Digest of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (Spring 2006)

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

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Dear Alumni and Friends,

For most physicians today, “being a doctor” is complicated; the role demands close attention and conscientious management on many levels—self, organizational, practice. Health care reform, the rapid growth of managed care and the resultant consolidation of health care providers have transformed medicine from purely a profession to a profession also managed as a business. The cover story of this issue of *Digest* highlights one ever-present set of challenges—how physicians can obtain/maintain financially viable practices while safeguarding quality care and the doctor-patient relationship that are critical to the integrity of the health care system as well as to the heart of the osteopathic medical practice.

This issue also demonstrates some of the research work being conducted in our PCOM Healthcare Centers. Eugene Mochan, PhD, DO ’77, associate dean for primary care/continuing education, and professor of family medicine, biochemistry and molecular biology, along with faculty and student collaborators, has been confronting the obesity crisis. Theirs has been a study that assesses the effectiveness of nutritional, exercise and behavioral interventions in African Americans struggling with this chronic disease.

As you read about many of the efforts of the PCOM community to carry out the instructional, research and service missions of the College, I thank you for your continued interest in and support of our wonderful institution.

Best wishes to you and your families for a happy and healthy summer.

With warmest regards,

Matthew Schure, PhD
President and Chief Executive Officer
THE BUSINESS OF BEING A DOCTOR

Nationwide, more physicians are finding it necessary to add business fundamentals to their core of medical knowledge. In today’s complex system of health care, they need to reclaim their voices among managed care firms, professional administrators, and accountants. They need to know how to maximize practice efficiencies and income while ensuring that the quality of patient care is not sacrificed.

A WEIGHTY ISSUE: OBESITY STUDY AT PCOM HEALTHCARE CENTER

At PCOM Healthcare Center – Cambria Division, Eugene Mochan, PhD, DO ’77, associate dean for primary care/continuing education, and professor of family medicine, biochemistry and molecular biology, and collaborators assess the effectiveness of nutritional, exercise and behavioral interventions in African Americans struggling with obesity. For PCOM students working with Dr. Mochan, the study involves them in live patient care.
GEORGIA CAMPUS RECEIVES ACCREDITATION

After a successful team visit from the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation in February, the Commission approved an extension of the PCOM Osteopathic Medicine Program accreditation to Georgia Campus – PCOM in April.

In other GA-PCOM news, the campus is continuing its growth with the addition of a biomedical sciences program that will enroll its first class of 40 students this fall. The program will mirror the one offered at the Philadelphia campus with the addition of a non-thesis track. “The biomedical program is important to the growth of PCOM and it’s an important opportunity for the students in the area,” explains Gary Watson, PhD, director, basic sciences. “Biotechnology is growing in this region,” he continues, “and it’s important that we offer students an additional training option.” The program will offer a one-year certificate program and a master’s degree with four concentrations: thesis research, organizational development and leadership, forensic biology and non-thesis. “The non-thesis track may be especially attractive to high school science teachers who want to earn their master’s degree, but who may not have a strong interest in a research career,” Dr. Watson explains.

In addition to the new program, there are new facilities. Three labs, 12 offices, a conference room, a reception area and a bookstore were recently completed.

GEISINGER MEDICAL CENTER NAMED AS A PCOM CORE CLINICAL CAMPUS

An agreement between PCOM and Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, PA, will make space available for six PCOM third-year students to complete all their core clerkships at the medical center. “Spending their entire third year at Geisinger will provide these students with a great sense of continuity within the Geisinger community,” explains Kenneth J. Veit, DO ’76, MBA, senior vice president for academic affairs and dean. “Geisinger is a premier tertiary care center that offers all the clerkship opportunities our students need. The hope is that some of the students will stay at Geisinger for their internship, residency and practice, making this program a pipeline for PCOM students to become Geisinger physicians.” In addition to this new program, which began in June, Geisinger continues to be a clerkship option for students in all disciplines.
PA PROGRAM REACCRREDITED

The Physician Assistant Studies program received a full, five-year reaccreditation from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). This accreditation results from a comprehensive self-study developed by the department and a site visit by ARC-PA, conducted in October 2005. The five-year accreditation signifies that PCOM’s Physician Assistant Studies program meets high standards in all areas, including faculty and administration, curriculum and instruction, educational outcomes evaluation, student life and educational resources.

OMM FELLOWS NAMED

Third-year medical students Danielle Campbell (DO ’08), Kristofer Feeho (DO ’08), Michael Lowney (DO ’08), and Kelli Young (DO ’08) have been accepted into PCOM’s OMM fellowship program. As OMM fellows, they will attend PCOM for an additional 12 months over a three-year period, serving in the College’s OMM department. The four cite the opportunity to promote and teach OMM as well as conduct OMM research and practice OMM as some of the key reasons for their participation in the fellowship program.

“Becoming an undergraduate fellow affords me the opportunity to further my education while promoting the practice of OMM to my colleagues,” notes Ms. Young. “This fellowship will also allow me to participate in osteopathic clinical research, which may lay the groundwork for future advancements in our profession.” Mr. Lowney points out that “OMM is the foundation of our profession. This fellowship will allow me to have a better grasp on OMM techniques as well as provide an outlet to teach my peers what I have learned.”

“I think of the fellowship as an opportunity to further my education and hone my skills as an osteopathic physician,” explains Mr. Feeho. “The fellowship also affords me the chance to apply osteopathic treatment modalities across many different disease presentations.” Ms. Campbell concludes that “My goal is to develop my OMT skills so I can offer as much to my patients as possible. I likewise want to share the knowledge that has been given to me with other future osteopathic physicians.”

An annual College provision sustains the fellowship program with assistance from the C. Paul Snyder, DO ’10, and the Frieda O. Vickers, DO ’39, and Major James G. Vickers endowment funds. Additional support comes from special gifts earmarked for OMM.

PCOM AND WACHOVIA TEAM UP TO EMPOWER YOUTH

PCOM Healthcare Center - Lancaster Avenue Division received a $50,000 grant from the Wachovia Foundation to provide complete physicals, including psychological referrals, to youth participating in the Youth Empowerment Centers. The goal of the Youth Empowerment Centers is to ensure that all of Philadelphia’s youth have the tools and opportunities they need to succeed in the workforce. Each center enrolls approximately 250 youth who receive GED education, job counseling and job placement assistance.

The ultimate goal is for the youth to secure employment. “Once the youth have a successful job interview,” explains Mr. Dow, “they often need a pre-employment physical. Most do not have primary care physicians, nor are they insured or financially able to pay for a physical, and that’s where Wachovia’s assistance to PCOM comes in.”

With financial support from Wachovia, Healthcare Center Director Izola David, DO ’85, and the other physicians at the Lancaster Avenue Division Healthcare Center will provide physicals, including any necessary lab work, over the course of the year to approximately 145 youths from the Empowerment Centers.

LEGISLATORS ON CAMPUS

State and city legislators visited PCOM to hear about the College’s accomplishments and goals and to discuss how they can help PCOM achieve its mission.

Philadelphia City Councilman Michael Nutter (right) chats with Kenneth J. Veit, DO ’76, MBA, senior vice president for academic affairs and dean.
Rani Bright, MBBS, assistant professor, pathology, microbiology & immunology and forensic medicine, gave a presentation on avian influenza at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and at Heart of Lancaster Hospital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Ray Christner, PhD, assistant professor, director, EdS/certification, school psychology; Rosemary Mennuti, EdD, professor, director, school psychology; Lydia Brill (PsyD); and Ashley Kase, MS '05 (EdS '08) presented “Prevention and Intervention with Adolescents: Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches” at the Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania’s annual spring conference.

Paul Evans, DO ’79, vice dean, GA-PCOM, had his peer-reviewed questions and explanations on lumbar and cervical radiculopathy published in The Core Content Review of Family Medicine. He also presented “Musculoskeletal Manipulation Workshop for Neck and Back Pain” at Case Western Reserve University, School of Medicine.

Katherine Galluzzi, DO, chair, geriatrics, received the Barbara Bell, MD Award for distinguished service in geriatrics from the Eastern Pennsylvania Geriatrics Society. She has also been recertified in family practice and osteopathic manipulative treatment by the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians.

