Digest of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (Summer 2012)

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

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Three alumni talk about their careers and their support for the College
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni and Friends:

It has been said that those who have been blessed have the opportunity, the responsibility, the privilege of giving back. Annually, and to mark special occasions, alumni and friends of Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine make transformative investments that help to ensure the College’s continued excellence and support its Mission. The cover article of this issue of Digest Magazine profiles three of these College benefactors. J. Steven Blake, DO ’89, MSc, FACOI, has pledged $1 million to endow an annual full-tuition scholarship. Dana Ferrara Planer, DO ’98, is a member of the Blue Ribbon Society—those who have consistently donated to PCOM for at least the past five years. Bernyce M. Peplowski, DO ’80, has bequeathed part of her estate to the College. On behalf of PCOM, I thank each of these philanthropists who are leading by example. And I thank all those whose sustained generosity helps us to maintain our benchmark of distinction.

The article “Transitioning into Retirement” profiles two beloved faculty members, Rosemary B. Mennuti, EdD, NCSP, professor and director of School Psychology programs, and John P. Simelaro, DO ’71, FCCP, FACOI, professor and chairman emeritus, Department of Internal Medicine, and past chairman, Division of Pulmonary Medicine, as they begin to move into new stages of their professional careers and lives. Both have given so much to our College not only in terms of longevity of service, but also in scholarly depth, outstanding teaching and ever present collegiality.

“Remembering Nicholas C. Pedano, DO ’61, FACOS” celebrates the life of a revered surgeon and leader who served our College and osteopathic education for four decades. Dr. Pedano passed away on July 13, 2012, at the age of 77.

Finally, the article “Dramatic Rise in Prescription Drug Abuse” reveals a frightening trend in forensic medicine from the perspective of two faculty members, Gregory McDonald, DO ’89, professor and vice chairman, department of pathology, microbiology, immunology and forensic medicine, and Frederick J. Goldstein, PhD, FCP, professor of clinical pharmacology, department of neuroscience, physiology and pharmacology. The informative piece offers insights into how healthcare professionals can help to reverse the trend of patient misuse.

I thank you for your continued interest in and support of PCOM.

With warmest regards,

Matthew Schure, PhD
President and Chief Executive Officer

“I thank all those whose sustained generosity helps us to maintain our benchmark of distinction.”
J. Steven Blake, DO ’89, MSc, FACOI, a member of the PCOM Board of Trustees and a Philadelphia gastroenterologist, philanthropist and entrepreneur, likes to lead by example. In March 2012, he pledged $1 million to establish The J. Steven Blake, DO ’89 Scholars Society at the College. Dr. Blake’s pledge, which will be fulfilled within ten years, is the largest single scholarship assurance for PCOM to date.
Part of a Legacy

Some PCOM families are multi-generational. Others are composed of multiple members of the same generation. The Class of 2012 includes both.

Ratnesh N. Mehra, DO ’12, proudly follows in the footsteps of his father, Rajesh N. Mehra, DO ’79. “My father never forced me into medicine,” he says, “but I was naturally surrounded by my father’s practice from an early age.”

The young graduate, who is pursuing a residency in neurological surgery at Michigan State University, cites his father’s unwavering support of his scientific curiosity and decision to attend medical school.

Dr. Rajesh N. Mehra has been a solo practitioner his entire career. His family practice in Chantilly, Virginia, has held steady against the wave of hospital acquisitions. Son Ratnesh N. Mehra recognizes that his subspecialty and trends in health care will not afford him such a choice. Regardless, he embraces his father’s philosophy: “The part of his practice that I admire the most is the knowledge that being a physician does not entitle one to corporate, fiscal or academic success and stability. In order to reach these goals, one must use his mind, stay current on the topics of medicine and truly understand the business of medicine.”

Commencement, Georgia Campus – PCOM

Seventy doctoral degrees in osteopathic medicine and 13 master’s degrees in biomedical sciences were conferred on May 20 in the Grand Ballroom of the Gwinnett Center in Duluth. The Class of 2012 is the fourth graduating class of DOs and the fifth graduating class of master’s degree students at the branch campus.

C. Charles Stokes, Jr., president and chief executive officer of the National Foundation for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, delivered the commencement address.

DO Commencement, PCOM

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine celebrated its 121st Commencement on June 3 at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia. Two hundred and forty-six doctoral degrees in osteopathic medicine were conferred.

Stephen C. Shannon, DO, MPH, president and chief executive officer of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, delivered the commencement address. The College proudly bestowed the title of professor emeritus upon James E. McHugh, DO, FACOI, MBA, FACP, and Frederick G. Meoli, DO, FACOS, during the ceremony.

Graduate Programs Commencement, PCOM

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine marked its 13th Graduate Programs Commencement on July 27 at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia. There were 225 candidates for graduate degrees in programs in clinical psychology (doctor of psychology, 27 candidates; respecialization, 1 candidate); school psychology (doctor of psychology, 21 candidates; master of science, 18 candidates; educational specialist, 21 candidates); counseling and clinical health psychology (master of science, 28 candidates); organizational development and leadership (master of science, 11 candidates); forensic medicine (master of science, 16 candidates); biomedical sciences (master of science, 34 candidates); and physician assistant studies (master of science, 48 candidates).

James J. Murray, co-founder of the Ronald McDonald House and president of Jim Murray, Ltd., delivered the commencement address.
Here for a Reason

By all accounts, Richard Davis, Jr., DO ‘12, should not have been at graduation. During his second year of medical school, Dr. Davis suffered a near-fatal ventricular arrhythmia while exercising on a treadmill. As fate would have it, a pediatrician was running on a treadmill behind him. The pediatrician immediately began CPR and initiated a defibrillator shock in an attempt to restore regular rhythm to Dr. Davis’ heart while emergency personnel were in route. Dr. Davis was without a heart rate for over ten minutes. It was not until the ambulance neared the hospital that he regained a sustainable rhythm. Dr. Davis remained in the ICU in a coma for three days.

Fortunately, the first-time patient did not suffer any major complications. A cardioverter defibrillator was implanted in Dr. Davis’ heart as a precaution, and he was permitted to return to PCOM. He did so with even greater motivation to learn and succeed as a physician. “I would not be here today if it were not for the physicians who used their medical training and passion to save my life,” he says.

Dr. Davis is pursuing an internship/residency program in emergency medicine at Geisinger Health System, Danville, Pennsylvania—where, he says, he will be “on the front line of the healthcare profession, eager to save lives just as mine was saved.”

When Sheranda C. Gunn, DO ‘12 (GA–PCOM), found the adjustment to medical school to be a difficult one, she diagnosed herself as “a stereotypically depressed insomniac student.” By mid-semester, the stellar student—in desperation—sought medical help. Test results revealed her hemoglobin and hematocrit volumes were at transfusion-requiring levels. Soon cancer, bleeding disorders, serious and life-threatening complications—those that should be studied rather than applied—became real considerations. “I remember taking an exam about bleeding disorders and the next day going to the hospital to be treated for them,” Dr. Gunn says.

Although Dr. Gunn attempted to maintain full-time status at GA–PCOM while undergoing numerous tests and experimental medications, she eventually filed for a temporary leave of absence. She underwent several surgeries, including a hysterectomy.

Today, with her diploma in hand, Dr. Gunn is healthier and happier. “I have energy; I sleep. I can remember things. It is amazing how much better the outlook is when your body is able to thrive,” she notes. “I never intended to be a patient during med school. But the experience has helped to shape the way I will practice medicine. Perhaps the greatest lessons I have learned came to me from my own hospital bed.”

Dr. Gunn is pursuing an internship/residency program in internal medicine at Danville Regional Medical Center, Danville, Virginia.

When Erica Madge, MS/Psy ’12, was born with spinal muscular atrophy type II, her parents were told that their little girl would not live past three years of age. Regardless, they pledged to help their daughter live up to her fullest potential—to encourage her to grow and to embrace every opportunity. Wheelchair bound, Ms. Madge was enrolled in normal classes at school and excelled from an early age. She underwent a full spinal fusion shortly following her seventh birthday to help combat the scoliosis caused by the autosomal disease. By high school, the honors student obtained a service dog, Sequoia, who helped her gain and maintain physical independence.

Ms. Madge’s intellectual independence expanded as she attended Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, graduating magna cum laude. At PCOM, she attained a 3.9 GPA in her studies, and recently completed a 700-hour internship at Eagleville Hospital, Eagleville, Pennsylvania.

“My own disease and subsequent disabilities have taught me many things—among them, patience. I have to plan how to go about physical tasks. But this patience has led to a sense of empathy that I will be able to employ with my own clinical patients.”

Wedding Bells and Diplomas

The Seeleys were married on May 5, 2012, in Cape May, New Jersey.

As a tradition, during the last few moments of each DO Commencement, the successes of the graduates are lauded, and the support they received from parents, wives, husbands, children and others throughout their journey is acknowledged.

It is not a secret—to those who have experienced it—that balancing marriage and/or parenting and medical school work is complicated. Yet during the course of medical school, 50 members of the DO Class of 2012 (inclusive of both campuses) were married. And 21 children were born to medical school parents.

The last couple to wed—a mere month before Commencement—was Brian Seeley, DO ’12, and Rouenne Abasolo Seeley, DO ’12. “We met during our first week at PCOM,” says Dr. Abasolo Seeley. “Our shared pursuits brought us together. We have experienced many triumphs and tribulations throughout our relationship so far; we look forward to our future together.” The Seeleys, who participated in the American Osteopathic Association Intern/Resident Registration Program Couples’ Match, are family and internal medicine residents at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey – School of Osteopathic Medicine.
Schweitzer Fellow

Roland M. Dimaya (DO ’15) has been selected as a 2012–2013 Greater Philadelphia Schweitzer Fellow. He will join 249 other U.S. Schweitzer Fellows carrying out service projects that address the social determinants of health in underserved communities.

Through a project called “The Art of Looking,” Mr. Dimaya will work with intellectually and physically disabled individuals to empower their voices and to strengthen their interpersonal abilities through art. Drawing on his background as a gallery teacher at Yale University Art Gallery, Mr. Dimaya has developed activities to engage participants in art literacy through “mobile art galleries” and visits to local art institutions. In addition, he will train other students to serve as gallery teachers.

