Welcome to the first issue of Family Medicine Matters, our new departmental newsletter. I hope you enjoy catching up on the comings and goings of our department.

As I celebrate my two-year anniversary at UT Southwestern, I’m pleased at the growth of family medicine here. For the second straight year, more than 20 medical students have matched into family medicine, a record for UTSW! In July, our new Texas Health Resources Hospital site will be fully up and running with 18 residents. Our growing research core now has four Ph.D. faculty, three research assistants, and approximately $200,000 in annual extramural research funding. The number of publications rose from five in 2017 to 23 in 2018.

One of our main goals is to improve the health of the communities we serve by engaging with our more than 30 community partners to provide health care, conduct community-based participatory research, and advocate for underserved and vulnerable people living in the Metroplex.

On another note, I am pleased to offer congratulations to:

- Dr. Dan Sepdham, Vice Chair for Education, who was selected by the medical students for induction into the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

Community Health is Critical

One of the Department of Family and Community Medicine’s goals is to improve the health of the communities we serve. To that end, we strive to create, improve, and maintain collaborative relationships with Dallas community agencies. We actively collaborate with 30 community partners. We utilize community-based participatory research (CBPR) models for understanding health and disease determinants, as well as supporting mechanisms for promoting healthier lives for individuals, families, and communities. These opportunities for engagement are open to medical students, residents, and fellows with the guidance and support of family medicine faculty members. Service learning experiences provide medical students, Family Medicine Faculty, and residents a pipeline through which they can improve the health of the underserved communities in Dallas.

Physician of the Day

Since 1971, the Texas Academy of Family Physicians (TAFP) has provided volunteer family medicine doctors from among its members to serve at the Texas State Capitol during legislative sessions.

This tradition, known as Physician of the Day, provides a unique opportunity for family medicine doctors to interact with Texas lawmakers. The physician of the day is introduced in both the Texas Senate and House of Representatives, and his or her name becomes part of the official legislative record. Several faculty members from the UTSW Department of Family Medicine have volunteered their time to participate in this program.

In 2019, Dr. F. David Schneider, Dr. Joseph Ventimiglia, Dr. Zaiba Jetpuri, Dr. Mahdi Awwad, and Dr. Astrud Villarreal have participated in this program.

Departmental Retreat

Dr. F. David Schneider gave a presentation on the new developments and future direction of the department.

The retreat brought together people from all quarters of the department, including faculty, nurses, residents, accountants, administrative assistants, and many others who are responsible for the department’s day-to-day upkeep.

The day included a communication workshop, breakout groups to improve the challenges facing the department, resident and faculty activities. As seen in the photo above, our residents had a fun time doing interactive, team-building activities.

Dr. Sarah Woods, Jessica Chu, and Katie Bridges, was the recipient of a NAPCRG Pearl Award, an honor given to the top research studies with the biggest impact on clinical practice.

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Dr. F. David Schneider (right) and State Senator Royce West

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New Clerkship Site in Jacksboro, Texas

In the spring of 2019, we expanded our clerkship sites to include Jacksboro, Texas. Dr. Shivum Agarwal, a former UTSW medical student, has joined Faith Community Hospital System (FCHS) and will take one student monthly to do full-spectrum family medicine practices. The FCHS consists of three hospitals serving the rural population of Jacksboro.

Dr. Agarwal performed his residency at John Peter Smith Hospital and then completed a fourth-year training program in advanced rural-global medicine & surgery. He plans on continuing with obstetrics, endoscopies, emergency, and primary care at FCHS and introducing the breadth of family medicine to the students with whom he works.

New Partnership with Texas Tech School of Pharmacy

The Department of Family and Community Medicine will be partnering with the Texas Tech School of Pharmacy to have a pharmacist assist at the Texas Health Resources Clinic. Dr. Ashley Higbea, a faculty member of the Texas Tech School of Pharmacy, will assist family medicine physicians with medication management. Once the new inpatient service at Texas Health Resources opens, Dr. Higbea will also round with the inpatient team on occasion to assist.

