

**Dean's Corner e-Newsletter**  
**February 7, 2003**

As many of you realize, we are facing some "challenges" in our current state funding due to empty coffers in Austin. This is not a unique problem anywhere in the country today. Many academic medical centers are facing significant budget cuts. Our primary focus is education, and we will try to make any cutbacks with that in mind. I anticipate minimal impact on our academic programs, if any at all. At the same time, we will continue to add enrichments to our programs, such as our newly acquired METI simulators, and the construction of our simulation facility.

I have added a link to an article by Don Berwick, MD the president and co-founder of the Institute for Health Care Improvement. The article, entitled *Escape Fire*, offers a thorough description of the challenges our health care system faces, and some cogent suggestions for improvement in patient care and patient satisfaction. It is well worth reading for faculty, staff, and students.

Please supply any pertinent information to my office (deantcom@hsc.unt.edu) by Thursday, for inclusion in this Newsletter.

**News from Faculty Members:**

Names for the 2003 Antibiotic Bowl have been submitted. It will take place in Austin at the TDH on March 1 and finals in San Antonio on April 5 at TMA.

*Barbara Atkinson, D.O., Internal Medicine*

**Student Admissions: (Ms. Jane Anderson)**

**TCOM offers 120 acceptances for the Class of 2007**

At midnight on February 1, 2003 medical school applicants were notified via the web of where they were accepted for next fall through the Texas medical school admissions match. TCOM selected 120 students through this process and will extend official offers of acceptance by mail.

Academically, accepted applicants for the Class of 2007 have an average overall GPA of 3.61, science GPA of 3.53 and a 26 on the MCAT. Among the leading undergraduate institutions represented are: UT-Austin, Texas A&M, Baylor University, UT-Arlington and Brigham Young University.

The Medical Student Admissions and Outreach office reports that 1,344 applications for admission were received this year, a 16% increase. Out of this applicant pool 442 were interviewed, which is a new record. The office sends it's thanks to the faculty and staff who greatly assisted them throughout this application cycle. Special thanks go to the admissions committee for their tireless efforts evaluating these applicants.

**Academic Affairs/Graduate Medical Education: (Dr. Blackwell)**

*Associate Dean for Academic Affairs*

The Office of GME is vigorously working on the development of new GME programs for our graduates. We are thrilled to announce the development of a new program in Family Medicine at Dallas Charlton Methodist Hospital. This is an established ACGME program located in Duncanville.

Dr. Brett Johnson, the current program director, has hired Dr. John Whitham as the new associate program director. Dr. Whitham's first task will be to obtain AOA approval for this internship and residency. It is anticipated that this approval will occur this academic year. Dr. Whitham is well-known

to the UNTHSC family for his service within the Department of Family Medicine and Seminary Clinic. Any questions on this initiative should be directed to my office.

Congratulations to Dr. Don Peska who was recently promoted to Assistant Dean for Clinical Education. Dr. Peska will continue his academic duties as DME for Plaza Medical Center, Chair of Curriculum Subcommittee for years 3&4, and program director for OMCT surgery. Dr. Peska will work closely with this office in the development of OGME programming and hospital student rotations.

### **Clinical Research: (Dr. Clearfield)**

#### *Associate Dean for Clinical Research*

The area of clinical trials is expanding with the hiring of two new trial coordinators, Pemba Wallace in surgery and Arthur Khurshudian in medicine. In the near future a third coordinator will be added for the ORC. The additions of these new coordinators underscore the clinical faculties increased productivity in clinical trials.

The ORC recently had the external advisory committee, composed of members from the AOA, AACOM, and AOF, in for a visit. The ORC's accomplishments were very well received and the future looks bright for the continued progress of the ORC.

The recent acquisition of two patient simulators will be highlighted in a future update. These simulators will allow our students a state of the art surrogate for certain patient scenarios.

The abstract deadlines are coming due for RAD on Feb 3 and for the AOA research meeting on April 15. It is my hope that every clinical department will present a minimum of one abstract for both our RAD and the AOA research conference in the fall. This is our chance to show the profession all the wonderful things we are doing in the research arena.