“During patient interviews and clinical case presentations to colleagues, I realized that the didactic skills I used as a gallery teacher translated aptly into the art of diagnosis and patient care,” says Mr. Dimaya. “It is my hope that ‘The Art of Looking’ will not only engage all participants in the rich culture of Philadelphia, but develop interpersonal skills and build social determinants of health and healthcare practice.”

Kaitlin Kobaitri, DO ’12

2012 Mason W. Pressly Memorial Medal Recipient, Georgia Campus – PCOM

In a rural clinic deep in the heart of Belize, an ailing patient was about to undergo a painful procedure. In this third world country, no pain relief medication was available. The medical staff instructed the patient to “take a deep breath and clench your teeth,” recalls Dr. Kobaitri, who witnessed the exchange while on a medical mission trip she organized for GA–PCOM students. “It was really hard to see the patient in such pain and not be able to help,” she says.

Helping people is what Dr. Kobaitri loves most in life. It’s the reason she pursued a career in medicine and the reason she organized initiatives to improve the lives of people in the local and international community as well as her fellow students during her years at GA–PCOM.

While serving as the Student Osteopathic Medical Association International Committee chair, she recruited and organized a medical mission team of 11 GA–PCOM students and raised donations of money and medication for the trip to Belize. Patients who came to their clinics in the countryside often suffered with musculoskeletal pain from doing manual labor all day. “We were able to help many of these patients by integrating osteopathic medicine techniques, like manipulation,” says Dr. Kobaitri.

Back on campus as president of the Pediatrics Club, Dr. Kobaitri dramatically expanded the scope of the club’s community outreach activities. Club members now regularly volunteer at the Atlanta Children’s Shelter, helping to care for homeless children and helping their parents acquire the skills to find jobs and housing.

Dr. Kobaitri also expanded the club’s “Fit for Life” outreach program to local elementary schools. Under her leadership, the program grew from a few club volunteers teaching a physical fitness activity to one classroom of 25 kids to a daylong event for the whole elementary school involving virtually the entire Pediatrics Club.

At Camp Boggy Creek, a Hole in the Wall Gang camp in Orlando, Florida, children with chronic diseases benefited from Dr. Kobaitri’s energy and enthusiasm when she led a group of club members on a weeklong volunteer mission trip there.

Back in Georgia, she personally visited pediatricians in the Atlanta area to establish valuable shadowing opportunities for Pediatrics Club members, a first for GA–PCOM.

As she begins her residency in pediatrics at Miami Children’s Hospital, Dr. Kobaitri takes pride in having laid the foundation for initiatives that have helped so many people. “My hope is that GA–PCOM Pediatrics Club activities will continue to grow and thrive,” she says, “and that GA–PCOM students will continue to help people in the local community and beyond.”

Dr. Kobaitri
Maryland School Psychologist Association Award

Bradley Petry, EdS, PsyD ’12, a practicing school psychologist in the Baltimore City Public Schools, is the recipient of the 2012 Maryland School Psychologist Association’s (MSPA) Outstanding Practice Award. Dr. Petry was chosen from nominees across the state and celebrated for his demonstration of the qualities associated with outstanding psychological services to students, parents and the community.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Petry acknowledged the faculty of and his cohort members in the school psychology doctoral program at PCOM. “There was a time when I saw school psychology as just a career,” he said. “My life has been changed; my perspective is now that of a practitioner who believes that school psychology transcends the day-to-day, that being an advocate for the overall well-being of children is a life’s work.”

Benjamin Schellhase, DO ’12
2012 Simmy Ginsburg Humanitarian Award Recipient

Dr. Schellhase sat in a barebones elementary school classroom in inner-city Baltimore, Maryland, helping a fifth grader with his homework. With their two heads bent over basic algebra equations, Dr. Schellhase patiently offered explanations and encouragement. The boy grumbled and sighed frequently in frustration. Then suddenly, his eyes lit up as he exclaimed, “Now I get it!” and rushed to complete the equations.

Moments like that have inspired Dr. Schellhase to volunteer as a tutor during his years at PCOM, as well as his undergraduate days at Johns Hopkins University. In addition to helping elementary school students, he has tutored adults working toward their General Educational Development (GED) diploma and taught English as a Second Language in underserved areas of Philadelphia and Baltimore.

“To me, the most rewarding volunteer work is helping people with educational pursuits,” he reflects. “Many more doors will open to an adult who has earned a GED diploma or learned to speak English more fluently. And the world will offer more opportunities to young students who don’t get discouraged and give up on their education.”

Dr. Schellhase sees himself as a link in a chain of many people who volunteer their time to help individuals develop the skills they need to succeed in life. “As one individual, you can’t expect to change a person’s world overnight, but you’re a link in the chain that helps them keep moving forward toward their goals,” he says.

Indeed, Dr. Schellhase has served as a critical link for many in a multitude of ways. In addition to tutoring and teaching, he has served on medical mission trips to Haiti and Mexico and organized community health fairs held in underserved areas of Philadelphia.

“Just the way you live your life can be serving others,” emphasizes Dr. Schellhase, who is starting a residency in general internal medicine at Drexel University College of Medicine. “It doesn’t have to involve a specific community service event. It’s how you approach people in daily life and how you use the time you have with them to have a positive effect on their lives. As medical professionals, we have the chance to do that every time we meet with a patient.”

“Ben embodies my mother’s intent about life,” says psychologist Susan Apollon, daughter of Harry Ginsburg, DO ’42, and his wife, Simmy, for whom the award is named. “He finds individuals who need assistance and uses the gifts he knows he’s blessed with to help them. Ben will go out into the world and teach people what they need to sustain themselves in life, help them to know who they really are and enable them to reclaim their power as individuals.”

For more information about the Ginsburg family, please see Digest #2, 2009.
Putting Research Front and Center

C. Woodworth Parker, MS/Biomed ’12 (DO ’16), explains his research findings to colleagues.

After spending countless hours in the lab focused on molecular aspects, PCOM researchers had their day in the sun at the Second Annual Research Day. Students, faculty and staff on both campuses displayed their research posters and discussed their work with scientists from labs across campus as well as with visiting scientists.

“I know that my colleagues are doing research, but we don’t often have the chance to find out about their work,” says C. Woodworth Parker, MS/Biomed ’12 (DO ’16). “Research Day gives us the opportunity to learn what others are doing and enter into dynamic conversation and connection.” Mr. Parker was one of two students who received the Annual Research Day Student Poster Award.

The other award-winning student, Mary F. Keith, Biomed MS ’12, showed her poster at GA–PCOM. She recognized the day as the impetus to showcase her research. “If it weren’t for Research Day, I might not have taken the time to present my research in a public forum,” she says.

And that was, in part, the goal of the day, according to Marina D’Angelo, PhD, professor, anatomy, and chair, research committee, who organized the event. “We’re hoping to generate more posters from more programs. This year we had participation from faculty, students and staff from the biomed, pharmacy, psychology and DO programs and had almost twice the amount of participation as we had last year. Research is clearly being done on both campuses; we want to make it more visible.”

The day began with a presentation by Mark Hamrick, PhD, senior vice president for research, Medical College of Georgia Health Sciences University, which was videocast to the Philadelphia campus. His presentation focused on the current and future state of biomedical research. After his presentation he spent time viewing posters and talking to researchers on the GA–PCOM campus.

The event “builds bridges both within PCOM and in the community,” says Harold Komiskey, PhD, professor, neuroscience, physiology and pharmacology, GA–PCOM. “It starts conversations and widens people’s views of the research being done on campus.”

New Admissions Articulation Agreements Announced

The PCOM Admissions Office

Strategic partnerships broaden training opportunities and facilitate quality choices. Recently, PCOM has instituted agreements with Adelphi University, Long Island, New York, and Penn State University – Brandywine (post-baccalaureate program). These agreements will allow Adelphi and Penn State students who meet the specified criteria to smoothly transition from undergraduate studies to medical school.

In addition, the College has instituted a new joint degree program that will provide DO students at GA–PCOM with an opportunity to pursue the master of business administration degree in healthcare management at Brenau University, Gainesville, Georgia. This degree combination will augment the traditional medical curriculum.

“PCOM is proud of its affiliation agreements with many of the undergraduate colleges and universities in the state of Pennsylvania and throughout the region,” says Deborah A. Benvenger, chief admissions officer. “Affiliations allow undergraduate institutions to target qualified students within the recruitment process who have expressed an interest in our programs.”
Trustee John P. Kearney and his wife, Lois, hosted their fourth annual reception for PCOM at the Glenmaura National Golf Club, Moosic, Pennsylvania, on April 24. The event, a celebration of the College and its legacy in Northeastern Pennsylvania, brought together local physicians; PCOM alumni, students and administrators; and students and premedical advisors from area colleges and universities.

In 2001, the Kearneys created the John D. Kearney Scholarship in memory of their son, a second-year student at PCOM who died in 1999 while trying to rescue a friend on a hiking trail in Arizona. Speaking at the reception, Mr. Kearney explained that he and his family wanted to make a statement with the scholarship. “We were looking for a way to immortalize J.D.’s life and freeze time,” he explains. “J.D. is now part of the history of PCOM. Every class from here to eternity will hear his name.”

Mr. Kearney encouraged the physicians and PCOM alumni at the reception to consider making a gift to the College to help ensure that future medical students will have the support they need to make their dreams of becoming physicians a reality.

Attending the reception were two individuals who were touched by the Kearneys’ generosity: Gregg Severs, DO ’04, who was the first PCOM student to receive the Kearney scholarship, and Jerry Slovin, DO ’12, a two-time Kearney scholarship recipient.

“I was truly honored to be the first recipient of the John D. Kearney Scholarship in 2002,” says Dr. Severs. “To a medical student being swallowed by debt, it was a welcomed gift, but the scholarship became so much more than that. John and Lois took the most tragic event of their lives and turned it into a way to continue J.D.’s legacy. I hope to embody the type of person J.D. was in both my personal and professional life.”

