

Family Medicine Connection

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH • JANUARY 2009

Head's Letter

I have just returned to work following coronary bypass surgery and am grateful for your well wishes for my recovery. The surgery was successful, and I'm feeling better and getting stronger each day. I've pledged to exercise a bit more regularly and may find a way to stay well!

Although the nation's and our state's fiscal challenges of 2008 and 2009 are greater than most imagined, I am confident we will survive the economic downturn as we focus on strengthening core programs that align with our mission. The state's budget deficit is predicted to have a significant effect on funding for the University, the Medical School,

and our department. However, we remain committed to our mission of *preeminent scholarship in family medicine education, research, and innovative health service delivery that improves the health of people and communities of Minnesota and the nation*. We will work with community leaders, insurers, and citizens to serve our public missions as we seek less costly methods of patient care, education, and research. We will closely watch as health care legislation is discussed and implemented nationally and in Minnesota and will be prepared to lead as needed.

This edition of the *Family Medicine Connection* includes updates from the department's Duluth campus and the Rural Physician Associate Program, the announcement of the University of Minnesota Physicians Mill City Clinic opening, and reflections from Jim Van Vooren, MD, associate director of our St. Joseph's residency program, on his involvement in medical education in Afghanistan.

Sincerely,
Macaran A. Baird, MD, MS
Professor and Head



Macaran A. Baird, MD, MS, and grandson Paxton



See page five for more about Jim Van Vooren, MD, and his work with Silk Road Development in Afghanistan.

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Duluth News

“Doctors on Call” Launched New Season

“Doctors on Call” entered its 27th season offering medical advice to the Duluth/Superior area on October 2, 2008. The program is broadcast live on Duluth’s public television station WDSE TV and allows viewers an opportunity to call in and have their questions answered by a panel of family physicians and specialists practicing in northeast Minnesota.

Each half-hour program this season will be hosted by **Jeff Adams, MD**, **Ray Christensen, MD**, **Alan Johns, MD**, or **Ruth Westra, DO, MPH**. Recent topics have included cancer, obesity, orthopedic problems, mental health, diabetes, and arthritis. WDSE TV estimates 16,000-18,000 viewers watch each show.

The program airs Thursdays at 7 PM through February 26, 2009.



Ruth Westra, DO, MPH, host, prepares for a “Doctors on Call” program with Duluth campus adjunct faculty (l-r) Robert Chalgren, MD, Richard Kanoff, DO, and Paul Sanford, MD. For a complete list of topics and airdates, visit www.med.umn.edu/duluth/DoctorsOnCall/20082009.html.

Fourth Annual Rural Pre-med Summit

Seventy-one pre-medical undergraduates attended the fourth annual Rural Pre-med Summit on Saturday, October 18, 2008 on the University of Minnesota–

Duluth campus. The day-long program offered students an opportunity to learn about the procedures, challenges, and rewards of pursuing a career in medicine.

Medical School–Duluth campus faculty and students and rural community physicians were on hand to participate on panels and answer questions. Students also had an opportunity to practice on one of the Duluth campus’s new medical simulators, Noelle, a computerized model of a pregnant woman programmed to simulate a specific physical condition or response.



Pre-med students delivering a baby with Noelle simulator at Rural Pre-med Summit. Photo: Duluth News Tribune

Lillian Repesh, PhD, Medical School–Duluth campus associate dean for admissions, **Ruth Westra, DO, MPH**, Duluth campus Department of Family Medicine and Community Health chair, and **Ray Christensen, MD**, Medical School–Duluth campus assistant dean for rural health and Rural Physician Associate Program associate director, designed and developed the summit. Other Duluth faculty participants included **Jeff Adams, MD**, **Jim Boulger, PhD**, **Alan Johns, MD**, and **Glenn Nordehn, DO**.

RPAP: Interesting Stories

In October 2008, the Rural Physician Associate Program (RPAP) began its 38th year as an internationally recognized nine-month elective, immersing third-year medical students into full spectrum rural medical care.

This year's class has 47 students practicing at 39 sites throughout Greater Minnesota. Current program leadership includes Director and Medical School Associate Dean for Primary Care **Kathleen Brooks, MD, MBA, MPA**; Associate Director and Medical School–Duluth campus Assistant Dean for Rural Health **Ray Christensen, MD**; and Associate Director for Research and Evaluation **Therese Zink, MD, MPH**.

Other faculty include **Gwen Halaas, MD, MBA**, former RPAP student and preceptor **Keith Stelter, MD, MMM**, and Duluth campus Department of Family Medicine and Community Health Chair **Ruth Westra, DO, MPH**.

