

# NEWSPAGER

*In the tradition of Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and Hahnemann Medical College*

## ***Richard V. Homan, M.D., Named Dean of Drexel University College of Medicine***

### **June 2005**

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After a national search chaired by trustees Dr. Donna Gentile O'Donnell and Nick DeBenedictis, Dr. Richard V. Homan has been appointed Dean and Senior Vice President for Health Affairs of Drexel University College of Medicine (DUCOM). University President Dr. Constantine Papadakis made the announcement May 11.

Dr. Homan will join DUCOM on September 1 from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock, where as Dean of the School of Medicine, he oversees all activities of the medical school across four campuses and serves as CEO of the \$250 million operating budget of the medical school and the faculty practice plan. Dr. Homan also holds the office of Vice President for Clinical Affairs, managing clinical activity among the five schools in the Health Sciences Center (Allied Health Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy) and directing managed-care contracting in the Health Sciences Center.

Dr. Homan has been a member of the Texas Tech faculty since 1989, when he joined the University as Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine. He was named Professor with tenure in 2001 and was appointed Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Finance, Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, and Dean of the School of Medicine, all in the same year.

Dr. Homan is board-certified in Family Practice and holds certificates of added qualifications in Geriatric Medicine by the American Boards of Family Practice and Internal Medicine, and in Sports Medicine by the American Boards of Family Practice, Pediatrics, Internal Medicine and Emergency Medicine. He has received more than \$9.5 million in extramural funding for scholarly activities related to the development of community-based medical-education programs, healthy aging, cardiovascular disease and stroke.

A native of Oceanside, N.Y., Dr. Homan received his medical degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Medicine. He completed his residency in Family Medicine at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center of the Pennsylvania State University. He and his wife, Rita, have three children, Andrew, Katherine and Gregory.

In announcing Dr. Homan's appointment, Dr. Papadakis expressed thanks to Dr. Joseph Bloom for "his outstanding service as Dean" during the search and commended his leadership.



## ***Student Activities Center to Rise at Queen Lane Campus***



Drexel University College of Medicine broke ground May 25 on a multimillion-dollar Student Activities Center at the Queen Lane campus. The new center will add approximately 17,620 square feet to the current campus. The building will include a student gym, locker rooms, meeting spaces and a large multipurpose room for classes and large meetings.

This will be the first-ever Student Activities Center at the Queen Lane campus. Construction is expected to be completed in January 2006.

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**Mary Moran, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
Associate Dean for  
Faculty Development

## ***The College Is Demonstrating Its Commitment to Helping the Faculty Achieve Their Goals***

It's an exciting time for faculty development at Drexel University College of Medicine. The creation of my current position in July 2004 reflects the commitment that our institution has to helping the faculty achieve their professional goals as well as the goals of our departments, the College, and the University.

As faculty members know, a number of programs have been offered this academic year, including the Monthly Faculty Development Seminar Series, the Humanism and Professionalism in Medicine Programs, and the Fundamentals of Medical Research Conference. The Professional Enrichment and Growth (PEG) Grants were awarded this month to two deserving faculty so that they may pursue the acquisition

of a new skill or knowledge that will help move them toward promotion. The Preceptoring Program pairs new faculty with more seasoned faculty preceptors to help steward them through the first year. The Physician Leader Seminar targeted mid-career and advanced-career faculty. It's important that all of our faculty have access to these programs, so, when possible, programs are videoconferenced to our remote sites.

In addition to the continuation of these programs, plans for the upcoming academic year include a one-day Orientation for New Faculty, the unveiling of the Faculty Development Website, and the reincarnation of the Mentoring Program. The system for annual evaluation of each faculty member by his/her Department Chair or Division Chief will be standardized across departments. Videoconferencing equipment is being upgraded at a number of our sites and should result in improved quality of the transmission.

To the new faculty: I have been trying to formally meet new faculty to get to know each of you and begin to act as a resource for you during your career at the College of Medicine.

I am committed to developing programs that meet the needs of faculty, "new" or "old," and would welcome all suggestions for program development. Please feel free to contact me anytime at **215-762-3500** or [Mary.Moran@drexelmed.edu](mailto:Mary.Moran@drexelmed.edu).

