award, which recognizes a student who has the best combined high academic achievement with leadership at the University or through other public activities.

“I was shocked,” Beyer recalls. “I knew you had to be nominated for this award, and it was an honor just to be that.”

The award was much deserved.

In the community, she is involved as an assistant Girl Scout leader to Cadette Troop 1448 in Hummelstown.

“I wanted to give back to something that gave so much to me growing up,” says Beyer. “It also allows me to act as a positive role model to young girls in the community.”

Within the University, she is a community service liaison, as well as the vice president, for the Graduate Student Association (GSA). Through GSA, Beyer organized a meal to be served for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House. The meal was prepared by eight graduate students from the College of Medicine.

“It was a blast,” says Beyer. “It wasn’t just making a meal. It was about helping those families. With everything these families go through, it made their day a little easier.”

Combining the two efforts, Beyer plans to involve her Girl Scouts in the effort this fall. Additional meals prepared by graduate students are also planned.

Also, in previous years, Beyer coordinated the graduate student effort to put together baskets for the annual Tisket-A-Tasket basket raffle event. She also led a group at the Kiss Hershey Back event, the Capital Region Heart Walk, and the Harrisburg/Hershey Heart Walk.

“Not much free time!” Beyer laughs. “I strive to do community events at least one to two times a month.”

This year she hopes to become involved with Habitat for Humanity and the Humane Society.

“I live and work in this community,” she said. “It just makes sense to me to help improve it.”

Academically, Beyer is just as busy. She is working towards a Ph.D. in microbiology and immunology.

Currently, she is mentored by Leslie Parent, M.D., professor of microbiology and immunology and chief of infectious disease. Parent motivated Beyer to investigate research on the mouse mammary tumor virus (MMTV) Gag protein and how it traffics through cells.

Parent was then the driving force behind Beyer applying for the prestigious and competitive National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Student Research Fellowship, which she received in 2006.

“Leslie is so supportive,” said Beyer. “And she gave me the opportunity to expand my research even further and I am grateful for that.”

The NSF awarded 907 fellowships from 9,000 applicants. The award will cover Beyer’s stipend, as well as her tuition, for three years.

She has also been awarded the Louis Pasteur Prize in Microbiology (2007), the Karl H. Beyer, Jr., M.D., Ph.D. Scholarship (2006), and a Penn State University Graduate Fellowship (2004-2005).

—Kristen Conroy
Mentoring Tomorrow’s Researchers

Through a new $2.3 million National Institutes of Health-funded program, Penn State College of Medicine and Penn State University are studying women’s health and gender differences in health, while guiding the next generation of researchers. Junior faculty scholars in multiple disciplines will work with mentors to help them become successful, independent scientists, while at the same time looking for ways to improve women’s health services.

Attracting The Best

Barry J. Marshall, co-recipient of the 2005 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, has accepted an appointment at Penn State as the Francis R. and Helen M. Pentz Professor of Science to further his groundbreaking research in bacterial infections. This part-time position is associated with the Department of Microbiology and Immunology in the College of Medicine. His body of work led to the discovery of a previously undescribed bacteria, *Helicobacter pylori*, in the human stomach, which ultimately led to proof of his theory that peptic ulcers were caused by this bacteria, and that patients with this bacteria also were at significant risk for developing stomach cancer. Marshall’s findings revolutionized treatment for ulcer patients worldwide.
Collaborating To Be Better Prepared

The Medical Center is leading south central Pennsylvania’s Health Care Facilities Partnership Program in a one-year, $2.5 million, collaborative effort to address gaps in regional preparedness for public health emergencies, such as pandemic flu.

“Nationally, medical care providers tend to be more competitive than collaborative, but that’s not the case here in this part of the state,” said Thomas Terndrup, M.D., professor and chair of emergency medicine, Penn State Hershey Medical Center, and Health Care Facilities Partnership director. “We are one of just ten institutions nationally to receive an award from this grant program, and it is partly because we have a history of regional collaboration to build on.”

Practice Makes Perfect

Hypothermia therapy, a lifesaving technique used on cardiac arrest victims to reduce damage to the brain, is now used regularly at the Medical Center. The public was informed of the benefits of this procedure through a special demonstration for area media at the Cognitive Science and Simulation Laboratory (Sim Lab).