As part of the RPAP curriculum, students participate in Web-based modules covering six rural health related topics and contribute to an on line discussion. A popular thread with recent classes has been titled, "interesting stories." Students have received encouragement from Zink to write narratives about their interactions with patients and experiences with rural medical care. Many of the stories are now being published, including "Babies Having Babies" by fourth-year medical student Cory Donovan, published in the October 2008 edition of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*; "Stepping Stones" by first-year internal medicine resident Kim Schoonover, MD, published in the December 2008

edition of *Minnesota Medicine*; and "Pursuing the American Dream" by first-year urology resident Cesar Ercole, MD, which will be published in an upcoming edition of *Minnesota Medicine*.



Therese Zink, MD, MPH, with former RPAP student Jean Howell, at RPAP student orientation on September 30, 2008.

These "interesting stories" offer a real world view into the lives of rural practitioners and encourage the students to be more reflective. What follows is an excerpt from Schoonover's story about an ER experience while on her 2006-2007 RPAP rotation. (The full article is available at www.minnesotamedicine.com.)

I thought about how this sort of drama changes a person's perspective about medicine. Until then, I had focused on hurrying to clinic, hurrying to scrub, hurrying to finish so I could see my family. When Tina came into the hospital, the

hurry stopped. I realized decisions that were made would affect someone's very existence. Suddenly, the details of writing notes and retracting them faded and what emerged was how knowledge was connected intimately to the power and ability to save someone's life.

When asked about her thoughts on this year's RPAP class, Brooks says she's looking forward to seeing what "interesting stories" they might turn out. She is also excited about the community health assessment project, which gives RPAP students the opportunity to understand the health care needs of their community and create and implement a plan for improvement. Past projects have addressed community needs surrounding teen pregnancy, dental fluoride treatment, concussions in youth sports, and health and wellness programs for manufacturing plants. Several members of this year's class are participating in Stratis Health's Minnesota Rural Health Palliative Care Initiative, a learning collaborative designed to start or strengthen palliative care programs in their communities.



Brett Glawe, current RPAP student, in front of International Falls sign. Glawe is completing his rotation in International Falls at the Duluth Clinic.

Mill City Clinic Now Open

The University of Minnesota Physicians Mill City Clinic opened November 20, 2008 in the heart of the historic Minneapolis Mill District, near the Guthrie Theater. The clinic's modern design, use of light, and art displays are not just intended to make the clinic visually appealing. Clinic director **Jon Hallberg, MD**, says, "Good design makes our job easier." Hallberg and other clinic leadership worked with an architecture firm to design the clinic to improve ease of access, minimize the sterility of exam rooms, and increase patient comfort level and privacy.



The clinic lobby displays various works of art from the Nina Bliese Gallery (www.ninabliesegallery.com).

Mill City Clinic offers same day appointments and is open Monday-Friday 7:30 AM-5 PM and Saturday 8 AM-Noon. Visitors are welcome - 901 S 2nd St, Suite A, in Minneapolis.



Jon Hallberg, MD, in one of the clinic exam rooms

New Faculty/Staff

Heidi Fall has provided administrative support for the Program in Human Sexuality research activities since



November 2008. Fall earned a bachelor of science degree from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse and

most recently worked for the University of Minnesota Department of Psychiatry coordinating the fellowship program in child and adolescent psychiatry.

Sara Johnson, MD, attended the University of Minnesota Medical School and University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview, Smiley's Family Medicine Residency, where she began a faculty appointment in December 2008. Johnson is interested in women's health, pediatrics, and international medicine.

Her husband, Kris, is a PhD candidate in conservation biology and a Bush Leadership fellow. They have three



children: Ella (6), Mattie (4), and Benjamin (1). Johnson enjoys the BWCA, reading, and spending time with family and friends.

GO GREEN

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Transforming Afghanistan

by Jim Van Vooren, MD

For the past five years, I have had the privilege of teaching medical education with Silk Road Development, a nonprofit organization, in Afghanistan. To understand our teaching efforts, it's important to have a little historical perspective on the country and the challenges it currently faces.

Afghanistan is land-locked by China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan and long torn by civil war and corruption. The country is completely Islamic – 80% Sunni and 20% Shia – and has several major ethnic groups, including Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimer, Turkmen, and Baloch; all with hundreds of years of history, which can present challenges for unification.

The economy is based on agriculture with the only significant exports being opium and hand-woven carpets. In fact, Afghanistan is the largest producer of opium and source of the vast majority of European and Asian heroin. Funds from this trade support the Taliban, local tribal leaders, and corrupt politicians.

In recent years, the economy has improved due to international assistance, increased political stability, and a developing service sector. Still, most of the population suffers from shortages of clean water, electricity, medical care, and jobs.

