

# NEWS

## A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

### A Journey Along the HIPAA Highway



The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) sets many worthwhile goals for the American healthcare system. It is also a complex, multifaceted federal law affecting all aspects of health care, including patient care and research. Among the requirements are making medical insurance

portable between employers, streamlining medical claims processing, protecting the privacy and security of patient healthcare data and giving patients specific rights to and control over their medical records. On April 14, 2003, after several rounds of modifications, some of those goals were achieved. The School of Medicine has taken its first step down the HIPAA highway.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the School is HIPAA's strict requirements for maintaining the privacy and security of patient information. We conduct medical research and we train medical students. These activities cannot occur without patient contact and the use of patient information. Physicians, researchers and students must have timely access to patients, and to all appropriate and necessary healthcare information. At the same time, patients and research volunteers must be assured that access to their private health care information is limited to those members of our workforce who need it. Meeting those requirements will be a test of wisdom and ingenuity.

Understanding and meeting HIPAA's requirements in a complex organization like ours is daunting. With the help of an external consultant, the School of Medicine spent the past year identifying areas and activities that needed to change. We worked closely with University Physicians, Inc., with sister schools on the UMB campus, with the medical center and other associates. Scores of our employees spent thousands of hours analyzing and fundamentally redesigning core processes. The School drafted dozens of new policies and practices describing how we will keep our pledge of confidentiality to patients and research subjects and detailing how we will protect the information they entrust to us.

In addition to thousands of faculty, staff and students, our workforce includes a vast army of volunteers. The job of training them was also daunting. Employees had to learn new practices in a short time. Conventional classroom instruction could not meet the needs of all employees, so we enlisted computer technology to deliver Internet-based training to individuals who could not attend face-to-face sessions.

Technology played another key role in our HIPAA compliance plan. We redesigned critical portions of our data network to eliminate weaknesses and invested in equipment to fortify them. Special security zones, firewalls, and data monitoring systems helped us lower the number and severity of threats to computer systems. These steps are beginning to pay dividends. Not only is computer security better, the reliability of the School's computer systems has improved.

But more work is left to do. Two other HIPAA regulations will take effect by April of 2005. But even when those are complete, compliance activities will not end. HIPAA is a long road along which the School of Medicine has taken a giant first step.

JAMES E. MCNAMEE, PHD  
ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR INFORMATION SERVICES & CIO

### Russian Physicians Learn About New Cancer Treatments in Visit to the University of Maryland



*L-R: Drs. Oxana Trofimova, Sergey Medvedev and Violeta Sakharovskaja, Sophia Michaelson, Dr. Vassili Milenkine, Cedric Yu, associate professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, Mark Kochevar, administrator, Cancer Center, and Drs. Alexey Nazarenko and Alexander Rusanov.*

A group of Russian radiation oncologists and physicists met with University of Maryland School of Medicine physicians on March 24th and 25th to learn more about innovative new radiation treatments. The visit was part of an exchange program started last year between the University of Maryland and Russia's largest cancer research and treatment facility, the 1,600-bed N.N. Blokhin National Cancer Research Center in Moscow.

The six Russian scientists – four radiation oncologists and two medical physicists – visited the Greenebaum Cancer Center and toured the Department of Radiation Oncology. They met with William R. Regine, MD, professor and chair, and Cedric Yu, DSc, associate professor, and attended a meeting of a tumor evaluation board. They also learned more about the most advanced system for delivering radiation therapy called IMRT (intensity modulated radiation therapy), which uses three-dimensional imagery to target tumors with a high degree of accuracy.

"We can benefit by conducting joint clinical studies with the Russians," said Dr. Yu. "At the Blokhin Center, they treat three times as many cancer patients as we do. By sharing data, we can expand and accelerate our research efforts. The Russian oncologists benefit because they have an opportunity to learn more about cutting-edge technologies available in this country. We can help give them a head start in developing their own programs. So the collaboration ultimately helps cancer patients in both countries."

As part of the program, four University of Maryland doctors have traveled to Russia to take part in conferences to inform Russian oncologists about advanced research and treatments available in the United States. They are Nancy A. Dawson, MD, professor, Department of Medicine, Bert W. O'Malley, Jr., MD, professor, Department of Surgery, Bruce R. Line, MD, professor, Department of Diagnostic Radiology, and W. Bradford Carter, MD, associate professor, Department of Surgery.

A Publication for the  
Faculty & Staff of the

University of Maryland

School of Medicine

Maryland ExpressCare will celebrate its 10-year anniversary on Friday, June 6th. Stop by headquarters between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. for refreshments and to meet the staff. Maryland ExpressCare is located on the ground level of the Shock Trauma building. Contact Linda Ellis at 8-7926 for more information.