The Sim Lab ensures that those who perform the procedure have adequate practice using high-tech patient simulators, giving patients added assurance that Penn State Hershey can not only provide this new procedure, but do it better.

Plans are underway for the Sim Lab to expand into a $6 million, state-of-the-art learning complex.

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In his thirty-eighth year at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Cheston Berlin Jr., M.D., is still learning new things.

“It seems each week or each month presents me with something that is an opportunity to learn more about medicine, and to learn more about my patients,” he said.

As an original member of the clinical staff at the Medical Center, and as a professor of both pediatrics and pharmacology at the College of Medicine, Berlin has been treating patients, teaching students, and conducting research since 1971.

He estimates that he has mentored more than 350 pediatric residents and cared for thousands of patients in his time at the Medical Center—activities he takes delight in. Although he teaches the medical students primarily in their first and third years, he follows the careers of and is still considered a mentor by many former students. Berlin also served as assistant dean for student affairs from 1972 to 1987.

“The one thing I really enjoy is hearing from former students, patients, and faculty about what they’re doing, where they are, and what they’re up to,” he said. “That has been a lot of fun.”

He is quick to recognize that if he had not stayed at the Medical Center for the last thirty-eight years, it would have been difficult to maintain these connections.

“One of the advantages of staying in a place for a long period of time is finding out what happens to the people in whom you have been interested and for whom you have provided care,” he said.

His interest in caring for his patients has not gone unrecognized. In 2003 Berlin was named Pediatrician of the Year by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The peer-nominated award highlights the respect and appreciation of those who work with Berlin.

Berlin was also awarded the Sumner J. Yaffe Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006 for his contribution toward the improvement of children’s health through his efforts in the field of pediatric pharmacology.

In June 2008, he was named an honorary alumnus of Penn State University for his dedication at the College of Medicine.

Berlin earned a degree in chemistry at Haverford College and graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1962. He became interested in medicine because he enjoyed helping people, and also because he was interested in “taking science to human biology.”

Berlin lives in Hershey with his wife, Anne. He has four children, two daughter-in-laws, and two grandchildren.

Berlin is still practicing, lecturing and researching, all while exemplifying the highest level of care for patients, students, and staff.

—Stefan Suchanec
Forty years of educating tomorrow’s physicians and scientists

Enrolling its first students in 1967, Penn State College of Medicine introduced the first Departments Of Humanities and Family and Community Medicine at any medical school in the country. Our Department of Comparative Medicine quickly became, and remains, a national model. Building on those standards of excellence, the College of Medicine has grown into one of the nation's premier educators of physicians and scientists today.
New Connections
Graduate students at Penn State College of Medicine enrolled in the Graduate Clinical Rotation, completed six weeks of observational experiences in clinical areas including anatomy/pathology, cancer, diabetes, ophthalmology, and movement disorders.

The Graduate Clinical Rotation course is available to all graduate students at Penn State beyond their second year of study, and is designed to help students bridge the divide between basic science research and clinical practice.

The course has been well received by both clinical and basic science faculty members, who recognize its value for the students and the institution. The personal, cultural, and scientific connections formed through the students’ experiences are expected to lead to new translational research opportunities for the Medical Center.

New Degree
The first three master’s degrees in homeland security in health preparedness were presented at the College of Medicine’s thirty-eighth graduation ceremony.

The program, started in spring semester 2006, prepares emergency management workers, first responders, public health officials, and others on the front lines of homeland security to better respond to challenges faced each day.

The graduates were Timothy R. Allen B.A., Jennifer Dawn Osetek, B.A., and Tess M. Pelfrey, B.S.

Daniel Shapiro, Ph.D.
Daniel Shapiro, Ph.D., was named the new chair of the Department of Humanities. Shapiro, was associate professor, clinical psychiatry, and director, Medical Humanities Program, University of Arizona College of Medicine. He authored a script that was produced into a short film, What the Doctor Ordered: About Cancer Patients and Fertility, that debuted at the 2003 Aspen Film Festival, and two medical memoirs that are currently in use at a number of medical schools.

During the past year Shapiro also served as a consultant to the television show Grey’s Anatomy.

Kristen B. Rozansky
Kristen B. Rozansky was named associate vice president for Medical Center development and chief development officer.