Mindy George-Weinstein, PhD, professor, anatomy, received a grant from the National Institutes of Health for approximately $1.4 million. This five-year grant will allow Dr. George-Weinstein and her collaborator at Lankenau Institute for Medical Research to study the regulation of skeletal muscle development. Dr. George-Weinstein has had continuous NIH funding for approximately 15 years.

The annual Bridging the Gaps (BTG) symposium held in January showcased the 19 BTG projects in which PCOM DO students participated over the summer. BTG allows teams of students to provide service while learning to consider the impact of socio-economic factors and the health care system on a community’s health. Working in direct service at community-based programs such as child or elder care, a women’s transitional residence or a men’s HIV support program, the students spend seven weeks at their assigned community organization.

While the PCOM students teach community responsibility, nutrition or proper oral health, they learn about different cultures and, perhaps more importantly, about themselves. Andrea Papa (DO ’08) spent the summer at Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc., providing HIV education and prevention activities through outreach to the North Philadelphia community. She admits she was apprehensive at the beginning of the program. Knowing little of North Philadelphia other than the negative images shown on the evening news, she was pleasantly surprised by the people she encountered: “The people were kind, helpful and considerate; they wanted to make a difference in the community just as I did. This experience has made me grow both emotionally and socially. I will take what I learned during my BTG experience and use it to help me become a caring and socially aware physician.”

Tessy Thomas (DO ’08) also worked in North Philadelphia with children at Deliverance Evangelistic Church. “I am not sure if I made a difference in the lives of the children around me,” she says, “but I am 100 percent sure that the children made a difference in me.” It is hard to believe she did not make an imprint on their lives, especially when she relates the following story. “During a coloring session one day, I went from table to table helping the children, and I asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up. Three of the girls told me they wanted to be mommies. I told them that being a mommy was a wonderful thing, but I pressed further and asked them about career ideas. I asked them if they knew they could be a mommy and be something else, like a teacher or a doctor or a lawyer. I explained that they had options—so many opportunities of which they are not even aware. One girl’s face lit up and said she wanted to be a mommy and a doctor. I learned that I cannot erase the imprints that have been made on the children by their environment; all I could do was encourage them to see the world through a different pair of eyes.”

BTG expands the world for both the students who serve and for those who are served.
Sacrifice 2 Feed

PCOM faculty went head to head with the women DO student body in a charity basketball game to collect food for those affected by Hurricane Katrina. It was a close game, with the faculty eking out a four-point win. But the real winners are the recipients of the many boxes of food that were donated as admission to this very exciting game.

Top: Robert Fogel, DO ’58, professor and chair, pathology, microbiology, immunology, plays tough defense. Below: The true goal of the game was to collect food for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Student Accomplishments

Jay Bhatt has been elected national president of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), the nation’s largest independent medical student organization. Bhatt will be the first osteopathic student to serve as president in the association’s 56-year history.

Nathan Jean (DO ’08) and Brent Schoenfeldt (DO ’08) received a student research award for most original project—“IsoTOUCH Pressure Monitoring System: Establishing Protocols for Gathering Baseline Data Needed for Teaching and Research” and “High Touch for High Touch in the Cranial Region: A Preliminary Report” at the 2006 American Academy of Osteopathy Convention. Michael L. Kuchera, DO, professor and director, OMM research, was the project’s primary author.

Mary Sharp Ross (EdS ’07) presented “The Limited English Proficiency/Special Education Students: What School Psychologists Need to Know” at the Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania’s annual spring conference.

Barbara A. Golden, PsyD, assistant professor, director of clinical services, psychology, and Meredith Mitstifer, MS (PsyD), presented “Masking the Emotional Response: Drugs, Alcohol and Violence” at the CJ Foundation for SIDS 2006 National Conference. In addition, Dr. Golden presented “The Multidisciplinary Treatment of Patients with Chronic Pain” to Social Work p.r.n.

James B. Hale, PhD, associate professor, school psychology, received a $25,000 grant for his Student Neuropsychological Profiles for Innovative Teaching (SNAP-FIT) project. The grant provides graduate assistant support for four PCOM school psychology students to provide individualized assessments for school children with special needs in Philadelphia, offering children and their families academic and behavioral services.

George McCloskey, PhD, associate professor, co-director, school psychology research, was filmed for a segment on the use and interpretation of error analysis for a one-hour training video on the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, second edition.

Fred Rotgers, PsyD, associate professor, clinical psychology, co-edited Antisocial Personality Disorder: A Practitioner’s Guide to Comparative Treatments and co-authored Treating Alcohol Problems with Beth Arburn Davis, PsyD ’04. He also co-authored a chapter with Laura Sharp (PsyD), “Alcohol Use Disorders,” which was published in the book Improving Outcomes and Preventing Relapse in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Ruth Thornton, PhD, professor and chair, department of biochemistry/molecular biology, received honorable mention in AAA World’s annual photo contest for her image of the Sun Ra mosaic in Vernon Park, Germantown, Pennsylvania.

Kudos

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SNMA RECOGNIZES LEONARD JOHNSON, DO ’64

When the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) held its 16th annual recognition reception this spring, it took a look back and chose Leonard W. Johnson, DO ’64, as its Meta Christy Award recipient. Dr. Johnson received this award in 1990, the first year it was created. “We felt that Dr. Johnson deserved to be recognized again,” says Masheika Jackson (DO/MBA ’08), SNMA co-president. “Dr. Johnson continually contributes to SNMA and PCOM’s minority recruitment efforts.” SNMA co-president Anthony Cooper (DO ’08) concurs, “He goes out of his way to approach minority students, to ask how they’re doing, and to help them however he can.” The College, too, recognized his commitment to mentoring students when it awarded Dr. Johnson the O.J. Snyder Memorial Medal in 2003. Dr. Johnson’s commitment to helping minority students goes beyond his work at PCOM. From taking a bus full of high school students to visit colleges to organizing a neighborhood health fair every year, Dr. Johnson is always willing to take the lead when necessary or lend a hand when asked. In addition to his work as founder, medical director and chief executive officer of Spruce Medical Center, Dr. Johnson still finds time to make house calls and contribute to Florida A&M University, where he earned his undergraduate degree. Dr. Johnson is also an active member of Bright Hope Non-profit Corporation; he serves on the board of directors of the National Adoption Committee and is founder and chairman of Spruce Adolescent Counseling and Education Center, Inc.

When asked why he is so committed to PCOM, he responds, “PCOM was very good to me. When I was a student, I was one of four African Americans in my class. Tom Rowland [PCOM’s fourth president] went out of his way for us. He called me up one day and suggested I apply for a National Defense Student Loan. President Rowland’s attentiveness made a huge difference for me, and I never forgot that. I’m always willing to help others; I want to see our students and PCOM move forward.”

SNMA is a national organization that was established to help under-represented minority students enter and succeed in medical school and return to the community to serve minority and indigent populations. The Meta Christy Award was established in honor of PCOM’s first minority graduate, Dr. Meta Christy, a member of the class of 1921. The award is given in recognition of the exemplary practice of osteopathic medicine, service to the community and inspiration to future DOs.

DO DAY ON THE HILL

More than 160 DO students from PCOM and 34 students from GA-PCOM were among the over 800 DOs and DO students from across the country who met with congressional representatives during this spring’s DO Day on the Hill. Students, state representatives and senators discussed pending legislation that impacts physicians, medical students and patient care. Sponsored by the American Osteopathic Association, the day focused on three important issues: residency training in non-hospital settings, correction of the sustainable growth rate formula for Medicare physician payments and enactment of meaningful medical liability reforms. The trip to the nation’s Capitol was made possible by support from the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association, PCOM’s Student Government Association and PCOM’s Alumni Association.
PHONATHON RAISES $177,600 FOR DO STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The annual PCOM student phonathon was held March 5-12. During the week, 44 PCOM students called more than 4,000 alumni to update their records and request a gift to the DO Student Scholarship Fund. Half of the funds raised are placed in a separate trust fund from which five percent is given out in financial aid; the other half is available for financial aid immediately. Last year, the DO Scholarship Fund gave a total of $155,000 in financial aid to DO students. Those alumni who were not reached have a chance to support the scholarship during the mail campaign now through June 30.