With an estimated 40% of the population unemployed, Afghanistan has one of the world's lowest standards of living. Large camps of internally displaced persons reside around Kabul, the capital and largest city in Afghanistan. These refugees have fled areas of continued insecurity or drought, live in primitive conditions, and are completely dependent on external aid for survival.

Challenges to the country include finding continued external support, rising and organized crime, the Taliban, difficulty maintaining influence in rural areas (controlled by tribal leaders), and government corruption. The latter is an extensive problem; Afghans are forced to pay bribes for many government functions.

Medically, Afghanistan suffers from diseases common to developing countries. Most of Afghanistan does not have access to clean food and water, so bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever are common. Malaria is prevalent in wetter areas of the country; rabies is present in rural areas. Afghanistan continues to struggle with endemic polio and measles and has a high infant mortality rate. One province has the highest maternal mortality rate ever recorded by the World Health Organization. Most women deliver babies without the benefit of a trained birth attendant, and many die from simple problems that can be easily treated.

Although Silk Road Development has provided direct patient care at times, we believe that medical education for physicians will have a larger impact on the health of the population. We began by providing lectures to large groups but have moved toward working one-on-one with physicians. We've also developed



an EGD training program for Afghan physicians, brought CPR and basic ACLS to hospitals in Kabul, worked with villages to provide basic medical care during their complete isolation in winter, and provided public education about clean water and sanitation. Currently, Silk Road Development is working on establishing a hospice program in Kabul.

On a personal level, I've had the opportunity to develop friendships with my Afghan colleagues, see interesting diseases (like Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic fever, parasitic obstruction of the common bile duct, measles, and cutaneous leishmaniasis), and help to improve the lives of a group of people who are living in very difficult circumstances. I am thankful for the department's support of my involvement with Silk Road Development and its work to make transformational changes for Afghanistan through training and development of individuals in all spheres of influence, including medicine.

To find out more about Silk Road Development, visit www.silkroaddev.org.

A Gesture of Appreciation



Mankato Family Medicine Residency

Mankato's holiday and applicant second-look party was held Saturday, January 10, 2009 at Bowlero Lanes in St. Peter, Minnesota.

(l-r) Resident Rob Olsen, MD, and daughter Alicia



North Memorial Family Medicine Residency

Broadway Family Medicine staff had their annual holiday brunch (right) at The Clubhouse at Edinburgh USA golf course on Sunday, December 14, 2008.



St. Joseph's Hospital Family Medicine Residency

Faculty, residents, and staff were greeted by an aroma of sizzling sausages and pumpkin pancakes the week of Thanksgiving.

(l-r) Nicki Stephens, clinic supervisor, Shelly Koehnen, patient care supervisor, Faith Norstrud, program administrator, Kathy Zwiig, clinic manager

Smiley's Family Medicine Residency

Smiley's held a holiday potluck on Friday, December 19, 2008. Faculty, residents, and staff brought food from their national heritage or a favorite family tradition to share.

Here's What's Happening

Awards/Honors

Macaran Baird, MD, MS, and **Bill Doherty, PhD** (family social science), received the 2008 Collaborative Family Healthcare Association Donald A. Bloch Award in November 2008 for significant contributions to the field of collaborative family healthcare, including teaching, scholarship, and innovation.

Krista Skorupa, MD, was named faculty advisor of the Family Medicine Interest Group in December 2008.

On January 6, 2009, WCCO radio announced **Keith Stelter, MD, MMM**, as a recipient of the 2009 WCCO radio Good Neighbor Award for his contributions and service to the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians.



In the Media

On October 13, 2008, **Michele Allen, MD, MS**, was interviewed on Minnesota News Network and WCCO radio concerning her research findings that Spanish language usage is not significantly associated with youth substance use.

Eli Coleman, PhD, was quoted in an October 31, 2008 article on ABCnews.com about women and sexual dysfunction and in a November 13, 2008 story in the *Minneapolis Examiner* about the rising satisfaction and interest in sex among older woman.

Ellen Dodds, RD, wrote an article about deciphering the claims made on food labels in the fall 2008 edition of *The Accordion*, an Action to Control Cardiovascular Risk in Diabetes publication.

Jon Hallberg, MD, spoke on Minnesota Public Radio's (MPR) "All Things Considered" on November 15, 2008 about the opening of the new University of Minnesota Physicians Mill City Clinic and on December 9, 2008 about athletes' use of diuretics to mask steroid use. Hallberg also served as tour physician for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's Scandinavian tour and blogged about his experiences in the *Pioneer Press* December 2-8, 2008.

On December 7, 2008, **Anne McBean, MA**, was quoted in the *Star Tribune* about compulsive sexual behavior.