She leads the twenty-two-member University Development and Alumni Relations Office in Hershey and oversees fundraising efforts for the Medical Center, College of Medicine, Children’s Miracle Network, and The Four Diamonds Fund, which supports pediatric cancer patients and their families.

Rozansky was formerly executive director of alumni development and alumni relations for the School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania.

Jennifer Dawn Osetek, B.A., receives her degree as Robert Cherry, M.D., program director, Master of Homeland Security in Public Health Preparedness, looks on.

Daniel Shapiro, Ph.D.
Penn State College of Medicine scientists, physicians, and students continue to conduct groundbreaking research, building on our rich history of discoveries that have contributed to the advancement of health care and the understanding of the human body. Our focus is on assuring that practical solutions for patients emerge from our spectrum of discovery and clinical research—a concept of taking research “from bench to bedside to community.”

Competition for funding dollars was aggressive this year, with flat funding levels at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). While barely more than 10 percent of NIH grant applications today are awarded funding, the College applied for and received more dollars this year—with NIH award dollars increasing 10 percent from last year.

In total, Penn State College of Medicine researchers submitted 1,086 proposals throughout the year, with 605 receiving funding of $99 million. This success comes at a time when other institutions are seeing reductions in both funded grants and dollars awarded.

With increased competition for NIH grants, an important piece of that funding comes from national foundations. Penn State faculty Andrea Manni, M.D., and Karam El-Bayoumy, Ph.D., received funding for a study on breast cancer prevention from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation. This grant will allow for the testing of new methods for preventing and treating breast cancer. In particular, this basic and clinical research will take an existing breast cancer drug and add omega-3 fatty acids to test a hypothesis that the drug will be more effective, with fewer side effects.

This past year, our research made headlines worldwide. Ian Paul, M.D., M.Sc., released findings of a study that found that honey is more effective at treating coughs than no treatment, while dextromethorphan (DM), a cough suppressant found in over-the-counter cold medications, did not provide significant benefit.
It’s been a long night, and as you glance at your watch, you see it’s 3 o’clock. Why won’t this baby stop crying? One frustrating minute passes after another as you realize that you have to get up in only three hours. You’ve walked everywhere in the house, you’ve fed the baby, changed the diapers, rocked and sung to the baby hoping something would help… but it hasn’t... "Why won’t you stop crying?!"

A combination of events led Mark Dias, M.D., to research Shaken Baby Syndrome. Dias, a pediatric neurosurgeon, and his team of nurse educators work daily to educate parents and caregivers throughout Pennsylvania about the dangers of violent infant shaking. The team received a grant in October 2007 from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that will test the effectiveness of their parent education program in reducing Shaken Baby Syndrome. The program, which Dias began in 1998 in Buffalo New York, has already decreased the incidence of Shaken Baby Syndrome there by nearly 50 percent.

Dias’ journey began when his son was born in 1997. Helping with the nightly feeding of his son, he would at times feel his frustration mounting both at home while trying to get his son back to sleep—and at work treating babies with severe brain injuries from Shaken Baby Syndrome. Working together with a radiologist on a particular baby boy who had been brought into the hospital with abusive head trauma, Dias recognized that the patient—home alone with his father—had been fine until three hours before coming to the hospital. However, the radiology literature at that time, pulling from information about near drowning accidents, suggested the injury could have occurred as much as three days before. Dias and the radiologist studied all of their patients with Shaken Baby Syndrome and published a landmark study that clarified some of the radiological findings in Shaken Baby Syndrome.

The message finally became clear, however, when Dias was approached by a company that did crash test dummy simulations for infant car seats. “Someone came up to me with an infant crash test dummy and wanted to know if I could use the dummy to do any research on Shaken Baby Syndrome. I thought, ‘Wow, somebody is trying to tell me something’, so I took the hint and changed my entire research focus,” said Dias. “When I was up at night with my son, I began thinking about how to prevent this from happening. My solution was to tell every parent of every newborn infant, at the time of the birth, about violent infant shaking, before the parents left the hospital—kind of like a car seat law.”

Breath and stay calm, you tell yourself as you feel the tension mount inside. Just don’t hurt the baby you keep telling yourself. And then the imaginary light bulb in your brain turns on. What did they tell me in the hospital about what to do when this happens?

