I had occasion to present the Department’s quality improvement and patient safety goals, projects, and accomplishments to the Medical Center’s Board of Directors and its Quality Committee on March 18, 2009, and took great pride in doing so. The Quality Committee is chaired by Director John Rhodes who is keenly focused on optimizing the quality of care we provide to our patients as well as providing such care in a safe manner. I pointed out that as of July 1, 2009, we would be the first department to formally appoint a Vice Chair for Quality Improvement as Cindy Whitener will transition to this position. She has already been taking the lead in many of our quality improvement projects, but will now focus her efforts in this area. I also pointed out that many faculty in the department have taken the lead as physician champions in a number of institutional quality projects – Greg Caputo, Mike Beck, Bob Gabbay, Kathleen Julian, Michael Katzman, Maggie Kreher, Colleen Rafferty, Cindy Whitener, and Peg Wojnar. Many more faculty, residents, fellows, and staff have been engaged in department, division, or individual quality or safety projects as well. It is quite clear to me that we must establish a culture in the department in

Developing a Culture of Quality in the Department of Medicine

Cynthia J. Whitener, M.D.

Donald Berwick once stated: “To engage improvement fully, doctors will need to enhance their sense of the need for overall improvement; their commitment to a customer centered definition of quality and to the measurement of quality; their willingness and skill to work as partners…; their investment in training and learning about quality related issues; and their commitment to reducing waste, duplication, and unsupported variation in the processes of care. Like all leaders, doctors who want quality to progress must make their commitments visible, without equivocation, and for the long haul (1).”

In recent years the Department of Medicine has paid greater attention to quality improvement (QI). Although physicians are busy with clinical, education, and research activities, many faculty are managing to devote a portion of their time to institutional, departmental, and/or divisional QI projects, and they are discovering that these experiences are very rewarding. They gain appreciation and respect for the work of other staff within the hospital, and have the satisfaction of knowing they contributed to improved patient quality and safety. Recently, even faculty not directly involved with QI projects seem to have developed increased awareness of the importance of quality and safety goals since more doctors accept data driven guidelines and other quality and safety initiatives with less resistance compared to the past.

The Department of Medicine contributed to the 2008-2009 institutional quality initiatives (reducing healthcare-associated infections and improving patient satisfaction) in multiple ways, but there is only space to highlight three examples: 1) Physician hand hygiene improved based on observations of Department of Medicine physicians (residents and attendings) before and after patient care. Hand hygiene was 44% before, 89% after, and 74% overall two years ago. More recently, compliance improved to 76% before, 90% after, and 84% overall. The Department’s goal is to achieve 100% compliance since hand hygiene is likely the most important method to prevent healthcare-acquired infections; 2) In addition to the hospital wide MRSA screening program, the MICU and the MIMCU, along with the...

“We are guests in our patient’s lives”

Donald Berwick

See CULTURE OF QUALITY (Continued)/ PAGE 4
It gives me great pleasure both to lead the Division of General Internal Medicine (DGIM), as well as to report on its progress. Having been here only two years, I am still grasping the breadth of activities that members of this division play – which are tremendous in scope in support of institutional goals of providing excellent patient care, preparing the next generation of physicians, and making research discoveries to improve these first two goals. Space will not allow me to review all of the important contributions of DGIM, but I will highlight a few.

The Division of General Internal Medicine plays a critical role in leading the medical center, the medical school, and beyond. Michael Weitekamp, M.D. serves as the Chief Medical Officer for the medical center; Richard Simons, M.D. is the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs and serves as Governor for Eastern Pennsylvania for the American College of Physicians; Gregory Caputo, M.D. serves as the Chief Quality Officer, and Luanne Thorndyke, M.D. serves as the Associate Dean for Professional Development. Within the Department of Medicine, Ted Bollard, M.D. serves as the Director of the Residency Program, Philip Masters, M.D. is Vice-Chair of Medical Education, is the current president of the Clerkship Directors in Internal Medicine (CDIM), and serves as Director of the Internal Medicine Clerkship Program. Carol Freer, M.D. serves as the Director of Hospitalist Outreach. Dr. Freer has been instrumental in developing a hospitalist program at Mt. Nittany Medical Center, which will become an important future teaching site. This summer we will also welcome back Paul Haidet, M.D., a PSCOM graduate who comes to us from Baylor College of Medicine to become the Director of Medical Education Research for the College of Medicine, and he will have his clinical and academic home in DGIM.

