

Bulletin

JAN/FEB 2011

MEMBER MAGAZINE FOR THE POLK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY



Annual Meeting

The Information
Technology
Challenge

Kathie J. Lyman
Scholarship

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*Official Publication
of the Polk County
Medical Society*

VOLUME 83 No. 1

Des Moines, Iowa
Jan/Feb 2011

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Bulletin

JAN/FEB 2011

MEMBER MAGAZINE FOR THE POLK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

Inside This Issue

Feature Articles

First Woman Recipient of KJL Scholarship	4
Congratulations 2011 Executive Council	7
In Memory - Richard C. Wooters, M.D.	8
Inner Mongolia China - Donny Suh, M.D.	11
In Memory - Martin Rosenfeld, D.O.	12
Annual Meeting	18
Power of Writing - Monica C. Hanson, M.D.	31
VPN Advisory Committee	33

Monthly Articles

President's Message	5
Doctors in the News	14
New Members	24
March Birthdays	28
April Birthdays	30
VPN	33

Cover Photo: 2011 President, John Zittergruen, D.O.

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“First Woman Recipient” of Kathie J. Lyman Scholarship



L-R: Katie Leick, Kathie Lyman and Adam Kapler

Katie Leick a University of Iowa medical student was the first woman recipient of the Kathie J. Lyman \$1,000 Scholarship Award presented at the Polk County Medical Society Annual Meeting Jan. 19. Adam Kapler Des Moines University Osteopathic medical student also received the \$1,000 scholarship.

The scholarship was created to provide support to medical students' annually from the University of Iowa Medical School and Des Moines University Osteopathic Medical School to recognize both scholarly

achievements and financial needs.

Thanks to all of the doctors who contributed to the Kathie J. Lyman Scholarship Fund in 2010. Your support sends a clear message that PCMS doctors are grateful to the young professionals who chose medicine for a career and your support of future medical students. If you did not contribute, you still can by donating to the Polk County Medical Society Kathie J. Lyman Scholarship Fund 501 (c)(3). Make a difference in the life of a medical student.

“Information Technology” Challenge



John Zittergruen, D.O.

I started practicing medicine July, 1980, after a 3 year Family Medicine Residency at Iowa Lutheran Hospital. Looking back at the 80's now

makes me wonder how we could practice medicine at all without computer generated pathways, formularies, and guidelines. As I recall, we tried to keep all those little details tucked away in our memory banks or in pocket sized notebooks we kept in our lab jackets.

The technologic advances in the last 30 years are too numerous to count but none have been more of a challenge to me personally than the use of a computer in everyday practice. When we first started talking about this at the turn of the century, I did not think it would ever be implemented before I retired but was I wrong. Within a few years, I was asked to use an IPAQ to electronically send prescriptions directly to the pharmacy rather than writing them out by hand. Would this be safer, faster, and less hassle for the patients? At first I had my doubts

but after several months I actually became quite good at it. We would develop our own list of favorites to treat different disease states and that helped streamline things. As with all electronic systems there were some occasional delays, downtime, and freeze ups but we could always revert back to paper in a pinch.

Then about a year later Iowa Health System wanted our clinic to be one of the first to convert completely to an electronic health record called Allscripts. This would be a major change in the way I practiced medicine and I must admit it was a bit scary. I had many concerns about this, but with the proper training and a lighter patient schedule, we were ready to start in September, 2005. Since that time patient's hospital charts, medical records, radiology reports, and most consultations can all be viewed on line by the physician. The key phrase there is "by the physicians".

Today, some Iowa hospitals and clinics will allow patients to be able to access test results, immunization records, prescription histories

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

and more with a program called Mychart. Yes, I know this is a secure online program but for how long? I strongly feel this information should be shared with our patients but only when we can explain things to them directly or through one of our medically trained personal. Relying on normal values and preprinted explanations will not do. I recently read an article that predicted physicians would spend part of their day answering emails from patients rather than seeing them in the office. How would physicians be reimbursed for that?

Seeing patients' face to face and human touch is still the best way to practice medicine. Patients deserve and need a physician that is physically in the examine room questioning, listening, and examining them. Information technology may have over-stepped their limits with Mycharts and patients emailing physicians with their symptoms. Practicing medicine today is an information technology challenge.

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In Memory of

Richard C. Wooters, M.D.



