“Finding the Light”

There is an oft-told 13th Century Islamic story that can be modernized as follows:

One night a man finds his neighbor looking under a street light for a lost key. When asked where he dropped the key, the neighbor says, “On the other side of the street”. “Then why are you looking on this side of the street for your lost key?” the man asks. The neighbor replies, “Because the light is better here”.

We often look where the light is best, not necessarily where we will likely find what we are looking for.

The Affordable Care Act has created opportunities, as well as challenges, for New Mexico, and for UNM specifically. With more patients enrolling for insurance coverage through the NM Health Exchange, and with the expansion in New Mexico of Medicaid eligibility to more than 170,000 people, our percentage of self-pay or uninsured patients has never been lower. We are now getting paid for services we provide that, in the past, were uncompensated. In the past year we have increased surgical volumes at UNMH, OSIS, SRMC, and, most recently, the BBRP, without an expansion of our physical plant. Yet we remain fiscally challenged, and we continue to struggle with timely clinic and OR access for our patients. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, we know that patients that formerly would have received care at UNM are being kept within the Presbyterian Health System. Why, in a time of opportunity, do we struggle to remain competitive?

Common sense (and the health care “gurus”) tell us that we need to be more patient-focused and customer-friendly in our care delivery systems. We can no longer assume that patients will seek care at UNM either because they have done so in the past, or because they have no other choice. Today, patients have choices.

Patients want what we want – a health care system that is easy to access, one that provides care in a timely and appropriate fashion, and one that considers their needs, values and perspectives at all times. They do not want to be put on hold when scheduling their appointments. They want to see a clinician as quickly as possible. They want tests and necessary procedures (including surgeries) scheduled promptly and conducted in a safe, high quality manner. They want to be respected as individuals.

Why, as a health care delivery system, do we struggle? One cause could be unaligned clinical incentives. The hospital, the Medical
Group and departments like ours need shared incentives. A “full hospital” and “full clinics” are not indicators of success if we cannot get our patients into either, in a timely fashion. At a time where lengths of inpatient hospital stay are being driven downward nationally by aggressive case management the average length of stay for surgical patients at UNMH continues to creep upwards. Declarations of the chronic crisis of “Code Purple” do not fix the problem.

Looking for new bricks and mortar resources (e.g., a new hospital) is looking where the light is good, not where we will find answers. For the foreseeable future, we will need to maximize our current resources – OR facilities, inpatient beds and clinics on the HSC campus and at SRMC – and support institutional efforts to improve patient throughput through better clinic and OR scheduling and through decreasing our inpatient length of stay.

JCR

New Faculty Reception, 2014

New Faculty 2014 (left to right) - Dr. Michael Davis, (Division Chief, Urology); Dr. Eugene Wu, Plastic Surgery; Dr. Stephanie Fine, Surgical Oncology; Dr. John Russell (Chairman, Department of Surgery); Dr. Hannah Kerr, Urology

Surgical Oncology New Faculty 2014 (left to right)- Dr. Stephanie Fine; Dr. John Russell, Chairman

Plastic Surgery New Faculty 2014 (left to right)- Dr. Eugene Wu; Dr. John Russell, Chairman

Urology New Faculty 2014 (left to right)- Dr. John Russell, Chairman; Dr. Hannah Kerr; Dr. Michael Davis (Division Chief, Urology)
**SRIA Grant Awards**

SRIA Grant Award Recipients (left to right)-
Dr. Cynthia Reyes (Vice Chair, Quality); Dr. Arup Das, (Vice Chair, Research); Dr. Thomas Howdeshell, General Surgery; Dr. Charles Bellows, General Surgery (SRMC), Dr. John Russell (Chairman, Dept. of Surgery); Dr. Bridge Fahy, Surgical Oncology (unable to attend); Dr. Katherine Morris, Surgical Oncology (unable to attend)

Congratulations!