# Vision Becomes Reality with Grand Opening of HSF II

CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES TOOK PLACE IN A DAY-LONG CELEBRATION ON MAY 8TH WHEN THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND OFFICIALLY OPENED HEALTH SCIENCES FACILITY II (HSF II) AND USHERED IN A NEW ERA OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

The big day started with a morning lecture for faculty, staff and students. Speaking from the auditorium in MSTF, Rita R. Colwell, PhD, director of the National Science Foundation, set the tone for the day, stressing the benefits of the high quality, high caliber scientific exploration that will be conducted in HSF II. She said, "We continue to learn that fundamental research provides us with options and applications to meet unexpected needs. The flexibility and adaptability of scientific application reminds me of the expression: 'The taller the bamboo grows, the lower it bends.' The more research and knowledge, the more expanded the reach."

Dr. Colwell added, "HSF II is going to create a new synergy on the UMB campus, as investigators from many disciplines share technology and collaborate in a research environment tailored to meet their needs."

The afternoon ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony began in the lobby of HSF II with a welcome from David J. Ramsay, DM, DPhil, president of the University of Maryland, followed by remarks from David A. Knapp, PhD, dean of the School of Pharmacy, and Dean Wilson. "As we focus on new scientific frontiers, HSF II will help ensure that the School of Medicine remains on the cutting edge," said Dean Wilson. "Discoveries and advances await in the fields of genomics, molecular biology, proteomics, and bioinformatics. I have no doubt that the opportunities for scientific collaboration created by HSF II will lead to new breakthroughs in patient care and drug treatment."

Dr. Wilson then introduced Elias A. Zerhouni, MD, director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), who delivered the keynote address. Dr. Zerhouni, a Baltimore resident and former executive vice dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, emphasized the magnitude of the medical research that will be accomplished at the new facility, which he views as the culmination of a scientific vision.

"The completion of the human genome is what is now allowing the investments you are making to become realities for healthcare," said Dr. Zerhouni. "But I think what we need to grapple with is the fact that when you think about what it will take to make further progress, you realize things have changed drastically. We have new ways of making discoveries – new pathways to discoveries – and that is a very important concept. You can no longer make discoveries without investments in basic technology. Whether it is DNA sequencing, imaging from NMR, or the BSL-3 facility you are building here. You are making all the right moves, I have to say. Without that infrastructure, your faculty cannot exert their creativity in the new ways we approach science."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony immediately followed Dr. Zerhouni's words, with Drs. Ramsay, Wilson, Knapp, and Zerhouni, and School of Medicine Board of Visitors member Willard Hackerman, CEO of the Whiting-Turner Contracting Company, taking a snip at black, gold, red, and white ribbons.

The new \$78 million, 101,000 square foot building is the largest on the campus dedicated solely to biomedical research. HSF II will dramatically increase laboratory

space for the schools of medicine and pharmacy and pave the way for breakthroughs in basic science, disease prevention, and drug treatment.

The School of Medicine will occupy six floors of HSF II, which will provide 45 new laboratories, including a Biosafety Level-3 (BSL-3) containment facility for the study of potentially lethal biological agents. This state-of-the-art containment lab – the largest in the eastern United States – will permit infectious disease researchers to work safely with possible bioterrorist agents such as anthrax and other illness-causing bacteria and viruses.

Built with a \$2 million NIH construction grant, and operating under tight security, the BSL-3 facility consists of seven self-contained labs, each with its own independent ventilation system. All doors, fixtures, and openings within the lab are carefully sealed to prevent the escape of biohazards. An insectary will facilitate the study and transmission of insect-borne diseases such as malaria.

The basement of HSF II is home to the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Center. Scientists in the NMR Center will use three enormous magnets to decipher the structure and interactions of proteins at the atomic level. The magnets, called NMR spectrometers, excite the atomic nuclei of molecules and record the responses, which are too minute to be seen even with the world's strongest electron microscopes. The largest of the superconductive magnets stands 13 feet tall, weighs eight tons, and is 350,000 times stronger than the earth's magnetic field.

The grand opening celebration ended with a reception for donors. Deans Knapp and Wilson acknowledged and thanked those in attendance for their contributions. "You are among the very first to see this beautiful new building," said Dean Wilson, "and you are here this evening because your thoughtful support has helped this institution achieve a new level of excellence. This building would not have been possible without the loyalty and generosity of our alumni and our friends."