## ***Manuel Stamatakis Golf Classic, August 8***

Among the best in the state, the Spring Mill Centennial Courses at Philadelphia Country Club are renowned for challenging golf amid a stunning landscape. Come out and play on Monday, August 8, when the club once again hosts the Manuel Stamatakis Golf Classic. In addition to golfing, your foursome will enjoy a buffet lunch in the clubhouse, cocktail reception, and festive dinner and awards ceremony.

For further information on the golf outing or sponsorship opportunities, call Ellen Plover at **215-762-1708**.

**"I'd Rather Be Golfing! Wouldn't You?"**



## ***Attorney Exler Promoted to VP, Drexel University College of Medicine***



Michael Exler, Deputy General Counsel for Drexel University College of Medicine, started the year off right, with a January 1 promotion to Vice President. Attorney Exler, who has been with the College of Medicine for five years, also serves as Secretary of the College of Medicine Board of Trustees.

Mr. Exler came here in May 2000 from the Johns Hopkins Health System, where he was Senior Counsel and also served as Board Secretary for several Hopkins subsidiaries. He was in-house legal counsel with Allegheny Health, Education and Research Foundation in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh prior to his work at Hopkins; before that, he was in private practice in Pittsburgh.

**Contact: 215-762-2026**

## College of Medicine's Vaginitis Center Offers Hope to Women with Chronic Conditions

Paul Nyirjesy, M.D., Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Drexel University College of Medicine, listens intently as his new patient relates the history of her problem. Although the details vary, the story is one he has heard many times before.

"I've seen six different doctors over the past three years," the patient tells him. "No one seems to know what's causing this severe itching, burning and pain in my vaginal area. I've had one diagnosis after another and used prescribed treatments that exacerbated my problem and even caused other problems. I haven't been able to have sexual relations with my husband in three years. Can you help me?"

Fortunately, the answer is yes for more than 90 percent of the patients who come to Dr. Nyirjesy at the Vaginitis Center he runs at Hahnemann University Hospital. His patients are usually referred by gynecologists who have exhausted treatment options for agonizing chronic vaginal infections such as yeast infections, bacterial vaginosis and trichomoniasis.

Patients also come to Dr. Nyirjesy with a wide array of other non-infectious vulvar and vaginal disorders such as vulvar vestibulitis or vulvodynia, which involves a painful response to touch or pressure at the vaginal opening where the major vestibular glands are located. He also treats many patients with rare conditions such as lichen sclerosus and lichen planus.

Each year, Dr. Nyirjesy and his associate of 10 years, Velma Weitz, MSN, CRNP, treat well over 3,000 patients, seeing about 500 new patients annually. The Vaginitis Center is the only one of its kind in Philadelphia, one of about 20 nationwide, and is estimated to be the largest such program in the world. Patients come from as far as California and the Caribbean for treatment.

Dr. Nyirjesy attributes the success of the program, which he started in 1991, to painstakingly careful history-taking and diagnosis, as well as aggressive treatment when appropriate.

"I spend a long time with my patients, reviewing their history for clues," relates Dr. Nyirjesy, the only ob/gyn specialist in the Philadelphia area who completed a full fellowship in infectious diseases. "We don't rush into treatment until we're certain we've

made a proper diagnosis. Many times, we find that women have three or four problems going on simultaneously. If you don't address all of them, you end up going around in circles."

Depending on the diagnosis, Dr. Nyirjesy may prescribe aggressive treatment. "We treat chronic yeast infections with a very aggressive six-month course of antifungal medication," he explains. "I've seen women who have suffered for over 10 years and, after treatment, they are 100 percent better."

In collaboration with other specialists, Dr. Nyirjesy also has successfully treated trichomonas infections that are resistant to the standard treatment of metronidazole. He has been using two antibiotics, paromomycin and tinidazole. For vulvar vestibulitis, he uses a wide array of treatments, including topical corticosteroids and amitriptyline, a tricyclic antidepressant.

"My involvement with research and networking with other subspecialists keep me on the leading edge of treatment," he notes.

He is particularly excited about his newest research project, which involves establishing a database on the patients who are referred to the Vaginitis Center. "This will provide a lot of new insights into these diseases and their treatments," he says.

