The Value of VA Research

In a December 2003 editorial in *Lancet*, entitled “Health Services Research,” Jonathan Lomas begins as follows: “Imagine a health system that improved diabetes control from 51% to 94%, screening of cervical cancer from 62% to 93% and use of beta-blockers for myocardial infarction from 7% to 95%…. that costs the same as the NHS but has consistently higher quality…. Actually you didn’t have to imagine them because these two systems already exist – the Veterans Affairs Healthcare system…”

In terms of basic science, the VA research system has produced three Nobel laureates and six winners of the Lasker Award. Thus, for basic and applied research, including health care outcomes, the success is stunning.

One of the many advantages of an academic partnership between VCU and the McGuire VA Medical Center is the opportunity for faculty to participate in research at the VA. The acting undersecretary for Health in Washington for the VA, Jonathan Perlin, M.D., Ph.D., a former chief resident at VCU’s Department of Medicine (1995–6), calls the VA patient population a “living laboratory” with 7.6 million enrollees and 6 million admissions/year nationwide. Multidisciplinary research can be fostered in both basic and applied areas, and this would be completely in line with the NIH roadmap as outlined by director Elias Zerkhouni, M.D. We are fortunate to be associated with the McGuire VA, and one key component of our good fortune is to do research there and to collaborate with VA investigators.

Contributed by Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc.
William Branch Potter Professor and Chair, DOIM

The Week of the Nurse

The Week of the Nurse was celebrated May 3-7, 2004. This is a special time to recognize nurses as well as other members of our care team for the outstanding contributions they make throughout the year. Each nursing unit chooses individuals within nursing, care partners and other support staff based on their contributions and development. Such recognition is exceedingly important to continued advancement and skill development. These individuals were all acknowledged during special ceremonies in their units throughout the institution.

In addition, the Department of Medicine nursing staff was recognized in two specific areas. Pat Selig received the Advanced Practice Nurse Award as a Nurse Practitioner and Diabetes Educator for the institution. Anne Hawkins received the Nurse Manager award for her outstanding contributions as the Nurse Manager for the Corrections Unit.

Congratulations to all of our excellent nurses and patient management staff.
Former Chief Resident, Faculty Member Accepts New Position

Last month, Dr. Jonathan Perlin, a VCU alumnus and DOIM faculty member, was appointed Acting Under Secretary for Health in the Department of Veterans Affairs. As the Chief Executive Officer of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Dr. Perlin leads the nation's largest integrated health system.

Dr. Perlin has served as Deputy Under Secretary for Health since July 2002. Since December 2003, Dr. Perlin has also served as VHA's Acting Chief Research and Development Officer, directing a $1.6 billion research program specializing in basic, clinical, rehabilitation and health services research.

Dr. Perlin's background includes health care quality management, medical education, health services research, and medical informatics. Prior to joining VHA, he served as Medical Director, Quality Improvement at the Medical College of Virginia Hospitals-VCU Health System. At VCU, he helped establish the Health Services Research Fellowship in the Division of Quality Health Care, Department of Internal Medicine, and was Associate Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program. Dr. Perlin is broadly published and maintains an academic appointment at our Department "Dr. Perlin has had a meteoric rise to the top of the medical profession within the VA Medical System," said Richard Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc., Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine. He added, "We are very proud of one of the bright stars from our training program."

Faculty Profile: Paulina Essah, M.D.

A young talented faculty member, Dr. Paulina Essah is developing a career in integrated medical research.

A graduate of Georgia State University, she received her medical degree at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and completed her residency at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, MO. Dr. Essah has been on faculty at the VCU Department of Internal Medicine since 1999. Besides being involved in research and teaching students, Dr. Essah is currently working on a Master's degree in Clinical Research and Biostatistics.

Dr. Essah was recently nominated to become Secretary of Women in Science, Dentistry and Medicine, the largest professional organization for women at VCU. She is also serving on the School of Medicine Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities.

