I just can’t help but reflect on the current economic crisis in our nation, and how this crisis may be affecting all of us in the department as well as the patients and learners entrusted to us. Many have seen their retirement “nest egg” fall by substantial amounts, and will have to consider working longer rather than retiring. Some, perhaps many, have deferred elective healthcare needs or prescription refills because of high deductibles and co-payments. Most have reduced discretionary spending in a variety of ways, and nearly everyone is worried about job security, health benefits, home values and mortgage payments, and the provision of basic needs, such as, food, heat and fuel. I am aware of these concerns and want you to know I am committed to working with senior leaders and management to ensure as many jobs and benefits as possible are preserved while responding in a fiscally responsible way to the crisis by not filling positions vacated by attrition which are not critical to our mission and operations for the foreseeable future. In order to accomplish this goal I need your help in generating new revenue for the department as well as in improving the efficiency of our work.

See CHAIR’S MESSAGE (Continued) / Page 2
O of the many strengths and challenges of our practice are the various organs and disease processes that fall under the purview of Gastroenterology and Hepatology. Multiple advances in basic science research, including immunomodulators and biologic therapies for inflammatory bowel disease and gastrointestinal and liver cancers, coupled with technical advances in diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy, affords and demands a very personalized approach for individuals with gastrointestinal and hepatobiliary diseases. The Gastroenterology and Hepatology Division has had recent success with recruitment to our clinical faculty that better enables us to fulfill our commitment to clinical excellence and remain on the cutting edge of our very exciting subspecialty practice.

To this end there are several new faculty members whose names may not be familiar to you. One name that may ring a bell is our newest faculty member, Dr. Charles E. (Chip) Dye, who was recruited from the University of Chicago. Dr. Dye specializes in advanced diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy and is the Director of Endoscopy Education for our Fellowship Program. Dr. Dye will work closely with members of the Penn State Hershey Medical Center’s Cancer Institute to improve the management of patients with gastrointestinal malignancies, including novel translational approaches. Chip is the son of Dr. Robert E. Dye, the first member of the Gastroenterology Division recruited by Graham Jeffries some years ago, and Dr. Elaine Eyster, former Chief of the Hematology Division.

The therapeutic endoscopy team also includes Drs. Mathew, McGarrity and Pooran. Dr. Pooran specializes in diagnostic and therapeutic ERCP including Spy Glass which allows a direct endoscopic examination of the bile and pancreatic ducts. Dr. Matt Moyer is our first “super therapeutic fellow.” Dr. Moyer received his medical education, internal medicine residency and Gastroenterology and Hepatology Fellowship training at Penn State Hershey. Before joining our faculty, Dr. Moyer will spend the year learning advanced therapeutic endoscopy. Dr. Moyer has collaborated with Dr. Mathew in the development of our NOTES (Natural Orifice Transendoscopic Surgery) Program. NOTES includes newly developed endoscopic techniques to create “incision-less” surgery. Drs. Mathew and Moyer have described the technique termed STAT (a Self-Approximating Transluminal Access Technique) for creation of openings and closures in the gastrointestinal tract for endoscopic surgery. They recently obtained a grant from the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy for their work evaluating a transgastric approach for cholecystectomy in a human cadaver model. Dr. Mathew has formed a strong collaboration with the Division of Minimally Invasive and Bariatric Surgery at the Medical Center and the Department of Mechanical Engineering at University Park.

Our Fellowship Program has been a critical avenue for successful recruitment for the Division. Dr. Ian Schreibman received his internal medicine and Gastroenterology and Hepatology training here and then completed a year of advanced training in Transplant Hepatology at the University of Miami. Ian works with Dr. Tom Riley, Medical Director of our very successful Liver Transplant Program which includes a living donor related program. Dr. Schreibman was awarded the Department of Medicine Teacher of the Year Award last year and also serves as Co-Director of our fellowship program.

Dr. Deb Bethards is a name that may be familiar to some. Deb completed her internal medicine residency here in the 1980s and spent some two decades in private practice in Virginia. Returning to her roots, she completed her fellowship here which included training in advanced motility techniques at the Mayo Clinic. Dr. Bethards joins Dr. Ouyang to form a strong clinical and research program in gastrointestinal motility disorders. Dr. Ouyang also collaborates closely with Dr. Shaoyong Yu in the study of esophageal-related noncardiac chest pain. Together their work investigates the action ofnoxious stimuli on esophageal sensory afferent nerves transmitted to the central nervous system via both spinal and vagal pathways. They have developed an ex vivo esophageal vagal preparation which combines electrophysiological, pathological and molecular approaches to further our understanding of esophageal response to inflammatory stimuli.

