The Department of Internal Medicine Executive Board Expanding

Dr. Judy Brannen received the following letter:

"Thank you so much. I can't tell you how wonderful it is to be welcomed at MCV. My experience at St. Mary's was just the opposite. No physician (all hospitalists) would take the time to speak to us at any time during [my mother's] stay. I took Mom to MCV to have her pacemaker replaced just a few days after her stay at St. Mary's. We walked into the lobby of the Gateway Building and were greeted by name by a total stranger (who turned out to be one of the nurses in the Cath Lab). Everyone we met went out of their way to make us feel comfortable. I was grateful for such universal concern from Dr. [Kenneth] Ellenbogen's staff."

Mr. John Duval received the following letter:

"My wife, Carolyn W. Hyde, was an outpatient at MCV Stony Point and then a patient in Palliative Care downtown for 13 days where she died on November 1. My family and I thank the physicians, nurses and others who provided medical and tender care to her, and were considerate to my family and me. Sherman Baker, Carol Calder, Pat Coyle, Carri Dewitt, Tim Ford, Gordon Ginder, Mary Helen Hackney, Karen Hayes, Claudette Hunter-Wilhite, Linda Kuzel, Whitney Main, Kathy Morand, Monica Morris, Lori Rockwell, Craig Swainey and Tom Smith. I have missed some names: I would recognize some faces but do not have their names, and others I did not see as they worked nights. I apologize to those who cared for her and our family [that] I did not name herein. We hope that you accept this letter of our appreciation and will thank those people who were so caring for my wife and family. Thank you. Very truly yours, Olin V. Hyde."

The Department is making a concerted effort to better align our missions, goals and values with our care partners.

"I feel honored for being asked to serve on the Board and excited about the increased collaboration between VCU and the VA," said Dr. Brannen. "These new board members will strengthen our ties with the Hospital, the School of Nursing and the McGuire VA Medical Center and the VA Medical Center. The Department is making a concerted effort to better align our missions, goals and values with our care partners," said Chris Higgins, Chief Operating Officer of the Department of Internal Medicine. "Expanding the executive board to include representatives from our medical center and the VA will allow us to better understand, integrate and identify opportunities to advance our patient care, teaching and research missions. We are glad to welcome Drs. Brannen and Goodloe to the Department's leadership team."
Introducing Our New Faculty Members

The following individuals are among the faculty members who have joined the Department of Internal Medicine in the past few months.

Eric M. Gibney, MD, assistant professor of medicine, Division of Nephrology and the Hume-Lee Transplant Center. Dr. Gibney joined the faculty last summer upon completion of a Renal Transplantation fellowship at the University of Colorado. He earned his undergraduate degree from Penn State and his medical degree from Emory, and was a resident and chief resident at NYU. Dr. Gibney's research interests center around kidney transplant outcomes, kidney donors, and promoting better access to clinical research and transplantation in African Americans. He has several publications and invited presentations nationally.

Drew Jones, MD, assistant professor of medicine, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. Having been at VCU since 1998, first as an intern, a resident and a research fellow, Dr. Jones is a familiar face for many of us. Dr. Jones has completed numerous research projects since obtaining his BS at North Carolina State. He received his medical degree from East Carolina University School of Medicine.

Sherif El-Mahdy, MD, FRCP(C), assistant professor of medicine, Division of General Medicine. Dr. El-Mahdy joined our Academic Hospitallist Service in the summer of 2005. Prior to this appointment, he served as a chief resident in the Michigan State University Internal Medicine residency program, and received several awards and honors in the process. A graduate of the University of Alexandria, Alexandria, Egypt, Dr. El-Mahdy also completed several research projects in Canada and the U.S.

Rajat Garg, MD, assistant professor of medicine, Division of Cardiology. One of our own, Dr. Garg completed fellowships in Interventional Cardiology and Cardiovascular Medicine at VCU, did his internship and residency here, and received his BA at VCU as well. A member of several honor societies, he presented posters at national conferences and is Board Certified in Nuclear Cardiology. Dr. Garg's clinical interests include the diagnosis and management of peripheral arterial disease.

William Ciesla, Jr., MD, assistant professor of medicine, Division of Cardiology. A graduate of Georgetown University, Dr. Ciesla was a resident at Duke and a fellow in infectious diseases at UVa. To add to the list of reputable schools, he also has several publications on his record, along with NIH grant support and research projects in cell biology and infectious diseases. Prior to VCU, Dr. Ciesla was on staff at the South Shore Hospital, Weymouth, MA.

Gregorio Gomez, PhD, assistant professor, Division of Rheumatology, Allergy and Immunology. Dr. Gomez has several years of NIH research experience and a number of publications in peer-reviewed journals. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and a member of the American Association of Immunologists, he joined VCU faculty in August 2005.

Margaret Roberson to Lead VCU Student Health

Dr. Margaret Roberson has been recently approved as the new Director of VCU Student Health Services. Since August 2004, she has been working as Interim Director.

Dr. Roberson has a long history with VCU Health System, having received her Internal Medicine training here and having joined the Division of General Medicine faculty in 1992. For many years, she divided her time between active clinical practice in the Ambulatory Care Center and Student Health. She has also been working closely with the Internal Medicine Residency Program, serving as Assistant Director and chairing the Intern Recruitment Committee for several years.

Since the appointment, Dr. Roberson has seen the Student Health Service through a successful Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) reaccreditation and has worked closely with her staff to meet the demands of ever increasing visit volumes. She is also serving as medical director for the VCU Public Health Response Team. Playing many roles in the Department, Dr. Roberson is an outstanding faculty member, a terrific teacher and an active clinician.

“We are excited about Dr. Roberson's appointment,” said Dr. Richard Wenzel, chair of the Department of Internal Medicine. “She will be an outstanding leader of Student Health.”

Stony Point Update

In December, Lenore Buckley, MD, MPH, presented information about space utilization, patient volumes, staffing and financial data including revenues, expenditures and downstream revenue to the hospital and practice plans for the Stony Point clinical practices at the MCV Physicians board meeting. She reported that patient “no show” rates are half that of the Ambulatory Care Center clinics and collection rates are higher.

Even though patient volumes are only 80% of capacity, the clinical practices and ancillaries generate a substantial profit, with significant downstream profits to the hospital and practice plans. “Dr. Buckley has made substantial strides in re-energizing the practice at Stony Point,” said Richard Wenzel, MD, Msc, chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine. The MCV Board will work with department chairs to decide how to best utilize the remaining space for expansions of existing practices and initiating of new programs at Stony Point.

There will be a report on a proposal for marketing Stony Point practices, programs and providers to the community and to community physicians that will be presented to the MCV Physicians board at the March meeting.