A Compassionate Forensic Scientist

Richard. C. Wooters, M.D. was best known to us through his nearly 30 years of service in the Polk County Medical Examiner's Office. He led the forensic investigation of over 20,000 deaths, 1,200 suicides and 400 homicides. He was often described as one of the most compassionate, caring, and available public officials in Polk County. His empathy for the grieving family members was authentic.

Dr. Wooters was born in Des Moines in 1925. He attended Harding Middle School and graduated from North High School. Both his bachelor and medical degrees were earned at the University of Iowa. Dr. Wooters spent several years at Iowa Lutheran Hospital in preparation for a career in family medicine which he had from 1949 until 1979. It was during the last 7 years of his practice that he was appointed Deputy Medical Examiner on a part-

time basis by the Polk County Board of Supervisors.

In 1979, Dr. Wooters was appointed Polk County Medical Director, and served full-time until his retirement in 1995. His reputation for being kind, and considerate to families in the midst of tragedy became a legend in Polk County.

Dr. Wooters drove a white Lincoln Continental town car, equipped with a siren and red flashing lights, and license plates that read MED EX. He often slept with his clothes on in a recliner chair in anticipation of receiving medical examiner calls. Years before it was commercially available, he wired his car to be started and warmed up from inside his house in order to arrive on the death scene as quickly as possible.

Dr. Wooters developed a relationship with Polk County Victim Services, Central Iowa Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Central Iowa

Infant Mortality Center, Iowa State Organ Procurement Organization, Des Moines and suburban police departments, Polk County Sheriff Department and other groups to help him provide information to families and for referring families in need of further assistance. He was said to be an expert on grief, having kind words and sympathetic ears for the family. He spoke slowly and softly, and where possible emphasized that, the person did not suffer at the end. He once said, "I believe that there is more to life than we see here, and death is not the worst thing that can happen to you." Dr. Wooters was available for calls around the clock, 24/7. With coverage by his deputies, he was able to visit Florida in the winter and fish in waters near his cabin in Minnesota with his family. He was also a man of faith who attended church and enjoyed playing the organ as a hobby.

Among his professional affiliations, Dr. Wooters was a member of the National Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners, Past President of the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners, Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Science, and member of the Polk County Medical Society, Iowa Medical Society and American Medical Association.

Dr. Wooters' brick and mortar legacy is the R. C. Wooters Forensic Laboratory/Morgue Complex built at Broadlawns Polk County Hospital in 1992. In 1997, Dr. Wooters and the Polk County Medical Examiner's Office earned the coveted National Association of Medical Examiners Accreditation Award. Polk County was the first one in Iowa, and among only 30 other medical examiner offices in the country to be so honored.

By: Julius Connor, M.D.

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“INNER MONGOLIA, CHINA”

by Donny Suh, M.D.



Camel caravan in Gobi Desert meeting medical mission group for a ride.

Since 1982, ORBIS International— a non-profit, humanitarian organization – has been dedicated to saving sight and eliminating avoidable blindness worldwide. ORBIS sends ophthalmologists to various countries all over the world for hands-on training for local eye care professionals, for public education about

blindness, as well as for technical assistance to improve access to quality ophthalmic services.

ORBIS has two types of programs. One is an airplane based program in which the patients are examined and treated in the fully equipped DC-10. The other is a hospital based program in

continued on page 22

In Memory of

Martin Rosenfeld, D.O.



A Farewell Tribute

On November 24, 2010, Iowa Ortho said farewell to a dedicated orthopaedic surgeon, our partner and friend, Dr. Martin Rosenfeld. Dr. Rosenfeld, better known as Marty, had a determined spirit and a zest for life that inspired those around him. In the past year, he experienced physical obstacles that most of us will never face in our lifetime and yet, he chose to live every day to the fullest and in the genuine spirit of a caring physician, continued to show compassion and concern for those around him. His many examples of courage during these past twelve months are too numerous to mention, but there is one selfless demonstration of compassion and courage that I will never forget. While I was hospitalized briefly in October, upon arriving back to my hospital room one afternoon... to my complete amazement...there was Marty waiting for me sitting in his wheelchair, with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face wanting to know

if I needed anything. That moment will be forever etched in my memory. He wasn't feeling particularly well at this time, and I knew it had taken at least 45 minutes for those caring for him to get Marty ready to even leave his home. Every outing was a challenge for him, it wasn't as simple as just getting in the car and driving to the hospital. Even as I write this, I am still in awe of his empathy and concern that day. The selflessness of this lesson is a tribute to the courage, strength, and compassion which Marty demonstrated in the most difficult days of his life.

