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Progress Notes

I had the pleasure on Friday, January 7th of being part of a delegation of ECU people who visited recently appointed UNC System President Tom Ross and his leadership team to talk about our work to create a new corporation to provide ambulatory cancer services in partnership with Pitt County Memorial Hospital. The visit was very successful with President Ross asking questions, making a few recommendations and expressing strong support for our plans.

As some of you know, much has been happening in the past several months to prepare for the launching of this new corporation. That launch is now projected to occur on Monday, April 11, 2011. Some of the more significant aspects include:

- Selecting Dr. Peter Kragel as the inaugural Director of the corporation. Dr. Kragel will shoulder this work in addition to his roles of Chair of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and Acting Chair of Radiation Oncology. A search is now underway for a Clinical Director of Radiation Oncology, as well as discussions about how to delegate some Chair responsibilities for that department to other capable administrators.
- Recommendation from a marketing team comprised of experts from PCMH/UHS and ECU that we use the existing name, Leo W. Jenkins, as the public name of this new corporation until such time as there is a compelling reason to change that.
- Recruitment for additional physician faculty in hematology/oncology, radiation oncology, gynecologic oncology, and surgical oncology. Very desirable candidates have been identified for a variety of vacant positions.
- Early discussion of plans for a new cancer center building that could be constructed in the next several years. This would replace the existing Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center, which is unfortunately outdated and undersized.
- The Certificates of Need (CON) for transfer of the Cyberknife to PCMH and the creation of the new corporation have been formally approved. The CON approval of the transfer of chemotherapy to PCMH is expected to occur very soon.

There is also a large amount of work yet to be done, including:

- Gaining approval from the UNC Board of Governors to lease out the majority of the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center, either to the new corporation to provide ambulatory care or to PCMH to provide chemotherapy. That request will be reviewed by the Board during their meetings on January 13-14. If that is successful, then the request will travel to several layers of State government and ultimately to the Governor for approval.
- Finishing the transition of chemotherapy administration to PCMH by early April 2011. This requires some of our employees move to Hospital employment, changes in the HealthSpan registration process, some additional signage in the Cancer Center, and related changes.
- Completion of a panoply of legal documents that create a formal structure for the new corporation and how it will operate. It has been decided that the initial membership of the Board of Managers for the new corporation for ECU will be Dean Cunningham, Dr. Benson, and Mr. Brian Jowers, while the three members for PCMH will be Mr. Steve Lawler, Ms. Kathy Barger, and Mr. Todd Hickey.
- Finalizing the recruitment of a new administrator for cancer services. This person will work closely with Dr. Kragel and oversee the daily operations of the corporation. Several strong candidates have been interviewed and a decision is expected soon.

Over the next few months, we will continue to work hard to mature all these plans and bring the new corporation to life on April 11, 2011. Our colleagues working in the Cancer Center will feel some stress and experience new challenges. I hope that you can work with me to support them to be successful in this transition. We have great expectations that Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Services can be very successful.

*Nicholas Benson, MD, MBA
Medical Director, ECU Physicians
Vice Dean*

Word to the Wise

“The price of greatness is responsibility.”

- Winston Churchill



Family Medicine Center Recognized as a 'patient-centered medical home'



Patient Robert Fulghum, left, and Dr. Robert Newman talk in the ECU Family Medicine Center. Photo by Doug Boyd

The Family Medicine Center at East Carolina University has gained recognition as a "patient-centered medical home" from a national organization.

The National Committee for Quality Assurance has identified the center as a medical practice where each patient has an ongoing relationship with a doctor who leads a team that takes responsibility for patient care and, when needed, arranges referrals for care with other doctors.

ECU achieved level III recognition, the highest possible.

"NCQA certification is a formal recognition that we have created a patient-centered medical home that allows for easy access for our patients, continuity with the same medical provider, (and) comprehensive care including hospital care and obstetrical care," said Dr. Robert Newman, vice chair for clinical services for the ECU Department of Family Medicine. "We have also started to measure our clinical performance and patient-satisfaction scores against nationally established benchmarks."

Patient Robert Fulghum, a retired microbiology faculty member at ECU and a patient of Newman's, said he has recommended the Family Medicine Center to several people who wanted to establish care at a medical practice.

"They don't just examine you and say, 'Here, take these pills,' and send you off," said Fulghum, 81. "They allow you to participate in the decisions that are made."

When referrals to specialists are needed, Family Medicine Center staff members assist with that and follow up. "However, I haven't really felt the need to go to a specialist," Fulghum said.

Faculty and staff members began working on the certification in February 2009 and submitted an application in April.

Numerous physician groups contributed to the nine standards for measuring patient-centered medical homes, such as access, communication, care management and referral tracking.

"The patient-centered medical home promises to improve health and health care," said NCQA President Margaret E. O'Kane. "The active, ongoing relationship between a patient and a physician in medical homes fosters an all-too-rare goal in care: staying healthy and preventing illness in the first place. PPC-PCMH recognition shows that Department of Family Medicine at East Carolina University has tools, systems and resources to provide their patients with the right care at the right time."

*Contributed by Doug Boyd
ECU Health Sciences New Services*

Physician Receives Research Award



Dr. Laura Barber

Dr. Laura Barber, a physician and fellow of pulmonary and critical care medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU, received the Young Investigator Award for her research presentation at Chest 2010, the annual meeting of chest physicians held Oct. 30 - Nov. 4 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Barber's research focused on the pulmonary disease sarcoidosis. The study, performed under the mentorship of Dr. Sergio Arce, an assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at ECU, was published Nov. 1 in the online version of Chest, the journal of the American College of Chest Physicians.