### **PA Studies: (from PA Lemke)**

#### **SMALLPOX RESOURCE FOR PAs**

Today, PAs find that they need to learn about Smallpox, a disease few if any have ever seen. The AAPA's Clinical and Scientific Affairs Council has written a special report, "Preparing for the Threat of Smallpox," to be published in the January issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (JAAPA). This report reviews the epidemiology of smallpox, the risks and benefits of the vaccine, current vaccine availability, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. The report will also be available at the AAPA Web site in February.

#### **WIRELESS HANDHELD SOLUTIONS For PAs**

On January 27, AAPA will begin offering PAs a comprehensive collection of handheld devices, software, and accessories designed to educate and empower PAs with advanced technologies to improve patient care and save time. Visit the <http://www.aapa.org/aapastore> to see the product lines and learn about discounts.

#### **PA CURRICULUM REVISIONS (Update)**

A review of pre-clinical portions of the PA curriculum focused on "Year 2" courses has been completed. The review included an analysis of course sequencing, time allotments and methods of delivery. From this review, a proposal for revisions has been submitted to the Dean of TCOM for review.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS TO PATTI PAGELS, PA-C**

Congratulations to Ms. Patti Pagels, PA-C, upon her selection by the Fort Worth Business Press as one of Tarrant County's Healthcare Heroes! Patti is not only one of three faculty from UNTHSC who were

selected by the Fort Worth Business Press, she is also the only PA in Tarrant County to receive this recognition. Well done Patti!

### **Science and Health News:**

#### NIH Funds Set for Small Rise, Breaking Recent Years' Trend

By LAURIE MCGINLEY  
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON -- The National Institutes of Health, which enjoyed huge budget increases in recent years amid booming interest in biomedical research, would get only a small funding boost under the Bush administration budget being prepared for next year, according to people familiar with the preliminary figures.

President Bush is scheduled to unveil his budget for the 2004 fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, on Feb. 3. The White House currently is planning to propose an NIH increase of less than 1%, and perhaps as little as 0.3%, say people familiar with the numbers. That would mark a sharp turnaround; Congress, which agreed to double the NIH budget between 1998 and 2003, has in recent years approved several annual increases of about 15%.

The reduction being discussed by the administration partly reflects the deteriorating federal budget outlook and the keen competition for limited funds, as well as the recent big NIH increases.

Still, the fact that the White House is suggesting growth of less than 1% for NIH comes as a surprise to many research advocates, who believe that much bigger increases are necessary to make the past years' investments pay off in biomedical advances.

For the current fiscal year, President Bush proposed increasing the NIH budget by more than 15% to more than \$27 billion. That would complete the five-year doubling of the budget that both he and Congress have pledged to support. But it's not clear that lawmakers will approve the whole amount; many of the appropriations bills for the current fiscal year haven't yet been passed, and many government programs are expected to be squeezed when Congress returns this month.

To try to prod Congress to pony up the money to finish the doubling of the NIH budget, lobbyists representing research, medical and patient groups are planning a major drive early this year.

### **Health Policy News:**

#### House Members Urge Action On Provider Relief

A Jan. 24 bipartisan letter signed by 293 Members of Congress urged House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) to provide immediate legislative action to "stabilize the Medicare program for the millions of seniors who rely on [Medicare] for their health care needs."

#### CBO Projects \$199 Billion Deficit for FY 2003

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Jan. 29 predicted the federal budget deficit for FY 2003 will be \$199 billion. This deficit projection is \$54 billion greater than CBO's estimate in August 2002. The

actual deficit in FY 2003 is expected to be higher than CBO's projection, which does not include any estimates for the cost of military action against Iraq or new tax cut proposals such as those put forth by President Bush or congressional Democrats.

#### Weldon, Simpson Join House Labor-HHS Panel

House Appropriations Chairman C.W. Bill Young (R-Fla.) Jan. 29 announced that Reps. Dave Weldon (R-Fla.), a family physician who supports a complete ban on human cloning, and Michael Simpson (R-Idaho), a dentist, will join the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee. The Democrats have not completed their subcommittee assignments.