In 2002 the Pennsylvania program started as a pilot study among forty-two hospitals in central Pennsylvania. Currently Dias’ nurse educators provide training and prevention materials to the staff of all of the state’s 118 birthing and three children’s hospitals. The grant allows Dias to study the effectiveness of this approach, and is also being used to investigate the feasibility and costs of offering additional education to parents during the two, four, and six month immunization visits to pediatric care providers’ offices within sixteen counties in central Pennsylvania.

Put the baby down in the crib and leave the room for just a few minutes. Even though the baby is still crying you know she is safe and out of harm’s way. You feel yourself start to gather yourself as you take a big drink of water and close your eyes for just a moment. You can do this, you and your baby will get through this long night together.

—Nicole Kazmar
Nurse coordinators are a very important piece of the research puzzle. Coordinators, who require specialized training, help conduct clinical studies that lead to new discoveries. Coordinators recruit patient participation, interact with study participants, and conduct day-to-day management of the study. Their important role ensures that the study follow protocol, protecting the integrity of study results.

The three nurse coordinators for the Pennsylvania Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention and Awareness Program collectively have more than seventy-one years of professional nursing experience. They are responsible for coordinating all aspects of the Pennsylvania SBS Program, which include educating hospital nurses statewide; collecting research data and compiling results; publishing quarterly newsletters for the hospitals; coordinating phase II of SBS education in the pediatric and family practice offices in central PA; participating as committee members on numerous statewide organizations; and serving as a resource for child abuse prevention programs at state, national, and international levels.

The nurse coordinators have been invited speakers at numerous conferences. They presented with Mark Dias, M.D., on “Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention in Pennsylvania: The Past, the Present and the Future” at the Seventh North American Conference on Shaken Baby Syndrome in Vancouver in October 2008.
Sweet Solution
Linda Hatfield, Ph.D., C.N.N.P., has discovered that sugar water is a way to reduce pain caused by immunization shots in infants. In her study, two- and four-month old children who drank sugar water just before regular shots showed lower pain responses than those without.

Options for reducing pain is important for encouraging parents to protect their children through immunizations and because research suggests exposure to repeated or severe pain in early life can affect development of the central nervous system.

Hatfield's findings were published in Pediatrics, the official journal of the American Association of Pediatrics.

Cesarean Study
Kristen Kjerulf, Ph.D., has been awarded a grant by the National Institutes of Health to look more closely at cesarean sections and their effect on having more children. Cesarean births are increasing in the United States, and those who deliver that way are less likely to have more children, or a fewer number of subsequent children, afterwards.

This study will look for factors prior to birth and during labor and delivery that may lead to having fewer children.
As a police officer with Shippensburg University for nearly twenty-five years, Jerome Kater is no stranger to rules and procedures. Even he had a personal challenge when it came to managing his diabetes. Patients with diabetes are asked to manage much of their own care, including tracking things like medication and food and drink intake. Knowing the sensitivities of elevated and dropped blood sugars, this self-tracking can be tricky, if not deceptive, depending on how it is done.

Diabetes is no stranger to Jerome, a 54-year-old father of eight. His mother has it, as did his late father, late sister, and extended family members. He knows firsthand the importance of knowing his levels.

Thankfully, he has found a new way to care for himself and mind his meds thanks to research at Penn State College of Medicine. Jerome is a participant in a research study tracking how the use of PDAs can influence and assist in the self-care and regulation of diabetes patients.

“I was tagging along with my wife to her appointment with the nutritionist at the Middletown physicians’ office, and noticed an advertisement for a research study looking for people with diabetes,” he states. “I was interested.”

He and his mother began the study in September 2006. Now, Jerome is finding himself absolutely accountable for his medication management and food intake in a way that he never knew before.

“I think you’re in denial,” he states. “Until you’re asked to track the labels you’re reading, the food you’re putting in your mouth, and when you are taking your medication, you can conveniently ignore some factors that go into your lifestyle. Not with this management. You are accountable for your body and how you take care of yourself. It is a constant reminder that you have diabetes and you are in charge of your own care.”