Dr. Slovin received the John D. Kearney Memorial Scholarship as a senior at Wilkes University, and was awarded the John D. Kearney Scholarship as a second-year medical student at PCOM. “These scholarships go beyond their monetary value,” he explains. “The Kearneys care about education and other people, and it gives me hope to see a family who wants to help with no expectation of anything in return. I’m very grateful; theirs is a gift of spirit.”
New Residency Program Opens in Georgia

The first class of resident physicians at Houston Healthcare’s new family medicine residency program, including PCOM’s Jovan Adams (DO ’09), was welcomed recently with an evening reception at the hospital’s Wellston Center in Warner Robins, Georgia. Celebrating with the class were Senator Cecil Staton (District 18, Republican), hospital administrators, physician faculty, community leaders and PCOM representatives.

“It was an exciting evening to be able to commemorate the completion of a long-anticipated family medicine residency at Houston Healthcare,” says H. William Craver, DO ’87, dean and chief executive officer, GA–PCOM. “It was great to mark the occasion with many of those whose leadership effort was so integral in the initiation of the first completely new residency program in Georgia in 16 years.”

The initial class includes six first-year and three second-year residents. The three-year program will eventually expand to include 18 residents.

Cary Martin, Houston Healthcare CEO, believes the program will have lasting benefits for enhancing health care in Georgia: “Studies show that a majority of resident physicians typically set up their own practices within 50 miles of where they did their medical training.”

GA–PCOM Names Six OMM Fellows

Six osteopathic medical students have been accepted into GA–PCOM’s OMM fellowship program. They are Connie Borgerding (DO ’13), Hobic Fuerstman (DO ’15), Britney Huneycutt (DO ’14), Joy Jones (DO ’14), Kristie Olds (DO ’13) and Cindy Wang (DO ’15).

As OMM fellows, they will attend GA–PCOM for an additional 12 months over a three-year period, serving in the campus’ OMM department.
Considering Cultural Diversity and Mental Health

Presenter Nikki Johnson-Huston, JD, MBA, LLM, shared her story of triumph over poverty and diversity.

Does race, religion, sex or sexual identity influence the care people receive from their mental health provider? This was the question addressed at PCOM’s Third Annual Cultural Diversity Conference.

Mental health experts from throughout the Delaware Valley explored the importance of cultural awareness in the field of mental health. “This year’s theme highlights the cultural significance surrounding the interplay between the mind and body and how the disconnect between the two may lead to maladaptive behaviors,” explains conference coordinator Yuma Tomes, PhD, associate professor and director, MS in School Psychology, PCOM.

Co-sponsored by the psychology department and Culturally Aware Psychology Students (CAPS), the conference drew over 200 participants to campus. Dr. Tomes notes that cultural diversity needs to be addressed, in part, because of the homogenous nature of those providing care. “We probably see about 85 percent of psychologists and about 90 percent of psychiatrists who are of European American descent,” says Dr. Tomes. “We have not done a great enough job of recruiting people of color and other minorities into the field.”

While mental health professionals treat individuals who are dissimilar to themselves, “this conference helped them to see their clients as people first, and see their disorder second. It opened the door for professionals to consider the multiple diversities that go beyond black and white issues including sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and veteran issues,” explains Dr. Tomes. The conference also “allowed for collegial conversation between seasoned professionals and those new to the field.”

Among the conference highlights was a presentation by Nikki Johnson-Huston, JD, MBA, LLM. Born into poverty, she was homeless at age 9 and failed out of college by age 18. By the time she turned 30 she had graduated from law school and had two additional advanced degrees. Currently a successful tax attorney, Ms. Johnson-Huston talked about how the social service system helped her succeed and how the same system failed her late brother.

The conference was lauded by Robert DiTomasso, PhD, professor and chair, psychology, for addressing “critical, cutting edge topics that help to shape professional practice in the community.” He also noted the success of the collaboration between all of the College’s psychology programs and CAPS to “express their social justice and diversity mission.”

“This year’s theme highlights the cultural significance surrounding the interplay between the mind and body and how the disconnect between the two may lead to maladaptive behaviors.”
Lancaster Healthcare Center Receives Grant for New Care Model

PCOM Healthcare Center – Lancaster Avenue Division received a $50,000 grant from the Independence Blue Cross Foundation to help implement the principles of a Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), leading to recognition by the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

A PCMH is a team-based model of care led by a personal physician who provides continuous and coordinated care throughout a patient’s lifetime to maximize health outcomes. The PCMH is responsible for providing for all of a patient’s healthcare needs or appropriately arranging care with other qualified professionals. This includes the provision of preventive services, treatment of acute and chronic illness, and assistance with end-of-life issues.

The Healthcare Center has adopted a continuous and coordinated healthcare model and strategy in order to serve an at-risk West Philadelphia community. Lancaster Avenue Division will serve as the model for incorporating the PCMH at all of the PCOM Healthcare Centers. This location is a primary teaching site, and under the guidance of a fully trained staff, students will learn the concepts and benefits of the Medical Home model and how to provide quality, accessible and cost-effective long-term treatment for patients.

Walgreens Grants Diversity Scholarship to Pharmacy Students

For the third year in a row, Walgreens has contributed $10,000 to a Diversity Scholarship distributed to five students enrolled in PCOM School of Pharmacy, Georgia Campus. The scholarship is awarded to students who have “made significant efforts toward raising awareness or play an active role in educating others about cultural competency and diversity related matters impacting the pharmacy profession.”

Recipients for 2012 are Simore Afamefuna (PharmD ’14), Bhumika Dhanani (PharmD ’14), Caitlin Goodman (PharmD ’14), Saba Hasan (PharmD ’14), and Jerry Mathew (PharmD ’14).

Annually, Walgreens donates $1 million dollars to accredited pharmacy schools across the nation to be used toward initiatives dedicated to promoting cultural diversity in pharmacy programs.

2012 PCOM Golf Classic

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the PCOM Golf Classic, which was held on September 24 at the Radnor Valley Country Club. Independence Blue Cross served as the title sponsor for the event, contributing $25,000. James Bonner, DO ’86, a board director for the PCOM Alumni Association, acted as Golf Classic chairman.

Proceeds from the Golf Classic support the College’s five Healthcare Centers, which offer critical health services to underserved and at-risk populations in North and West Philadelphia, Roxborough, Wynnefield Heights and Laporte, Pennsylvania.

Honor Someone Special

Let someone special know that you care while contributing to research within PCOM’s Center for Chronic Disorders of Aging. The Office of Alumni Relations & Development has developed two sets of tribute cards, available for purchase, to commemorate special occasions and significant events.

The cards were designed to support research programs that have received a great deal of attention from volunteers who are personally committed to raising awareness and significant money for their causes. The cards support research generated by the Food Allergy Research Initiative (FARI) and the Stanley E. Essl, DO ’75 Memorial Research Fund for Neurodegenerative Diseases. The Essl Fund, established by Dr. Essl’s family, supports research into the causes, origin and treatment of neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer’s disease, Lewy body dementia, Lou Gehrig’s disease, Parkinson’s disease and vascular dementia. FARI, founded by Lita Indzel Cohen, Esq., a PCOM trustee, supports research in immune modulation to decrease the severity of allergic reactions following exposure to peanuts and other food hyper-sensitivities.

Tribute cards make a thoughtful gesture and are fully tax-deductible contributions toward important research at PCOM. Contact the Office of Alumni Relations & Development to obtain your supply of tribute cards.
Three alumni talk about their careers and their support for the College

by David McKay Wilson

Digest Magazine recently sat down with three alumni to discuss their careers and their commitment to giving back to the osteopathic medical school that set them on a trajectory for personal and financial success. Each found a very different pathway through the thicket of medical practice today. Each decided it was time to help ensure that those who come after them are able to do the same.

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine has served as the launching pad for thousands of successful medical careers. There comes a day when many of those graduates reflect back on where they’ve come from, and decide that it’s time to pay it forward to help ensure the College’s continued excellence and support its Mission.
J. STEVEN BLAKE, DO ’89, MSc, FACOI

Dr. Blake, a Philadelphia gastroenterologist, philanthropist and entrepreneur, likes to lead by example.

He has encouraged high school students to dream beyond the borders of his hometown in northwest Mississippi by sponsoring a 10-day tour of northeast cities since 2006. He has encouraged PCOM alumni to stay connected to their medical school by providing them lifetime membership in the College’s Alumni Association. Since 2006, Dr. Blake has gifted 134 minority (members of the Student National Medical Association) and non-minority students (student mentees) with these memberships (inclusive of both campuses).

And as a member of PCOM’s Board of Trustees, and chairman of its development committee, he has encouraged other alumni to donate to their alma mater with his pledge of $1 million, which will endow a full-tuition scholarship for an African-American medical student.

“I can’t stop doing enough for this institution,” says Dr. Blake, 54, of Philadelphia, who has served on the Board of Trustees since 2007. “There are many who are equal to and more successful than I am. If we were to do something collectively, we could elevate the College to unprecedented levels.”

Dr. Blake arrived at PCOM in 1985, after earning his bachelor’s degree in chemistry and zoology at the University of Mississippi. After graduating from PCOM in 1989, he completed his residency at the College’s former hospital and went on to do a fellowship there in gastroenterology in 1994.

“Colorectal cancer starts as a benign polyp and can develop into colon cancer over time,” Dr. Blake says. “It’s a unique progression, and no one should ever die from it. The mission is to educate people because if you are an educated patient, you are better equipped to make the right decisions for yourself.”

An entrepreneur like Dr. Blake knows he has to do more than just invest in the bricks-and-mortar that built his facility. He needs to continually work on expanding his network to keep his business moving forward. It’s part of an outreach effort that includes attending health fairs and visiting senior centers to introduce himself.

“It’s a way to tell the community that my doors are open,” says Dr. Blake. “McDonalds lets the community know its doors are open. We market to let people keep us at the forefront of their minds. I have people who depend on me for a paycheck every two weeks, with mortgages and car loans. They depend on me to provide that kind of security.”
As a philanthropist, Dr. Blake likes to make investments that make good things happen for others, and help create a better world.