Marty was born in Iowa on January 11, 1946. He loved discussing his years in orthopaedic surgery and the satisfaction he received from what he loved to do, improve the lives of his patients. He enjoyed living in Iowa and spent most of his years practicing general orthopaedics in Iowa, except for a brief time in

1976, when he moved to New Mexico. However, his Midwest roots soon beckoned him back to Iowa in 1978, where he was in private practice until joining Iowa Ortho in 1995. Over the years, his dedication, talent, and skill as a surgeon, enhanced the lives of many patients.

In the past twelve months, we spent a lot of time together. Despite difficult circumstances, the desire to expand his knowledge and immerse himself in life remained, but with greater purpose and perhaps even a sense of urgency. Maybe he knew that his time here was growing shorter. During our many conversations I discovered Marty was an avid reader and art collector. He not only had a flair for the extraordinary, but also the ordinary moments of life such as a challenging game of dominos, a game Marty taught me during my frequent visits. To most, this may seem like a simple game, but to the champion domino player, it becomes an almost mechanical skill of delicate thought out maneuvers. One of the attributes that made Marty successful in the vast array of potential domino maneuvers was the ability to think through his approach with a sense of purpose. This is how he lived his life, approaching each day with a willingness to learn and to move forward with a sense of purpose, regardless of his circumstances.

Marty had many professional achievements. He was board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, a member in the Polk County Medical Society, a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the International College of Surgeons, and the American College of Surgeons. He was also the past president of Tifereth Israel Synagogue, a member of the Iowa Jewish Historical Society, the Za-ga-zig Shriners International, the Iowa Masonry, and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Dr. Rosenfeld will be fondly remembered for the kindness and compassion he demonstrated for others. The warm sincere smile he had for his patients and the Iowa Ortho staff who assisted him in clinic will continue to resonate in the hallways. He will be missed by his wife Trudi, their children, grandchildren, his patients, and the physicians and staff of Iowa Ortho. Marty Rosenfeld was a husband, father, surgeon, and friend, who leaves behind a legacy of inspiration and a true passion for life pursued with a purpose regardless of circumstance. It was a privilege and an honor to be called his friend.

By: Cassim Ingram M.D.





Congratulations to **Dale Andres, D.O.** who was featured in the Des Moines Register Metro Edition December 19 for his work with new equipment to improve efficiency and safety when working with blood tests and storage.



Congratulations to **Steven Bailin, M.D.** who was featured in the Business Record December 6 for pioneering an alternative technique for attaching pacemaker leads to the heart muscle.



Congratulations to **Craig Clark, D.O.**, who was invited as an author on the "ACCF/ACG/AHA 2010 Expert Consensus Document on the Concomitant Use of Proton Pump Inhibitors and Thienopyridines" published in the journal *Circulation* 2010;122:2619-2633.



Congratulations to **Richard Demming, M.D.**, who received the Health Promotions Award of Merit from the American Cancer Society for contributions to Health Promotions in the Midwest Division, Iowa Region.



Congratulations to **James Kimball, M.D.**, who received Osceola's Community Service Award. Dr. Kimball also serves on the Osceola City Council, as well as the County Economic Development Corporation board.



Congratulations to **Anadeep Kumar, M.D.**, who was appointed as the Iowa State Physician Liaison to the American Association of Neuromuscular & Electro diagnostic Medicine.



Congratulations to **Douglas Massop, M.D.** who was featured in the Des Moines Register Health Section December 1 for his use of a new procedure to fix aortic aneurysms.



Congratulations to **Yogesh Shah, M.D.** who was featured in the DSM Magazine in October for his "commitment to service medicine" and his role in making DMU's global health program a successful program for the University.

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“ANNUAL MEETING”

& Installation of 2011 Officers

The Polk County Medical Society held their Annual Meeting on Wednesday, January 19th at the Des Moines Golf and Country Club. The 2011 PCMS officers were elected and installed.

Over 140 PCMS members, hospital administrators and guests were present as Governor Terry Branstad opened the dinner ceremonies and discussed his health care goals for Iowa. FBI Special Agent Scott James, shared his exciting experiences and knowledge in medical abuse and fraud. The second recipients of the Kathie J. Lyman Scholarship were presented with their scholarship awards .