Despite continually increasing gasoline prices, Jerome believes his experience with the research study is worth the trip once a month to Hershey from Shippensburg. “I have had such a positive experience with this whole study that I only wish I could spread the word about what promising research is being done to help patients NOW, right here in central Pennsylvania.”

―Amy Buehler Stranges
Worldwide Buzz

A study about the effectiveness of honey as a cough suppressant made a worldwide buzz.

A study by a Penn State College of Medicine research team lead by Ian Paul, M.D., M.Sc., found that a small dose of buckwheat honey given before bedtime provided better relief of nighttime cough and sleep difficulty in children than no treatment, while dextromethorphan (DM), a cough suppressant found in many over-the-counter cold medications, did not provide significant benefit.

News outlets across the world reported the study findings, which were first published in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*.

Around the world

A sampling of news media that covered Ian Paul's research announcement:

- Newsday
- Detroit Free Press
- Scientific American
- Chicago Tribune
- Pittsburgh Post Gazette
- Fox News
- The Daily Show
- The Telegraph, UK
- The Mirror, UK
- Toronto Star, Canada
- China Daily
- Vancouver Sun, Canada
- Earthtimes, UK
- The Independent, South Africa
- National Post, Canada
- The Hindu, India
- Frontline, India
- Ottawa Citizen, Canada
- New Zealand Herald
- The Peninsula, Qatar
- China Post, Taiwan
## Research Statistics

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His dream was to be a cancer geneticist. He even spent his senior year in college as a student assistant in genetics. But then Gavin P. Robertson, Ph.D., associate professor, pharmacology, pathology, and dermatology, was recruited to work in a melanoma lab during graduate school, and the rest, as they say, was history.

In May 2008, Robertson published groundbreaking research results in the journal *Cancer Research*, explaining how his team discovered that a mole develops into melanoma through the interaction of two key proteins. Nearly 90 percent of all moles contain a mutation in the B-Raf gene, which by itself isn’t a problem because most never develop into melanoma. But when Akt3, a second protein, is present, the Akt3 regulates the activity of the mutant protein, which aids in the development of melanoma.

While comparing proteins within normal moles and human melanoma cells, the researchers noticed that the two proteins were communicating with one another only in melanoma cells.

“This tells us that you can have a mole but it cannot turn into melanoma without the presence of that second protein,” explained Robertson.

Robertson’s research team now is focused on using a low-frequency ultrasound device to inject drug-filled nanoparticles directly into cells, targeting these two proteins.

“We have shown that if we target the two proteins separately, it somewhat inhibits the development of tumors,” Robertson added. “But if we target them together, the development of tumors gets inhibited significantly. It validates these proteins as key targets for effective melanoma therapy.”

So how did Penn State College of Medicine become the hotbed of melanoma research? The Foreman Foundation, founded in honor of John Bruno Jr., punter for Penn State’s 1986 National Championship football team who died from melanoma, worked with Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute to establish a faculty position specifically related to melanoma research. In 2001, with a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences (University of California, Riverside) and postdoctoral experience from Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, San Diego, Robertson was recruited to Hershey to fill this position.

A few years later, he founded the Melanoma Therapeutics Program, which is comprised of diverse investigators who look at the entire disease from a variety of angles. Because this program runs the gamut from drug discovery to working directly with patients, Robertson was promoted recently to associate director of translational research for the Cancer Institute.

He also leads the Institute’s Experimental Therapeutics Program, which currently has a drug portfolio of approximately twenty different agents at varying stages of development, spanning various cancer disease sites. Some are still in the lab. Others are in animal testing. Others yet are in clinical research studies.

Regardless of the findings that stem from his melanoma research efforts, Robertson notes, “It’s working for and with melanoma patients that keeps me motivated and excited about my research. And the passion of the Foreman Foundation volunteers who just want to cure this terrible disease. That’s where we all come together.”

—Kris Green
Community involvement and interaction—whether in the central Pennsylvania region, or with our worldly neighbors—is an important mission at Penn State Hershey Medical Center.

In the past year, the Medical Center has delivered more than $17 million in charity care, at an estimated cost of $8.3 million to the hospital. This marks an increase of almost 20 percent over 2007. We’re helping those who may not otherwise be able to afford health care, to receive the medical attention they need.