JOHN BENDER, DO '80, SUPPORTS NICHOLAS SCHOLARSHIP

Dr. Bender, who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation, practices in Fort Collins, Colorado. He made a gift of $10,800 to the Nicholas S. Nicholas, DO Memorial Scholarship. The Nicholas Scholarship was established in memory of the former chair of the OMM Department. The scholarship is given to a student who demonstrates high achievement in osteopathic manipulative medicine as well as excellent patient communication skills.

MILLION DOLLAR CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

Alumni, trustees, faculty, staff and friends have contributed $447,530 as of March 1, 2006, toward the fiscal year goal of $850,000, which must be reached by June 30, 2006. PCOM President Matthew Schure noted that this amount is 24 percent more than the College raised last year in the same period: “Our alumni understand that these funds are supporting critical needs of PCOM and are stepping up to meet the challenge.” Campaign funds will be used to provide flexible funding to enhance student services and research and to sustain new clinical faculty positions. Next year’s goal is $1 million.

LOG SCHOLARSHIP

At a special meeting on April 6, 2006, alumni of the Caduceus Chapter of Lambda Omicron Gamma Medical Society (LOG) contributed $82,000 to endow a new scholarship at the College. The group hopes to increase the gift to $100,000; one of the members contributed $3,000 anonymously to raise the total to $85,000. Founded as the Blue and White Society in 1926, LOG was a national medical fraternity formally established by students who, as Jews, were not permitted to join the existing medical society. LOG also welcomed women and minority students as members. The local chapter sold its house a few years ago and has now contributed the proceeds as well as other remaining chapter funds to establish the scholarship. PCOM recognizes and thanks LOG leadership for this significant new scholarship.
THE BUSINESS OF
Physicians who practice medicine these days need more than a stethoscope and a medical school diploma to succeed. Somewhere along the line, either through formal training or practical experience, they need to acquire an unprecedented level of business savvy to operate profitably in the complex system of health care that exists in the United States today.
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) projects that the nation will spend more than $2.1 trillion this year on health care. That’s more than 15 percent of all the money in the country. And that number is expected to double by 2015. But it has become increasingly challenging for physicians to get their fair share of the reimbursement pie. As Medicare and other insurers look for ways to cut costs, they continue to reduce the level of reimbursement to physicians. With advancements in medical technology, the system increasingly pits hospitals against private practices in a competition for patients who need outpatient procedures. At the same time, physicians are facing increased costs and overhead in their practices. What’s a good doctor to do?

It’s vital for physicians to have a firm grasp of business principles as well as a thorough understanding of how the health care reimbursement system works, according to Kenneth J. Veit, DO ’76, MBA, senior vice president for academic affairs and dean. “Physicians need to know how to maximize practice efficiencies and income while ensuring that their patients receive the best quality care,” says Dr. Veit.

A growing number of PCOM students are pursuing a joint DO/MBA degree for this purpose. Many alumni with successful practices have learned through practical experience over the years. Here is how some of them are meeting today’s business challenges.

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

When J. Steven Blake, DO ’89, set out to start a private gastroenterology practice in 1997, his father, a retired small business owner, advised, “Read everything you can about running a business and set up your practice with as little money as possible.”

Heeding that advice, he started out by renting an 8’x10’ exam room from another physician. He read business books and periodicals voraciously. He developed a business plan. And he marketed his practice by driving around the city, knocking on the doors of primary care physicians and asking for referrals. It was slow going at first.

“Most physicians said they already had a GI specialist to whom they referred their patients,” Dr. Blake recalls. Refusing to take no for an answer, he asked, “If you send 10 patients to a GI specialist each week, would you consider sending just one to me? Then, if you’re happy with the care I provide, perhaps you’ll consider sending me more.”

Over time, his marketing approach and business plan worked. His practice in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia grew, and today Dr. Blake has a solid base of 50 referring physicians and 12,000 patient charts on file. His full-time staff of 14 includes four gastroenterologists, an internal medicine specialist and a family physician. Last year, he moved his practice to a brand new medical building that
also houses an independent ambulatory endoscopy center. The move to this 6,500-square-foot state-of-the-art facility, which his practice owns, has enabled Dr. Blake to meet a number of current business challenges.

“Medicare is the basis of most changes and challenges that physicians face,” notes Dr. Blake. “Like all physicians, we are facing a decrease in reimbursement for professional fees. Since 2000, Medicare has pushed gastroenterologists to perform endoscopic procedures either in private offices or ambulatory endoscopy centers by drastically reducing reimbursement for any procedures done in the hospital. Many physicians, myself included, responded by establishing endoscopy suites in their private offices. However, now we are anticipating a mandate from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that will require all endoscopic procedures to be done either in the hospital or in a freestanding endoscopy surgical center. As a result, gastroenterologists will be forced either to accept lower fees or find a center where they can perform procedures. This led me to build my own center.”

Dr. Blake adds that he sought investors for his medical facility but could find no takers because of the malpractice insurance crisis. “Potential investors were afraid that we might leave Pennsylvania and they’d be stuck with a building they couldn’t lease,” he explains. “This is just another example of the business challenges we face.”

A comparable experience is that of Robert Finkelstein, DO ‘90, who two years ago, opened a practice in dermatology in Sarasota, Florida, but only after conducting his own extensive market research. “I called hospitals and physicians in the area and asked a lot of questions to determine the level of need for dermatologists,” relates Dr. Finkelstein. Convinced by their answers that the area could support another practice, he enlisted the help of an accountant who specializes in medical startups and a banker, then carefully selected a location for his office. For the first year, he pounded the pavements one day a month, calling on primary care physicians to ask for referrals. He also ran ads in local periodicals and on local cable TV channels. His marketing efforts proved effective and his practice continues to grow. His five-year plan includes adding a second practitioner and opening a second office.

“The easier thing is to practice medicine,” reflects Dr. Finkelstein. “The business side is a far greater challenge. For me, dealing with insurance companies and staying on top of accounts receivable and payroll is the tough part. Finding quality people to help manage that is essential, and once you’ve found them, you have to avoid the extremes of micromanaging or being too relaxed. It’s a constant effort.”

Yet, it is one that Dr. Finkelstein considers well worth it. “It’s really rewarding to cultivate a practice and see it flourish,” he says. “Private practice isn’t for everyone, but if you’re organized, highly motivated, a good listener and a good manager, you can succeed. It’s very satisfying to mold the practice according to your own personal values without compromising quality of care.”

Q

uality of care was the primary factor that motivated Larissa Dominy, DO ’93, to open a private pediatric practice in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, two years ago. “I had practiced in two large groups where each pediatrician was expected to see such large volumes of patients that I felt quality of care was compromised,” relates Dr. Dominy, who is also a clinical assistant professor of pediatrics and pediatric clerkship director at PCOM. Before opening her practice, she enlisted the aid of her business-savvy husband to conduct a thorough market research analysis of the area. Together, they determined that, although five pediatric practices already existed, the growing population could support additional pediatricians. So Dr. Dominy took a “leap of faith” and launched Panda Bear Pediatrics. She established a referral base by meeting with the senior physician in each of the OB/GYN practices in the area and, for additional exposure, arranged to speak to birthing classes at the area hospital about the care of newborns.

As her Collegeville practice experienced steady growth of about 30 patients per month, Dr. Dominy and her husband began to eye another highly promising business opportunity in Gilbertsville, a rural town about a half-hour drive away that had no pediatricians. “Growth in that area was and is tremendous,” she relates. “Housing developments are popping up everywhere on former farmland. I knew that if I didn’t seize the opportunity to start the town’s first pediatric practice, someone else would. I decided to go for it despite the fact that I was a solo practitioner and would really have to stretch to cover two offices.” Dr. Dominy worked half of each day in each office, and her gamble paid off. Just one year after she opened the Gilbertsville
office, her practice had grown enough to enable her to bring on a partner. “We have no support staff so we do everything ourselves, from weighing and measuring babies to giving shots to full office exams,” says Dr. Dominy. “The parents love the personal care that their children receive from us and we love giving it. We are much happier doctors. This is the quality of care I dreamed about providing when I opened my practice.”

Although Dr. Dominy sees fewer patients per hour than she did in a large group practice, she meets the reimbursement challenge by accepting insurance only from private payers and large HMO groups, by carefully coding each claim, and by relentlessly fighting rejected claims. Still, she has frustrations. “I have lost money on some vaccinations due to inconsistent reimbursement rates for the administration fee,” she relates. “The insurance companies cover the cost of the vaccination itself, but many do not adequately cover the cost of supplies needed to give pediatric vaccines or my time as a physician. The only way this and other inequities will change is if pediatricians rally around the issue as a group and fight. I’m all for it.”

