Preparing Students to Work in Diverse Settings

The Saint Louis University AHEC Program Office mission encourages health profession students to work in underserved areas. However, lack of knowledge necessary to care for the underserved deters students from choosing to work in these areas. Despite content related to communication skills and cultural competency in the curriculum of health professions schools, students graduate with insufficient skills to deal with the complex problems that arise in caring for the underserved. This spring the AHEC Program Office in conjunction with its curriculum subcommittee embarked on a new and exciting venture to educate students in the health professions regarding minority health issues, cultural competence, and interprofessional teamwork.

The curriculum subcommittee, comprised of faculty from the cooperating Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Allied Health, Public Health and Social Service, has designed a course which addresses this need — the Interprofessional Minority Health Education elective. Objectives for the course included: demonstrating communication and cultural competency skills, differentiating factors that alter the ways in which patients view health, distinguishing roles of the various health care professions and promoting respect for contributions, and examining the impact of the external environment on health care team decision-making.

The elective curriculum was designed after an extensive literature review of the issues addressing minority health. Specific discussion topics integrated: examination of the problem of prejudice and racism, examination of and potential solutions to refugee health, solutions for moving individuals toward cultural competence, ways to provide culturally sensitive health services interprofessional roles and teamwork, and implementation of health care policy.

Faculty from the cooperating schools taught the various aspects of the course. An array of guests from community agencies were invited to present on the documentation of the problem of health disparities and to describe agencies which have been established to address the health needs in communities where health disparities exist.

Assignments in the course required personal introspection and interaction among students, activities necessary to achieve the attitudes consistent with working in teams and with diverse cultures. Students watched and responded to the film, “The Shadow of Hate.” They completed exercises on prejudice and racism. In addition, students had to choose a cultural competence theory, stage themselves, and then propose strategies to move themselves to the next stage.

Seven students from various health professions participated in the elective together. They demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and participation in the class. Student comments were very positive regarding
Preparing Students To Work In Diverse Settings Continued

the course. Some of them included: "This course has truly opened my eyes about the health disparities existing in St. Louis and nation/worldwide. I'm truly inspired to address these issues and concerns in my professional practice." "I love the different perspectives this class allowed me to view and attempt to understand." "I think all the professors and guest speakers have the same passion and desire to help try to eliminate health disparities as I do and provide us with many resources to help our patients in practice."

The curriculum subcommittee will offer the course again next spring, probably in the late afternoon, to create an opportunity for more interested students to register.

Margaret S. Ulione, Ph.D.

News From Research

June has been a very busy month to welcome new employees to the division!

Rob Nicholson, PhD has recently joined the department as an assistant professor in the research division. He received his PhD in Clinical Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University and was a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine at the Brown University Medical School/The Miriam Hospital. Rob has been quite busy before joining us as an investigator on a grant that Dr. Mengel submitted. He has also submitted a K23, "Tailored Messaging and Behavioral Treatment for Migraine". Dr. Nicholson will be presenting at the American Headache Society Annual Scientific Meeting held June 19-22 in Chicago. The title of his presentation is "The Role of Anger in Predicting Headache-Related Disability". We are delighted to welcome Rob to the department.

Peter Yan, MS is our new biostatistician. Peter received his M.S. in statistics in 2002 at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and has been working for the Community Health Research Group at UT as a statistician. Peter will be working with us in a variety of capacities from inputting data to consulting on the data analysis section of grants. If you need Peter's services, don't hesitate to contact him.

Two research assistants have joined us for the summer. Cara Saunders, a graduate student in social sciences, started with us on June 2nd and is working on collecting data through interview and chart review for the Tenkku, Schamp and Chibnall research project, "Health Care Wishes". Katherine Tenkku will be with us on a part time basis as a general research assistant working on projects with Dr. Nicholson and others in the department.