Another way we’re helping keep our community healthy is through education and research conducted by the Penn State Hershey Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion. The Center’s NRG Balance campaign promotes healthy eating and physical activity through school- and community-based programs. In addition, the Center examines how environments and social groups influence healthy choices.

Almost 80 percent of Pennsylvania school districts, representing 860,000 children, are involved with the Center’s efforts. In addition, 1 million community members have benefited from healthy eating/active living promotion events.

This campaign is working, with participating schools showing lower obesity rates than the state and national averages.

In addition, the hospital continues its annual screenings for the community, including the Penn State Care Fair which reaches underserved populations in nearby Harrisburg and Lebanon.
Our community spirit extends to our students, with five first-year medical students launching a litter clean-up of Derry Township/Hershey in April called Kiss Hershey Back. Medical students, hospital staff, community groups, churches, and school students collected trash township-wide, and planted trees in several locations. This clean-up is becoming a yearly event, with the next slated for April 18, 2009.

Our impact is global as well as local. In June, the Medical Center hosted Tamar Ramadan Fattah, governor of the Duhok Province of Iraqi Kurdistan, visited the Medical Center on June 24, 2008. One of Fattah’s goals is to improve health care in his province, both for its inhabitants but also for tourists and business travelers. Larry Demers, Ph.D., provided a tour of the Medical Center, and Matt Wain, administrator of the Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital, described the programs and resources of the Medical Center. Alan Snyder, Ph.D., and Judith Bond, Ph.D., explored opportunities for collaboration and exchange for purposes of education and research. It is hoped that an ongoing relationship will be established.

In early summer, Jim Connor, Ph.D., visited China to discuss Penn State Hershey’s ALS clinic. Connor shared his expertise to help the Tianjin Bureau of Public Health increase the quality of life and life expectancy of Chinese with the disease. A clinic similar to Hershey’s will be the first of its kind in China.
Hershey, Pennsylvania gives its residents and visitors millions and millions of Kisses® a day. So it only seemed fitting that for one day, the community would unite and “Kiss Hershey Back!”

It all began as Clinton Ellingson, a first-year College of Medicine student, was jogging through Derry Township. He was disheartened by the amount of trash that littered the beautiful path around him. So, vowing to do his part, he grabbed a trash bag and began collecting. But it didn’t take long to fill that one bag; so much trash was collected that Ellingson returned home for a second garbage bag.

Inspired by an annual spring cleaning day in his home state of Utah, Ellingson grabbed a group of friends—David Baird, Nathan Hull, Matthew Nerdin, and Clayton Hess, also medical students at the College of Medicine—and planned a clean up effort called “Kiss Hershey Back!”

The group originally planned the event as a community service project for the medical students. But it soon turned into something much more. Plans quickly got underway for what would be a township-wide clean-up effort the entire community was invited to participate in, including scout troops, Milton Hershey School students, and churches.

The inaugural “Kiss Hershey Back!” was held on Saturday, April 19, 2008, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. For the event, the township, which encompasses 27.3 square miles, was broken into nine zones which participants could sign up for prior to the event.

Made possible by the generous donations of local businesses, residents, and employees, the 1,200 participants of “Kiss Hershey Back!” collected an astonishing estimated twenty-eight cubic yards of trash, ten cubic yards of recyclables, sixty tires, two computer monitors, several pieces of exercise equipment, and 600 pounds of mixed metal.

Organizers have already planned next year’s event, which will be held on April 18, 2009.

—Danielle Ran
Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

The Penn State Hershey Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion advances knowledge and strategies for achieving energy balance by exploring how environments and social groups influence healthy choices, and engages communities in improving access to healthy eating and active living options.

Through the administration of the state network, Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA), the Center delivers programs and events that support healthy eating and physical activity in schools, recreation settings, healthcare, and the community. The success of these initiatives has resulted in the development of a national, branded social movement: nrgBalance™—make healthy easy.

The work of the Center and the development of its initiatives are based largely upon the translational research conducted by the Center which focuses on implementing evidence-based practices for childhood obesity prevention, and generates practice-based evidence for improving nutrition and physical activity behaviors for childhood obesity prevention and management.

In 2008, the annual nrgBalance Zone campaign enrolled 1,339 Pennsylvania schools in 69 percent of Pennsylvania school districts, reaching 715,006 youth and their families.