HOSPITAL CONNECTIONS

Whether you are in private practice or a salaried physician, there is no way to avoid the business of medicine, according to Carol Henwood, DO ’83. She should know. In 1985, she joined a solo practitioner in private practice in the Pottstown, Pennsylvania area. Together, they built the practice into a 24-provider primary care group of family practitioners and pediatricians during a period of enormous growth in the surrounding community. Dr. Henwood served as chair and supervising physician.

In 1994, the practice became affiliated with a local community hospital and expanded to four office locations. Then in 2003, after the hospital and group practice were sold to a for-profit hospital system, Dr. Henwood decided to return to private practice. Currently, she operates her solo practice as an independent profit center of a primary care and internal medicine group.

Dr. Henwood notes that salaried physicians can pay no less attention than their private practice counterparts to business productivity. “Most salaried physicians are paid a salary with a productivity clause,” she notes. “So they must learn to provide quality care to an adequate number of patients so their employer can pay the bills.”

According to Dr. Henwood, physicians have many resources to tap for assistance with the business of medicine, including professional organizations such as the Medical Group Management Association and the American Association of Managed Care Physicians. Young osteopathic physicians will find an excellent mentoring network in the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association (POMA) and the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP). “These organizations work hard to help members with business issues ranging from appropriate salary structure and staff to physician ratios for your practice to reviewing capitation and quality assurance reports,” she says. The last is especially important in light of the growing trend toward pay for performance.

“With pay for performance, insurance companies pay physicians according to how well they meet or exceed designated quality standards for patient care,” explains Dr. Henwood. “Therefore, it’s very important that physicians document the care they provide very carefully and make sure the insurance company’s quality assurance reports accurately reflect that documentation so they are paid appropriately.”

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—Carol Henwood, DO ’83
For this and other purposes, Dr. Henwood is a strong proponent of electronic medical records (EMR). “Electronic medical records are moving the business of medicine forward,” she states. “With EMR, physicians can better control their reimbursements through more accurate and thorough documentation in less time. EMR also helps to ensure the highest quality standards of care—and, as a result, higher physician pay—by helping physicians to manage patients more effectively with features such as built-in physician reminders for routine health maintenance.”

Integrated electronic medical records, billing and practice management systems can enable private practice physicians to increase their income by as much as $80,000 annually, according to Anthony Alfieri, DO ’85, an interventional cardiologist in Wilmington, Delaware, who is also the founder of Blue Ox Medical Solutions, a provider of such services. “Some malpractice insurance companies will reduce premiums by as much as 15 percent for physicians who use electronic systems because they have evidence that these systems enable physicians to provide a higher level of patient care,” Dr. Alfieri notes. “EMR systems also enhance the physician’s ability to coordinate patient care among various providers and specialists.”

The move to electronic medical records and practice management software was a unanimous decision for Salvatore Moscatello, DO ’85, and his three partners, who operate a busy gastroenterology practice in North Charleston, South Carolina. He says the $135,000 investment was well worth it. “With nearly 30,000 active patient charts, our staff was constantly chasing charts all over the office,” says Dr. Moscatello. “The EMR has greatly improved our efficiency, freed up a former file room for much-needed clinical space and is helping to reduce overhead costs.”

Technology advancements are also helping to drive the trend to outpatient care facilities such as ambulatory surgical and endoscopy centers. Dr. Moscatello’s practice performs 420 endoscopic procedures each month in their practice-owned facility, which they designed and built from the ground up in 2003. “It took an enormous investment of time, energy and money,” he says, “but my partners and I are committed to long-term investment and growth in our practice.”

As a result of that growth, Dr. Moscatello and his colleagues are adding two more partners to the practice this year, a process that will also require an investment. “A business partnership is like a marriage,” observes Dr. Moscatello. “You have to be sure that you share the same philosophy of patient care, the same work ethic and the same ability to take risks that will advance the practice. So we spend a lot of time interviewing and performing due diligence to make sure we are hiring the right candidates who will enable us to build on our success.”

“The most important business skills are communication and getting along with people,” he continues. “You must communicate well with your patients, your partners and your staff.”

“You have to learn to delegate to your support staff,” says Kellie Smaldore, DO ’88, who along with her husband Stephen Smaldore, DO ’88, owns a private primary care practice with five practitioners and 25,000 patients in Bel Air, Maryland. “It’s important to recognize that you can’t do everything yourself. That’s why it’s essential to hire good people that you can rely on for critical functions like billing and coding.

“Negotiating skills are also essential, especially for dealing successfully with insurance companies,” adds Dr. Smaldore. “We’ve learned a lot about running a practice over the years by attending seminars and joining organizations like the Medical Group Management Association and our state medical society.”
THE MBA PATH

Though many physicians learn the business of being a doctor through practical experience, mentoring and networking, many are pursuing advanced business degrees such as the joint DO/MBA program offered by PCOM. Paul Ufberg, DO/MBA ’02, who is currently chief pediatric resident at Miami Children’s Hospital in Florida, says that the joint degree program helped him define his long-term career goal—to be a hospital chief of staff. “The joint degree has allowed me to see medicine in a different light,” says Dr. Ufberg who plans to pursue a fellowship in pediatric gastroenterology. “I believe that every physician needs to be versed in medical-economic language and concepts that affect our daily lives. We practice in an environment where insurance companies—not the providers—are ruling the day. We each must strive to become leaders in the field and direct the future of the profession. Business knowledge will help us achieve that.”

Joshua Coren, DO/MBA ’02, aspires to become chair or dean of a medical school. Currently, he is a clinical assistant professor of family medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey School of Osteopathic Medicine. He also serves as medical director of the University Doctors Family Medicine Hainesport Office. “Through the DO/MBA program, I learned how to make tangible the services our physicians provide,” says Dr. Coren. “If you don’t understand the costs involved in running the office and you don’t know how to navigate the reimbursement system, you may find yourself in a situation where your practice can’t grow. Understanding the financial and business intricacies can help you be a better clinician as well as a better business manager. For example, you will find that you are better equipped to help your patients overcome the limitations of their insurance plans.”

When John DiMuro, DO/MBA ’00, entered the joint degree program, he already had business experience as an investment banker. While he wanted to shift gears and become a physician, he also wanted to continue to build on his business expertise. Now an anesthesiologist, he also serves as a practice administrator in an interventional pain medicine practice near Denver, Colorado. “There isn’t a doctor in practice who doesn’t wonder, ‘How can I maximize my income potential?’” says Dr. DiMuro, whose practice is owned by a publicly traded company. “Doctors are confronted with business decisions ranging from major capital expenditures for equipment and advertising to whether to buy or lease an X-ray machine. Understanding how to assess the risk and rewards involved will help you make the most financially sound decisions.”

Nicole Heath Sirchio, DO/MBA ’02, hopes to use her degree to pursue a position of leadership where she can advocate for improvements in physician reimbursement. Currently a physician with a family practice in Bensalem, Pennsylvania, Dr. Sirchio observes, “Many doctors have become too complacent about accepting what the insurance companies pay out. If we want to change the system, we have to fight. We must document and submit claims for the care we provide even when we know the insurance won’t reimburse for it. That’s the only way they’ll see how often we’re providing that service and ultimately, that will help to convince them that they need to pay for it.” Politically active with the ACOFP and POMA, Dr. Sirchio says, “I am determined to make a difference.”

FUTURE CHALLENGES

“As physicians, our business challenge of the future will be to better define our intrinsic worth to the outcome of patient care,” says Dr. Veit. “We’ve done this very poorly until now. If we want to be considered valuable in the system and receive reimbursement reflecting that, we must do a better job of justifying our value. The United States already spends more on health care than any other country, and no one has promised to put more dollars into the system. So the challenge is how we can work within the system to provide quality patient care and maintain financially viable practices with the revenue stream we’re given. This is essential if we are to continue to provide the best care to the public, and it’s going to take a lot of leadership and business knowledge at all levels.”
What Eugene Mochan, PhD, DO ’77, associate dean for primary care/continuing education, and professor of family medicine, biochemistry and molecular biology, began as a pilot study about three years ago has led to an ongoing project utilizing one of PCOM’s greatest resources—its Healthcare Centers. Dr. Mochan and collaborators are studying the effectiveness of nutritional, exercise and behavioral interventions in African Americans (especially women) struggling with obesity. He selected this group because it has one of the highest overweight/obesity rates (about 60 percent) among the American population.