#### Senate Committees Hold Hearings on Smallpox Vaccinations

The Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee and the Senate Health, Education Labor, and Pensions Committee held hearings Jan. 29 and Jan. 30, respectively, on the federal smallpox vaccination plan. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Julie L. Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H., and National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., testified at both hearings on the progress and the future of the program.

#### Young Announces Homeland Security Reorganization

House Appropriations Chairman C.W. Bill Young (R-Fla.) Jan. 29 announced a major reorganization of his subcommittees' jurisdictions to create a new Homeland Security Subcommittee. The proposal, which is subject to approval by the full Appropriations Committee, would put all of the agencies in the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under one appropriations subcommittee.

#### INS Extends SEVIS Deadline

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Jan. 29 announced a decision to grant a grace period until Feb. 15 for schools that have experienced difficulty accessing or using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

#### NIH Director Speaks to NCRR Advisory Council

The advisory council to the NIH's National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) convened Jan. 23 on the NIH campus. The meeting included a presentation by and lengthy discussion with NIH Director Elias Zerhouni, M.D., who has made efforts to meet with each institute council during his first year in the position. While budgetary matters, homeland security, and other issues loom large over the center's deliberations, council members focused their questions, and their chief concerns, on long-range prospects for biomedical research.

#### NQF Reviews Group 2 Hospital Measures, Safe Practices

The Board of Directors of the National Quality Forum (NQF) met on Jan. 29 to discuss whether to endorse, modify, or reject member votes on the proposed Group 2 Hospital Measures Set, the Framework for Hospital Care Performance Evaluation, and the Safe Practices report.

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The AOA's representation of DOs' interests in Washington, DC is one of the most important services we provide. In order to provide quality care to patients, physicians must also be able to practice to the best of

their abilities, without undue hindrance from the government or managed care entities. We support that objective at the AOA by advocating for universal access to healthcare, the Patient Bill of Rights, and prescription drug coverage under Medicare and Medicaid.

We also support and represent DOs by fighting for professional liability insurance (PLI) reform and physician payment relief, which are by far the AOA's preeminent legislative issues. The AOA's DO Day on Capitol Hill last September was a huge success. Our ongoing efforts to educate lawmakers helped bring about the House of Representatives' passage of the HEALTH Act (HR 4600) that same day.

Likewise, the AOA continues to combat future reductions in Medicare payments to osteopathic physicians. Effective March 1st, physicians and other healthcare professionals will face a 4.4% reduction in Medicare reimbursements, compounding the 5.4% reductions implemented in 2002. The AOA will urge Congress to immediately halt this reduction through our lobbying efforts and grassroots support from our members.

The 107th Congress failed to pass comprehensive PLI and Medicare reform in 2002. However, given the widespread consequences of these crises, PLI and Medicare reform will continue to be heavily debated. The AOA has high hopes that the newly elected 108th Congress will take on the responsibility to address what is becoming a crisis situation in our system of healthcare.

On January 24th, the AOA Council on Federal Health Programs will meet in Washington, DC to discuss legislative issues relevant to the osteopathic medical profession. Understanding that an important part of our leadership is planning for the future, the council will determine the AOA's legislative agenda and strategy for the upcoming 108th Congress. Rest assured that comprehensive PLI and Medicare reforms will be at the top of our list and that the AOA will continue to aggressively advocate for these changes until our members receive relief.

### **Research and Funding Opportunities:**

#### **RESEARCH APPRECIATION DAY 2003**

Questions regarding abstracts should be e-mailed to the Research Appreciation Day office. You may also contact the Office of Research and Biotechnology at ext. 5400.

Please visit the RAD website at <http://www.hsc.unt.edu/RAD> for abstract instructions, forms and other general information. The website can also be reached by clicking on the RAD hotlink on the intranet.

Research Appreciation Day is an annual event showcasing the research of health science center faculty, staff and students. RAD allows the institution to share its research endeavors with the campus community and the public. This year, RAD 2003 will be April 4.

### **Quotes**

Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there. (Will Rogers)

After all is said and done, more is said than done (Koffi Annan.)

There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and cost of comfortable inaction. (JFK)

If you're in a bad situation, don't worry it'll change. If you're in a good situation, don't worry it'll change.  
(John A. Simone, Sr.)

Marc

Marc B. Hahn, DO

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