With regards to teaching and clinical care, DGIM provides primary care services and hospitalist inpatient services that serve as core teaching experiences for Internal Medicine residents and third and fourth year students. Our inpatient providers, led by Thomas O’Bryan, M.D. and assisted by Colleen Rafferty, M.D. oversee the care of approximately 2,700 inpatients each year on three teaching (resident) teams and one team staffed by mid-level providers (Friedel, Horlacher, Lowery, Rohrbaugh, Shellenberger). Currently, 14 of our physicians serve as inpatient hospitalist physicians (Ballentine, Bhardwaj, Bollard, Freer, Glod, Hennrikus, Kreher, Magnifico, Masters, O’Bryan, Ofoma, Rafferty, Sauder, Simons). In addition, the inpatient providers perform medical consultations and co-management services to patients on other services at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center (PSHMC) and at the Penn State Rehabilitation Center (Hess). On the outpatient side, 19 DGIM physicians (Ballentine, Bell, Boan, Bollard, Borys, Caputo, Goldstein, Green, Jeffries, Jones, McCall-Hosenfeld, Miller, Sciamanna, Sherwood, Simons, Thorndyke, Weitekamp as well as Becky and Phil Masters) and 2 mid-levels (Weaver, Jacobs) are on track to see over 25,000 outpatient visits this year.

A major change to the division’s activities over the past two years has been an expanded focus on research, with the dual goals of stimulating research of physicians who mainly care for patients and recruiting new research faculty to PSHMC. We are thrilled that Cynthia Chuang, M.D. has taken on the role of Director of Research in the division to oversee these efforts. As of this summer, DGIM will have 7 research intensive faculty with a variety of interests and funding: Cynthia Chuang, M.D. (K23, Unintended Pregnancy in Women with Chronic Medical Conditions), Michael Green, M.D. (ACS, End-of-Life Health Care Decisions by Patients with Advanced Cancer), Christopher Sciamanna, M.D. (R01, Improving the Quality of Asthma Care Using the Internet), Jennifer McCaHosenfeld, M.D. (K12, Improving Health Outcomes for Rural Women who Experience Intimate Partner Violence), Liza Rovniak, Ph.D. (K99/R00, WalkLink: Email-Based Walking Program for Cardiovascular Disease Risk-Reduction), Jennifer Kraschnewski, M.D., who studies interventions to improve weight control in diabetes, and John Hustad, Ph.D., who studies interventions designed to reduce college drinking. At the same time, other faculty members are getting involved in the research mission, with the following areas of focus: Transitions of care (Rafferty, Hennrikus, Swallow, and Kreher), Hygiene hypothesis (O’Bryan), Academic-Industry relations (R. Masters, Green), Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis (Bhardwaj), Resident education research (Ofoma), Complementary and Alternative Medicine (Jones), Obesity management (Boan, Sherwood, Sciamanna), Continuing education and development (Hess, Thorndyke), Quality of DVT prophylaxis (Beck) and Quality of life among elder adults (Ballentine).

We are extremely appreciative of the investments of time and money from the Departments of Medicine and Public Health Sciences and from the support of collaborators and mentors at PSHMC and across a variety of departments at the University Park campus. We are also indebted to the support we have of our administrative staff as well as the staff at the 30 Hope Drive clinic, West Health Campus clinic, and the University Physicians Center clinic, who make coming to work not only productive but enjoyable. Overall, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve as the Chief of such a dynamic division. We are blessed with wonderful people who are committed to excellence and armed with great ideas and the energy to move them forward.
Match Results

The 2009 interview season has drawn to a close, and this year we interviewed a record number of applicants (223 and 100 respectively) for our 20 categorical and 10 preliminary medicine positions. We welcome a strong new intern class to Penn State in July, with five of our own Penn State students at the core of the class. These residents bring with them a diversity of previous experiences, including extensive research and community service pursuits.