"I understand how tough these problems are for the women who have them," Dr. Nyirjesy reflects. "I've had 30-year-old women with breast cancer sit in my office and tell me that this chronic burning they've had for the past year is a bigger deal in their lives than breast cancer. It impacts their marital relationships, their self-image and their work. That's why I spare no effort to figure out the problem and help them get better. The good news is that for most of them, we can usually find a treatment or combination of treatments that will make a big difference."

**Contact: 215-762-1503**



**Dr. Nyirjesy**

## Professionalism Curriculum Team Selected for Conference

A College of Medicine group led by Donna Russo, Ph.D. and Dennis Novack, M.D. has been selected through a competitive process to participate in the Relationship-Centered Care Initiative Immersion Conference hosted by Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM), Indianapolis. Drexel University College of Medicine is one of just eight medical schools invited to send a team to the August conference. Others include Baylor College of Medicine and Dartmouth Medical School.

Our team comprises members of a group that has been working on DUCOM's professionalism curriculum; in addition to Drs. Russo and

Novack, they include Mary Moran, M.D., Janet Moore, Psy.D., Laura Smals, M.D. and Mark Woodland, M.D. The eventual goal of the IUSM initiative, now in its third year, is to change the culture of that school and the content of the "hidden curriculum."

While experiencing IUSM "as a case study," participants will explore approaches to transforming the hidden curriculum and create a roadmap for enhancing the professional culture of their own schools.

## ***\$700,000 Raised – and the Ball was a Blast!***

More than 650 people gathered in the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown for the Black Tie White Coat Ball, which raised \$700,000 to support research into chronic pain. Emceed by Jerry Blavat, the ball featured the best of the girl groups – the Shirelles, the Crystals and the Marvelettes – who sang their hearts out for the jubilant audience. The concert was followed by dinner and music by the Flamin' Caucasians that kept party-goers rocking till midnight.





## Grants and Kudos

**Melanie Alexander**, a doctoral candidate in neuroscience, has been awarded a pre-doctoral fellowship for three years from the National Institute of Drug Abuse to study "MDMA Modulation of Sensory Information Processing."



Dr. McLeer

**Susan V. McLeer, M.D.**, Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, has been named to the Board of Managers of Friends Hospital, effective July 1, 2005.

**Michael M. White, Ph.D.**, Professor and Chair, Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, has been appointed to the Editorial Board for Elsevier's Integrated Series, which is a group of nine review texts for the basic sciences. Dr. White's primary responsibility will be the pharmacology text, as well as ensuring integration of pharmacology concepts into the other books in the series.

### **Dr. O'Donnell Appointed to Pa. Health Research Advisory Committee**



Dr. O'Donnell

Board member Dr. Donna Gentile O'Donnell has been appointed by the Pennsylvania Senate to the Health Research Advisory Committee in the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Dr. O'Donnell is one of 10 members of the committee that allocates research dollars from Pennsylvania's \$11 billion tobacco settlement. Dr. O'Donnell is Managing Director, Life Sciences Portfolio, of the Eastern Technology Council.

### **Student Activities Center...continued**

The two-story building will be located at 2900 Queen Lane on the south side of the existing building, between "C" and "D" wings. The first floor will contain a student lounge, bookstore, gym, locker rooms, student government space, and access to an outdoor terraced courtyard. The second floor is a large multipurpose room that can accommodate up to 290 seats.



## Presentations & Publications



Dr. Blank

**Kenneth Blank, Ph.D.**, Senior Associate Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Policy, participated in the March 9, Ninth Annual Meeting of the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance, on a panel concerning "Commercialization of University Intellectual Property." On March 19, Dr. Blank partook in the 12th International Symposium of the International Society for Optical Engineering,

on a panel entitled "Science and Technology Needs in Homeland Security: Government-Industry-Academia Partnerships."

**Eric N. Faerber, M.D.**, Director of Radiology, St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, served as Senior Councilor for the Pennsylvania Chapter at the 82nd Annual Meeting and Chapter Leadership Conference of the American College of Radiology, April 9-14, in Washington, D.C.



Dr. Varjavand

**Nielufar Varjavand, M.D.**, Assistant Professor, Medicine; **Dennis Novack, M.D.**, Professor, Medicine; **Diane Cohen**, Program Director, Clinical Skills; and **Edward Gracely, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Preventive Medicine, presented "Survey of Incoming Interns' Responses and Attitudes to Medical Errors and Disclosure" at the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) regional and national meetings in March and May of 2005.