L-John Zittergruen, DO, R- Janie Hendricks, DO, and Center-Governor Terry Branstad addressing the PCMS members

ANNUAL MEETING



L-R: Bruce Reese, Governor Branstad, Garry Weide, D.O. and Ashley Weide, Mark Barnett, MD, Robin Barnett, DO, and Kelly Reed, DO



L-R: Allan Latcham, MD, Olaf Kaufman, MD, and Diana Kaufman, MD



FBI agent Scott James sharing with doctors his experience on medical fraud and abuse.



L-R: Doctors Kathleen and Douglas Massop and John Stern, MD.



L-R: Danah, with parents, Nuha-Shash-Barazanji, MD, and Majed Barazanji, MD

continued on page 20

continued from page 19



L-R: David Swieskowski, MD, Mary Ellen Kimball, Mark Purtle, MD, Susuan Schmunk, and Paul Karazija, MD



L-R: Paul Holzworth, MD, Mark Smolik, MD, and Jaime Smolik



L-R: Janie Hendricks, DO, 2010 PCMS President, and Governor Terry Branstad.



L-R: Governor Terry Branstad, Ahmad AlShash, MD, and Sahar AlShash



L-R: Kevin DeRonde, Iowa Health DM, Michelle Mahoney and Craig Mahoney, MD, Sid Ramsey, Iowa Health DM, and Joe LeValley, Mercy.

continued from page 11



Providing public education about blindness, and technical assistance to improve access to quality ophthalmic services.

which the traveling physician cooperates with the local facility.

I traveled to Baotou, Inner Mongolia, in August, 2010. It was a great experience to be able to train the local doctors on pediatric eye and adult strabismus surgeries. Also, I was able to share the latest surgical techniques and current research being performed in the United States. Conversely, I was able to learn of how they perform surgeries with different instruments. It was a great way to share ideas and medical knowledge. By working together with a common goal we were able to help many patients. I also enjoyed the opportunity to tell them about Iowa and our wonderful people.

The local host took me to the Gobi Desert, the

Mongolian Grassland and the Genghis Khan Museum. These sights were simply astounding. The locals were extremely gracious and generous. I was able to enjoy the Mongolian and Chinese foods and soak in their culture.



Hospital staff working together with Dr. Suh



Dr. Suh shares the latest surgical techniques



Dr. Suh with grateful patient



Dr. Suh at Genghis Khan Museum



Abbas, Mohamad, M.D.

Education: American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon

Residency: St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital-Internal Medicine, New York, NY

Specialty: Internal Medicine and Infectious Disease

Dr. Abbas currently practices at CIC Associates, 1601 N.W. 114th Street, Suite 347, Clive, IA 50325.



Alliman, Kyle, M.D.

Education: University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Residency: Iowa Methodist Medical Center – Trans Internship, Des Moines, IA

Specialty: Ophthalmology

Dr. Alliman currently practices at Wolfe Eye Clinic, P.C., 6200 Westown Pkwy, West Des Moines, IA 50266.



Coaker, Melisa, M.D.

Education: Meharry Medical College, Nashville, TN

Residency: Henry Ford Hospital – Internal Medicine, Detroit, MI

Specialty: Internal Medicine

Dr. Coaker currently practices at CIC Associates, 1601 N.W. 114th Street, Suite 347, Clive, IA 50325.



Frankova, Daniela, M.D.

Education: University PJ Safarik, Lekarska Fak, Kosice, Slovakia

Residency: Sound Shore-Internal Medicine, New Rochelle, NY

Specialty: Internal Medicine

Dr. Frankova currently practices at Mercy Diagnostic Medicine Clinic, 411 Laurel Street, Suite 3140, Des Moines, IA 50314.



Gaffey, John, M.D.

Education: University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Residency: Loyola University – Orthopaedic Surgery, Maywood, IL

Specialty: Orthopaedic Surgery

Dr. Gaffey currently practices at Des Moines Orthopaedic Surgeons, P.C., 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 213, Des Moines, IA 50316.

NEW MEMBERS



Harris, Wendi L., M.D.

Education: University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Specialty: Pediatrics

Dr. Harris currently practices at Ankeny Pediatric Clinic, 909 SW Oralabor , Suite 10, Ankeny, IA 50021.



Ihrig, Timothy, M.D.

Education: University of Nebraska College of Medicine, Omaha, NE

Residency:Iowa Methodist Medical Center – Internal Medicine, Des Moines, IA

Specialty: Internal Medicine

Dr. Ihrig currently practices at Methodist Plaza Internal Medicine, 1221 Pleasant Street, Suite 200, Des Moines, IA 50309.