Leigh Tenkku, MPH, along with her colleagues, Mary deGroot, PhD, Barbara Bogomolov, BSN and Katherine Jahninse submitted a letter of intent to the Patient Communication and Quality of Care In Underserved Populations Program of the Commonwealth Fund. Their project is titled "Refugee Acculturation & Adaptation Model (REFrame) Pilot and Feasibility Study in a Sample of Somali Bantu Refugees".

Kim Zoberi, MD has completed her Faculty Development Fellowship Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Kim presented her research study, "Correlation of Calcium Intake and Obesity in African American Females" at the 24th Annual Fellows Symposium on June 11th, 2003. Congratulations to Kim! On a more personal note, Kim and her husband, Imran, are expecting their first child in November. We are all looking forward to that happy event!
NEWS FROM THE CHAIR

I would like to summarize many of the activities going on in the department, other than in the Predoctoral Division, which will be featured in this issue.

Toni Garrison, M.H.A. has accepted the job of Deputy Director of our SLU AHEC Program Office and took up residence in the corner office on June 9th. She has extensive community experience through her work at St. Mary's Hospital, and will be a true asset to our emerging urban AHEC. Building on our previous project in bioterrorism preparedness, the Missouri Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) is working with the Center for Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections to apply for a grant to improve bioterrorism preparedness among health professionals in the state of Missouri.

Our Saint Louis University/St. Elizabeth's Family Practice Residency Program in Belleville has completed a Residency Assistance Program consultation, which confirmed that a focus on rural medicine would be a good fit for that program. Michael Temporal, M.D. and Matthew Ulven, M.D. will be sorting through the consultant’s recommendations in the next few months. I have been working with Jerry Kruse, M.D., the Chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Southern Illinois University, to examine the feasibility of the establishment of an AHEC system in southern Illinois. Our collaboration will involve guiding the establishment of centers in East St. Louis and in the Belleville area. Should we decide that this is a feasible opportunity, SIU will be submitting a grant in December to expand the Illinois AHEC network into southern Illinois in collaboration with us.

Our Research Division continues to submit grants. Margaret Ulione, Ph.D. and I along with faculty from our own Family Practice Residency Program in Belleville and from Forest Park’s Residency Program submitted a project on using a Family History Tool to risk-stratify patients on common chronic conditions meshed with tailored messaging to see if that would lead to improvements in healthy behaviors. Robert Nicholson, Ph.D., our new Research Division faculty, has submitted his K award application to study the effect of using tailored messaging on migraine patients in the primary care setting.

Lastly, our Des Peres practice continues its growth with the addition of Michael Cannon, M.D. who will join our practice on September 1, 2003. Dr. Cannon has proved to be a very effective teacher during our third and fourth year Family Medicine Clerkship and our first year Community and Behavioral Science unit of of Patient, Physician, and Society I. He will be expanding his teaching role and helping us develop our Primary Care and Prevention Center practice at Des Peres.

The department continues to move forward on many fronts: bioterrorism preparedness, rural medicine, tailored messaging for people with chronic medical conditions, and expansion at the Des Peres clinical site.
Student Kudos

We are pleased to announce that Cherise Colley and Sandra Pagan, rising fourth year students, are the recipients of the Multicultural International Scholarship Award. This award will support encumbrances incurred while completing the CFM 410 International Health Seminar: Field Placement Cross-Cultural/International Experience elective next year.

July will be a busy month for the recipients of the Students for Global Health International Scholarship! Ken Bensch and Peter Jeppson, MS2s, will leave for Guatemala as part of St. John's Jesuit Annual Medical Mission Program. Their program will entail traveling to surrounding villages, changing locations daily and providing clinical health care under the direction of Dr. Richard Paat, Clinical Associate Professor, Medical College of Ohio (MCO). Tina Barbado, MS2, has been accepted to the IHCA (International Health Central American Institute) program, "Latin Spanish Patient in the Environment of Tropical Medicine." Ilona Lemanyi, MS2, will spend the first three weeks of July in Pec, Hungary at Pecs Medical University where she will participate in a summer program for foreign medical students organized by the Hungarian Medical Students International Relations Committee (HuMSIRC).