Dr. Varjavand also led the Quality Improvement Interest Group at the SGIM national meeting in May 2005 in New Orleans.

## Upcoming CME Programs

### JUNE 2005

June 1-5 **Internal Medicine Board Review Course**  
Marriott Courtyard, Philadelphia, PA  
**Contact: Denise Vernier – 215-762-8695**

June 24 **Trauma: Posttraumatic Growth: Creating a Healing Environment**  
Crowne Plaza Valley Forge, King of Prussia, PA  
**Contact: Shirley Hines – 215-831-4773**

### DECEMBER 2005

Dec 10 **The Annual Day of Trauma**  
The Union League of Philadelphia  
140 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA  
**Contact: Jennifer Sumter – 215-842-6998**

## Coming Next Fall – Mini-Med II



Laparoscopic surgery? It's all in a day's work for this Mini-Medical School student, practicing her skills on a simulator under the watchful eye of surgery resident Alexey Shereshevsky, M.D. The popular community education program, which meets one evening a week for eight weeks, will be held again next spring. Fall will see the launch of Mini-Med II, a series of classes focused on one area of medicine – this fall it's "Neurosciences: Integrating the Mind and the Brain." Call **215-762-6800** for information or visit the website at [www.drexel.edu/med/minimed](http://www.drexel.edu/med/minimed).

## Compliance Corner: Clinical Documentation – Templates and the Electronic Medical Record



**Edward G. Longazel**  
Chief Compliance Officer

The tools to assist in the documentation of clinical activity continue to improve. The key to success for most clinicians will be gaining competency in the use of paper "templates" for inpatient and outpatient evaluation and management (visit) services over the summer and through the fall. The skills learned and developed in the use of a template-driven documentation regimen in the office or at the bedside will be

directly transferable to documenting in the outpatient electronic medical record. The electronic medical record is scheduled for implementation in the College of Medicine during fiscal year 2006.

Paper templates provide outline formats that serve as a guide to the documentation of key clinical information while reducing legibility issues and the need for a note that is completely handwritten. Clinicians moving from a paper template note to the electronic medical record screens will feel more at home. The clinician with template experience will have transitioned to a documentation environment with outlines, lists and check boxes and easily move to the electronic medical record screens, drop-down menus and associated keystroke selections.

Contact: 215-762-2023 / Confidential Hotline: 215-762-1010



## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

### '80s

**Thomas A. Boyd, M.D., HU '82**, has joined Psychological and Behavioral Consultants in Willoughby Hills, Ohio. Dr. Boyd was most recently the Director of the Psychological Assessment Center at MetroHealth Medical Center.

### '90s

**Stephanie O'Connell Siegrist, M.D., MCP '90**, has written a consumer-friendly, easy to read and understand book on arthritis, *Know Your Bones: Making Sense of Arthritis Medicine* (Windsor Media Enterprises, [www.wmebooks.com](http://www.wmebooks.com)).

**Ric Baxter, M.D., MCP '98**, has been named Medical Director for the Lehigh Valley Heartland Hospice in Pennsylvania. Dr. Baxter has been affiliated with the Heartland agency since 2000 and has run a private practice in family medicine for the past 19 years.

### In Memoriam

**M. Agnes Gowdey, M.D., WMC '35**, passed away April 22, 2005. Dr. Gowdey practiced family medicine, including obstetrics, pediatrics and geriatrics, from 1939 until her retirement in 1977, in Philadelphia and Riverton, N.J. After she retired, she was active in community affairs, concentrating on meeting the needs of the elderly. Dr. Gowdey was the 2002 recipient of the Boots Cooper Community Service Award, given by the College of Medicine for significant accomplishments in one's professional field while exhibiting community leadership involvement and having an impact on community health.

**Einar A. Palmgren, M.D., HMC '41**, passed away April 10, 2005. After serving as a physician for the U.S Navy during World War II, Dr. Palmgren began his medical practice as an eye, ear, nose and throat physician in Lancaster, Pa., dedicating his service for over 30 years. Dr. Palmgren was a 32nd degree Mason and a member of the Zembro Temple in Harrisburg and the Lancaster Trinity Lutheran Church, and an active volunteer at the Masonic Home in Elizabethtown, Pa.

