The Sixth Annual Virginia Associates Program was held on January 25 at the Omni Hotel in Richmond, Virginia. Our own resident Lisa Ellis, M.D., was the co-chair of the program and organized the event. The program included a Medical Jeopardy competition, which was similar to the game show “Jeopardy,” with buzzers, judges and a computerized game board. Margo Vassar, M.D., Chinh Nguyen, M.D., and Alex Morgan, M.D., were chosen to compete in “Medical Jeopardy” at the state conference in April.

The highlight of the day was the Medical Jeopardy competition, which was similar to the game show “Jeopardy.” The topic was “Chronic Kidney Disease: Sean Elliott’s Story,” related his experiences with CKD and his transplant. The visit also served as an opportunity to encourage individuals to attend the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) of Virginia’s Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP) screening to be held on March 15 at the NKF of Virginia’s Affiliate Office. Individuals with close relatives with kidney disease, hypertension and diabetes are at increased risk for CKD, especially if they belong to a minority group. For more information, contact the NKF office at 288-8342.

Dr. Anton Schoolwerth and NBA Great Sean Elliott Kick off National Kidney Foundation Program

Sean Elliott, former star of the San Antonio Spurs and current ESPN commentator, came to Richmond on Thursday, Feb. 13. He is a survivor of kidney disease, having received a kidney transplant from his brother in 1999. Although his diagnosis may have come too late for early intervention, Sean was here to promote early detection and treatment of patients at risk for chronic kidney disease (CKD). Together with Drs. Anton C. Schoolwerth and Anne L. King of the Division of Nephrology, he presented Medical Grand Rounds. The topic, “Chronic Kidney Disease: Sean Elliott’s Story,” related his experiences with CKD and his transplant. The visit also served as an opportunity to encourage individuals to attend the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) of Virginia’s Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP) screening to be held on March 15 at the NKF of Virginia’s Affiliate Office. Individuals with close relatives with kidney disease, hypertension and diabetes are at increased risk for CKD, especially if they belong to a minority group. For more information, contact the NKF office at 288-8342.

The win was simply stunning. We are very proud of our residents and will root for our Medical Jeopardy team to become the national champions. – Dr. Richard Wenzel
PROGRESS NOTES

The Pulmonary Hypertension team is offering its services to the community. Primary pulmonary hypertension (PPH) is a rare disease and was generally considered untreatable and rapidly fatal. The outlook for PPH patients improved in late 1996 when the first effective drug became available. Continuous infusion epoprostenol (Flolan) was effective but complicated, and patients were still referred to a handful of centers that had developed this therapy. “By 1998, we were managing two Flolan patients and providing ‘back-up care’ for two others, and it occurred to us that if you build it, they will come,” said Dr. Paul Fairman, the director of the Pulmonary Hypertension Service. “We did and they have.”

Dr. Alpha (Berry) Fowler, III, Chairman of the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, praised the team’s effort. “Paul Fairman has single-handedly developed expertise in the care of patients with pulmonary hypertension and has organized expertise in the care of these complex patients. Knowledge of the outcomes of Paul’s work has spread throughout the region and the state, and has resulted in a 30% increase in referrals to the Division for care.”


Having built a team, the physicians have noticed that the patients have appeared: some with PPH, many with scleroderma, or portal hypertension-associated PH, and others with severe lung or cardiac disease. “We have to offer evaluation and treatment services for all types of pulmonary hypertension to physicians throughout the Central Virginia region,” says Dr. Fairman. “We seek to attract new patients and to develop a program that will become a local, state and regional center for quality diagnostic evaluation and therapy for primary pulmonary hypertension and pulmonary hypertension associated with connective tissue disorders, cirrhosis, heart disease and pulmonary disorders.”

Dr. Gordon Ginder Earns Top State Research Honor

It was recently announced that Dr. Gordon Ginder, director of the Massey Cancer Center and Professor of the Department of Internal Medicine, has been named Virginia’s Scientist of the Year. This award recognizes outstanding Virginians and their contributions to the state and is presented by the Governor of Virginia. This honor tops the list of several research awards won by Dr. Ginder over the years.

Dr. Ginder is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Prior to his appointment with VCU, he held academic positions at the University of Minnesota and University of Iowa.

“Without a doubt, Dr. Ginder is one of our outstanding scholars,” said Dr. Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc., Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine. “His contributions in the field of gene regulation and bone marrow transplantation are widely recognized, and we are delighted with this recognition of Dr. Ginder and with it our Department of Internal Medicine.”

CLINICAL ACTIVITIES: LETTERS

Mary Helen Hackney received the following letter:

“I write belatedly to thank you and the staff of attending physicians and residents for the fine treatment ... received at your hands, both on the ward and in the ICU. The nursing staff was also most attentive to [M’s] needs throughout the treatment and during the time of dying. I was also impressed with the hospitality and welcome shown by the staff – it never seemed that we visitors were [as one might expect] a great bother, but were made to feel “at home,” with information being shared honestly and forthrightly.

I’d like to mention especially Dr. Kleiner, whose duty coincided with the time of M’s beginning to die. She was very thorough with me and also with M’s family about what was understood to be M’s wishes for treatment. She took special pains to see that we were all “on the same page” regarding his care in extremis.

As a newcomer to Virginia, I come away from this experience with a deep respect for the skill and the humanities of the staff of MCV as well as the quality of care given here.”

NEWS BRIEFS

The chief medical resident selections for 2004 are Tim Finnegan, Christine Jones, David Kay and Rajiv Panikkar.

Curt Sessler’s photograph, “Bridleveil Creek,” which was on the cover of Between Rounds in 1999, recently received first place in the photography category at the 65th annual meeting of the American Physicians Art Association, held in Washington D.C.

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Former Faculty Member Carolyn Clancy Named Director of AHRQ

The Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., has been appointed director of the department’s Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Dr. Clancy is an internist and health services researcher who was a faculty member in the Division of General Medicine for many years prior to her joining AHRQ in 1990. She is a graduate of Boston College and holds a PhD in social work from Fielding Graduate University. She has authored and contributed to five books, and currently holds an academic appointment at George Washington University School of Medicine.

Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc., Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine commented, “It says a lot about the University and our Department, if our faculty are making such a marked contribution to healthcare nationwide. They are role models for our junior faculty, and, for our medical students and residents, an advertisement of our ability to grow future leaders in national healthcare.”

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Special recognition and thanks go to Dr. Lisa Ellis, who did an extraordinary job organizing the meeting. "The win was simply stunning," said Dr. Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc., Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine. "We are very proud of our residents and will root for our Medical Jeopardy team to become the national champions.”

Medical Jeopardy: VCU Medicine Residents Trounce Competition in Statewide Meeting

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