“We’re learning a lot about tackling one of our great medical problems, one that affects so many people that it has become, in essence, our national health crisis,” says Dr. Mochan. “Here at PCOM we are utilizing one of our Healthcare Centers to learn more, to reach out into the community and to educate our students about obesity and the chronic diseases it spawns.”

Dr. Mochan works to involve fourth-year students in the study. Obesity, hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, arthritis, some cancers—there are so many diseases that are related to obesity. “This is fundamental material for fourth-year students that highlights clinical application of American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Clinical Competencies including patient care, medical knowledge, practice-based learning and improvement, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, system-based practice and osteopathic principles and practice,” says Dr. Mochan.
With funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Health as well as private donations, Dr. Mochan conducted the pilot study. He recruited the first participants through churches and through local advertising. In the 10-week study of 141 African American women with obesity, there was about a 5- to 10-percent decrease in weight, accompanied by a reduction in blood pressure, waist size, body mass index and other key measurements. “We saw enough in the pilot study that we wanted to continue the study in the Healthcare Centers,” recalls Dr. Mochan.

“We know that the physicians who relate best to patients get the best results,” says Dr. Rotgers. “So, why not teach students to concentrate on what the patients need and want?”

A motivational interview in the study at PCOM Healthcare Center - Cambria Division might start something like this: “I’d like to talk with you today about diet and exercise. Is that something you’d like to talk about?” The idea is not to tell patients what they should do, but rather to ask them if they have an interest in a subject involving their health and to involve them in learning about which issues might be roadblocks to better health.

Dr. Mochan was so impressed by Dr. Rotgers’ work that he has asked Dr. Rotgers to help students in the DO program with this technique, and he’s also asked that doctor of psychology in clinical psychology (PsyD) students, many of whom have a plethora of clinical experience, become involved with the project. “PsyD students are very good at motivational interviewing; they would certainly provide the teamwork that has become the model for modern health care,” says Dr. Mochan. PsyD students also could help in the Cambria study with behavioral issues that impede progress in efforts to increase physical activity and decrease unhealthy dietary habits.

The study at Cambria began in 2005 with more than 50 women and is growing. “Dr. Bullock and the staff at Cambria have been very supportive; we couldn’t do it without the effort put out by the entire Cambria team,” emphasizes Dr. Mochan.

“Our patients hear about obesity on television, they read about it in magazines; they’re well aware of the problem,” says Dr. Bullock. “This project allows each patient to be treated individually. It allows him/her to hold something tangible in his/her hand, a plan for his/her effort.”

“For students, it’s an easy way to get involved in real live patient care, and with the kinds of problems they’re likely to encounter in medical practice,” adds Dr. Bullock.

Dr. Mochan called Oliver Bullock, DO ’78, director, PCOM Healthcare Center - Cambria Division. Today, the two physician-educators continue to work together to enlarge the study and to teach students why this type of clinical study is so relevant to their future practice. PCOM students are also involved, as are undergraduate research interns from the College of New Jersey, LaSalle, West Chester and Penn State universities. PCOM students and others involved in the project communicate with Laurie DiRosa, MS, administrative coordinator and health educator.

Dr. Mochan also enlisted the expertise of Frederick Rotgers, PsyD, associate professor of psychology. Dr. Rotgers taught medical students at PCOM a technique developed by a psychologist at the University of New Mexico called Motivational Interviewing, a patient-centered method of getting at the heart of a patient’s problem. “The patient is the authority of his or her own life,” explains Dr. Rotgers.

Teaching: The Core of the Study
There’s so much for students to gain from working with the patients in Dr. Mochan’s study that it has encouraged Dr. Mochan to continue to expand his investigation into the effectiveness of exercise, nutritional and behavioral interventions in treating obesity.

“We’d like to continue to take our study further, out to the community,” he says. In order to accomplish that, Dr. Mochan will need future students to give the kind of efforts the project received from students such as Jovan Adams (MS/BioMed (DO ’09); Jim Gengaro, DO ’06; Lauren Muchorski (DO ’09); and Benjamin Bullock, DO ’06.

“The study was perfect for me because it wasn’t just research in a lab. It helped me to become involved with patients very early,” explains Ms. Muchorski, who worked on the project while she was an undergraduate.

“Obesity does interest me; it’s such a tough problem and so many people struggle with it. It needs more of our thinking and efforts.”

Benjamin Bullock, DO ’06, the son of PCOM Healthcare Center – Cambria Division’s director, worked on the project during his fourth-year clerkship. “The study is a kind of self-actualization for patients,” says the younger Dr. Bullock. “There are no medications; there are lifestyle changes to make, but we provide help and support.” He adds, “Motivational Interviewing is consistent with the osteopathic approach of treating the patient as a person, not just treating a disease.”
Class of 1932
George S. Robinson, DO, Sarasota, FL, is doing well at the age of 103. He recently moved into a new residence with his wife, Dorothy. Dr. Robinson remains active and is a member of the Shriners. He remembers his PCO days fondly (he was educated at the Spring Garden campus and later, at 48th and Spruce) and is a loyal alumnus.

Class of 1950
Grace H. Kaiser, DO, Phoenix, AZ, had her third book published. Dr. Kaiser's *Growing Up Farm* recounts personal memories and experiences at Crestview Farm (Doylestown and Chalfont areas) in the 1920s and 1930s.

Class of 1956
Class Agent: Jay H. Joseph, DO 610-237-5060
Stanford P. Sadick, DO, Prescott, AZ, retired as a full colonel from the U.S. Air Force where he served as a surgeon. Dr. Sadick is a member of the adjunct faculty at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and teaches the course Human Factors in Flight.

Class of 1959
Class Agent: Tomulyss Moody, DO 937-298-9151
Michael F. Avallone, Sr., DO, (deceased), Elkins Park, PA, was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Fellow Award by the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians at the ACOFP's 43rd Convention in Grapevine, Texas.

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**Ronald Blanck, DO ’67**

**New Challenges, New Successes**

When Ronald Blanck, DO ’67, retired from the military in 2000, he did so with a staggering array of accomplishments. He was the first DO to become surgeon general of any of the U.S. commissioned services; he was the first assistant dean for student affairs when the Uniformed Services University School of Medicine was established in 1976; and he served as the first DO chief, department of medicine of Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas, the Army's second largest medical teaching center. This is in addition to having served as Army Commander of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, having commanded two U.S. Army Hospitals and having been awarded many military honors including the Bronze Star and Distinguished Service Medals. Now that he has retired as president of University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth (UNTHSC), his list of accomplishments has grown.

Dr. Blanck joined UNTHSC after retiring from his 32-year career in the U.S. Army. UNT Chancellor Lee F. Jackson states, “Dr. Blanck has led the UNT Health Science Center to unprecedented advancement, achievement and growth.” Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Blanck points to doubling student enrollment, tripling research funding, doubling the size of the campus with the construction of the Center for BioHealth and the purchase of additional adjacent property, and getting the contract to provide patient care for the local public hospital. Dr. Blanck makes certain to point out that, “while I may have been president, credit for these accomplishments goes to the people who made the growth happen—the faculty, staff and students.”

Dr. Blanck says he was drawn to academia because, like the military, it has a mission based on values other than profit. “It is,” he says, “about helping people take care of people. I’m driven by the importance of individuals. I communicate it to my associates. I build it into medical education curricula. Most importantly, I try to live my values. If you live what you believe, others see and follow your example.”

Dr. Blanck credits PCOM with providing the broad base of knowledge he needed to pursue the variety of opportunities that have come his way. “People like Al D’Alonzo, Nick Nicholas, Sr., and Morton Greenwald were tremendous teachers,” he recalls. “And the camaraderie and teamwork I experienced at PCOM still influence my interactions with people to this day.”