We would like to thank the faculty who helped with our recruitment efforts this year, through interviewing, noon lectures, and involving our applicants on bedside rounds. Their involvement leads to a richer experience for our applicants and gives them a glimpse into their future at Penn State Hershey. We hope you will join us in welcoming these new interns to our Penn State family when they arrive in mid-June.

Resident Scholarly Activity

It has been another stellar year for the internal medicine residents in their scholarly pursuits. Throughout the course of the 2008-2009 academic year, our residents have given eighteen presentations at local, state, and regional meetings; twenty-seven presentations at national meetings; one presentation as “invited” guest lecturer; six first-author research and review articles published or submitted for publication; and have a total of seven publications either under review or in press. Most recently, seven of our residents (Hooman Hajian, Anay Pradhan, Syed Rizvi, Lawand Saadulla, Krista Todoric, and Pradeep Yadav), presented at the American College of Physicians Annual Scientific Session held in Philadelphia in April, and three more (Chetan Bhardwaj, Rahul Sharma, and Jason Stepp) have been selected to present at the Annual Society of General Internal Medicine national meeting in Miami, Florida in May. Given the time constraints and the collaboration that must occur between our residents and their faculty mentors, these are tremendous accomplishments. The residents would like to express their thanks and gratitude to all the faculty members in the Department of Medicine who have acted as research mentors and advisors.

ACGME / RRC Site Visit

In April, the Internal Medicine Residency Training Program and seven of its subspecialty fellowship programs underwent the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) / Resident Review Committee (RRC) site visit for continuing accreditation. While the on-site review has been completed, the accreditation process and notification from the ACGME will not occur until the fall of 2009. We expect a successful review and will update you in future Lions of Medicine correspondence.

Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society

We are very pleased to announce that the April induction ceremony for the Eta Chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society (AOA) welcomed two of our current chief residents to their membership. Congratulations to Drs. David Dougherty and Nicole Swallow on their selection. Dr. Dougherty will be leaving “the fold” for his hematology/oncology fellowship at the University of Rochester, where he plans to combine additional graduate degree requirements in medical education and administration to his clinical training. Dr. Swallow will be continuing as a faculty member in the Department of Medicine as a hospitalist, as well as continuing her interests in medical education as our newest associate program director focused on hospital-based education for our training program.

See RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAM (Continued) / PAGE 4

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 (shassenbein@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.
CULTURE OF QUALITY (Continued)

Neurosciences ICU, participated in a multi-disciplinary project to decrease the incidence of hospital-acquired MRSA. There was a decreasing trend of hospital-associated MRSA cases within these units from July 2008 to March 2009, and 98% of the cases were due to colonization rather than infection; and 3) Patient satisfaction for 6 Medicine improved significantly in fiscal year (FY) 2008, in large part due to the work of the multi-disciplinary Medicine Integrated Care Delivery Team, and the implementation of hourly nursing rounds. During FY 2009, the scores have been maintained with only slight variation.

Departmental projects have been challenging due to resource constraints, but some projects have provided valuable information. The intra- and extra-departmental surveys are an example. The surveys were done to assess faculty and resident perceptions of our clinical services, specifically whether Department of Medicine physicians were courteous, timely/provided quick access, provided the advice requested, and communicated effectively. The survey results improved awareness of colleague’s perceptions and expectations, and they prompted changes in faculty staffing to improve consult and outpatient services in two divisions and changes in outpatient scheduling in one division. One hundred percent mortality review began in the department in September 2008. Each case is reviewed by the physician providers (residents and attendings), and by one of 15 independent faculty reviewers. A summary of the first 6 months of data is in progress. Delayed palliative care consultation is the most common finding of the reviews.

