Message from the Chair:

I am pleased to share the inaugural edition of our Family Medicine Department newsletter. As we continue to grow, the newsletter will be a platform to keep you abreast of our latest and greatest news.

This department has an incredible team working to assure excellence in patient care, teaching, research and community service. We have an array of programs and projects – The National Center on Elder Abuse, the Primary Care Physician Assistant Program, the Pacific AIDS Education and Teaching Center, the residency program partnered with the Eisner Clinic and California Hospital – devoted to care for people of all ages and in all strata in our society.

I hope you enjoy the stories and highlights contained in the newsletter. We value your involvement, engagement and support.

Laura Mosqueda, MD, FAAFP, AGSF

Celebrating a lifetime of dedication and care: Dr. John Dennis Mull honored by LA City Council

On August 14th, Dr. John Dennis Mull was recognized by Los Angeles City Council for his contributions to the city in the last five decades. At age 77, Mull works six days a week, rarely missing a day of work at the South Central Family Health Center. He wakes up every morning to see patients starting at seven in the morning.

Rose Rios, a board member at the South Central Family Health Center nominated Mull for his dedication to the clinic and community to City Councilman Curren D. Price for recognition by the city of Los Angeles.

“He is so special, it is just such a pleasure to be even under his care,” Rios told attendees. “He is a good doctor, a good person and we just love him.”

Mull is a preventative and family medicine doctor who studied medicine at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine in 1965, and then completed his residency at Massachusetts General Hospital. After finishing his medical training, he was drafted to Vietnam where he served two tours and did a great deal of rescue work. Upon his return to the United States, he completed a Master’s in Public Health at Harvard University and Councilman Curren D. Price honors Dr. John Dennis Mull at Los Angeles City Council meeting on August 14, 2015 for his lifetime of service and care to the community.

Family medicine care now in La Cañada

Dr. Rose Taroyan is one of the newest members of our Clinical Family Medicine team. She is an assistant professor of clinical medicine practicing at Healthcare Center 2 and the USC office in La Cañada Flintridge.

Taroyan is dedicated to working with the patient to manage lifestyle changes such as weight control, exercise regimen and improved eating habits.

Located adjacent to Verdugo Hills Hospital, the La Cañada office accepts appointments for children, adults and older adults. Taroyan loves this wide range of medical management calling it “the best part of family medicine.” Dr. Jehni Robinson, the vice chair of clinical affairs, applauds Taroyan for her work.

“She plays a very important role in growing family medicine in the San Gabriel Valley, especially La Cañada.”

Awards and Recognition:

Dr. Theresa Santos and Dr. Kate Gibson both received Outstanding Teaching in Introduction to Clinical Medicine awards for Year I and II, respectively, while Dr. Walter Coopenrath received an award for Outstanding Teaching in Year III at the White Coat Ceremony on August 14, 2015.

Annie Nguyen, Ph.D., has been elected as the Secretary of the Aging & Public Health Section of the American Public Health Association by her peers based on her excellence in leadership.

Dr. Jerry Abraham has been appointed to represent the American Academy of Family Physicians as a resident delegate to the American Medical Association House of Delegates.

Sabella Quidwai’s article “Note Taking in the Digital Age” was named the top story of the summer by Physician Assistant Education Association.

Inside This Issue:

- Major grant awarded to department chair to create training for older adult health care
- HIV fellows wrap up a year of specialized training
Grant awarded to department to create interdisciplinary primary care team for older adults

The fastest growing segment of the population in the United States are people above the age of 85. Often this segment is diagnosed with diabetes, heart failure, or dementia, which translates into serious functional problems for these older adults. The USC-LAC Training a Workforce in Interprofessional Geriatrics (USC-LAC-TWIG) with Laura Mosqueda, MD, as the primary investigator, have received a $2.5 million federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to help develop teams of interprofessionals to better recognize the needs and provide care for this expanding population.

“We need teams of people that work on behalf of an older adult,” Mosqueda said. “Often we tend to pull people apart in terms of their body parts and all those parts are attached to a person.”