Kaufman, Diana, M.D.

Education: Creighton University Medical School, Omaha, NE

Residency: Creighton University – OB/GYN, Omaha, NE

Specialty: Obstetrics & Gynecology

Dr. Kaufman currently practices at Ankeny Clinic, 1105 N. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, IA 50023.



Kessler, Jason R., M.D.

Education: University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Residency: Western Reserve Care System – Pediatrics, Youngstown, OH

Specialty: Pediatrics

Dr. Kessler currently practices at IME, 100 Army Post Road, Des Moines, IA 50315.



Kemp, Jenna K., M.D.

Education: University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Residency: Iowa Lutheran – Family Medicine, Des Moines, IA

Specialty: Family Medicine

Dr. Kemp currently practices at Waukee Clinic, 30 E. Highway 6, Waukee, IA 50263.



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NEW MEMBERS



Mishra, Leenu, M.D.

Education: Maharaja Krishna Chandra Gajapati Medical College, Orissa, India
Residency: Maimonides Medical Center – Psychiatry, Brooklyn, NY and Cleveland Clinic Foundation-Psychiatry, Cleveland, OH
Specialty: Child Adolescent Psychiatry & Adult Psychiatry

Dr. Mishra currently practices at Blank Childrens Psychiatry, Iowa Lutheran Hospital, 700 E. University Ave., 3 West, Des Moines, IA 50316



Nelson, Christopher, D.O.

Specialty: Orthopaedic Surgery

Dr. Nelson currently practices at Des Moines Orthopaedic Surgeons, P.C., 311 S. Clark Street, Suite 285, Carroll, IA 51401.



Nelsen, Marcia, M.D.

Education: University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD
Residency: Sacred Heart Hospital-General Surgery, Yankton, SD and University of Nebraska-Orthopedics, Omaha, NE
Specialty: Orthopaedic Surgery

Dr. Nelsen currently practices at Broadlawns Medical Center, 1801 Hickman Rd., Des Moines, IA 50314.



Niederhauser, Amy, M.D.

Education: University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
Residency: Naval Medical Center Portsmouth – OB/GYN, Portsmouth, VA
Specialty: Obstetrics & Gynecology

Dr. Niederhauser currently practices at Methodist Plaza Obstetrics & Gynecology, 1212 Pleasant Street, Suite 405, Des Moines, IA 50309.



Prevo, N. John, D.O., M.P.H.

Education: Des Moines University, Des Moines, IA
Specialty: Occupational Medicine & Family Medicine

Dr. Prevo currently practices at Company Medicine, P.C., 5901 Westown Parkway, Suite 225, West Des Moines, IA 50266.

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29

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Marnix A. Verhofste, M.D.

30

Dapka N. Baccam, M.D.
Lisa A. Klock, D.O.
Balasubramanyan Napa, M.D.
Lazaro Rabang, M.D.

31

Catherine C. Truesdell, D.O.

NEW MEMBERS



Probasco, Aimee, D.O.

Education: Des Moines University, Des Moines, IA

Residency: University of Nebraska – Ob/Gyn, Omaha, NE

Specialty: Obstetrics and Gynecology

Dr. Probasco currently practices at West Des Moines OB/GYN Associates, P.C., 4949 Westown Parkway, Suite 140, West Des Moines, IA 50266.



Rodriguez, Carlos, M.D.

Specialty: Obstetrics & Gynecology

Dr. Rodriguez currently practices at Penn Avenue OB/GYN, 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 411, Des Moines, IA 50316.



Rokes, Christopher, M.D.

Education: Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Lima, Peru

Residency: Miami Children's Hospital-Pediatrics, Miami, FL

Specialty: Pediatrics, Hematology/Oncology

Dr. Rokes currently practices at Blank Health Providers, 1215 Pleasant Street, Suite 306, Des Moines, IA 50309.



Saad, Salman, M.D.

Education: Rawalpindi Medical College, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan

Residency: Mercy Medical Center-Family Medicine, Des Moines, IA

Specialty: Family Medicine

Dr. Saad currently practices at Broadlawns Medical Center, 1801 Hickman Rd., Des Moines, IA 50314.



Schwalm, Carla, M.D.