WCCO TV's Jason DeRusha interviewed **Grant Morrison, MD**, October 16, 2008 for "Good Question." Morrison answered why our bodies make different noises, such as snoring and hiccupping.



On November 10, 2008, **Glenn Nordehn, DO**, was quoted in the *Duluth News Tribune* regarding his contributions to the Hearts Sounds Project.

Jim Pacala, MD, discussed medical student stress and burnout on MPR's October 14, 2008 "Midmorning," and was quoted in the December 2008 issue of *Minnesota Medicine*. Pacala was also quoted in the October 27, 2008 *Wall Street Journal* about the link between allergies and aging.

David Power, MD, MPH, was among the authors of a September 2008 *Annals of Internal Medicine* article on medical student burnout, cited in the October 31, 2008 *NY Times*.

On November 2, 2008, **Bean Robinson, PhD**, discussed causes and remedies for low sexual desire on "WCCO TV News."

Bill Roberts, MD, MS, wrote a column about knee pain and injuries for the October 2008 issue of *Consumer Reports on Health*. Roberts was also quoted in a fall 2008 *US News* article about deciding when to decrease the intensity of a workout or sport.

The *Rochester Post-Bulletin* featured two stories on November 28, 2008 about the efforts made to encourage doctors to practice in small towns. **RPAP** was highlighted, including current student Wendy Rangitsch and preceptor Tom Witt, MD, from the Lake City Medical Center.

David Satin, MD, was featured in the September/October 2008 *MetroDoctors* "Colleague Interview."

Carolyn Torkelson, MD, MS, wrote an article about detecting and caring for ovarian cancer with the patient-centered medical home model of care, published in the November/December 2008 edition of the *Minnesota Family Physician* newsletter. Torkelson was also interviewed on MPR on December 11, 2008 about the breast cancer drug Tamoxifen.

The *American Medical News* quoted **Therese Zink, MD, MPH**, in a December 29, 2008 article about responding to patient reports of family violence.

New Arrival

Ethan Mohlman Berge was born to **Jerica Berge, PhD**, and her husband Nels, January 6, 2009.



Departures

Effective January 5, 2009, **Lisa Capell, MD**, left the department to accept a part-time position in the community.

Karin Larsen, PhD, resigned her position with the Program in Human Sexuality on December 3, 2008 to work in the OB/GYN department at the University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview.

Scholar's Corner

Grants

Clearway Minnesota awarded **Tai Mendenhall, PhD**, \$129,375 in November 2008 to assess student participation in and perceptions of Students Against Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction and its relationship to smoking-related outcomes.

Mike Miner, PhD, is co-principal investigator of the US Department of Justice National Institute of Justice investigation of risk assessment procedures and their predictive validity with samples of American sex offenders. The \$507,073 grant was awarded in October 2008.



Presentations

At the December 2008 NIH Summit:

The Science of Eliminating Health Disparities, **Michelle van Ryn, PhD**, presented a poster on the development and evaluation of a pilot Web-based intervention intended to reduce unconscious stereotyping by medical providers. **Mark Yeazel, MD, MPH**, and **Sean Phelan** were among the coauthors of this project.



Publications

Gwen Halaas, MD, MBA, Therese Zink, MD, MPH, and **Deb Finstad** were lead authors of a fall 2008 *Journal of Rural Health* article on recruitment and retention outcomes of rural physicians following completion of RPAP. Zink, Halaas, Finstad, and **Kathleen Brooks, MD, MBA, MPA**, also authored an article in the same publication on the value of immersion learning offered through RPAP.

In the November-December 2008 issue of *Current Sports Medicine Reports*, a journal of the American College of Sports Medicine, **Bill Roberts, MD, MS**, and current St. John's resident **Harvey Anderson, MD**, were among the authors

of a case report of an acute traumatic spine injury in a competitive snowboarder.

The *American Medical Association Virtual Mentor* published an article co-



authored by **David Satin, MD**, on practice incentives and professional responsibility in November 2008.

Steve Stovitz, MD, was highlighted in the October 2008 issue of *Accelerate*, published by the AHC Office of Clinical Research, for his work in the CAPS program. Stovitz's research is focused on identifying children at highest risk for adult obesity.

Ruth Westra, DO, MPH, co-authored a December 2008 *Minnesota Medicine* article about the Medical School-Duluth campus community service requirement for second-year medical students. Since 2005, Duluth campus medical students have made brain awareness presentations to more than 10,000 elementary school students throughout Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin.

Submit notice of grant awards, publications, media attention, or other news to the department's communications team (see contact information below).

E-mail: ebuege@umn.edu

Mail: MMC 381, 420 Delaware St SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: 612-625-3001

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Editorial team: Barb Heyer and Emie Buege

Production: Libby Frost