Transgender Health and Lab Values

Transgender health is an emerging topic within family medicine, and research on the unique factors facing this population is limited.

Many people who identify as transgender desire to transition to their self-identified gender through the use of hormonal therapies. Altering the hormonal profile of a patient brings about secondary sexual characteristics unique to each sex. While this process is common, it is still unknown how hormonal therapies alter common laboratory values, which are important to family medicine physicians caring for this population.

In collaboration with Dr. Jeffrey SoRelle from the Department of Pathology, three family medicine faculty, Dr. Philip Day, PA Patti Pagels, and Dr. Nora Gimpel, recently co-authored an article in Clinical Chemistry titled “Impact of Hormone Therapy on Laboratory Values in Transgender Patients,” addressing alterations in laboratory values. Hormonal therapies that administered estradiol and testosterone altered several lab values normally observed by a primary care physician.

Hormonal effects on the body are far-reaching. Understanding how hormones impact laboratory values will help family physicians identify abnormalities that are not consistent with use of this type of therapy, which will lead to better diagnostics and better care. The UTSW Department of Family and Community Medicine remains involved in new research to improve the care of transgender individuals.

Sincerely,

F. David Schneider, M.D.
Perry E. Gross, M.D., Distinguished Chair in Family Medicine; Professor and Chair, Department of Family and Community Medicine; david.schneider@utsouthwestern.edu

Dr. Shivum Agarwal, M.D.

New Developments in Clinical Services

This past year saw continued growth in the clinical services offered by our department, and 2019 promises to build on our existing services and include some significant new developments.

Currently, the department provides primary care services to approximately 18,000 individuals via our four primary care clinics. Two of these are residency training sites and two are faculty run. All four are sites at which UT Southwestern medical students do their ambulatory rotations and participate in institutional and departmental research.

July of 2019 will see the start of our Family Medicine Inpatient (Hospital) Service at Texas Health Presbyterian Dallas. This service will support our family medicine clinic also located at the Texas Health campus. In 2019 we also anticipate opening a new family medicine clinic in Frisco, Texas, at a site currently under development.

These two additions will not only offer more locations for our patients to be seen but also continue to enrich the experience for our medical students and residents.

departments:

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

Family and Community Medicine

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Family and Community Medicine at NAPCRG

The North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) is an interdisciplinary professional organization that encourages research in primary care settings.

NAPCRG’s 46th Annual Meeting in Chicago in November of 2018 was a gathering of researchers and clinicians in primary care to present and discuss the latest research in primary care. UTSW’s Family and Community Medicine Department was well-represented at this meeting, with multiple members of the faculty, residency program, and medical school in attendance making the following contributions:

- 28 posters presentations
- 7 oral presentations

One oral presentation, Pediatric HTSS: A Short Screening Tool to Detect Childhood Physical and Sexual Abuse in Clinical Settings, presented by Dr. Amer Shaki, Dr. Philip Day, and Departmental Research

The Department of Family and Community Medicine continues to grow its volume of research. Its number of published peer-reviewed articles quadrupled in the past year. The department has four main research areas: health disparities, behavioral health and trauma, clinical care, and education research.

Our current funding in the department includes the following:

- Dr. Neelima Kale, Dr. Philip Day, Dr. David Schneider, and Dr. Zachary Simoni recently received a grant from the Texas Academy of Family Physicians (TAFP) Foundation for their project exploring patient and physician trust in one another and how this relationship influences opioid use.
- Dr. Elizabeth Arnold, Dr. Kale, Dr. Day, and Dr. Schneider were recently awarded a grant from the David W. Crowley Foundation focused on HPV and cervical cancer among rural women in Texas. The project involves collaborations with multiple partners in rural parts of the state to identify women who do not have access to preventive health services.
- Dr. Arnold, the department’s new Vice Chair for Research, is an investigator with the CARES Project at UCLA, part of the Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS funded by the NIH. She leads a project focused on helping HIV-positive youth ages 12-24 with established infection achieve viral suppression through an innovative behavioral intervention model.

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