Education: Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, IN

Residency: Children's Hospital/King's Daughters-Pediatrics, Norfolk, VA

Specialty: Pediatrics and Pediatric Hematology-Oncology

Dr. Schwalm currently practices at Blank Childrens Hematology Oncology, 1215 Pleasant Street, Suite 306, Des Moines, IA 50309.

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Angela E. Sandre, D.O.

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Amerlon L. Enriquez, M.D.
Richard D. Wells, M.D.

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David K. Jones, M.D.
Konstantinos P. Lekkas, M.D.

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Jose R. Borromeo, M.D.
Tracy L. Ekhardt, M.D.
Allen R. Kaufman, M.D.

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Colin Kavanagh, D.O.

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Richard S. Bratkiewicz, M.D.

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John C. Heffernan, M.D.
David E. Swieskowski, M.D.

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Jerry Lehr, D.O.
Stacey S. Roberts, M.D.

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Craig A. Stevens, M.D.

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Ronald K. Grooters, M.D.
Clint Rozycki, M.D.

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Rodney R. Carlson, M.D.
Steven R. Craig, M.D.

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Ethel F. Faust, M.D.

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Scott Paulsen, M.D.
Anna G. Sagebiel, D.O.

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Michael W. Agey, D.O.
Samir Y. Alabsi, M.D.
Eric G. Garner, M.D.
John P. Palecek, M.D.
Tamra Richardson, D.O.

18

Thomas E. Becker, M.D.
Nargis Naheed, M.D.

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Lynn M. Nelson, M.D.
Sara L. Schutte, D.O.

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Ari Auron, M.D.

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Geethanjali Bandla, M.D.
John R. Gambill, M.D.
Robert S. Shires, M.D.
Jon G. Van Roekel, M.D.

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Donald L. Burrows, M.D.
William M. Jagiello, D.O.

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Christopher R. Spinelli, D.O.

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James L. Gallagher, M.D.
Richard H. Marcus, M.D.

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Karen Kienker, M.D.
Marla Onishi, M.D.
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27

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James P. Lovell, D.O.
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Gerard A. Matysik, D.O.
James G. Piros, M.D.
John G. Sweetman, M.D.

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John Houghton, D.O.
Randall D. Miller, D.O.

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William W. Chase, M.D.
Ryan P. Melcher, M.D.
Jason M. Reynolds, M.D.

30

Harvey A. Giller, D.O.
Lester J. Yen, M.D.

“ “ The Transformational Power of Writing ” ”

(printed in its entirety)



Monica C. Hanson, M.D.

Last April I fulfilled a dream by attending a workshop called **The Examined Life: Writing and the Art of Medicine.** I spent

three wonderful literary days at the University of Iowa, in the company of writers from all over the US and a few from abroad: doctors, nurses, other health care professionals and medical students. I learned that in 2008 UNESCO declared Iowa City as one of the three “literary cities” in the world (the others are Edinburgh, Scotland, and Melbourne, Australia) and I confirmed that several Pulitzer prize winners have been writers with literary connections to the University of Iowa Writing Program, including Iowa Writers’ Workshop alumnus Paul Harding, who was recently awarded the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for fiction with his novel, *Tinkers*. In fact, since 1967, more than 1100 writers from more than 120 countries have attended the International Writing Program, including Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk, from Turkey. The alchemy

for writing in that bucolic city is tangible, as demonstrated by Nick Flynn’s reciting of his poetry, and by the testimony of Lan Samantha Chang, author, and Director of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop.

We spent our time listening to medical narratives from various perspectives, and discussing their importance in the lives of doctors, of other health care providers, as well as in the lives of patients. I heard a gentle, retired doctor, Pat Cancilla, read a story about his recollection of a funny episode when he made a house call. In the same session, a surgeon, who had had a stroke and is no longer able to practice medicine, read a self-reflection on his struggles to reacquire his motor skills and his reading comprehension. Dr. Fred Platt, from the University of Colorado School of Medicine, talked about poetry in medicine as “a way to help us understand the nature of suffering, of grieving and of loss, phenomena we encounter daily.” Dr. Sayantani DasGupta, from the Columbia University Program in

continued on page 32

continued from page 31

Narrative Medicine, read her poignant and engaging essay, titled "Writing is Risky" - Writing for Resistance: Narrative, Health and Social Justice.

As a daughter of a political journalist who courageously wrote daily columns about these issues, and having been a teenager and a young adult in the dark, oppressive times of military dictatorship in my country (Brazil), when newspapers, books, plays and songs were censored by the government, and when politicians, writers, journalists, intellectuals, artists and students were tortured, exiled and sometimes killed, I know in my heart how risky writing is. However, I also know in my heart the transformational power of writing.