Dr. Blanck has returned to the East Coast to be closer to his family. He has joined Edward D. Martin, MD, the co-founder and chairman of Martin & Associates, Inc., a consulting firm to the health care industry, government and major health care management and technology companies. The company is now Martin, Blanck and Associates, Inc., where Dr. Blanck, no doubt, will help those with whom he consults rise to their next level of excellence.
Class of 1963
Class Agent: Harvey Spector, DO
215-673-0556, do63@aol.com
Harvey M. Spector, DO, Huntingdon Valley, PA, was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award presented by the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians.

Class of 1966
Class Agent: H. Michael Zal, DO
610-664-7223, dochmz@msn.com
Ronald I. Cowen, DO, Saint Davids, PA, was appointed to the board of directors of Episcopal Hospital in Philadelphia.

Class of 1967
Class Agent: Sherman Leis, DO
610-667-1888, drshermanleis@aol.com
Ronald Blanck, DO, Fort Worth, TX, was elected to a second four-year term as a member-at-large of the National Board of Medical Examiners.

Class of 1969
Class Agents: David A. Bevan, DO
610-642-7637
Harry E. Manser, Jr., DO
609-477-0800, hmanser@aol.com
A. Clifton Cage, DO, Weatherford, TX, was promoted to assistant professor of family medicine at the University of North Texas Health Science Center. Dr. Cage is the director of the Center for Clinical Drug Trials for the family medicine department and serves as medical director for the Health Psychology Preceptor Program.

Class of 1971
Class Agents: Pat A. Lannuti, DO
215-871-6337
John Simelaro, DO
215-871-6337, johns@pcom.edu
Pat A. Lannutti, DO, Drexel Hill, PA, had his article titled “Accessing Heart Complications” featured in the Philadelphia Sunday Tribune.

Class of 1972
Class Agent: Joan M. Watkins, DO
813-613-7755, jwatkins@mail.uach.org
Domenic Pisano, DO, Bryn Mawr, PA, received his board certification from the Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology.

Class of 1973
Class Agent: Herbert J. Rogove, DO
949-764-6058, hroBOVE@hoaghospital.org
Joseph J. Mayberry, DO, Lancaster, PA, was appointed medical director of the Hyperbaric Oxygen and Wound Center, a collaborative partner center between Lancaster General Hospital and Curative Health Services.

Class of 1975
Class Agent: Jon J. O’Brien, SJ, DO
202-965-6912, jo25@georgetown.edu
Jeffry A. Lindenbaum, DO, Ivylead, PA, was re-elected president of the Executive Council of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians.

Class of 1976
Class Agent: R. Michael Gallagher, DO
856-354-1403, gallagrm@umdnj.edu
Ralph E. Aldinger, DO, Belleville, PA, was elected chief of surgery at J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital.

Class of 1977
Class Agent: H. Sprague Taveau, IV, DO
806-212-5750, glorysix1@cox.net
Sue Bailey, DO, Bethesda, MD, was appointed to the board of advisors of the University of Maryland’s Institute of Human Virology (IHV). The IHV combines the disciplines of basic research, epidemiology and clinical research to speed the discovery of diagnostics and therapeutics for a variety of viral and immune disorders.

Class of 1989
Class Agent: Jeffery L. Milsaps, DO
301-964-0209, jeffmilsaps@gmail.com
John Smart, DO, Ellicott Country, NY, was appointed as a member of the American Society of Breast Surgeons. The society is dedicated to elevating the standards and practice of breast care and breast surgery.
Class of 1978
Class Agent: Lorraine M. Disipio, DO 610-623-7230, ldisipio@comcast.net
Oliver C. Bullock, DO, Philadelphia, PA, had his article titled “Blacks Highly Afflicted by Colon Cancer” featured in the Philadelphia Sunday Tribune. Dr. Bullock was recently a guest on the radio show “Neighbor to Neighbor” on station WURD-AM, where he spoke about cancer.
Carlo J. DiMarco, DO, Erie, PA, was appointed professor and regional director of clinical education at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. Steven D. Kamajian, DO, Montrose, CA, was appointed chief of staff at Glendale Medical Center.

Class of 1979
Class Agent: Earl H. Brinser, DO 717-272-7321, ebrinser@hotmail.com
William F. Murphy, DO, Erie, PA, joined Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine - Bradenton as an assistant clinical professor of family medicine. Dr. Murphy was the recipient of the Wendell N. Rollason Award for being a model physician for health care systems in the state of Florida.

Class of 1980
Class Agent: Steven J. Fagan, DO 843-743-7753, navya4@bellsouth.net
Vincent A. Berkley, DO, Phoenix, AZ, was promoted to the rank of admiral in the United States Navy. Dr. Berkley has been in the Public Health Service since he was a student at PCOM.

Class of 1981
Class Agent: Gerald E. Dworkin, DO 610-520-0690, ged@painfix.com
Peter J. Adler-Michaelson, DO, Wangen, Germany, was elected to the board of directors of the Osteopathic International Alliance. He has also been appointed to the American Osteopathic Association’s Council on International Osteopathic Education and Affairs.

Class of 1982
Class Agent: Anthony J. Silvagni, DO 954-262-1407, aj@silvagni@aol.com
Karen K. Brady, DO, Danville, PA, joined Susquehanna Physician Services in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.
Jere R. Eshleman, DO, Williamsport, PA, was named medical director for the HCR Manor Care, Williamsport South, a skilled nursing facility.
Joseph G. Gurselman, DO, Spokane, WA, is owner and winemaker at Robert Karl Cellars (www.robertkarl.com). He is assisted in the winery by his wife, Rebecca, and his three sons.
William J. Meis, DO, Egender, PA, was reappointed chairman of the department of surgery at Roxborough Hospital.
Ralph S. Wolf, DO, Merriott Island, FL, is president-elect of the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics.

Class of 1983
Class Agent: Mary Ann Dibiagio, DO 610-520-0690, ged@painfix.com
Thomas A. Boyle, DO, Elmhurst, IL, was appointed chair of the department of emergency medicine and course director in the practice of medicine at Midwestern University’s Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Boyle also serves as an educational staff physician at St. James Hospital in Fields, Illinois.

Class of 1984
Class Agent: Paul V. Suhey, DO 814-231-2101, pvs@uoc.com
Thomas M. Fox, DO, Niceville, FL, has been appointed chief of staff-elect at Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Court, Destin, Florida.
Debra K. Spatz, DO, Port Republic, MD, is president-elect of the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics.
**Class of 1985**

**Class Agent:** Michael P. Meyer, DO  
717-721-5700, mmeyer8700@aol.com

Brian S. Campbell, DO, White Sands, NM, retired from the United States Army in August 2006 after 30 years of military service.

Daniel B. Clark, DO, Sligo, PA, retired as a general surgeon in 2004. He is currently a student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, working toward his master's of divinity degree.

Izola David, DO, Bala Cynwyd, PA, had her article titled “Good Nutrition Is Crucial for Mothers” featured in the Philadelphia Sunday Tribune.

Marcella A. Tabor, DO, Mt. Pleasant, SC, joined Palmetto Primary Care in Summerville, South Carolina.

Barbara B. Wallis, DO, Dillingham, AK, works with nine other family practitioners in rural Alaska; they serve 28 villages spread over 46,000 square miles. Dr. Wallis is based out of Kanakanak Hospital and works closely with the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage.

Samuel P. Wyche, DO, Wyndmoor, PA, graduated from the adult division of the Institute of the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia.

**Class of 1986**

**Class Agent:** John C. Sefter, DO  
410-337-7900

Jerome M. Guanciale, DO, Murrells Inlet, SC, was elected chief of staff at Waccamaw Community Hospital.

**Class of 1987**

**Class Agent:** Thomas J. Dagney, III, DO  
812-885-3810, tjd3@charter.net

Larry N. Finkelstein, DO, Lafayette Hill, PA, had his article titled “How You Can Protect Your Heart” featured in the Philadelphia Sunday Tribune.

Joan M. Grzybowski, DO, Conshohocken, PA, appeared on “Healthcare Leaders,” a weekly radio program hosted by Jeff Savino on WWDB 860 AM in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania.

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**Kristen Lehmann, MS/PA ’00**

**First, But Not Last**

Kristen Lehmann, MS/PA ’00 likes to be first. She was a member of PCOM’s inaugural class of physician assistants, and she was the first PA to join Reconstructive Orthopedics in Lumberton, New Jersey. Both required a little extra work on her part, but the rewards were great.