Many faculty are participating in very worthwhile divisional QI projects, but space constraints do not allow these to be outlined here.

Physician involvement in QI activities has been found to be essential for continued project success. This need has led to a new challenge in academic medicine today - the development and acknowledgement of the contributions of faculty who excel in QI activities. In fact, it has recently been proposed that certain types of QI activities have academic merit worthy of a career pathway in academic medicine (2).

It’s an exciting time to perform QI activities since these efforts are now recognized internally and externally as critical to excellent patient care. Due to increased demand for higher quality of care from regulatory and accreditation bodies, patient groups, and payers, it is likely that more resources and infrastructure will need to be dedicated to QI endeavors. The Department of Medicine is in the process of reviewing and considering benchmark programs, keeping in mind that programs that have succeeded elsewhere will need to be tailored to our local reality.

The Department of Medicine has made progress toward adopting a culture of quality and safety, but there are still many challenges and opportunities. More faculty are encouraged to contribute to quality initiatives. With a critical mass of faculty and staff involved in QI activities in the department, laudable goals are achievable.


RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAM (Continued)

Housestaff Graduation

On June 30th, we will be saying “good-bye” to seventeen graduating residents and eight preliminary interns. Of the graduating seniors, seven will be continuing their graduate medical education in their respective fellowship programs, three will be staying in the department as chief residents/instructors, one will enter the practice of general internal medicine, and six have accepted positions as hospital-based physicians. We thank all of our departing residents and interns for their hard work, their support of the Department of Medicine and their fellow residents, and their dedication to their education and training. We wish them the best as they enter the next phase of their professional development.
LAWRENCE I. SINOWAY, M.D., was named Penn State Distinguished Professor of Medicine. The title reflects outstanding academic contribution to Penn State. The professors must be acknowledged leaders in their field of research; have demonstrated leadership in raising the standards of the University in teaching, research and service; and have excellent teaching and mentoring skills.

Dr. Sinoway is the founding director of the Penn State Heart and Vascular Institute, which launched in 2005. Under his direction, the institute now ranks among the top 100 cardiovascular hospitals in America and is considered a leader in research, development and clinical use of heart pumps. A cardiologist, Sinoway’s research has contributed to understanding how heart and blood vessels of patients with congestive heart failure respond to exercise. He has served as program director for the General Clinical Research Center.

TIMOTHY J. CRAIG, D.O., was presented a 2009 College of Medicine Distinguished Educator Award. He will join previous awardees to become members of the Society of Distinguished Educators. Awardees were selected from a pool of nominees based on demonstrated exceptional scholarly work in medical or graduate education in one or more of the following areas: original educational research; successful procurement of educational grants; development and implementation of innovations in the curriculum, teaching methodology or technique, new assessment methods, or faculty development; consistent awards for excellence as a teacher/role model; and leadership in education.

The Department of Medicine congratulates both Dr. Sinoway and Dr. Craig on their achievements.

CAROLYN CRETER AWARDED DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE EMPLOYEE OF THE SECOND QUARTER

THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE REWARDS AND RECOGNITION COMMITTEE is pleased to announce the award of Employee of the Second Quarter to Carolyn Creter. Carol has been a dedicated employee of the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism in the Department of Medicine since joining the Medical Center in 1990.

Carolyn is a valued member of her division. She is always willing to help however and whenever she can. She has a positive attitude and takes on new tasks and responsibilities with enthusiasm. She is especially willing to help rearrange office space, filing, or desks whenever necessary! Her team spirit and enthusiasm make her a pleasure to work with and a deserving recipient of the Employee of the Quarter Award.

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR (Continued)

which each of us takes personal responsibility for continuous quality improvement (and showing it with results) and for providing safe, efficient, effective, patient and family centered, and timely care for our patients every time. This can be very hard work, but we must commit to doing it together! It is simply the right thing to do.