I listened to a doctor, who wrote an emotional and beautiful essay about her scary journey since her diagnosis of breast cancer. As a patient, she talked about the coldness and the bureaucracy of the medical system of which she, as a doctor, is also a part. I agree with her. I learned long ago that it is when I am a patient that I learn the most about the art of being a doctor. It is when I am a patient that I become much more aware of the full weight and meaning of our words, of our tone of voice and of our gestures as physicians. It is when I am a patient that I have the truest realization of the importance and the nobility of our profession. It is when I am a patient that I conclude with certainty that intellectual knowledge and

technical expertise alone do not make us great doctors and that, besides these qualities, it is the expressed caring and kind interest that a doctor has for his or her patient that establishes our human connectedness and instills trust. Care and kindness are essential needs when our bodies and our minds are troubled.

We learned that in some areas of the country writing is used in the waiting rooms of physician's offices and also as a form of therapy with chemotherapy patients. Ted Bowman, a therapist from Minnesota, talked about friendship therapy. "I know of no medicine that I can give at this point to help you," says Dr. Jerome Groopman, in his book, The Anatomy of Hope. Barbara, his patient, shook her head and replied, "No, Jerry, you do have something to give: you have the medicine of friendship." Yet another example to make us ponder our medical jargon comes from Julia Darling, a cancer patient. This is part of a letter she wrote "Dear Doctor, I am writing to complain about these words you have given me, which I carry in my bag: lymphatic, nodal, progressive, and metastatic. They must be made of lead. I haul them everywhere. And when I get them out and put them on the table, they tick like bombs and overpower my own sweet tasting words: orange, bus, coffee, June."

Dr. Joseph Gascho, a cardiologist from Penn State Milton Hershey College of Medicine, told us that he interprets diastole, not only

continued on page 34

“ VPN ” Advisory Committee



L-R: Rob Heen, Vicki Hertko, Jon Bond, Nicci Dean, Kathie Lyman, Jackie Strang, Janna Johnson and Theresa Bringleston

The Volunteer Physician Network Advisory Committee met November 30, 2010. The VPN expanded the number of committee members to include representatives from larger specialty groups, hospitals, surgery centers and financial departments. The VPN updated the group on the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Volunteer Health Care Provider Program (VHCPP). The IDPH completed the new administrative rules, fact sheets and applications, and have been posted on the state VHCPP website. Specialty offices and individual specialists may begin signing up for indemnification when volunteering through the VPN.

continued from page 32

as an intrinsic mechanism of the heart, but as a poetic physiologic act of openness and reception. When he reads echocardiogram of a patient, knowing only a name, an age and a reason why this exam was requested, he writes a poem about the unknown person, and finds a way to include in it something about the person's echocardiogram findings. How unique are these echo(e)s of the heart! He also projected on the screen beautiful photographs of his patients, taken by him in their homes, and given to them as his gifts. First, he projected on the screen one or two lines of medical information about each patient. For example, "BJ, female, 82 years old, congestive heart failure." Then, he gave us a few seconds to pause and he asked us to imagine such a person. After we were ready with our mental images, he showed the real picture of his patient. Invariably, our mental images were biased by the medical information that we had been previously given, and we were repeatedly surprised by the scenarios in which the pictures were taken, and by the beauty and the dignity that the art of his photography captured. As it is often said, sometimes an image is worth a thousand words.

We watched a documentary film made by medical students featuring patients in their own home environments. Through this artful task, these students acquired a better understanding about the patients, their reality and about the dynamics of their illnesses. One

of these patients was a young doctor who, at the beginning of his residency, was diagnosed with a lymphoma. It was truly touching!

The new movement across the country to introduce humanities in the curriculum of medical schools is a meritorious attempt to humanize the practice of medicine by enlightening future doctors and encouraging them to open themselves to appreciate the strengths and the vulnerabilities of the human spirit, expressed, since ancient times, through the various forms of art. In this way, they will hopefully become more aware of the universality and of the complexity of human emotions, and will become more empathetic listeners, not only to their patients, but also to themselves.

Writing is an exercise of analysis and of reflection, of soul searching for comfort, for meaning or for pleasure, and it is an effective way to bridge our human separateness. When we write, we also heal, and when we share what we write, we share our human vulnerabilities and we share our hopes.

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