**CHAIR’S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)**

I believe we have opportunities to generate new revenue every day by documenting care provided to patients and ensuring we are billing for these services – this includes everything from day of admission care, day of discharge care, concurrent daily care, consultations and follow-ups, and supervised procedures to outpatient visits. We can be more aggressive about soliciting and requesting consultations when appropriate to patient care, and about filling our clinic schedules. Another source of new revenue can also come from grants and contracts to help offset faculty and staff salaries and benefits. The Stimulus program under consideration by Congress includes added funding for the NIH. Now, more than ever, our research faculty should be submitting proposals to take advantage of this infusion of funds. I ask each of you to ensure you are doing all you can do to generate revenue for the work you are doing. We can also work to improve efficiency by eliminating tasks which need not be done; moving to an electronic environment for all documents thereby eliminating the need for files, shadow records and the like; and sharing resources and people across traditional work units (e.g. divisions or departments) when possible. Lastly, and importantly, I urge all of us to do these things with civility, mutual respect, and high expectations for a better future together.
RESEARCH (Continued)

with which the scientific community views the work of our investigators. In these times of tightening NIH budgets, with pay lines of 10-15% for some institutes, the fact that we have been able to grow our research enterprise should be a source of great pride.

Our faculty continue to perform innovative and influential research. Space allows me to mention only a small fraction of the many research programs in the Department. Jill Smith, M.D., in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology continues her NIH-funded trials of opioid growth factor in advanced pancreatic cancer and naltrexone in inflammatory bowel disease. These human trials are based on pioneering preclinical animal studies from her lab. Leslie Parent, M.D., Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases, had her NIH RO1 grant renewed through its 15th consecutive year. Her work has identified the cell nucleus as a novel site for assembly of retrovirus particles. Her recent publication in the Journal of Virology was the subject of an editorial commentary. Jianhua Li, M.D., Ph.D., Division of Cardiology, was named an Established Investigator of the American Heart Association for his work on the sympathetic nervous system in heart failure. Dr. Li is the only faculty member at Hershey or University Park currently holding this prestigious award.

Robert Gabbay, M.D., Ph.D., Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, continues his research into optimal strategies for the treatment of diabetes. In recognition of his expertise, Dr. Gabbay was appointed to the Steering Committee of The Governor’s Pennsylvania Chronic Care Management, Reimbursement and Cost Reduction Commission. The Commission is implementing a statewide chronic care model which will use reimbursement changes to foster practice redesign. This unique approach is already receiving national recognition for wider potential implementation. Andrea Manni, M.D., Chief, Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, has teamed with colleagues at University Park and in Colorado to test the combination of an omega-3 fatty acid rich diet and low dose antiestrogens as a safe and effective approach for breast cancer prevention. This project was selected to receive $7.5 million in support from a highly competitive grant program from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation.

The department has added a number of new investigators over the past year. Han-Mou Tsai, M.D., was recently named Chief of the Section of Hemostasis and Thrombosis in the Division of Hematology and Oncology. Dr. Tsai is a leading authority on the pathogenesis of TTP and discovered that TTP is often due to a defect in the ADAMTS13 protease. His NIH-funded laboratory seeks to determine the immunologic basis for ADAMTS13 neutralizing antibodies. Elliot Epner, M.D., Ph.D., Division of Hematology and Oncology, is a leading expert on mantle cell lymphoma. His NIH-funded laboratory examines the epigenetic regulation of lymphoma cell growth. Jose Stoute, M.D., Division of Infectious Diseases, studies malaria pathogenesis. His NIH-funded research addresses the mechanisms of red cell destruction in malaria with an emphasis on innate immune mediators. Kebin Hu, M.D., Ph.D., Division of Nephrology, joins us after a productive research fellowship at University of Pittsburgh. He is interested in the mechanisms of tubulointerstitial fibrosis. He has discovered that tPA acts as a cytokine to promote renal fibrosis through actions on myofibroblasts.

I hope I have provided a glimpse of the vibrant research programs in the department. In subsequent installments, I will describe the important role our faculty play in supporting interdisciplinary research within the college and university, departmental activities intended to support and promote research, such as research conferences and research day, and the important role of research in the training of our students and housestaff.

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE BIRTHDAYS

The Department of Medicine celebrated birthdays occurring January through March at its first quarterly birthday breakfast celebration on Thursday, February 12th.