**Victoria Romeo, M.D., MCP '72**, passed away July 19, 2004, after a long illness. A lifelong resident of Lock Haven, Pa., Dr. Romeo was in family practice for her entire career until her illness forced her to retire. She had served as president of the medical staff at Lock Haven Hospital and president of the Clinton County Medical Society. She was a member of Alpha Omega Alpha.

Send alumni notes to **Patty Comey** at College of Medicine Office of Alumni Relations, Paul Peck Alumni Center 60-2, 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, or email to [pcomey@drexelmed.edu](mailto:pcomey@drexelmed.edu)

245 N. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Mail Stop 484  
 Philadelphia, PA 19102

## Bulletins:

### Simple Measures Could Prevent Newborn Deaths

As many as 2.9 million newborns die every year for lack of 90 cents' worth of care each, according to researcher Vinod Paul, a doctor with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi. Dr. Paul co-authored several pieces in *The Lancet* that showed that of the 4 million newborn deaths each year, 41 percent to 72 percent could be easily prevented by such methods as administering antibiotics, encouraging mothers to breast-feed and having mothers-to-be vaccinated. The total cost of these methods is 90 cents per newborn, the journal *Nature* reported him as saying. Dr. Paul is affiliated with the World Health Organization and Save the Children.

### Malpractice Caps Do Not Reduce Awards, Study Finds

Caps on non-economic damages – pain and suffering, physical impairment, inconvenience and so on – in medical malpractice suits have “little to no effect” on the total amount awarded, a recent study found. Study conductor Catherine Sharkey, an Associate Professor of law at Columbia Law School, analyzed 550 jury verdicts from 22 states, controlling for such factors as severity of injury and state law. She suggests that fluctuations in the economic damage portion of the award – medical expenses, lost wages, etc. – might account for this finding. “By formulating expansive theories of economic loss, lawyers – and the experts whom they hire – may expand the boundaries of the category of economic damages,” Sharkey said.

### My, How Your Eyes Sparkle!

A diamond-coated eye implant may sound like the latest in celebrity outrageousness, but it's actually an implantable silicon chip that gives sight to the blind. A 16-electrode version of the chip is currently in human trials, and has allowed a formerly blind patient to distinguish between cups and plates, and read large letters, according to a report in *Nature*. With more electrodes, patients would be able to see more clearly, but the chip would be more susceptible to damage. Enter the diamond coating: a recent development that creators hope will protect a 60-electrode chip from the eye's fluids. The chips are being developed by a company called Second Sight and a group of university researchers. Second Sight president Robert Greenberg said that the diamond-coated, 60-electrode implant will begin clinical trials this year, but will not be in human trials for several years.

## Calendar:

- June** *Vision Research Month*
- Jun 6 **National Cancer Survivors Day**, [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- Jun 13 Agents of Opportunity for Terrorism Seminar, co-sponsored by Drexel University College of Medicine Department of Emergency Medicine, [www.drexel.edu/med/agents-symposium](http://www.drexel.edu/med/agents-symposium)
- Jun 19-22 Biotechnology Industry Association Annual International Convention, Philadelphia, [www.bio.org](http://www.bio.org)
- Jun 26-30 Drug Information Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., [www.diahome.org/docs/index.cfm](http://www.diahome.org/docs/index.cfm)
- Jun 27 **National HIV Testing Day**
- July** **International Group B Strep Awareness Month**
- Jul 4 **Independence Day Holiday**
- August** **Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month**, [www.fsma.org](http://www.fsma.org)
- Aug 1-4 Class of 2008 First-Year Orientation
- Aug 5 White Coat Ceremony, 3:00 p.m., Philadelphia Hilton, City Avenue. Contact: Marie Hartman **215-991-8219**
- Aug 8 Manuel Stamatakis Golf Classic, Philadelphia Country Club. Contact: Ellen Plover **215-762-1708**
- September** **Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month**
- Sep 5 **Labor Day Holiday**
- October** **National Down Syndrome Awareness Month**
- Oct 5 Discovery 2005, Drexel University College of Medicine Annual Research Day. Contact: Tara Sarica, **215-762-3948** or [tsarica@drexelmed.edu](mailto:tsarica@drexelmed.edu)

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