Dr. Todd Gehr has accepted the position of interim Chair of the Division of Nephrology. He has been affiliated with the division since 1984, when he undertook a fellowship in Nephrology at VCU. Since then, he has steadily grown in academic stature, becoming one of the premier teachers and educators. In fact, he is so loved by his students, that M-I, M-II and M-III recognize him as one of the best teachers every single year.

Having received a Master’s of Science in Chemical Engineering from Purdue University, Dr. Gehr subsequently obtained his medical degree from West Virginia University Medical School. Prior to coming to Richmond, he did post-graduate work in Internal Medicine at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, New York.

Dr. Gehr currently is a Medical Director of Home Dialysis and Gambro Mechanicsville HD unit and has worked on several committees in the School of Medicine, thus contributing significantly in the area of administration. He has made important service contributions to the MCV Hospitals, the School of Medicine and the state. Since last year, he has held a position as endowed professor of Nephrology.

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Dr. Gehr is an outstanding member of our faculty, and I am confident he will flourish in this new position of leadership.

– Dr. Richard Wenzel
Canadian Historian Addresses Grand Rounds

Recently, the Department of Internal Medicine had a remarkable Grand Rounds speaker who was a visiting professor at VCU and is one of Canada’s most distinguished historians – Professor Michael Bliss. He spoke on the life of Sir William Osler, the leading internist in the world in the early 20th century. “The ideals of this caring and skillful clinician were beautifully presented by Professor Bliss,” said Richard P. Wenzel, Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine. Professor Bliss was able to meet faculty, housestaff and medical students during his stay, discussing not only his books but also his impressions of the unfolding SARS epidemic in his home city of Toronto.

Professor Bliss’ scholarship in medical biography and history of medicine has been extraordinary. His definitive account of the discovery of insulin not only brought new insights to an important chapter in the history of medical science, it also was accessible to a broad audience, and therefore gave thousands of readers world-wide a better understanding of the world of biomedical research. The Discovery of Insulin (1982) was followed by Bantering: A Biography (1984), by Plague: A Story of Smallpox in Montreal (1991) and most recently by William Osler: A Life in Medicine (1999).

The Discovery of Insulin was awarded the William A. Welch Medal of the American Association for the History of Medicine in 1994 and the City of Toronto Book Award in 1983. Plague was short-listed for the Governor General’s Award/Non-Fiction in 1992 and William Osler: A Life in Medicine was also short-listed for the Governor General’s Award/Non-Fiction in 1999. It won the Canadian Historical Association’s Ferguson Prize for the best book of the year in a field of history other than Canadian, and for it Professor Bliss won his second Janet Hannah Medical from the Royal Society of Canada. A member of the University of Toronto faculty for thirty-four years, and distinguished teacher as well as scholar, Professor Bliss is currently writing a biography of Harvey Cushing, Osler’s first biographer and the founder of neurosurgery, which will complete a two-volume biographical study of the rise of North American medicine.

News Briefs

Dr. Arun Sanyal’s team received a priority score of 147 for their T-32 grant which has been competitively renewed for five more years. This is year 27-32 for this training program which makes it one of the oldest funded training programs in gastroenterology in the country.

Dr. Betty Anne Johnson has been accepted as a member of the 2003-2004 class of Fellows in the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program for Women.

Dr. Michael Edmond was invited to address the Institute of Medicine Committee on Smallpox Vaccination Program Implementation in May 2003 in Washington, DC. The goal of the meeting is to gain an understanding of how the smallpox vaccination program is proceeding and how smallpox preparedness is being defined across the various public health venues in order to provide advice to the CDC.

Dr. David Gardner has been asked to author two chapters for the prestigious book Inghar and Wener’s The Thyroid, edited by Brauerman and Utiger. This is a major textbook in the field, and Dr. Gardner attained this honor by his consistent visibility as a scholar and educator, including repeated invitations to conduct tutorial sessions at the annual meetings of the American Thyroid Association and the American College of Physicians.
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"His performance in all aspects in outstanding," commented Dr. Anton Schooberth, recently retired Chair of the Division. Dr. Richard Wenzel, the Department's Chair, added, "Dr. Gehr is a superb teacher and clinician who continues to conduct clinical trials. He has been an active participant in many important Departmental, School of Medicine as well as national committees, and is widely recognized for his clear thinking. He is an outstanding member of our faculty, and I am confident he will flourish in this new position of leadership."