Early findings indicate that the campaign’s focus on changing environments, social groupsm and policies to support healthy choices has resulted in childhood obesity rates that are lower than national estimates. Students in the nrgBalance Zone school program show lower BMI’s in both elementary and secondary settings. In elementary schools, 16.3 percent of children were screened as obese compared to 18.8 percent of 6-11 year olds nationally (NHANES 2003-04). In secondary schools, 17.2 percent of children were screened as obese compared to 17.4 percent of 12-19 year olds nationally (NHANES 2003-04).
Children’s Miracle Network

Funds raised for Children’s Miracle Network (CMN) at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital during 2007-08 totaled a record-breaking $3,157,496. The total was announced during the twenty-fourth annual CMN “Celebration” Broadcast on May 31 and June 1. The broadcast, aired on WGAL-TV8, is the culmination of the fundraising year for CMN.

Throughout the event, viewers were encouraged to pledge $20 a month for twelve months to purchase neuro-intensive monitoring systems for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital. As a result of these pledges, CMN will be able to acquire five monitoring systems.

All funds raised from this year’s efforts will be used to support pediatric programs, research, equipment, and services at Children’s Hospital. CMN is an international nonprofit organization whose mission is to generate funds and awareness to benefit children in 170 affiliated hospitals in the United States and Canada. At Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital, CMN has raised more than $31 million since it began locally in 1984.

THON 2008

The largest student-run philanthropy in the world broke, yet again, the previous year’s total. THON 2008 surpassed the 2007 total by more than $1 million, totaling a record-shattering $6,615,318.04.

More than 200 Four Diamonds families came to support the 708 dancers during THON weekend, which had the theme, “Hope Finds A Way.” The families provide the motivation for the dancers to find a way to stay awake and on their feet for the forty-six hour dance marathon.

Student Pediatric Society members Alissa Baker and Katie Meadows danced in THON on behalf of Penn State College of Medicine. College of Medicine students collectively raised nearly $17,000 for the kids.

Approximately one-hundred new families receive support each year from The Four Diamonds Fund. The Fund covers medical expenses not covered by insurance or other means and also supports pediatric cancer research. Since 1972, The Four Diamonds Fund has helped nearly 2,000 families.
Jim Connor, Ph.D.

Jim Connor, Ph.D., a professor of neurosurgery at Penn State Hershey Medical Center and Penn State College of Medicine, found himself in China just weeks preceding the 2008 Summer Olympic Games.

Connor was bound for Tianjin, a city with roughly the same population as Pennsylvania, seventy miles southeast of China’s capital city of Beijing.

There, at 1st Central Hospital, Connor and colleagues Zachary Simmons, M.D., and Qing Yang, Ph.D., shared with their Chinese peers their experience of designing a comprehensive clinic in Hershey for patients with the terminal neurodegenerative disease ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

“While there are definitely differences between the Eastern and Western approaches, we’re finding out that we’re more alike than we were aware,” Connor said.

ALS affects the Chinese at about the same rate as it does Americans—two new cases per 100,000 people—but traditional Chinese care for terminal illnesses is home-based. This approach limits study of the disease and possible treatments and does little for the quality of life or life expectancy of those with the illness.

Administrators for the Tianjin Bureau of Public Health, which operates the city’s hospitals, want to change this trend.

They turned to Penn State Hershey Medical Center for guidance.

Last fall, as part of a Medical Science Exchange agreement with Tianjin, two neuroradiology specialists spent time observing how doctors at Penn State Hershey Medical Center diagnose and treat neurological disorders. They were particularly impressed with the ALS clinic, and upon return to China, they recommended using the Hershey model and the expertise of Connor, Simmons, and Yang to open such a clinic in Tianjin.

This fall, two neurologists from 1st Central will shadow Simmons in the ALS clinic to ensure the same standards of diagnosis and treatment are met in the new Tianjin clinic. 1st Central plans to open its clinic—the first of its kind in China—to patients next spring.

For Tianjin, this partnership means a new era of hope for the quality of life of ALS patients and their families as they deal with the disease. Likewise, it means a unique opportunity for the medical center to offer hope to patients in Pennsylvania and the United States.