In addition to those students named above, these rising second year students, Denise Chow, Eric Connely and Daniel S. Micuinescu, have been selected to receive the AMSA-International Scholarship Award. Denise will attend a summer program in Australia. Eric will volunteer in Kathmandu, Nepal and Daniel will attend the AmeriSpan Unlimited SALUD Program in Guatemala.

For the first time ever, the department turned over its grand rounds presentation in May to two first year student teams who presented regarding the agencies they visited as part of their Community Health Project for PPS I. The top two student teams were selected to present by ballot of their peers as well as faculty and staff evaluators after all teams presented on April 17th. Team #17 which was comprised of Jill Cook, Raina Gupta, Jason Konop, Charles Le and Timothy Speigle presented on the Midtown Catholic Community Services Center. Nathan Cannon, Lesley Nichols, Pamela Somervell, Richard Strathmann and Kimberly Tyus, Team #28, presented on the Language Access Metro Project (LAMP). Hats off to these industrious and creative students for a job well done!

The Health Resource Center (HRC), a community based clinic operated by our medical students, recently received the 2002-2003 Saint Louis University Bill Nordmann Community Service Award. Mr. Nordmann was well known for his involvement with student organizations, particularly those associated with community service and campus ministry. The HRC was nominated for this award by Cassandra Griffin, Program Director for Community and International Health Programs in our department.

Patrick L. Riley was the recipient of the Family Health Foundation of Missouri award to the top graduating medical student entering Family Practice in 2003. At graduation, he received a $500 scholarship and plaque. Dr. Riley will be joining the SLU Family Medicine Residency Program in Belleville in July. We’re so happy to keep him in the family.

Belleville Welcomes New Interns

The Saint Louis University Family Medicine Program will welcome eleven new interns on July 1, 2003 from a variety of medical schools from across the country and Puerto Rico. We are proud to announce that five of the first year residents are from our own SLU School of Medicine: Gregory Climaco, Kelly Jones, Anne Nash, Captain Michael Nash and Patrick Riley. They will join Captain Aaron Boyer from the University of Illinois, Captain Philip Ham from Nova Southeastern University, Captain Gregory “Chad” Kahl from the University of Florida, Captain Jason Kelly from the University of Texas-Houston, Captain Sarah Vick from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Captain Ramon Yambo-Arias from the University of Puerto Rico and Jim Hong from SUNY. We wish them all well as they begin their first year at St. Elizabeth's.
THE WAY I SEE IT

FAMILY PHYSICIANS: GATEKEEPERS OF THE FAMILY

I was driving along the highway one morning when I heard a very disturbing bit of news information on a popular talk show. The guest of the hour, a newly published author, stated that six percent of African American children are with both parents by age seventeen in the United States. Further, only thirty percent of Caucasian children reach this plateau.

As a family physician I find this very disheartening. I thought about my own practice experience in an effort to "discount" this data but my quick assessment actually was similarly dismal. I know that approximately two thirds of African American children are raised in single parent homes; and, in the St Louis area, teen pregnancy and out of wedlock pregnancies continue to be a problem.

Many would argue that this is not a health issue but more psychosocial and would wonder what relationship this data has to disease. I would respond that fifty percent or more of the region’s morbidities (heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, smoking disorders, and cancer) are very much tied to lifestyle and socioeconomic issues. It is my belief that the continuing demise of the so called “nuclear” family is having a devastating effect on the fabric of America.

Since 1970 the percentage of traditional families has diminished from 40.3% to 24%. Given that it takes approximately two years to adjust to divorce and five years for a new step parented household to adjust, the children of the 21st Century are almost constantly in transition. We know that parental conflict is a strong predictor of childhood psychopathology. I contend that we as physicians and health care providers will spend the greatest amount of our time “cleaning up the mess” that is frequently rooted in unhappy childhood experiences.