The funds awarded to the team at USC will support a program focused on decreasing the shortage of properly trained elder care workers by expanding the multidisciplinary model in the ambulatory geriatric clinic at LAC+USC Medical Center and developing a new geriatric assessment clinic at the Health Science Campus. LAC+USC Medical Center, the California Southland Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association and the Center for Health Care Rights will integrate educational components helping to carry the philosophy of patient-centered care into the community setting.

The development of these comprehensive interprofessional geriatric assessment programs will help to improve caregivers’ abilities to manage the complex needs of patients with cognitive impairment or a diagnosis of dementia, in addition to the patient’s other medical issues. This is expected to lead to a higher quality of life for both patients and their family caregivers.

“There is a rapidly expanding elderly population and there aren’t sufficient numbers of trained clinicians to take care of them,” said Bonnie Olsen, Ph.D., the team lead. “We hope to develop the work force of trained and knowledgeable clinicians to provide the quality care that seniors deserve.”

The team is also planning improved curriculum for healthcare professional students to increase their ability to manage complex geriatric syndromes, emphasize team-based care and overcome the barriers to geriatric career choices.

“When you think about it here at Keck, when we teach [students] to do something really well, they are going to impact thousands of lives,” Mosqueda said. “If we teach everyone graduating from Keck to have a compassionate understanding of older adults, they have the potential to provide better care throughout their careers, an ever expanding ripple effect.”

Boosting preceptor numbers for PA students

Mitzi D’Aquila, MACM, PA-C, a faculty member at the Primary Care Physician Assistant Program at Keck of USC and her team of investigators have received a grant to develop a multimedia program to examine potential barriers and to increase the number of clinician preceptors for PA students.

“Often we tend to pull people apart in terms of their body parts and all those parts are attached to a person.”

Titled B.O.O.S.T (Bring Our Stellar Teachers) the multimedia project will focus on using innovative visual projects to inspire more preceptors to take on PA students in their clinics. The project will provide information on areas, such as the scope of practice of PAs, discuss the innovative model of teaching interprofessional teams of students and how best to give feedback to PA students.

“Our team believes that the brief multimedia intervention delivered in preceptor practice sites will increase receptivity to accepting PA students in the future,” D’Aquila said. “We chose a multimedia platform to deliver the intervention for the following reasons: it can be brief, informative and engaging; it can be delivered at point-of-care or sent as a web link; it can be revised and improved continually.”

After developing the multimedia project, the team will assess the impact on attitudes of clinicians toward teaching PA students in the future. It is anticipated that the multimedia will be made available on a national scale via the Physician Assistant Education Association.

New educational modules on elder abuse

After an extremely successful 10th annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15th, the National Center on Elder Abuse is producing a brand new education module.

In partnership with the USC Davis School of Gerontology, the NCEA has created educational videos for professionals and estimates to launch the program in November.

The education program will include videos, quizzes and information from experts in the field. Professionals will be able to complete the course work for credit.

This follows the momentum created by World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which the NCEA kicked off after a 10-week countdown to increase awareness about elder abuse. This yearly event is intended to bring together communities around the globe to plan activities and events, where they can share information and spread awareness related to aging and abuse. Each year, millions of older people are mistreated, abused, neglected and scammed, most often by people they know.

“It was far-reaching and gratifying. The results were phenomenal reaching into Canada, it is an international topic,” said deputy director of the NCEA, Julie Schoen. “We hope the awareness that we have built during this campaign resonates throughout the year.”
MULL: Fifty years of service recognized
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became a member of the faculty.

Later on he taught at the University of California Irvine in the Family Medicine Department. Then in 1997 he joined the Keck School of Medicine of USC, where he was in charge of clerkships for family medicine and was the vice chair for academic affairs for the department.

Passionate about global health, Mull led many student trips to Tanzania, there he established the SHED Foundation (Shirati Health, Education and Development), where medical students work in the clinic with local doctors, medical staff and patients.

“He is just so generous and humble,” said Chris Feifer, DrPH, who went on one of the trips to Shirati. “He tries to make the place better.”

During the last two decades, Mull has also led a number of summer trips to Ensenada, Mexico for students to learn and practice medical Spanish. Students on this trip are taught to effectively communicate with Spanish-speaking patients about their illness, medication and care.