That’s what he has been doing since 2006 with his East Coast Cultural Enrichment Tour for high-achieving students from Clarksdale, Mississippi, who attend Coahoma Agricultural High School, where he graduated in 1976. The school, a historically black public school, founded in 1924, is located on the campus of Coahoma Community College, where Dr. Blake’s father taught automobile mechanics, and his mother served as a dietitian.

Dr. Blake recalls that as a child, he dreamed of someday becoming a physician in a small town like the one in which he was raised in northwest Mississippi. It wasn’t until he visited cities on the eastern seaboard that his dreams about his place in the medical world expanded beyond those small-town boundaries.

This spring, Dr. Blake flew 17 students from Mississippi to Boston, where they met him to begin a 10-day excursion that included visits to New York, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia. In New York, they visited the Apollo Theater in Harlem, saw the musical *The Lion King* at the Minskoff Theatre in Times Square, and took a bus tour around the city. In Washington, they visited the Pentagon and toured the U.S. Capitol building. In Philadelphia, they saw the exhibit featuring the work of Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse and Paul Gauguin at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. They toured PCOM, visiting its research laboratories and meeting with basic science professors. Dr. Blake also held a reception for the students at the Pyramid Club on the 52nd floor of the BNY Mellon Center on Market Street, and at a colleague’s home in suburban Kennett Square, where they met professionals from the area.

“I wanted them to get a sense of the cities, and a feel for the suburbs,” Dr. Blake says.

Students must have a grade-point average of at least 3.0 to qualify for the trip. Since the program began, every student that has participated has attended college following graduation from high school.

Dr. Blake says the trip encourages students to work hard, exposes them to the wonders of the art world, and shows them that success can be found outside of athletics, which holds such a strong sway over today’s youth.

“This lets them know that they don’t have to achieve financial success through athletics,” says Dr. Blake. “It can be done using their brains in other professions. And [the program] can encourage other students in the school. If they want to see what their fellow students have seen, they’d better start studying. It’s working.”

Dr. Blake’s pledge to PCOM builds on his advocacy for minorities within the osteopathic profession through the National Osteopathic Medical Association, a Philadelphia-based professional group that he led as president and now serves as treasurer.

In March, Dr. Blake announced his pledge, which will establish The J. Steven Blake, DO ‘89 Scholars Society. He’ll fulfill his pledge within 10 years, with his first donation of $100,000 per year to be made in January 2013. The Society will provide a full-tuition, four-year scholarship to an African-American student. If the endowment grows (the plan), Dr. Blake says the program could expand to others, including students of other races.
Dr. Blake, who is divorced and has no children, says that the first Blake Scholar will attend PCOM in the fall of 2013, with Dr. Blake providing the scholarship through his personal funds as the endowment grows.

“I have plenty of friends who are funding two or three of their children in college,” he says. “I have no kids. I feel comfortable stepping out in that direction.”

DANA FERRARA PLANER, DO ’98

Early in her medical career, Dr. Planer considered pursuing a sub-specialty, such as cardiology or nephrology. But after three years of residency at Union Hospital in Union, New Jersey, she’d grown weary of the 36-hour shifts. She wanted to get on with her life.

So she became an internist. Eleven years later, she’s pleased with her choice, treating adults and geriatric patients in a private practice in Port Charlotte, Florida.

It’s an older community, so her patients tap into her knowledge of a broad range of diseases—from diabetes and osteoporosis to hypertension and various cancers. “My patients tend to be 75 years old and older,” says Dr. Planer, who is board certified in internal medicine. “I enjoy working with an older community.”

Dr. Planer, who grew up in the suburbs of Bloomfield, New Jersey, moved south to Florida’s west coast in 2001, to become an associate at Murdock Family Medicine and avoid the cold northern winters. By 2004, she’d become a partner, and four years later, the practice was sold to Millennium Physician Group, one of southwest Florida’s largest privately owned groups.

“I feel a sense of personal responsibility to the institution that has given me so much. The education I received has given me the life I have. You can’t forget where you came from.”

“People today are really savvy when they are searching for a new physician,” says Dr. Planer, 41, who lives in Punta Gorda, Florida, with her husband Richard, a middle school physical education teacher; twins Madison and Frank, age five; and daughter Olivia, age two. “Our practice gives them lots of choices.”

The practice has been at the forefront of electronic medical records, with its computerized system online since 2003, and prescriptions made electronically for the past several years. The computerized system allows her to call up patient records if she has to address patients’ needs from home, and it provides easy access to records for physicians at the group’s walk-in clinic, which is open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekends.

Dr. Planer learned firsthand the value of electronic records when her father, a retired public school music teacher, came to live with her family in Florida for a month to recuperate from a recent hospitalization in New Jersey. His records came electronically, and his new doctors in Florida got up to speed on his condition immediately.

“They could pull up the patient summary, see what he was treated for, what medication he was on,” says Dr.
Planer, who earned her bachelor's degree at Rutgers University. “It was so helpful.”

She has a desktop computer in her office, and there’s a
desktop on a stand in the hallway outside her exam room.
So far, Dr. Planer has resisted using a computer inside the
exam room—an increasingly popular decision by physicians
looking for efficiencies in their practice.

“I’ve considered getting a laptop or a tablet that I could
take with me from room to room to put down my notes,”
she says. “But so far, I’ve liked spending time face-to-face,
eye-to-eye, with my patients. The biggest complaints
patients have about electronic records is that their doctor is
focused on the computer screen in the exam room, not on
them.”

Dr. Planer is a member of PCOM’s Blue Ribbon Society,
which was established in 2008 to recognize donors at all
levels who have given for at least five consecutive years.
Though Dr. Planer is still paying off the loans she took out
to attend medical school, she believes it’s important to give
back to the institution that provided her with the opportu-
nities to achieve great success.

“I feel a sense of personal responsibility to the institution
that has given me so much,” she says. “The education I
received has given me the life I have. You can’t forget where
you came from. It’s important for me to give back—at
every stage of my career. I feel strongly about that.”

Bernyce M. Peplowski, DO ’80

As medical director of California’s leading workers com-
pensation insurance company, Dr. Peplowski often confers
with physicians of all specialties to talk about the quasi-
public agency’s approach to supporting treatment for
employees injured on the job.

During case conferences, Dr. Peplowski says she encour-
eges physicians to take a more holistic approach to healing.
There are 5,500 physicians who treat workers in the
Compensation Insurance Fund of California’s sprawling
statewide network.

“We are letting our physicians know about other therape-
ies besides surgery or a pill,” says Dr. Peplowski, 57, of
Calabasas, California, in the San Fernando Valley about 30
miles northwest of Los Angeles. “I tell them: If you need a
test, if you need manipulation or acupuncture, please do it.
We are very happy to pay for those things. We are all about
giving a patient their life back.”

Since joining the Fund in February 2011, Dr. Peplowski
says she has focused on outcomes data—how long injured
employees are out of work and a claim remains open, what
the claim has cost, and whether narcotics have been pre-
scribed for pain.

She notes that a 2008 study by the California Workers
Compensation Institute found that workers who received
high doses of opioid painkillers for workplace injuries, such
as back pain, were off the job three times longer than those
with similar injuries who were treated with lower doses.
Dr. Peplowski was quoted in a June 2012 article in
The New York Times which reported that disability pay-
ments and medical care were nine times higher when a
strong narcotic, such as oxycodone, was prescribed.

In 2011, Dr. Peplowski developed a protocol that
requires prior approval for physicians to prescribe opioids
for more than 60 days. The rule was implemented despite
opposition from some members of the Fund’s physicians.

“We want patients to be satisfied and get back to work,”
she says. “We also want them off narcotics. The physicians
are coming around. They are getting it. And we’re working
with physicians to make suggestions on alternatives.”

Those alternatives include cognitive behavioral therapy,
which teaches patients coping skills to deal with pain
instead of dulling it with a narcotic. “You tell patients that

Dr. Peplowski
you know they have pain, and you encourage them to think about more pleasant things so they aren’t so focused on how much it hurts,” says Dr. Peplowski. “You teach patients that everything in life isn’t bad. And you focus on helping them get back their connection to the world.”

Dr. Peplowski’s arrival at the State Compensation Insurance Fund caps a career in occupational medicine that began in California, after she completed her residency at the University of Southern California Medical Center in Los Angeles. From 1982 to 1990, she practiced occupational medicine at the defense contractor Lockheed Aeronautical Systems, headquartered in Burbank, California.

“My medical training was the biggest thing for me. I thought: wouldn’t it be wonderful to take what I have amassed, and perpetuate the experience for those who come behind me.”

She had a private practice from 1991 to 1994, and then worked at Southern California Kaiser Permanente from 1994 to 2006, serving as the managed care consortium’s regional chief of occupational medicine. That post led her to the workers compensation arena, where she served as medical director of Zenith Insurance before moving to the State Fund in 2011.

Dr. Peplowski says her work with the State Fund allows her to better integrate primary care and specialty care, and develop systems that bring wellness programs into the workplace.
“It’s coming full circle for me,” says Dr. Peplowski. “I’ve been working on integrating primary care and specialty care for much of my career. You make everyone accountable for the outcomes. You include wellness and prevention so they won’t need to use narcotics. You treat the whole person, and the patient will get as well as they can get.”

Dr. Peplowski, who grew up in Pittsburgh, earned her bachelor’s degree at Duquesne University and a master’s degree in environmental and occupational health at California State University at Northridge. She says PCOM emerged as her top choice for medical school after an inspiring interview there opened her eyes to the holistic philosophy that underlies osteopathic medicine.

“I felt like the professors cared about me, their patients, and their patients’ outcomes,” says Dr. Peplowski, who also earned a master’s degree in health professions education at Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, California. “This was the kind of doctor I wanted to be. I wanted to be like the people who interviewed me. I can remember it like it was yesterday.”

Those years at PCOM provided the foundation for three decades of medical practice. And now, as she begins to consider her eventual retirement in Hawaii, Dr. Peplowski has included PCOM in her estate plans, creating a trust through PCOM’s Andrew Taylor Still Legacy Society.

Dr. Peplowski, who is single and has no children, says she decided to include PCOM in her estate planning following her mother’s death a year ago.