So much of what our health belief system is composed of is taught within our families. A seemingly simple daily ritual such as eating is so out of control in this country that obesity is considered epidemic. In 1990 there were only four states (Missouri was one of them) with obesity prevalence greater than six percent. By the year 2000, all but seven U.S. states had obesity rates greater than that. As America gets older and fatter, the prevalence of diseases continues to increase. Something is definitely wrong.

As one seriously involved in the training of physicians and family doctors, in particular, I am concerned that family doctors continue to practice “family medicine” by looking comprehensively at families and their internal dynamics while practicing preventive medicine to stop some of the dysfunctional behaviors observed. Family physicians must remember to keep the “Family” in family doctoring and be assertive enough to question husbands and wives about their relationships and deal with some of the answers given that we don’t want to hear. Personally, I have never had a patient yet say, “That is none of your business.”

This can be a time consuming process and, as a result, the time required to get to the heart of it may negatively impact the income of those physicians who ask the hard questions and deal honestly with the answers given. Considering the impact of each dysfunctional family within the community, the effort seems worth it.

Someone has to be the “gatekeeper” of the family. Who better to do it than family doctors? We need to ask ourselves periodically, “Am I really practicing family medicine?”

MICHAEL T. RAILLEY, M.D.

That’s my take on this situation, what’s yours?

We would love to have your take on issues, concerns and developments – both positive and negative – facing family physicians to place in our newsletter.

SLU AHEC PROGRAM OFFICE APPOINTS NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Toni Garrison, M.H.A., has been named Deputy Director for the SLU AHEC Program Office. Toni comes to us with extensive experience in health care administration as a former network vice president for SSM Health & Wellness. She has numerous community connections that she has cultivated as board member for the Missouri Minority Health Advisory Committee, St. Louis County Workforce Development Board, St. Louis ConnectiCare Community Advisory Board, Greater St. Louis Prevention Partnership, and the American Diabetes Foundation Board. Toni has hit the ground running in her first week here in the department. We are looking forward to her leadership as we work to build the AHEC program.
FAMILY MEDICINE GRADUATES' PINNING CEREMONY

On May 14th, the department continued its annual tradition of honoring the graduates who are entering residencies in family practice by holding a reception and pinning ceremony here in the department for them and their families. Six of the eight students who had chosen family medicine were able to attend. Each of the graduates placed a blue pennant bearing their name into the city where they will be doing their residency on the large map of the U.S. that hangs in the department. The metropolitan St. Louis area has gotten quite crowded as five of the graduates have chosen the SLU FRP in Belleville (see Belleville Welcomes New Interns) and Leah Swartwout will join the Family Medicine Program at St. John’s Hospital. The other two graduates will also be nearby - Erin Fionteck is heading to the University of Missouri-Columbia and Hannah Echalier will be at the University of Kansas.

Dr. Railey always asks the graduates to complete a brief exit interview to get some feedback regarding our predoctoral program in family medicine and its impact on these students and their specialty choice. Some of the results of the interviews are interesting and revealing. In response to a question asking if completing the FM clerkship affected their decisions to select Family Medicine (FM), all but one responded that it confirmed their decision or helped them to realize that FM was a good match for them.

In response to a question asking if they had been subjected to discouraging remarks about family medicine from faculty and peers, they all responded that they had heard negative remarks. Attendings, residents in other specialties and fellow students suggested that they would not make enough money to pay off their loans, the job market was terrible for family physicians, family medicine is too broad and family physicians are not trained well enough to take care of hospital patients. They found these remarks somewhat discouraging.

Those students who were members of the Family Medicine Interest Group affirmed that the panels at the FM residency programs that they had attended had spurred their interest in family medicine and given them a better understanding of what family medicine is all about. One student commented that after hearing Dr. Railey tell a story early in med school about encountering “a man at a gas station and how fortunate he felt to be part of a community”, he/she wanted that same feeling. It is interesting to note the impact that words have on young students even when they may be off-hand remarks.

Asked about how they would improve or change the clerkship, most of the students simply commented that they had had a very good experience. One student ended the interview by simply writing, “Thank you for the wonderful teaching”.