In 2001, Dr. Essah was enrolled in an NIH-funded research training program BIRCWH (Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health). This mentor-based program offers salary support and allows Dr. Essah to devote 75% of efforts towards research. Currently Dr. Essah's research is focused specifically on polycystic ovary syndrome and insulin resistance syndromes in women. Dr. John Nestler, Chair of the DOIM Endocrinology Division, is her mentor. "Dr. Essah, through dedication and industry, is steadily acquiring training and experience in clinical investigation," said Dr. Nestler. "Her successful competitions for a VCU BIRCWH award and, most recently, an NIH R03 award are testimony to her talents, and bode well for a promising research career."

VCU Department of Internal Medicine Interns 2004–05

The Department of Internal Medicine matched an outstanding group of interns for 2004. We have students from many fine schools across the country. As always, we now face the ongoing challenge of justifying the confidence of these students by providing them with the excellent medicine training they all expect in coming here.

Categorical Medicine

Aneesha Abhae, M.D., University Campus Bio-Medico of Rome, Italy
Mithul Anun, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Jennifer Beeker, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
William Clark, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Aimee Collins, M.D., University of Louisville School of Medicine
Tiffani Dennis, M.D., Crefordt University School of Medicine
Rhsi Do, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Robert Flynn, M.D., State University of New York at Syracuse College of Medicine
Art Hirsch, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Adam Holmes, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Suzanne Kinsey, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Minu Mahata, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Rajiv Malhotra, D.O., Touro University College of Osteopathic Medicine
Evan Meadorn, M.D., Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine
John Miller, M.D., Louisiana State University Medical Center School of Medicine in Shreveport
Kristin Miller, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Amanda Moore, M.D., University of Mississippi School of Medicine
Andrew Polikopovic, M.D., University of South Florida College of Medicine
Christopher Rash, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Michael Richmond, M.D., Louisiana State University Medical Center School of Medicine in Shreveport
Kimberly Schools, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Megha Shah, M.D., University of Louisville School of Medicine
Jenny Smith, M.D., University of Mississippi School of Medicine
Michael Stevens, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Ashlee Waugh, M.D., University of Oklahoma College of Medicine

Medicine/Pediatrics

Veronica Alya-Sims, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Patricia Cook, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Brandon Kuebler, M.D., West Virginia University School of Medicine
Hava Massaquoi, M.D., Wayne State University School of Medicine
Andrew Meyer, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Preliminary Medicine

Matthew Brown, D.O., Touro University College of Osteopathic Medicine
Amanda Colgan, M.D., University of Kansas School of Medicine
William Craig, IV, M.D., East Tennessee State University College of Medicine
Charles Dillard, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Lisa Edsall, M.D., Ph.D., University of Virginia School of Medicine
Y. Imam Faruqi, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
William Fox, M.D., University of Texas Medical School at Galveston
Brian Hacker, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Alyssa Howard, M.D., University of North Carolina School of Medicine
Trey Leaven, M.D., Eastern Virginia Medical School

(continued on page four)
VCU Department of Internal Medicine Interns 2004–05
(continued from page three)

Matthew Lee, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Sara Moshiri, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Jason Pang, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Susmeeta Sharma, M.B.B.S., Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh
Garrett Sherman, M.D., University of Kentucky College of Medicine
Christian Shield, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Rashida Stevenson, M.D., University of Maryland School of Medicine
Cam Thuy Tran, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Tina Tran, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Shamolie Wyckoff, M.D., Wright State University School of Medicine

Primary Care
Tammy Copsey Spring, M.D., University of Kentucky College of Medicine
Elizabeth Naylor, M.D., Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University

Women’s Health
Sheila Glausby, M.D., Eastern Virginia Medical School
Elizabeth Perkins, M.D., University of Texas Medical School at San Antonio
Molly Rutherford, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Krysti Wick Fabato, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Christine Young, M.D., Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

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