“I wanted my money to go to a place I really believe in,” she says. “My medical training was the biggest thing for me. I thought: wouldn’t it be wonderful to take what I have amassed, and perpetuate the experience for those who come behind me.”

Her gift will include the 5,000-square-foot home with a view of Diamond Head she intends to build on a tiny lot she just bought in East Honolulu’s Hawaii Loa Ridge neighborhood.

“The house will appreciate, and the College will get a nice sale out of that one,” she says. “I’m really jazzed to build there.”
Amid an aging American workforce, a maturing professoriate is particularly notable. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of professors age 65 and older has more than doubled in the past decade. This statistic signals an impending generational shift in higher education through retirements (and gradual transitions) and rehirings.

As colleges and universities look to the future, they recognize that their older faculty, many of whom have had a significant longevity of service, are much more than numbers. They are—at their quintessence—the faces and reputations of their institutions. Their careers span decades and thousands (sometimes hundreds of thousands) of alumni. They provide institutional memory, scholarly depth and valuable understanding of teaching and collegiality.

What follows are profiles of two beloved Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine faculty members who are beginning their transitions into retirement.

Rosemary B. Mennuti, EdD, NCSP

In July, Dr. Mennuti, professor and director of School Psychology programs, relinquished her full-time administrative duties, opting to continue direct services to students only: teaching, managing dissertation work and serving as a core faculty member on a part-time basis. Her action, accepted in non-belief (if at all) by many among the PCOM community, has signaled a shift in the degree programs she developed and implemented in 2003 (PsyD program) and 2004 (MS and EdS programs).

For nearly a decade, 64-year-old Dr. Mennuti has been the face of School Psychology at PCOM. Yet, she cautions, “merely the face. The heartbeat of the School Psychology programs belongs to my colleagues and students. Our unique collaboration is what makes our degree programs invariably sound.”

Dr. Mennuti, who enjoyed a 30-year career in New Jersey public schools as a fourth-grade teacher, guidance counselor and school psychologist, came to the helm of the PCOM programs when she fulfilled requirements for respecialization in clinical psychology under the tutelage of Arthur Freeman, EdD, ABPP, clinical professor and former chair, department of psychology, PCOM, graduating on the lawn outside of the Levin Administrative Building in 1999. Dr.
Mennuti had served only briefly as clinical faculty at PCOM when Dr. Freeman invited her to develop the College’s School Psychology program. “He handed me a golden egg,” she reminisces. “It is not often that one’s professional career comes full circle. I was given the opportunity to teach once again and impact the future of school psychology.”

Dr. Mennuti’s design for the program was based upon the standards set forth by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) and her own study of relational theory. “Developing student competencies and providing a relational environment is a necessity,” she explains. This is the culture, creativity and appeal of the program, which received approvals from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and NASP for all three programs and ASPPB Designation for the PsyD program. It annually draws highly credentialed students at the national level.

“From its inception, I sought a model that would be collaborative and integrative—from the bottom up. Senior and junior faculty were empowered to move the programs forward, to work together, to challenge one another,” says Dr. Mennuti. “We remain a mix of subspecialties, backgrounds and ideas, and we function in tandem with the osteopathic philosophy. We strive to embody the very collaborative approach we teach, and we require it of our students with the expectation that they will require it of their students.

“I suppose you can say that I have laid a foundation,” she continues. “The structure will continue to evolve and flourish, and I am excited and open to what is to happen. I hope to be a part of it all—just in a different role.

“It is not often that one’s professional career comes full circle. I was given the opportunity to teach once again and impact the future of school psychology.”

“There are points when shifts occur and stages in life beg for new kinds of attention,” Dr. Mennuti says. “My life has been filled with many blessings and some challenges. I have raised my family, matured with my children and grown with my career. I have been fortunate to have the opportunities I’ve had to interface and integrate a loving and fulfilling personal life with a long and exciting professional career. I loved the hours I burned the midnight oil, worked closely with administration, colleagues and friends trying to figure out ways to make School Psychology at PCOM happen. I relish the hours of my life spent studying, writing, editing, lecturing and working closely with students and colleagues. I plan to continue these academic activities; I just want to do them at a different pace and have more personal time to play.”
Dr. Mennuti acknowledges that retirement is daunting for many and that there is great value in paying attention to and preparing for significant life changes as one looks at the final chapters of life. She counts herself among those who are “privileged”: “I am able to look at my transition as an opportunity,” she says. “Until I am ready to move into full retirement, I am able to continue on here at the College doing what I love the most—mentoring students and advocating for children and families. But I want to walk out of PCOM when the time is right,” she adds, “not be carried out.

“My only fear, as I commence this stage in my life, is not truly taking advantage of all that life still offers me. I need to—we all must—live in the moment. Life unfolds in the present,” she offers. “Confronting the fragility of life reminds us of the value of each day. By living in the moment and being in control of my journey as much as possible, I will continue to embrace life and hopefully continue to touch lives in positive ways.”

**John P. Simelaro, DO ’71, FCCP, FACOII**

A legend to legions of graduates and patients, Dr. Simelaro, professor and chairman emeritus of the Department of Internal Medicine, and past chairman of the Division of Pulmonary Medicine, is a scholar and a joker, a teacher and a compassionate physician whose eccentricities and unmistakable South Philly ethnolect have worked their way into the College’s consciousness. At age 66, he is in every respect the embodiment of a pioneer faculty member who has long maintained a love for PCOM and its community.

Dr. Simelaro has served the College for more than 40 years, establishing the Division of Pulmonary Medicine in 1976. And his clinical research on the treatment of asthma and complicated chest infections has secured significant funding from the American Lung Association, Glaxo-SmithKline, Merck, Novartis, Pfizer and Roerig.

As a professor, he has not only lectured on critical care medicine and management, but has gone into the “trenches” with “the kids,” making primary care doctors out of countless 20-somethings clad in short white coats adorned with goldtone medals purchased from wholesale party stores (the medals, symbols of Dr. Simelaro’s “Pulmonary Marine Corp”).

“Teaching and fun must be synonymous,” says the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Award recipient and ten-time Student Council Teaching Award champion, who was originally recruited to full-time teaching by the late President Thomas M. Rowland, Jr. “The trenches [patient care units] can be emotional places. Students need to be prepared intellectually and perceptively. They need to reject the notion of being ‘super doctors’—actually, the medical profession needs to reject it—so they/we can face the stresses of illness. Medicine is filled with glorious recoveries, but it is also filled with bleak outcomes. Death and dying gets to all of us. I teach the kids that the capacity to laugh is essential. So much of being a doctor denies the humanness of the doctor and asks us to give and keep giving. We should not give so much of ourselves away that patients become burdens and we become empty shells.”

Realism is inherent in all of Dr. Simelaro’s punch lines. “I’m 100 percent for my students and patients. Students and patients are my life,” he says. “I have never allowed anything or anyone to interfere with these priorities. Stupid rules get stupid solutions.”

In a similar matter-of-fact manner, he talks about his own recent health diagnosis: a benign brain tumor, for which he underwent successful treatment. “My own body has reminded me that I need hobbies and days off and permission to breathe sometimes,” he says. “I have trained hard, worked hard. It’s my turn [to transition into retirement]. I’m doing it my way—as I always do. I’m slowing down gradually—two weeks on, two weeks off. My wife has big plans for me.”

When asked what he will miss most when he retires, Dr. Simelaro emphatically quips, “ICU call. I despise it. I loathe it. Hospital personnel page you all night and then you have to provide patient care and teaching the next day. It can be very exhausting. Such a lifestyle used to stimulate me when I was younger, but I guess things change with age.”

He continues, “As doctors, we are privileged to share an intimate part of our patients’ lives that few others will ever be allowed to share. Patient care takes our competencies, it takes our dedication, it takes our sacrifice. It takes a great deal of humility and compassion. We must always be people doctors, not disease doctors.”

“I cannot imagine a more gratifying calling.”
“As doctors, we are privileged to share an intimate part of our patients’ lives that few others will ever be allowed to share.”
Daily, millions of Americans take opioid analgesics such as oxycodone and fentanyl for moderate to severe pain. When taken as prescribed, they are safe and effective medications. Unfortunately, they are also among the most abused prescription drugs in the United States and the most lethal when abused, causing a dramatic increase in overdose deaths nationwide.

Since 1999, overdose death rates involving opioid analgesics have more than quadrupled in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Opioid pain relievers now cause more overdose deaths than heroin and cocaine combined. They account for 75 percent of all overdose deaths from prescription drugs; nearly one-third involve methadone, an opioid used to treat heroin addiction. Abuse of other prescription drugs, including benzodiazepines and amphetamines, is also on the rise.

Why is abuse on the rise?

In some cases, patients who are prescribed oxycodone for pain can’t wean themselves off it. They may become tolerant to the drug and need higher and higher doses, which the physician may not be comfortable prescribing. Out of desperation, the patients may start seeking medication through illegal channels on the street and end up overdosing. Oxycodone has also become the illicit drug of choice for individuals who merely crave the sense of euphoria it can provide.

“Oxycodone is now in high demand because word has gotten out on the street about its high potency,” says Gregory McDonald, DO ’89, professor and vice chairman, department of pathology, microbiology, immunology and forensic medicine at PCOM and chief deputy coroner for Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. “We are seeing many more autopsies where oxycodone, either by itself or in combination with other drugs such as antidepressants or benzodiazepines, is the primary cause of death.”

Dr. McDonald also notes abuse of fentanyl patches, another potent pain treatment. “Typically, patients are only supposed to use one patch at a time for pain. But at some autopsies, I’m seeing evidence that the individual was using three or four patches at a time,” he says.

In some cases, patients looking for relief from anxiety or depression take combinations of opioids, benzodiazepines, central nervous system depressants and/or alcohol that prove dangerous or lethal.

Lethal drug combinations

The death of actor Heath Ledger in 2008 from an overdose of prescription drugs brought to the forefront the dangers of combining prescription drugs. Ledger died from taking a combination of five prescription drugs (two opioid analgesics; three benzodiazepines) and one
St. John’s wort and dextromethorphan, an ingredient found in cough syrups, can also contribute to this syndrome.”