**Graduating Chief Residents**

*Congratulations!*

- **Gregory Ward, MD (ENT)**
  Head & Neck Otolaryngology Fellowship
  Indiana University
  Bloomington, IN

- **Llitch Diaz, MD (GS)**
  Cardiothoracic Fellowship
  University of Minnesota
  Minneapolis, MN

- **Lorant Divald, MD (GS)**
  Plastics Fellowship
  Mayo Clinic
  Rochester, MN

- **Patrick McGrew, MD (GS)**
  Critical/Acute Care Fellowship
  University of Las Vegas
  Las Vegas, NV

- **Nova Szoka, MD (GS)**
  Minimally Invasive Surgery Fellowship
  Duke University
  Durham, NC

- **Jessica Ming, MD (Urology)**
  Peds Urology Fellowship
  Hospital for Sick Children
  Toronto, ON, Canada

- **Christopher Taylor, MD (Urology)**
  Private Practice
  Farmington, NM

**UNM Vein & Cosmetic Center**

Drs. Christopher Demas, Michael Nuara, Anil Shetty, and Amar Joshi were recognized in the Special Advertising Section of The Albuquerque Magazine for an experienced team of board certified surgeons in the areas of breast and facial reconstruction after cancer treatment (Dr. Demas), cosmetic and reconstructive surgeries related to the face and neck (Dr. Nuara), patient care for hemangiomas and vascular malformations (Dr. Shetty), and correcting cosmetic and functional conditions for the eyelids, eye sockets and tear drainage system (Dr. Joshi). Great job!

**Division of Surgical Oncology**

The Division of Surgical Oncology would like to introduce Dr. Stephanie Fine as an Assistant Professor in Breast Surgery. Dr. Fine received her
medical degree at the UNM School of Medicine and completed her residency and internship at the University of Utah Medical Center. She completed a fellowship in breast surgery at the Akron General Medical Center in Akron, Ohio. Dr. Fine has practiced at community hospitals in Ohio, Utah and New Mexico, and has given numerous presentations on breast cancer. **Welcome aboard Dr. Fine!**

**Dr. Bridget Fahy** was accepted into the Medical Education Scholars program and recently invited to serve as an examination consultant to the American Board of Surgery. Dr. Fahy also received a SRIA grant to study a preoperative decision aid in Hispanic patients. Great Job!

**Dr. Rodrigo Rodriguez** presented at the 1st Annual ASCO Palliative Care in Oncology Symposium, October 24-25, 2014 in Boston; Abstract Title: "Estimation of risk in cancer patients undergoing palliative procedures by the American college of surgeons risk calculator."

**Dr. Rodrigo Rodriguez** also presented his research on Utilization of Palliative Care Consultation Services by Surgical Services at UNM, at the American College of Surgeons meeting, October 29, 2014 in Chicago.

**Division of Ophthalmology**

**UNM Hospitals Ophthalmology Clinic**, Open House & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held on June 27, 2014. Well done!

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The Division of Ophthalmology would like to announce **Dr. Amar Joshi** as the Medical Director and **Dr. Rachel Davis** as the Residency Program Director. Congratulations!

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**Division of Otolaryngology**

**Dr. Andrew Cowan** received a portion of a V Foundation grant (as a subcontractor) for a study titled: "Genetic Alterations of PIK3CA Identify Actionable Targets for HPV-Associated Head and Neck Cancer." The grant will help run a stage I/II study with the University of Pittsburgh (and a couple of other sites) to test a PI3 kinase inhibitor for patients with HPV-associated head and neck cancer. Congratulations!

**Division of Otolaryngology**

**Division of Otolaryngology**
The Division of Plastic Surgery would like to introduce Dr. Eugene Wu as an Assistant Professor and Director of the Burn Program. Prior to UNM, Dr. Wu owned and operated a Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery practice focusing on aesthetic surgery in Beverly Hills and Alhambra, California. Dr. Wu is Board Certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery and The American Board of Surgery. Dr. Wu is an Active Member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

In addition to his private cosmetic practice, Dr. Wu performed acute and reconstructive burn surgery as a staff surgeon at the Grossman Burn Centers from 2007-2012. He has been involved in multiple international missions abroad repairing cleft lip and cleft palates for underprivileged children. Dr. Wu stays up-to-date on the latest in plastic surgery techniques. He has co-authored multiple research publications and presentations throughout his career. Welcome aboard Dr. Wu!

The Division of Urology would like to introduce Dr. Hannah Kerr as an Assistant Professor and Kidney/Pancreas Transplant specialist. Dr. Kerr returns to UNM after completing an ASTS Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Fellowship at The Cleveland Clinic. Originally from Columbus, Ohio, Dr. Kerr completed a 6 year BS/MD program at Northeast Ohio Medical University prior to her Urology Residency at UNM. Her interests include kidney and pancreas transplant, urologic oncology, and renal surgery.

She is a member of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons, American Urological Association, Society of Women in Urology and The Urologic Society for Transplantation and Renal Surgery. Welcome aboard Dr. Kerr!

Baby News!

- Vinay Rai, MD
- Jason Wilson, MD

Congratulations on the new addition to your families!