Ms. Lehmann had been working as a physical therapist for four years in Colorado when she first heard about the physician assistant profession and decided to come East where she had grown up. Although there were several established PA programs in the area, Ms. Lehmann applied only to PCOM. “I liked the idea of working side-by-side with DO students during the core curriculum,” she explains. “I also knew there would be good clerkship opportunities.”

Building on her experience as a physical therapist, Ms. Lehmann sought a clerkship at an orthopedic practice. She was only several weeks into the clerkship when the physicians she was working with started asking her about her future plans; they hoped she would stay. “It was a great practice, and I knew I would be happy there,” she recalls, “but first there were many questions that needed to be answered.’

“Hiring licensed PAs was still a relatively new concept in New Jersey,” Lehmann explains. “The doctors had questions about reimbursement, state laws, credentialing and what PAs could and could not do. I did the research, which showed how it would benefit the practice to have a PA on staff.” Because of Ms. Lehmann’s research, the practice presently consists of five doctors and four PAs, and they are looking to bring another PA on staff.

“I knew this was what I wanted to do when I applied to PCOM’s program,” says Ms. Lehmann, “but I didn’t expect it to be as rewarding as it is. I like making differential diagnoses and building relationships with patients. Being a PA allows me to figure things out.”

Although she was among the first PCOM PA students, Ms. Lehmann is making sure she isn’t among the last. She comes back to campus a couple times a year as a guest lecturer in musculoskeletal classes, and she helps students prepare for PA licensure. She serves as a preceptor for PA students who are interested in orthopedics and welcomes interested undergraduate students to shadow her in her practice (she works with Joseph Farrell, DO ’78) and during hospital rounds. She’s involved in a mentorship program arranged by the PA alumni committee of which she’s a member.

“I’m proud to be a graduate of the first class of PCOM PAs,” says Ms. Lehmann, “but I’m also proud of how the program has grown.”
Michele D. Jones, DO, Allentown, PA, joined the medical staff at Sacred Heart Hospital of Allentown.

Class of 1988
Class Agent: Eric M. Lipnack, DO
856-784-0444, elipnack@comcast.net
Russell G. Clayton, DO, Houston, TX, was appointed vice-president of medical affairs at Discovery Laboratories, Inc. He is responsible for the strategic and operational management of the medical affairs activities for the company's pipeline Surfactant Replacement Therapies.
Kathryn C. Lambert, DO, Marlton, NJ, has been appointed to the New Jersey State Board of Medical Examiners.
Ronald M. Lieberman, DO, Bear, DE, opened the Delaware Spine Institute in Dover, Delaware.

Class of 1989
Class Agents: Judith Richmond Pryblick, DO
610-366-8445, gjmjrpr@aol.com
Coleen M. Smith, DO
423-722-9355, colsmithdo@pol.net
Eric B. Bontempo, DO, Fort Washington, PA, was elected vice-chief of staff at Atlantic General Hospital and Health System.

Class of 1990
Class Agent: Jennifer Waxler, DO
jwaxler@sbhcs.com
Elisa Shipon-Blum, DO, Meadowbrook, PA, was highlighted in an article, “Why Abby Won’t Talk,” published in Time Magazine (February 2006). Dr. Shipon-Blum specializes in treating selective mutism through a range of cognitive-behavioral techniques aimed at increasing nonverbal interaction. She has founded the non-profit Selective Mutism Group—Childhood Anxiety Network (selectivemutism.org).

Stephanie Schneider, MS/Psy ’02

Making the Mind-Body Connection

Stephanie Schneider, MS/Psy ’02, saw first-hand the correlation between physical and mental health when she taught and practiced medical informatics at a family medicine practice at Chester Crozer Medical Center. “It was apparent that many of the patients’ problems were psychosocial and behavioral as much as they were physical,” she explains. She was intrigued by her observations and wanted to learn more. She shared her interest with a physician at the hospital, Jim McHugh, DO ’68. “Dr. McHugh encouraged me to come to PCOM,” recalls Ms. Schneider.

Ms. Schneider started out in the first class of the master’s program in clinical health psychology and then entered the advanced graduate studies program in cognitive behavior therapy. The decision to enter the program was an easy one since, as she points out, “it was the only program focusing on health psychology that emphasized a bio-psychosocial model.”

Ms. Schneider now puts that degree to good use as program coordinator of the Center for Pediatric Traumatic Stress at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. As part of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, the center is multidisciplinary in its studies of the effects of medical traumatic stress on children, adolescents and families. “We develop and disseminate empirically based interventions for children and families experiencing trauma in health care as a result of life-threatening illness or injuries,” explains Ms. Schneider. “We work on two fronts—with psychosocial health care providers and with medical professionals—to identify potential problems so the patient can receive early intervention.”

During the past year, Ms. Schneider co-developed the Pediatric Medical Traumatic Stress Toolkit for Health Care Professionals, which is distributed nationally through the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and she has co-authored two articles on interventions for pediatric traumatic stress.

Ms. Schneider has watched PCOM’s master’s degree program grow since its inception. “The program provides very strong academic and clinical training,” says Ms. Schneider. “In particular, I found the standardized patient program to be an extremely helpful training tool. “We were thrown into a standardized patient scenario the first week of school, and we had six to eight more sessions during the course of the program. It was nerve-wracking, but it was an excellent teaching experience.”

In addition to her work at the center, Ms. Schneider is a practicing clinician, researcher and teacher. She teaches undergraduate developmental psychology courses at Gwynedd-Mercy College, and she teaches developmental psychology and professional, legal and ethical issues in PCOM’s master’s program in clinical and counseling health psychology. “I really enjoy teaching at the master’s level,” she explains. “It’s gratifying to watch as the students begin the program thinking of themselves as students and then transform into thinking of themselves as professionals by the end of the program.”
Class of 1992
Class Agent: Daniel J. Kupas, DO
724-845-6360, djkkcvm@comcast.net
Vincent N. Disabella, DO, Bear, DE, hosts the “Sports Health Highlight” show on Voice America Online Radio Network (www.health.voiceamerica.com). The show airs on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Class of 1994
Class Agent: Judith A. Gardner, DO
215-428-9383, judygocats@verizon.net
Lawrence R. Crist, DO, Lititz, PA, joined the medical staff at AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center.
Bryan E. Dorf, DO, South Salem, NY, joined the medical staff at Internal Medicine of New Canaan.

Class of 1995
Class Agent: Francis N. Ogbolu, DO
606-833-9870

Class of 1996
Class Agent: Joanne E. Hullings, DO
215-781-0575, joannehullings@hotmail.com
Terence M. Grogan, DO, Pulaski, WI, joined the medical staff at Aurora Health Centers in Pulaski and Seymour, Wisconsin.

Class of 1997
Class Agent: Daniel W. Matkiwsky, DO
908-353-7949
Krista Rebo-Massara, DO, State College, PA, received board certification from the American Osteopathic Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology.
Laurie Ann Spraga, DO, Broomall, PA, is a captain in the 144th Area Support Medical Company stationed in Camp Cedar, Iraq. Dr. Spraga’s company is a level-1 battalion aid station. The team consists of one physician and eight combat medics. They are in charge of medical care for Southern Iraq.

Class of 1998
Class Agent: James V. Lieb, DO
814-946-2708
Diane F. Godorov, DO, Harker Heights, TX, has a son, Wolf Ekkehard Hindrichs (age 19), and a daughter, Sieglinde Hindrichs (age 16).
Steven P. Kerner, DO, Chapin, SC, opened Urology Center of the Midlands in Newberry, South Carolina.
Francesco T. Mangano, DO, Loveland, OH, was a recipient of the 2005 Robert C. Erwin Literary Award, presented by the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons, for his paper titled “Early Programmable Valve Malfunctions in Pediatric Hydrocephalus” (published in the Journal of Neurosurgery). He also had a paper, “A Novel Technique Involving Simultaneous Image-Guided and Endoscopic Navigation Without Rigid Skull Fixation in Infants,” published in Neurosurgery (April 2006).

Class of 1999
Class Agent: Tabatha Jeffers, DO
814-375-0460, froggytlj@hotmail.com
Jennifer A. Hagerty, DO, Wilmette, IL, was a recipient of the 2005 Residency Achievement Award presented by the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons.
Kevin L. Kirk, DO, Silver Spring, MD, was a recipient of the 2005 Residency Achievement Award presented by the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons.