Happy Birthday to the following employees:


We want to hear from you! This newsletter is made possible by the submissions from the department’s faculty and staff. If you wish to prepare a submission for publication, please e-mail your file as a Microsoft Word document to Susan Hassenbein (hassenbein@hmc.psu.edu). Please include the word count in your e-mail and enter “Lions of Medicine Submission” in the subject line. We also welcome comments about our publication via e-mail or telephone to any member of the editorial board.
The affiliation of the Department of Medicine and the Lebanon Veterans Administration Medical Center (LVAMC) is currently in its 20th year. During this period, the LVAMC has seen significant changes in its patient care activities; yet, it continues to be an excellent training opportunity for our medical students, residents, and fellows.

In the early to mid-1990’s, the LVAMC, in addition to many VAMC’s across the country, was seeing a reduction in its inpatient care services as well as an inability to provide comprehensive continuity of care in their ambulatory clinics. In 1999, the Veteran’s Health Administration partnered with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement to improve primary care access to our veterans while not only maintaining but also actually improving the quality of care. The resulting Advanced Clinical Access program has accomplished just that and has been a model in many ways for quality improvement and access for other healthcare systems to follow.

As such, the number of primary care outpatient visits to the Lebanon facility increased dramatically and, therefore, the inpatient services responded accordingly. We currently maintain two university general medicine ward services at the LVAMC. Our residents continue to believe the VA provides excellent experience in the care of veterans with a wide variety of medical diagnoses. They also feel a strong sense of fulfillment in being able to provide comprehensive, effective care to our veterans.

Medical students rotate each month at the LVAMC as clinical clerks and acting interns on these services. We continue to build our affiliation in several of the departmental subspecialty fellowship areas, including cardiology, hematology/oncology, and gastroenterology.

One of the unique opportunities in our training program, and consistently ranked one of the best from the residents’ perspective, has been the hospice/geriatrics rotation at the LVAMC. Scott Shreve, D.O., associate professor of clinical medicine, and the current national director for hospice and palliative care in the VHA, initiated the prototype inpatient hospice unit for the VHA in the mid 1990’s at the LVAMC. Our residents began rotating on the unit in 1999. Along with being a superb clinician/educator, Dr. Shreve has developed a patient-centered approach to our veterans requiring palliative and/or hospice care while incorporating an educational focus that ranks second to none in the VAMC system.

As a testimony to LVAMC staff and their dedication to medical education, one of their physicians has been chosen by our housestaff as “Teaching Attending of the Year,” five of the last eight years. In addition, two of their physicians have received special educational recognition awards presented by the Department of Medicine for their contributions to medical student and resident education.

We are proud of our continued affiliation with the Lebanon VAMC and are looking forward to expanding our educational, clinical, and research opportunities in the years to come.

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Department of Medicine Employee of the Quarter

The Department of Medicine Rewards and Recognition Committee is pleased to award its Employee of the Quarter to Renee Morton, Administrative Associate, Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine.

Renee has been a dedicated staff member of the Department of Medicine since her arrival in January of 2000, when she joined the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine. She has been employed by the Penn State Hershey Medical Center since April of 1989.

Renee is the “GO TO PERSON” in her division for getting things done in a timely and efficient manner. She accepts any request or job task with a smile and “can do” attitude no matter how high the “piles” of work are on her desk. She is kind and accommodating to all around her, including patients and colleagues alike. Her work efforts are seamless and always selfless. Renee exemplifies the meaning of teamwork and is highly deserving of this award.
Meet the Team

The Internal Medicine Residency Program Welcomes its 2009-2010 Chief Residents

Zac earned his medical degree from the University of Kansas School of Medicine. He has received the Outstanding Categorical Intern Award in 2006/200 and the In-service Training Exam Award for the highest score achieved on the Internal Medicine in-training exam. He is also a member of the Penn State University Hershey Medical Center medical jeopardy which competed at the 2007 regional American College of Physicians meeting. Zac is also a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society, the American Medical Association, and the American College of Physicians.

Shana earned her medical degree from the Oregon Health Sciences University School of Medicine in Portland, Oregon. She is a member of the American Medical Women’s Association and the American College of Physicians. She won the Rose Award: Recognition for outstanding service excellence by a patient, visitor or colleague, during her surgery clerkship in 2003 and her pediatrics clerkship in 2004.

Neil earned his medical degree from the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine. He is a member of the American College of Physicians as well as the Pennsylvania Medical Society. Neil also participates in the Internal Medicine Internist Group and Lioncare, a local non-profit homeless shelter and drug/rehabilitation center that provides healthcare to underserved population of Harrisburg and central Pennsylvania.

Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

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