The Hershey ALS clinic is the second largest in the state, yet sees only seventy to eighty new ALS cases each year. That’s not enough to pull from to ensure meaningful clinical trial data on possible treatment drugs. Partnering with sites across the country bolsters participant numbers, but slight variations in data collection can reduce result reliability.

If the 100-200 new cases of ALS diagnosed in Tianjin each year were filtered through a single clinic, whose director has trained in Hershey, the pool of potential study participants and quality of results would go up. If the clinic model is extended to other provinces in China, as Chinese public health administrators hope, the pool increases exponentially.

“The real worry is that there are many very good drugs not getting into the market because of the cost, or because there is too much uncertainty about the risks vs. benefit,” Connor said. “This would give us enormous quality control over those variables.”

It is a progressive model, to be sure, but one that fits perfectly with the mission of Penn State Hershey Medical Center and College of Medicine to train the next generation of physicians and scientists and discover tomorrow’s treatments and cures, yielding the highest level of patient care.

—Megan Walde Manlove
On one weekend each year, the cheers, shouts, and rumbling from the Bryce Jordan Center at Penn State are not for a sports team or a rock concert. The noise is made instead for some very special kids fighting cancer, like 7-year-old Kaeli Brant, here at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital. THON, a forty-six-hour dance marathon, raises money for The Four Diamonds Fund, which aids any family with a child being treated for pediatric cancer at Children's Hospital. For Kaeli, THON is a special event that was hard to reach.

At age 4, Kaeli was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor known as atypical teratoid rhabdoid tumor, or AT/RT. In two-and-a-half years of treatment, she spent only three months at home.

“She’s been very tough—extremely tough—with the help of Dr. Comito, Kaeli’s doctor, the best woman, the best person ever,” says Amy Brandt, Kaeli’s mother.

The radiation treatment left Kaeli partially paralyzed, but she hasn’t let that bring her down.

“What I’ve been amazed with this child is no matter what happens, she is so resilient and she finds a way to find the beauty of everyday and it helps me to remember that in my day to day life—if she can find the beauty, I can find the beauty,” says Melanie Comito, M.D.

The Four Diamonds Fund has supported the Brandt family not only financially, but emotionally as well. In 2007, Kaeli and her mom packed the car to take part in THON, but a stop at the doctors office cut their trip short. Instead of dancing, Kaeli was in the hospital once again.

She faced another year of treatments, but this time she had a little more help from her friends. The dancers at THON spend all year raising money, but they also take the time to meet the patients they are dancing for. A group of students sent Kaeli a personalized video from THON. Later they visited her and taught her the traditional THON line dance.

This year, Kaeli was determined to make it to the Bryce Jordan Center, even putting off reconstructive surgery so that she could travel. Once again Kaeli’s mom packed up the car, but this time nothing got in Kaeli’s way. In February of 2008, Kaeli shared the stage with other Four Diamonds families and once again saw her dancing friends.

Kaeli is now spending more time at home than at the hospital. She is even back at school and getting back to normal things, which for Amy is a huge accomplishment, “It’s the simplest things, you kind of forget that they can be harder to do.”

—Mathea Jacobs
The power of charitable giving can enhance the medical treatment of a child fighting a devastating illness, may create an opportunity for the construction of a lab where cutting-edge cancer research is carried out every day, and holds the promise of empowering doctors and scientists to accomplish great feats in research and patient care.

A record number of individuals, organizations, foundations, and corporations made leadership contributions to Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and Penn State College of Medicine in fiscal year 2008. The number of gifts nearly doubled from the previous year reaching a record-breaking number of 138,239.

Without this support and generosity, noble initiatives, such as the building of a free-standing Children's Hospital, could not be achieved. This year the Children's Hospital campaign was moved into the public phase accompanied by the announcement of its initial fundraising milestone of $51,021,171. These dollars will be used to create a facility where medical professionals will be able to treat pediatric patients with state-of-the-art technologies, and where families in crisis will find an environment that affords them the dignity, privacy and comfort they deserve.

Penn State Hershey Medical Center and Penn State College of Medicine continues to benefit from your strong support. In the past three years philanthropic gifts have grown to an average of $35,330,101 to support all of our missions—missions that help provide the best quality care for our patients, expand our campus, rejuvenate programs, and keep us moving forward in excellence.
Total Number of Donors and Money Raised between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008
Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

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