Class of 2000
Class Agent: Edward Casey, DO
casey.edward@may.edu
Sean K. George, DO, Hummelstown, PA, joined the medical staff of Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network.
Shawn M. Hazlett, DO, Macungie, PA, joined the medical staff of Warren Hospital. He is also a member of the staff at Nephrology-Hypertension Associates of Lehigh Valley in Easton, Pennsylvania.
Amy E. Hoffman, DO, Chicago, IL, joined the medical staff of Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois.
Michael L. Miller, DO, Virginia Beach, VA, joined Virginia Oncology Associates.

Class of 2001
Class Agent: Connie Andrejko, DO, and Kenneth Andrejko, DO
215-873-8384
Stephen M. Lago, DO, Sinking Spring, PA, was featured in an article published in the Reading Eagle titled “Daily Diligence.”
Lorianne E. Pereira, DO, Cherry Hill, NJ, is a neurocritical fellow at Hahnemann University Hospital (through June 2006). In July, she will become stroke director at Kenmore Mercy Hospital in Buffalo, New York.

Class of 2002
Joshua S. Coren, DO, Huntingdon Valley, PA, was the first osteopathic family physician recipient of the Emerging Leader Award presented by the Family Medicine Education Consortium. Dr. Coren is medical director of UMDNJ-SOM, Mount Laurel Family Practice.
Rachel Fasson Esposito, DO, Connellsville, PA, was profiled in an article published in the Daily Courier titled “Doctor Returns to Open Practice.”
John-Mark Miller, DO, Rome, GA, served as battalion surgeon for the 1/172nd Battalion Aid station in Ar Ramadi, Iraq. In February 2006, he started a new family practice in Rome, Georgia. He has two children, Benjamin and Amelia.
Terry L. Pummer, DO, Mahanoy City, PA, opened a new family practice in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania.

Class of 2003
Mark B. Abraham, DO, Lafayette Hill, PA, joined the Department of Family Practice at Brandywine Hospital, Coatesville, Pennsylvania, on July 1, 2006. He completed a traditional rotating osteopathic internship program at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital before completing his residency in family practice at PCOM-Mercy Suburban in Norristown, Pennsylvania, where he served as one of the chief residents.

Adam Colombo, DO, Coopersburg, PA, had his article, “Multiple Eruptive Skin Nodules in the Setting of Gastric Carcinoma,” published in The Journal of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association.


On a Personal Note

Mark B. Abraham, DO ’03, married Roberta Rosenblum on December 9, 2005.

Sean Conroy, DO ’95, Glen Mills, PA, and his wife Robyn Shor-Conroy, DO ’96, are the proud parents of Dani Kelly, born on January 13, 2006. Dani joins brother, Dean, age two, in the growing Conroy family.

Robert E. Davis, DO ’02, Kulpmont, PA, married Kelly Ann Dallabrida on September 17, 2005. The couple honeymooned in Hawaii.

Jon Z. Elliott, DO ’01, Palmyra, PA, and his wife, Sarah, are the proud parents of Lauren Elizabeth, born on June 20, 2005.

Charles Heller, III, DO ’01, Philadelphia, PA, and his wife, Anjana Trivedi, DO, are the proud parents of Jay Charles, born on March 17, 2006.


Thomas A. Monko, PA-C ’04, Broken Arrow, OK, married Jocelyn R. Idema, DO ’05, on October 22, 2005, in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. The couple honeymooned in the Rocky Mountains.

Christopher L. Stark, DO ’01, Chicago, IL, and his wife, Stacy Bishop-Stark, DO ’01, are the proud parents of Mary, born on October 22, 2005.

Scott M. Weaner, DO ’85, Yardley, PA, and his wife, Liz, welcomed their second set of twins, Emily and Abigail, in September 2005. They join their brother and sister, Steven and Rebecca, age two, and two dogs.

Peter Wertheimer, DO ’03, Margate, NJ, married Meghan Quinn on June 4, 2005. The couple honeymooned in Saint Kitts.

Daniel J. Wilkin, DO ’02, Hillsdale, NJ, and his wife, Jennifer, are the proud parents of Harrison Daniel, born on August 12, 2005. Dr. Wilkin joined Bergen Primary Care Associates in Emerson, New Jersey.

Brian W. Zimmer, DO ’02, Harrisburg, PA, and his wife, Femabelle R. Bautista-Zimmer, DO ’01, are the proud parents of Ella Cina, born on July 23, 2005.
Certificates of Merit

Roy A. DeBeer, DO ’67, Long Beach, NY, was inducted as a fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology.

Lawrence D. Hochman, DO ’90, New Port Richey, FL, was inducted as a fellow of the American College of Radiation Oncology.

Wonsuck Kim, DO ’87, Florence, AL, was elected president of the Alabama Academy of Ophthalmology.

Eleanor V. Masterson, DO ’57, Havertown, PA, was the recipient of the A.T. Still Medallion of Honor, the highest honor bestowed by the American Academy of Osteopathy.

Anthony J. Silvagni, DO ’82, Fort Lauderdale, FL, received the 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) during its 103rd annual convention. Dr. Silvagni serves as dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Nova Southeastern University.

Arnold Sokol, DO ’62, Blue Bell, PA, was inducted as a distinguished fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians.

Harvey M. Spector, DO ’63, Huntingdon Valley, PA, was inducted as president of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association.

Daniel B. Sullivan, DO ’86, Fruitland Park, FL, was inducted as a diplomate of the American Society of Echocardiography.

In Memoriam


Keith D. Gangewere, DO ’80, Clearfield, PA, February 3, 2006.


Robert Koprince, DO ’55, West Bloomfield, MI, March 5, 2005.


Charles J. Neun, Jr., DO ’59, Havertown, PA, August 6, 2005.


Morton Silver, DO ’53, Havertown, PA, April 19, 2006.


Richard H. Stancliff, DO ’42, Meadville, PA, March 5, 2006.


In 1983, I was on staff as a medical scientist specializing in pain management in the Hematology/Oncology Department of Walter Reed Army Medical Center. My purpose there was to develop and conduct a clinical study designed to enhance opioid analgesia. During this time, I also received requests from oncologists to see some of their patients who were presenting with substantial pain. They asked me to help improve analgesia for these persons. Two such cases in which I participated have influenced my career and will continue to do so for the remainder of my life.

The first consult involved a soldier who had been involved in World War II in the Phillipine Islands. He had been admitted a few days earlier and was in constant pain from his spreading cancer. When I entered the room, it was clear he was experiencing significant discomfort, but he also had been refusing additional treatment. Why? After spending some time with him, I learned that he was a survivor of the Bataan Death March; he felt that since he survived that ordeal—and many of his fellow soldiers did not—he should handle this pain with minimal assistance. I then discussed the benefits of improved analgesia; for example, he would sleep more comfortably, which would increase his ability to eat and to have the best possible interactions with his family in this last phase of his life. Within a relatively short time, he agreed, and thanked me for my time. I subsequently informed his oncologist of the result of this meeting and then wrote my recommendation for pharmacotherapy. When I saw him the next day, he was interacting very positively with his family; it was clear that the quality of his life had improved and remained so until he died shortly thereafter.

A second case that impacted my life was a consult to see a 21-year-old woman in pain who had come into Walter Reed the previous night; she had been fighting cancer since the age of 13, and was now terminal. Within a minute or so after I entered her room, she took off her oxygen mask; it had a dull metal flange on it. Right in front of me, she tried to slit her wrist because of the excruciating pain she was experiencing. We did not have the option of sustained-release opioids 23 years ago, so I created a plan with the available morphine. It was effective. When she died a few days later in her mother's arms, she was at peace.

Jack Kevorkian had the opposite plan: kill patients who are in pain. His actions prompted me to coin the term “suicidogen,” a word that means any condition that causes a person to consider taking his or her life.*

Inadequate pain management is, in fact, a suicidogen.

These events had a major influence in shaping my approach to teaching proper pain management. Adequate analgesia must be provided continuously and aggressively. I strongly advocate this plan when giving presentations to health professionals, from medical students at PCOM to physicians attending continuing medical education programs.

Among my most rewarding moments now are the times when former students communicate to me that I helped them learn advanced approaches to pain management that they now use to provide good analgesia for their patients.

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- Lois DeBakey, PhD