The Department’s Contributions to the Richmond Academy of Medicine

Recognizing the growing threat of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, the Richmond Academy of Medicine in partnership with Ukrops, the Richmond Pediatric Society, Trigon, the Virginia Department of Health, and Whitehall-Robins organized an educational series discussing antibiotic resistance.

In September, an evening of lectures on antibiotic resistance was held for community physicians, nurse practitioners, and pharmacists. Not surprisingly, many of the speakers were enlisted from the Department of Internal Medicine – Drs. Richard Wenzel, Belinda Ostrowsky, and Suzanne Lovis. Additionally, the September issue of RAMifications newsletter (published by the Richmond Academy of Medicine) focused on this alarming problem.

Dr. Wenzel, the chair of the Department of Internal Medicine, was a guest editor along with Drs. Donald Switz, Sheldon Markowitz, Robert Ormsstein, Edward Wong, and Suzanne Lovis.

In Recognition of Excellence

The School of Medicine’s Third Annual Teaching Awards Program was held October 22. Three out of four awards were taken by members of the Internal Medicine faculty.

The Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, the School’s highest recognition for teaching, went to Paul Fairman, M.D. Dr. Fairman is an exemplary teacher and has been widely recognized for educational leadership and academic inquiry. He has a compelling record of contributions to education at VCU.

The Whitby Award in Clinical Teaching was given to Cesar Kanamori, M.D. It recognizes superior teaching in clinical medicine taught in the last two years of medical school and residency training. Whitby, Inc., a pharmaceutical marketing and research company, established the award in 1992. This year, the award was re-named to honor Dr. Robert Irby and Dr. G. Watson James, two outstanding educators in Internal Medicine, who recently passed away.

Mary Nettleman, M.D., M.S., was selected as the recipient of the Distinguished Mentor Award. It is given to a faculty member for significant contributions to the career development of others, including fellow faculty members, residents, fellows, and graduate students.

We are proud to have these exceptional educators as our faculty. High standards of teaching are an integral part of our Department’s effort to achieve excellence in education on all levels. Our congratulations to this year’s recipients of the School’s awards!
New Clinical and Managerial Information System Promises Improvements

Five years ago, the VCU Health System committed to moving to a new medical-center-wide clinical and managerial information system. After an extensive evaluation process, two vendors were chosen: Cerner for the clinical information system and IDX for the financial, scheduling, registration, and numerous managed-care functions.

Patients will immediately note a change since there will be a single joint registration process across the enterprise. No longer will a second (or more) registration for hospital services be separate from physician services. This should reduce registration time and effort, and provide more accurate information for efficient billing and referrals.

The Center medical information system is built on a Microsoft Windows paradigm. The magnitude of the change from the current system will be dramatic. For example, the system will have numerous built-in functions for order checking and rules with alerts for duplicates, drug/drug, food/drug, and allergy/drug interactions, and dose ranges to support clinical decision-making. Availability of on-line documentation of medical center diagnostic and therapeutic information such as discharge summaries, surgical pathology, and endoscopy reports will be increased.

Dr. Bruce Hillner

NEJM Appoints Dr. Wenzel as Editor-At-Large

In September 2001, The New England Journal of Medicine announced the appointment of Richard F. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc., chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine, as the first editor-at-large. Considered one of the most prestigious academic publications in the field of medicine in the world, NEJM had sought an independent editor to make decisions on manuscripts that are submitted to the journal by the editor, associate or deputy editors, or members of the editorial board.

In his new capacity, Dr. Wenzel will choose referees to evaluate the submissions, will review the resulting critiques, and make final decisions regarding acceptance or rejection of the manuscripts. Dr. Wenzel served for eight years on the NEJM editorial board, beginning in 1992. Since he stepped off the board late last year, he has frequently been called on to serve in the role of an editor-at-large on an ad hoc basis.

Unusually Successful Research Funding

Dr. Steven Grant of the Division of Hematology/Oncology was recently awarded three new grants. Two are funded by the National Cancer Institute of NIH and the third project is funded by the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation. Their total approaches $2 million over a period of four years.

The first project, Flavopiridol and Differentiation-Inducers in Leukemia, concentrates on developing a rational basis for a novel antileukemic strategy combining pharmacologic cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK) inhibitors with clinically relevant differentiation-inducers (DIs). The goal of the second project, Phase II and Correlative Studies of ByeHoHDeC, is to conduct a multi-institutional Phase I trial of bryostatin 1, a high-dose ara-C in conjunction with a clinical laboratory study in patients with refractory acute myelogenous leukemia.

The third grants major goal is the development of a novel strategy for the treatment of multiple myeloma.

New Clinical and Managerial Information System Promises Improvements

Dr. Ben Newhouse received the following letter:

- He is highly knowledgeable. He has outstanding communication skills. He has a rare ability to pass that knowledge on to patients.
- He is thorough. He has excellent follow through. He really seems to care.
- He is persistent... I know what excellent physicians do; one of the finest doctors I have ever met. I say this for the following specific reasons:
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