Serotonin syndrome includes changes in mental status such as anxiety, confusion and hypomania; alterations in neuromuscular function such as muscle rigidity and tremors; and instability in the autonomic nervous system including tachycardia, tachypnea, diaphoresis and hypothermia. Although in most cases the symptoms of the serotonin syndrome are resolved without serious consequences, severe serotonin toxicity can result in admission to the intensive care unit.

Drug delivery intensifies the problem

How the drug is delivered into the body is another key abuse factor, notes Dr. McDonald. People who are illicitly using drugs such as opioids or benzodiazepines often destroy the time-release coating by grinding up the tablets to get a much more rapid “high” or euphoria from the drug. “They may swallow or snort the ground medication,” he says. “Sometimes they grind it finely enough to mix with liquid solution and inject. As a result, they get a much more potent and potentially lethal dose of the medication.”

Dr. McDonald also notes “experimental and unique ways” of using the fentanyl patch. “I’ve heard of people rolling the patch and smoking it. They are also freezing the patches, then cutting them up and putting them under the tongue,” he explains. “These delivery methods break down the time-release mechanism so you’re getting all the medication at once. We are seeing increased death due to this also.”

Amphetamines being prescribed to control attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are also being ground up to be swallowed, snorted or injected. “These drugs are often abused in college dorms where students with a prescription either take too much themselves or sell pills to other students who want to stay up all night to study or party,” observes Dr. McDonald. “When ground up, these drugs are even more potent.” An overdose can cause high blood pressure, stroke, cardiac arrhythmia and bizarre and/or violent behavior.

Healthcare professionals can help reverse the trend

“First, know your patient,” advises Dr. McDonald. “As osteopathic physicians and healthcare professionals, we need to look at the whole person as we’ve been trained to do. Know all the medications your patients are taking, including those prescribed by other clinicians. Communicate frequently with your patients about the dangers of combining drugs and alcohol.

“When doing an exam, don’t just listen to the patient’s heart,” he continues. “Do a complete exam. People inject themselves with drugs in odd places to avoid detection, including the breasts and groin area. Consider the possibility that new pulmonary problems could be associated with abuse such as smoking fentanyl patches. Look for sequelae of drug abuse such as nose bleeds from snorting and track marks. You may also see signs of skin popping—round, well-healed scars or ulcers on the body resulting from a subcutaneous injection, usually on the leg where it won’t be noticed. Be alert to changes in the individual’s condition or demeanor such as poor hygiene, excessive sleepiness or strange behavior.”

Safeguarding prescription medications more effectively is also critical. Pharmacies, physicians’ offices and hospitals need to do a better job of securing these drugs. “Even with inventory control in drugstores and hospitals, people can fudge the records,” observes Dr. McDonald. “Diversion of drugs from hospitals by medical personnel for sale or personal use is a fairly big and growing problem. An increasing number of treatment and rehab programs are available to help impaired physicians, nurses and physician assistants confront their problems and get the treatment they need.”

Physicians should also advise adult patients to lock their medicine cabinets, particularly if they have teenagers in the house. “Increasingly, kids are raiding their parents’ medicine cabinet for drugs like oxycodone,” says Dr. McDonald. “They don’t steal it all at once, just one or two at a time so it’s not obvious. Don’t underestimate how much kids know about the potency and street value of drugs.”
Nicholas C. Pedano, DO ’61, FACOS, “was always on fire about the possibility that something good was just about to happen—if only you worked hard enough to make it so,” says his daughter, Andrea D. Pedano, DO ’90. Her prodigiously hard-working father died on July 13, 2012, at the age of 77, in Jupiter, Florida. The surgeon served PCOM and osteopathic education in myriad capacities for four decades.

Dr. Pedano completed his internship and residency at the Hospital of Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, where he was also an attending surgeon, chief of surgery for over 25 years and president of the medical staff.

Arthur J. Sesso, DO ’81, Galen S. Young, Sr., DO ’35, Chair in Surgery; professor, department of surgery; and program director, general surgery residency, is not only Dr. Pedano’s successor but was also his student, resident and associate, taking over their surgical practice after Dr. Pedano retired. He characterizes these relationships as “the greatest learning experiences of my life.”

Dr. Pedano “never differentiated between surgery and academics,” says Dr. Andrea Pedano, a Philadelphia family practitioner and member of the PCOM Board of Trustees. “He always was surrounded by interns, residents and medical students.” Her father trained over 75 surgical residents at PCOM, winning the Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching in 1993.

A different work ethic

“As a young girl I did not understand why my father worked so hard, so much and so late,” says Dr. Andrea Pedano. Dr. Sesso maintains that “Dr. Pedano had a different work ethic than most people. When we met outside of work hours, he was still working. And he expected you to work that hard too.”

Despite Dr. Pedano’s drive, “I never saw him lose his temper,” says Dr. Sesso, “and he always was even-handed with the residents in the OR. Much later, when we were associates, and I was getting upset about something, he took me aside and said, ‘See the inside of my lip? It’s purple from biting it.’ He was confident but not cocky, very even-tempered—a model for modern surgeons.”
Dr. Pedano was in private practice in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, for 36 years. He was an attending surgeon at Philadelphia’s now-closed Metropolitan Hospital and a consultant in general surgery at Suburban General Hospital (now Mercy Suburban Hospital) in Norristown, Pennsylvania. He also was a general surgical consultant to the National Board of Osteopathic Examiners.

A passionate osteopathic advocate

As chairman of surgery at PCOM, Dr. Pedano expanded the residency program from two to 16 surgical residents (there are now 40) and secured rotations at nationally renowned institutions. Dr. Sesso describes Dr. Pedano as “extremely passionate about our osteopathic heritage and identity. He felt strongly that we should be able to compete in any field. He wanted us to work at the same hospitals as allopathic physicians so we could see if we were as good, or needed to be better.” Dr. Sesso adds, “He was convinced that osteopathic training was superior.”

Dr. Pedano was also convinced, before it was widely accepted, that gender should be no limit to any career, including medicine. “He was old-fashioned in his values,” says Dr. Andrea Pedano, “but a big proponent of ‘you can do anything you want.’ ”

Dr. Pedano received virtually every accolade PCOM can bestow, including the O. J. Snyder Memorial Medal, PCOM’s highest honor, in 1999. The College named him professor emeritus in 2001.

A member of the Alumni Association Board of Trustees beginning in 1986, Dr. Pedano served as its president in 2007. He was on the PCOM Board of Trustees from 1984 to 2009.

In 1994 Dr. Pedano chaired The PCOM Mission capital campaign, which raised more than $9 million over five years. Dr. Andrea Pedano says, “He knew if he could get his classmates to appreciate that where they were was a direct result of PCOM, it was their duty to give back.”

Dr. Pedano was also active in the broader osteopathic community. He was on the Board of Trustees of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association for more than 40 years, serving as president in 1990–1991 and receiving its Distinguished Service Award in 1995. He was also a member of the House of Delegates of the American Osteopathic Association.

When he wasn’t working...

Dr. Pedano’s drive to serve did not end with his professional identity. Numerous civic, child welfare and cultural organizations benefited from his efforts.

In his free time—astonishingly enough, Dr. Pedano did have some free time—he was an avid boater and fisherman whose children’s lives were marked by his love of the sea.

And he was a painstaking craftsman even when not in scrubs. Dr. Andrea Pedano describes his complete refurbishment of an older mansion in the Philadelphia suburbs, including taking down the original woodwork, burning off the paint, sanding it and putting it back up. He had a “full workshop with every possible electrical tool,” she says, “and he had no qualms about cutting lumber with an axe.”

Skill, compassion, charm

Dr. Pedano demonstrated a remarkable mix of skill and compassion that endeared him to his colleagues and patients. Dr. Sesso observes, “Surgeons and family practitioners do different things at different tempos and in different environments. And that can be a divide. But he could connect with people on many levels. He made people feel he was interested in them and knew them. He could do that with patients and other physicians. He was a very charming individual.”

Dr. Andrea Pedano says that her father “could connect with you regardless of race or creed—he was blind to that. And he was there in a pinch if you needed surgery. So primary care physicians loved him, and his patients were just as loyal.”

A man of his word

As much as Dr. Pedano loved his work, with his customary foresight he planned for his retirement. “He set his date two years ahead of time,” says Dr. Sesso. “He said, ‘This is what I want to do and how I want things to go for the next two years.’ That made for a smooth transition. And,” adds Dr. Sesso, “I could always pick up the phone and ask, ‘Chief, what would you do here?’ He was very reliable—a man of his word.”

“You are your word,” Dr. Andrea Pedano learned from her father. “Your reputation will depend on it.” She also learned that one’s actions should reflect “respect for your family, credit to your faith and benefit to your fellow man.” Besides his daughter, Dr. Pedano is survived by his wife of 52 years, Mary B.; another daughter, Monica; four sons, Nicholas Jr., James, Francis and Joseph; and 15 grandchildren.

A loving coach

“Dr. Pedano will always be a guiding force in our department,” says Dr. Sesso. “He has become a part of every surgeon this institution has trained, and therefore continues to impact the lives of thousands of patients all over the country.”

“He could be a tough guy,” acknowledges Dr. Andrea Pedano. “But he had a big heart, and was always there when you needed him. When I succeeded, he stood back and took no credit. When I failed, he was by my side. And that’s how he was for residents and his family and friends.”

Dr. Sesso says, “He was a tough person to work for. But he always backed you up. A surgeon needs people to rely on when the chips are down, and that was him. He was a coach who loved his players.”
CLASS OF 1965
Vincent Lobo, DO, Harrington, DE, was appointed by Governor Jack Markell to a three-year term on the board of the Delaware Institute of Medical Education and Research.

CLASS OF 1966
Rabbi Merrill J. Mirman, DO, Springfield, PA, was awarded the additional rabbinical ordination/semicha of yadin yadin by the American Board of Rabbis/Vaad HaRabbonim of America. Rabbi Mirman can now participate in a rabbinical court of Judaism as a judge.

CLASS OF 1967
Joseph A. Ackil, DO, Southborough, MA, retired after a 43-year career in family medicine. Dr. Ackil was one of ten osteopathic physicians in Maine who signed a note so that University of New England – College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNE COM) could open. He spent many years teaching family medicine clerkships for UNE COM and for Tufts University School of Medicine. Both schools have honored him for his many contributions.