All in all we appear to be on the right track despite diminished numbers this year. Thanks to the graduates for your parting words. We take your comments and suggestions to heart and hope that you will continue to feel part of the department after graduation.

We especially hope that you will consider precepting medical students in your own practices down the road. Your positive influence remains vital to our specialty. Good luck to you in your

ULIONE NAMED DEPARTMENT VICE CHAIR

Margaret Ulione, Ph.D, R.N. has recently been named Vice Chair of the Department of Community and Family Medicine. Maggie joined the department in September 2000 as part-time Education Coordinator in the predoctoral division. She was the primary author of the predoctoral grant which spurred significant change in the family medicine clerkship and PFS I course for first year students. In July of 2002, she was named Director of the Research Division. Under her leadership, the division continues to expand, adding several new employees and interesting projects. She has demonstrated the unique ability to work effectively with a diverse group of individuals, wear a number of different hats simultaneously, be out front on the new directions in the department, and keep us all in good humor. We are delighted to be working with and for her! Congratulations, Maggie!
THANKS TO CHP AGENCIES

The Department wishes to thank the following agencies that participated in the Community Health Project (CHP) with our first year medical students this year. Their participation allowed our students to better understand health disparities, improve their cultural competency skills, and gain an understanding of issues that impact community health. We are most grateful to all of them for their commitment to broadening the vision of these young physicians in training.

- African Refugee Services
- Alzheimer’s Association
- American Diabetes Association
- American Parkinson Disease Assn.
- Blacks Assisting Black Against AIDS
- Citizens for Missouri’s Children
- Community Health-In-Partnership Services (CHIPS)
- Faith House
- Food Outreach
- Kids in the Middle
- Language Access Metro Project (LAMP)
- Life Skills
- Lupus Foundation
- Midtown Catholic Community Services
- MO Department of Health
- MO Department of Social Services/Family Services
- Myrtle Hillard Davis Comprehensive Center
- Nurses for Newborns
- Paraquad
- Parents as Teachers
- Peoples Health Center
- Places for People
- Ranken Jordan Pediatric Rehabilitation Center
- St. Louis City Health Department
- St. Louis Crisis Nursery
- St. Louis Effort for AIDS
- Vision for Children at Risk
- Women’s Support and Community Services

FELLOWSHIPS

Lowell Sessinstaff, M.D. and Matthew Ulven, M.D. recently completed fellowships in primary care faculty development from Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI. Dr. Sessinstaff’s project was entitled, “A Longitudinal, Integrated, Three-year Eye Care Curriculum for Family Practice Residents.” Dr. Ulven’s research project, “Rural Family Physician Preferences for Computer-Assisted Learning Tools for their Patients with Diabetes Mellitus, Type II”, included surveying rural family physicians in Illinois.

Congratulations to both of you!

JAMA REVIEWS DR. MENGEL’S BOOK....

"THIS BOOK IS A GEM!"

In the June 11th issue of JAMA, Fundamentals of Clinical Practice, 2nd edition, edited by Mark Mengel, Warren Holleman and Scott Fields was reviewed by Joseph A. Lieberman III, M.D., M.P.H. of the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia. Dr Lieberman loved the book and credits the editors with compiling a text that succeeds in presenting clinical medicine from three different perspectives, “Patient”, “Doctor” and “Society” and then demonstrates how they are all interrelated. Educational objectives are enumerated at the beginning of each chapter which is particularly useful for educators and each chapter is introduced by cases which “ground the discussions in a clinically relevant fashion.” The reviewer concludes by encouraging “any lifelong student of medicine to add this marvelous text to his or her medical library and to take its teachings to heart, and mind.” Bravo, Dr. Mengel
Mark your calendar to attend our AHEC CME event

A Crisis of Care
Effective Interventions
For
Complex Patients

September 19 - 20, 2003
Saint Louis University Learning Resources Center

More information will be forthcoming
Please call Teal Stevens @ 314-721-9979 if you have any questions