Her research found that sarcoidosis patients with reduced levels of a protein called p65 also had more severe disease, responded poorly to steroid therapy and had frequent multi-organ illness. Thus, the research team proposes measuring the levels of p65 protein in sarcoid T-cells to help identify patients likely to develop more active or severe disease and who will likely respond poorly to steroid therapy. Identifying these patients will help prevent steroid toxicity and begin alternative therapies earlier.

Barber is a graduate of Cordoba National University in Argentina and completed residency training in internal medicine at ECU.

This story appeared originally in the Dec. 10, 2010 issue of Pieces of Eight.

ECU Dermatologists Open a Clinic in Washington



Dr. Charles Phillips



Dr. Harris Green

Dermatologists from East Carolina University are seeing patients two days a week in Washington.

Drs. Charles Phillips and Harris Green see patients Mondays and Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at ECU Physicians Dermatology Washington Office at 1240 Cowell Farm Road. They treat a variety of skin conditions and offer many procedures on site.

Phillips is a professor and chief of dermatology at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Green is a clinical assistant professor. Both are board-certified in dermatology.

This practice is a part of ECU Physicians, the group medical practice of the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Appointments are available by calling 946-6221.

In addition to the new Washington office, ECU Physicians' dermatology practice in Greenville has moved to a new location at 517 Moye Blvd. This location offers improved parking and more space in a modern facility.

More information about ECU's dermatology services is available online at <http://www.ecu.edu/ecuphysicians/patient-care/dermatology.cfm> or by calling 252-744-3109.

*Contributed by Doug Boyd
ECU Health Sciences New Services*

Cancer Drug Enters Clinical Trial



Dr. Anne Kellogg

A potential treatment for many ovarian, breast, cervical and other cancers has entered clinical testing.

The treatment, a collaboration between ImmunoGen and Sanofi-aventis uses an antibody created by Dr. Anne Kellogg, an associate professor of pathology and laboratory medicine at the Brody School of Medicine.

The antibody seeks out and attaches to cancer cells and serves as a delivery vehicle for ImmunoGen's Targeted Antibody Payload technology to attack the cancer cells with a potent cell-killing agent. Once inside, the cell-killing agent activates and kills the tumor cell as it divides. The technology allows the use of precise amounts of powerful cancer-killing drugs while minimizing side-effects.

Kellogg is happy the drug has made it this far and cautiously optimistic about the future.

"You always hope some of the work you do in your research lab will have some positive benefit for people," Kellogg said. "There's still a lot of years in terms of testing in patients."

*Contributed by Doug Boyd
ECU Health Sciences New Services*

Pulmonologist Joins ECU Physicians



Dr. Mark Bowling

A specialist in pulmonary and critical care medicine has joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

Dr. Mark Bowling has joined ECU as an assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine. He comes to ECU from the University of Mississippi, where he was an assistant professor of medicine.

He has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Mars Hill College and a medical degree from ECU. He completed residency training in internal medicine at ECU. Bowling completed fellowships in pulmonary and critical care medicine and interventional pulmonology at Wake Forest University.

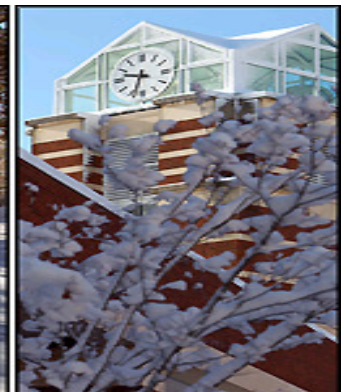
Bowling is board-certified in internal medicine, pulmonary medicine and critical care medicine. His clinical interests are lung cancer, asthma, coughing, interventional pulmonology, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and dyspnea, or shortness of breath. Bowling will lead the development of ECU's pulmonary care outreach efforts in eastern North Carolina.

He sees patients at Moye Medical Center at 521 Moye Blvd. Appointments are available by calling 744-1600.

Winter Wonderland Photos



Left: A light layer of snow coated the campus of the Brody School of Medicine



WINTER WONDERLAND: Several inches of snow fell at East Carolina University beginning Christmas evening and continuing the next day. The snowfall shut down campus Dec. 27. ECU News photos by Cliff Hollis.

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both

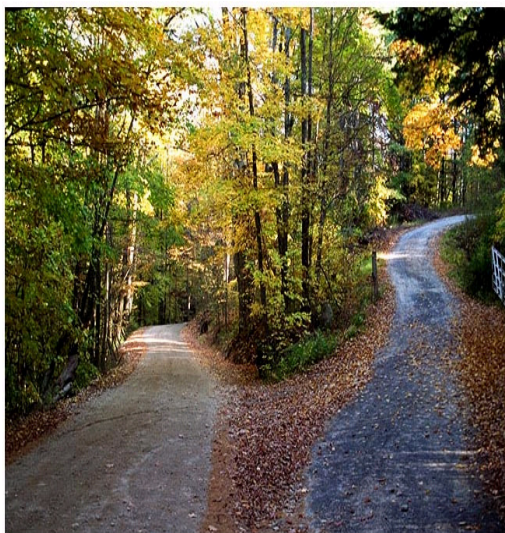
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.



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