CLASS OF 1971
Patrick J. McAndrew, DO, Pleasant Mount, PA, has joined Wayne Memorial Community Health Center. His practice, McAndrew Family Medicine in Vandling, will now be called the McAndrew Family Health Center.

CLASS OF 1973
John M. Ferretti, II, DO, Erie, PA, was the recipient of the 2012 Robert A. Kistner Award presented by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine at their Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Dr. Ferretti was honored for co-founding Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine.

W. William Shay, DO, Barto, PA, had his article “Medications and Herbal Remedies May Not Mix; Take Care to Avoid Dangerous Interactions” published in the March 12, 2012, issue of The Mercury.

CLASS OF 1974
Frank J. Brooks, DO, McMurray, PA, joined Canonsburg General Hospital and the Center for Women’s Health.

Michael J. Feinstein, DO, Coronado, CA, was appointed to the Osteopathic Medical Board of California by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

CLASS OF 1976
David V. Condoluci, DO, Moorestown, NJ, was named chief of medicine at Kennedy Health System.

FREDERICK A. GRASSIN, DO ’52
Practicing medicine for 60 years with no plans of stopping
by Colleen Pelc

Most people count down the days until they turn 65 and can officially retire. But Dr. Grassin, whose family practice is a cornerstone of his New Port Richey, Florida, community, isn’t like most people. The 87-year-old Dr. Grassin has no plans of retiring. None.

“I love what I do and I love my patients. We have a great relationship. It’s not just physician and patient, but physician, patient and friend,” Dr. Grassin says.

“I love seeing families start over and how they develop; I am now seeing third and fourth generations of some families. Their healthful continuance is most rewarding to me.”

Dr. Grassin reports that he has seen many changes in the field of osteopathic medicine since he began his career more than six decades ago: “The philosophy is much broader these days, where the field includes the best of both osteopathy and general medicine. When these two come together it creates a very good school of medicine and much broader care for patients.”

It’s that love for his patients that keeps Dr. Grassin going—working four days a week, taking only Thursdays as an “off day.”

“I believe that if you have a job that you enjoy, you should keep doing it. It’s good for your health to maintain a routine, to make a contribution to your community,” he says. “In medicine, it is rewarding to care for patients. They hug me, offer thanks, bring cards and small gifts. It is so very rewarding to know that they care for me just as I care for them.”

Because Dr. Grassin believes so much in doing what you love and loving what you do, he does offer advice for doctors just entering the profession: “My advice is to not see too many patients just to make money. See as many as you can comfortably, and make friends with your patients. You will get a better understanding of their lives, their health issues—and you will be more content with your own practice.”

Dr. Grassin also notes that he hasn’t been successful in his practice all by himself. “We don’t do this alone. I have a good mate in my wife of 40 years, two successful children and five grandchildren. When you work side by side with someone in your life, you are more capable and content to do what your profession expects of you,” he adds.

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Ted S. Eisenberg, DO, Philadelphia, PA, was featured in the article “A Question of Combination – Surgeons Discuss Simultaneous Augmentation Mastopexy Versus Staged Approach,” published in the Aesthetic Exchange section of Cosmetic Surgery Times (April 1, 2012).

CLASS OF 1977
Suzanne K. Kelley, DO, Harrisburg, PA, was installed as 2012–2014 president of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Family Physicians Society at the Annual Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association Clinical Assembly held on May 4, 2012.

Anthony M. Landis, DO, Duluth, GA, was the recipient of the Physician Champion Award presented by the Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation. This award recognizes exceptional physicians who “step out of the white coat to contribute and volunteer with the GMC Foundation and other community organizations.”

CLASS OF 1978
Samuel J. Garloff, DO, Palmyra, PA, was elected secretary of the Pennsylvania State Board of Osteopathic Medicine.

CLASS OF 1979
Walter C. Ehrenfeuchter, DO, Suwanee, GA, was elected to serve on the Board of Governors of the American Academy of Osteopathy.

William A. Wewer, DO, Harrisburg, PA, was elected 2012–2013 secretary/treasurer of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association.

CLASS OF 1980
Paul D. Seltzer, DO, West Palm Beach, FL, received the Advocate Award, presented by the Florida Association of Medical Staff Services in recognition of his continuous support of and commitment to the education of medical service professionals.

CLASS OF 1981
Neil A. Capretto, DO, Beaver, PA, was featured in “Heroin’s Siren Song: A Force That’s Stronger Than Will or Reason,” which was published in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (January 22, 2012). Dr. Capretto serves as medical director of Gateway Rehabilitation Center in Aliquippa, and is a psychiatric consultant at Heritage Valley Beaver.

Nicholas P. Chiumento, DO, Yatesville, PA, was named Eastern Region Medical Director of the Year by Golden Living. Dr. Chiumento was among nine finalists from Golden Living’s eastern region nominated for this award.

Michael P. Hahalyak, DO, North Versailles, PA, has joined Highmark Inc.’s Integrated Delivery System. Dr. Hahalyak became a Highmark physician in May 2012.

Hugh E. Palmer, DO, York, PA, was honored as Central Penn Parent magazine’s Physician of the Year on March 22, 2012, during a celebration at the Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel. Dr. Palmer is on the medical staff at Greensprings Family Medicine.

Julia M. Pillsbury, DO, Dover, DE, was named a Childhood Immunization Champion by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Pillsbury worked with insurance companies to provide childhood immunizations.

George L. Weber, DO, Philadelphia, PA, was elected to serve on the board of trustees of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association.

CLASS OF 1982
Thomas H. Neill, DO, Pen Argyl, PA, joined Weissport Medical Services, the newest addition to Behavioral Health Associates.

CLASS OF 1983
Carol L. Henwood, DO, Pottstown, PA, was named vice president of the American College of Osteopathic Physicians. Dr. Henwood is a family care physician at Snow Family Practice and a staff physician at Pottstown Memorial Medical Center.

CLASS OF 1984
David Coffey, DO, Montgomery, AL, was unanimously chosen as president-elect of the American Academy of Osteopathy.

John C. Green, DO, Clarion, PA, joined the medical staff in the Surgical Associates office at Clarion Hospital.

Richard A. Ortoski, DO, Erie, PA, was elected chairman of the Erie County Health Department. Dr. Ortoski is on the medical
For nearly a decade, Dr. Pinto worked as a primary care physician, aiding patients in controlling blood pressure, lowering cholesterol levels, and guiding them in general wellness. But for Dr. Pinto that wasn’t enough. After extensive training, he opened The Center for Medical Weight Loss of South Jersey in July 2010, with a second location in May 2011.

“Each day of patient care was rewarding in some way, but when I added weight loss I experienced a new level of reward,” Dr. Pinto says. “The first time I saw that glimmer of hope in a patient who lost weight on my program, who previously thought he was destined to never lose weight and had given up hope, I realized that I was onto something special.

“Once I had my first patient lose over 100 pounds, I realized I was truly changing people’s lives for the better, more so than I ever did in the past,” he adds.

The Center was launched into the media spotlight recently when Tony Luke Jr., TV personality and co-founder of Tony Luke’s restaurants (read: famous South Philly cheesesteaks), lost more than 125 pounds with the help of Dr. Pinto and The Center for Medical Weight Loss.

“Tony actually had little success with me the first few weeks on my program mainly because he could not grasp the idea that despite his intense exercise regimen and his healthy food choices, his total calorie consumption was still way too high,” Dr. Pinto says. “However, once I finally convinced him to follow my advice, he lost over 100 pounds.”

Dr. Pinto’s not stopping there. He now serves as assistant medical director of Lourdes Medical Associates, and he will soon open a new facility in Marlton, New Jersey—Vive Center for Medical Weight Loss and Aesthetics—that will be geared toward weight loss, wellness and aesthetics. “I believe this is one of the first practices of its type in the area, and my hope is that it becomes the standard for physician-supervised weight loss in the future. I believe this change will allow me to improve upon my current weight loss practice, offering more services to patients,” Dr. Pinto says.

“My goal is to bring together experts in nutrition, psychology and physical fitness to add to the medical expertise I offer to help patients make lifestyle changes that will last a lifetime,” he adds.
CLASS OF 1995

Jeffrey J. Dunkelberger, DO, Lewisberry, PA, was elected vice speaker of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association’s House of Delegates.

Jeffrey A. Heebner, DO, Flourtown, PA, was elected vice chairman of the Pennsylvania State Board of Osteopathic Medicine.

Pat F. Romano, DO, Garnet Valley, PA, joined Main Line HealthCare at their Summit Crossing practice in Glen Mills.

CLASS OF 1996

David B. Burmeister, DO, Philadelphia, PA, has been appointed chairman of the department of emergency medicine at Lehigh Valley Health Network.

CLASS OF 1998

Karen E. Agersborg, DO, Blue Bell, PA, was recognized by Worldwide Who’s Who for showing dedication, leadership and excellence in endocrinology. Dr. Agersborg is a clinical endocrinologist for Mercy Suburban Hospital.

CLASS OF 1999

John T. Kolinsky, DO, Clarksville, TN, joined the medical staff at Murfreesboro Medical Clinic.

Vietnhan Hoang Nguyen, DO, Fayetteville, NC, was appointed chief of gastroenterology at Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg.

Brian W. Ondulick, DO, Wilmington, OH, joined the medical staff at Greene Memorial Hospital.

CLASS OF 2000

Rachel E. Croteau, DO, Keene, NH, joined the medical staff at Jaffrey Family Medicine.

Christopher A. Davis, DO, Springfield, PA, was re-elected to serve on the board of trustees of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association.

CLASS OF 2002

Robert E. Davis, Jr., DO, Paxinos, PA, joined the medical staff at Capital Cardiovascular Associates, a service of Holy Spirit Health System.

Peter Ojuro, DO, Grand Forks, ND, joined the medical staff at Altru Health System.

CLASS OF 2003

Richard J. Donlick, DO, Clarion, PA, joined the medical staff at Internal Medicine Associates.