Mull is dedicated to his wife, Dorothy, their three children and one grandchild. He is a well-respected physician who has touched many lives and mentored countless people over the years.

Despite delay scholar presents poster at LAX departure gate

Warren Yamashita packed his poster ready to set off for Kansas City, MO to attend the annual American Academy of Family Physicians’ National Conference. He had received a scholarship from the California Academy of Family Physicians and was going to present his poster based on increasing health care access by training interdisciplinary health professional students to act as insurance educators.

However, his flight from Los Angeles was delayed three times due to storms on the east coast. After missing multiple flight-alternatives, he asked for cab fare since he had no other ride until the buses began to run again in the morning. They denied him.

Stranded with other passengers, airline employees and their families overnight, Warren engaged in a conversation with others stuck in the terminal about the recent airline mergers that led to a discussion about trends in medicine.

“We were talking about the conference and they said why don’t I do my presentation, so I ended up doing that, which was really funny because it was an esoteric research topic, but about the larger issue of healthcare access,” said Yamashita. “The healthcare system works for those who can pay for it at the time, which is related to the airlines.”

This opportunity to present in the airport terminal despite the frustration of delays gave Yamashita a sense of being rejuvenated by the experience.

“Somehow these airline families redeemed a terrible situation and brought that vision and value of ‘family’ to me last night,” said Yamashita.

Want to make a difference in medicine, education and healthcare?

Donate today to the Department of Family Medicine and contribute to education, research and health. Your generosity makes a difference and we thank you for your support.
Training in HIV care offered to fellows promotes healthcare in Los Angeles

This August the Pacific AIDS Education and Training Center’s HIV fellows finish their year of training and new fellows begin.

Designed to teach physicians to treat the full spectrum of HIV disease from early infection to common co-morbidities to the management of multi-drug resistant virus with opportunistic infections, this specialized twelve-month training is directed by Jerry Gates, Ph.D.

“The original purpose of the fellowship was to fulfill a need for well-qualified individuals to diagnose and manage HIV with increasing complexity while caring for the whole patient,” Gates said. “That need hasn’t gone away as the nature of HIV has changed as now is much more a chronic illness. It makes sense that a primary care physician is well-positioned to take care of the entire spectrum in someone infected with HIV for their entire lifespan.”

Kenneth T. Leong, D.O., and Kristin Walsh, M.D., have just finished their year in the respective fellowships and walk away with a great deal of first-hand HIV care experience.

Honoring 10 years of fellows in the HIV Clinical Fellowship

Going into medical school, Dr. Kenneth T. Leong wanted to care for underserved populations, particularly those in the LGBT community. Leong was initially drawn into the fellowship because his goal is to be a ‘gay doctor for gay people’ and his long time passion for HIV medicine.

“This program has really educated me to be a well-rounded physician. I feel very strongly that I am able to provide amazing comprehensive HIV care,” said Leong, the clinical HIV fellow.

In his role at LAC+USC, he saw first-hand how treatment would have been different if patients had insurance.

“They can’t advocate for themselves because there are barriers including, literacy, language, poverty, access to healthcare,” Leong said. “We really had to advocate for them since they couldn’t speak for themselves and it was a very positive experience.”

Leong will pursue his dream in San Francisco caring for HIV positive and underserved patients.

A one-of-a-kind fellowship brings specialized HIV care to the largest jail system in the country

“Life in jail is tough,” said Dr. Kristin Walsh about her experience in the HIV correctional fellowship, the only one of its kind. “If you are going to call an ambulance, you have to isolate a deputy to go with [the patient]. It is tough to pull off any transfer because they are wards of the [county] at the moment.”

Despite the complications of working in the correctional system, it did not take long for Walsh to feel the rewards of helping those individuals who lacked proper health care access and resources, and left her with the sense that she was able to give patients back some control.

“The good days are when the patients responded and they were happy to have a doctor sit and take time to explain what their diagnosis means. It felt very rewarding,” Walsh explained. “You have this one point in contact for these people who never engage in healthcare and sometimes they are interested and sometimes they are angry. For everything in [their] life that is out of control there is one thing [they] can control. It’s their HIV and I help them give them ownership over it.”

Walsh will start at the Santa Clara County Jail in September.

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