AARON P. BRINEN,
PsyD ’10
Helping those with schizophrenia live the life they desire

by Colleen Pelc

From a young age, Dr. Brinen was attracted to the field of psychology, drawn to interactions between people and interventions that could help not only the outcome of the present situation, but also how a person would react in the future. Through myriad clinical environments and experiences, Dr. Brinen realized that his clients would get better with treatments that targeted their thinking, and that the result would be longer lasting than any rehabilitative intervention.

“That was the final push to psychology for me. I remember the first session, when I sat down as a therapist and introduced myself. It felt like the place where I was supposed to be,” says Dr. Brinen.

Today, that place is the department of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, where Dr. Brinen is completing a two-year research fellowship. Under the direction of Aaron T. Beck, MD, he is working as a member of the schizophrenia team to train individual therapists and other practitioners in recovery-oriented cognitive therapy for those suffering from the mental disorder.

“Recovery-oriented cognitive therapy is based on the extensive research into the psychology of schizophrenia. Our unit along with other researchers has identified thoughts, beliefs and behaviors that promote poor functioning and impoverished quality of life of individuals with schizophrenia, such as low motivation, low socialization, low expectation of pleasure, hallucinations, delusions and thought disorder,” says Dr. Brinen.

“We develop an understanding of the patient’s internal reality and devise a strategy to help them move toward their goals. We get them back to living the life they desire. These patients have untapped potential, and this treatment capitalizes on it,” he says.

Dr. Brinen explains that their treatment targets poor functional outcomes and the negative symptoms of schizophrenia, which are not typically impacted by medications. “Until recently, treatments offered to those suffering from schizophrenia in the United States prioritized medication. Our work gives options and aims to destigmatize this disorder and give hope, a feeling of dignity and a plan of action to those suffering,” he adds.

Dr. Brinen’s future plans include implementing cognitive therapy in various settings, developing group therapy for schizophrenia and training therapists in cognitive therapy around the world. He will move into a staff position at the University of Pennsylvania next year. “I also look forward to continuing to grow my private practice, because treating individuals is of the utmost importance to me and ultimately makes me a better trainer,” Dr. Brinen says.
CLASS OF 2005


Daniel J. Csazar, DO, Phoenixville, PA, founded the Csazar Institute, which is a family medicine/sport medicine/OMM practice with a focus on combat sports medicine. Dr. Csazar was selected to work as a licensed ring/cageside physician on both the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Athletic Commissions.

Anthony C. Falvello, DO, Hazleton, PA, opened his new orthopedic practice, Falvello Orthopedics, in Hazle Township.

Adam R. Griffith, DO, Erie, PA, is board-certified in emergency medicine and is currently working at the UPMC Hamot Medical Center.

Suzanne Kuttler Kelly, DO, Furlong, PA, was named medical director of Pickering Manor in Newtown. Dr. Kelly is a board-certified family physician with Newtown Medical Group in Langhorne.

Nina Maouelainin, DO, Doylestown, PA, was granted medical staff privileges at Grand View Hospital. She is an associate at the Intensivist Group in Sellersville.

CLASS OF 2007

Steven R. Bowers, DO, Brigantine, NJ, joined the medical staff at Shore Physicians Group in Northfield and has privileges in family medicine at Shore Medical Center in Somers Point.

Douglas Troutman, DO, Philadelphia, PA, had the highest score for a senior resident in the country on his American Board of Surgery in-service exam. In addition, his paper “Duplex Ultrasound Imaging to Detect Limb Stenosis or Kinking of Endovascular Device After Midterm Follow-Up” was published in *The Journal of Vascular Surgery* (February 2012).

CLASS OF 2008

Nicholas C. Avitabile, DO, Malverne, NY, was appointed 2012–2013 chief resident of emergency medicine at St. Barnabas Hospital in Bronx, New York.

Irene Dmitruk, DO, Chicago, IL, was appointed 2011–2012 chief resident of emergency medicine at Midwestern University/Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Amy M. Kelly, DO, Saint Marys, PA, joined the medical staff at Elk Regional Health Center.


Svetlana Zakharchenko, DO, Brooklyn, New York, started an emergency medicine ultrasound fellowship at New York University/Bellevue School of Medicine.

CLASS OF 2009

Malissa M. Barbosa, DO, South Miami, FL, was a contributing author for an inspirational book entitled *Beautifully and Wonderfully Made* (available through amazon.com).

James P. Colvard, DO, Montgomery, AL, was the recipient of the 2012 Family Medicine Resident of the Year Award presented by the Montgomery County Medical Society.
On a Personal Note

**Abasolo/Seeley wedding**

**Baby Denzine**

**Klucka/Potts wedding**

**Baby Lessig**

Rouenne Abasolo, DO ’12, and Brian Seeley, DO ’12, Cape May Courthouse, NJ, wed on May 5, 2012, in Cape May, New Jersey. PCOM alumni in attendance were Michael Boja, DO ’12, John Brady, DO ’12; Jenna Brown, DO ’11; Jaime Connors, DO ’12; Kate Baranck Drumond, DO ’12; Loretta Hallock, DO ’12; Andy Hamarich, DO ’12; Bradley Hammond, DO ’12; Gregory Imbarrato, DO ’12; Chelsea Marks, DO ’12; Lauren McCrossan, DO ’12; Joshua Minori, DO ’12; Julie Pierdon, DO ’12; Christine White, DO ’11; and Jason White, DO ’12.

Mark L. Denzine, MS/PA-C ’04, DO ’12, and Meredith A. Denzine, MS/PA-C ’04, Wynnewood, PA, are the proud parents of Harrison Walker, born on May 17, 2012.

Amber R. Elway, DO ’05, Allison Park, PA, and her husband, Daniel, are the proud parents of Nathan Ryan, born on November 4, 2011.

Adam R. Griffith, DO ’05, Erie, PA, and his wife, Amy, are the proud parents of Wesley Charles, born on February 27, 2011.

Glenn Klucka (DO ’13) and Elizabeth Potts, DO ’12, Pitman, NJ, were married on April 14, 2012. Joe McDermott, DO ’12, and Katie Muenker, DO ’12, were members of the bridal party.

Benjamin D. Lessig, DO ’96, Toms River, NJ, and his wife, Celeste, are the proud parents of Noah Ethan, born on April 22, 2012.

Shawn M. Tweedt, DO ’00, Brookeville, MD, and his wife, April, are the proud parents of Katherine Michaela, born on June 1, 2012. Baby Katherine joins big sister Claire Amelia, age three.

**In Memoriam**

Frederick Scott Bartlow, DO ’88, Nampa, ID, May 9, 2012.


Neil Litten, DO ’64, Boca Raton, FL, September 17, 2011.


Alvin Rosen, DO ’53, North Palm Beach, FL, April 7, 2012.


E. Eric Horvath, DO ’95, San Antonio, TX, was recognized by Scene in S.A. (January 2011) as one of the “Best Doctors in General Surgery.”

On a Personal Note

E-MAIL YOUR NEWS AND PHOTOS TO MADELINE LAW: MADELINE@PCOM.EDU
The Philanthropy of Giving Back  

by Lauren Saltzburg (DO '15)

It’s quite near impossible not to let those little ones steal your heart. That is exactly what happened to me in 2009 as a newly hired nurse at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). As I became accustomed to the dynamic environment inside of the hospital, I constantly wondered how, outside of it, I could fight for children fighting chronic diseases. Perhaps it was the abandoned, abused newborn admitted to my care, or the eager 17 year old, spontaneously hit with paralysis, who was more worried about attending the prom than the severity of her progressing neurological disorder, that lit the fire.

After much soul searching (and brainstorming), I founded the Gloves for Love Pediatric Cancer Foundation, with the goal of “knocking out pediatric cancer.” Gloves for Love is a 501c(3) foundation that benefits the Cancer Center at CHOP. Since its inception, Gloves for Love has raised over $20,000 through a number of charitable events.

Charitable funds for pediatric cancer support and research truly make a difference in the lives of the sickest of the sick, many of whom fill CHOP’s beds daily. Oftentimes people hear the word “cancer” and think of it as a death sentence. Yet so many advances in treatment methods—new drugs, clinical trials and treatment protocols—allow children to live, to grow up and to have children of their own, to partake in the blessings so many of us take for granted: lives full of relationships, love and faith.

I have found that there is a unique generosity of spirit among those who support Gloves for Love. A large part of this spirit—and momentum—has come from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine community. In between OMM practicals and neurology exams, my classmates find the time to face off against the faculty in charity basketball games and to attend Beach Baggo benefit tournaments. The community recognizes that such fundraisers are not just fun and games; they are intrinsic workings of healing, of encouragement and hope. Their dedicated efforts give sick children a voice and help to raise awareness for them. While parents await a cure for their young sons and daughters, such efforts give them a network of emotional support.

On a personal level, I have been amazed at the ways Gloves for Love has helped me to grow. I am learning new things each day and coming in contact with wonderful people who are willing to donate their time and talents to this important cause. Our shared enthusiasm sustains the foundation—and also my own academic journey whenever times are challenging (balancing DO studies while pursuing a joint MBA/MA program at Saint Joseph’s University is not always easy).

I remain steadfast in my obligation to humanity, to my future patients and to my colleagues. I remain eager to train and to eventually practice during an unprecedented time in the history of medicine. There are now tools to uncover the underlying basis of many childhood cancers. There is a potential to transform the way children with these dreaded diseases will be treated. I believe there will be a cure for pediatric cancer; there has to be, for the next child diagnosed with this malignant disease.

glovesforlove.org
You love PCOM.
The Fund for PCOM has been the primary vehicle through which alumni, parents and friends express their loyalty to the College. Annual gifts are a meaningful way for donors to demonstrate their belief in the College’s continued commitment to the recruitment and training of osteopathic physicians and graduate students who will employ compassionate, holistic approaches to clinical, didactic and other professional responsibilities required in today’s healthcare and scientific environments.

We invite you to play a pivotal role in the life of the College through an annual gift to The Fund for PCOM. Your gift will provide discretionary funding that will be directed to the areas of greatest need at PCOM. Call the Office of Alumni Relations and Development at 800-739-3939 or visit www.fund.4.pcom.edu.