HSF II adjoins the original Health Sciences Facility, which opened in 1995. The new building includes offices for faculty and staff, three seminar rooms for small group learning, and a 100-seat auditorium for lectures and special presentations.

Commemorative posters of the HSF II grand opening are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. To request one, please email Heather Graham at [hgraham@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:hgraham@som.umaryland.edu).



*Left: Dr. Zerhouni speaks at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.*

*Right: Dr. Colwell addresses faculty, staff and students.*



*The view from "the point" conference room.*



*The exterior of HSF II.*



*Hallway in HSF II.*



*View of the landscaped courtyard from the lobby of HSF II.*



*Whiting-Turner CEO Willard Hackerman, UMMS CEO Morton I. Rapoport, MD, and Maryland Treasurer Nancy Kopp chat at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.*



*Dean Wilson, Dr. Zerbouni, Dean Knapp and President Ramsey in the courtyard of HSF II.*



## Anthony S. Fauci Receives Honorary Degree at 2003 Commencement



The honorary degree of Doctor of Science was bestowed on Anthony S. Fauci, MD, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) at the National Institutes of Health, during the University of Maryland, Baltimore's commencement ceremony on May 23rd.

"Dr. Fauci's steady leadership in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks instilled confidence and assured the nation that everything possible was being done to protect the public from biological threats," says Dean Wilson. "Much of that vital research was and still is being conducted here at the School of Medicine, and we are grateful for the confidence Dr. Fauci has shown in us."

Dr. Fauci, who became director of NIAID in 1984, is known for his many contributions to basic and clinical research on the pathogenesis and treatment of immune-mediated diseases such as AIDS. Dr. Fauci became internationally renowned as a pioneer in human immunoregulation. His observations serve as the basis for the current understanding of the regulation of the human immune response.

Dr. Fauci has made seminal contributions to the understanding of how the AIDS virus destroys the body's defenses, leading to its susceptibility to deadly infections. He has been instrumental in developing strategies for the therapy and immune reconstitution of patients with AIDS, as well as for a vaccine to prevent HIV infection. He continues to devote much of his research time to identifying the nature of the immunopathogenic mechanisms of HIV infection and the scope of the body's immune responses to the AIDS retrovirus.

## Quick Studies

Claudia R. Baquet, MD, MPH, associate professor, Department of Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine, and associate dean for Policy and Planning, chaired the Inaugural Forum on Reducing Health Disparities at the National Managed Health Care Congress March 10-12 in Washington, DC.

Michelle Cabrera, MS-1, received the 2003 Student Award for Excellence in Clinical Services for Medicine from the Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research Program in the UMB Office of Academic Affairs. The program presents the annual award to outstanding students who have demonstrated a commitment to the care of older adults.

Timothy B. Gilbert, MD, MBA, MSc, FACC, associate professor, Departments of Anesthesiology and Medicine, was elected to membership in the prestigious Association of University Anesthesiologists at the Association's 50th annual meeting in Milwaukee. Fewer than one percent of anesthesiologists in the United States are elected to membership.

Phyllis Hayes, assistant to the dean, was re-elected as the northern region representative to the Association of American Medical Colleges Deans' Assistant Group during the organization's spring meeting in Miami.

Eve J. Higginbotham, MD, professor and chair, Department of Ophthalmology, has been named a Council of Deans (COD) fellow by the Association of American Medical Colleges. Fellows are nominated by their deans and are faculty who presumably have an interest in pursuing deanship. Fellows are invited to COD administrative board meetings and are expected to attend major meetings throughout the year.

Elijah Saunders, MD, professor, Department of Medicine, will be honored in August by the Association of Black Cardiologists at their annual testimonial banquet in Philadelphia. Dr. Saunders, a founding member of the association, will be honored for "significant lifetime achievement" in cardiology.

Yibin Wang, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Physiology, has received a four-year, \$1.3 million grant from the National Institutes of Health National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute for a study titled "JNK Regulation of Cx43 Expression and Cardiac Remodeling."

### FUNfact

Did you know that the School of Medicine generates more than \$1 billion in economic activity for the state of Maryland each year?



Guest speakers for the Student National Medical Association's black history month lecture series included Louis Randall, MD, '57 (far left), the first African American OB/GYN resident at the School of Medicine, and Donald Stewart, MD, '55 (fourth from left), one of the two first African American students at the School of Medicine. Also pictured (L-R) are students Gareth Warren, Barbara Robinson, Sampson Kyere, Erica Martin, Kiana Hebron, Sherry Taylor, and Donna Parker, MD, associate dean for Student & Faculty Development.

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# SOMNews

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Campus Mail

MONTHLY SOM COUNCIL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS. THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25TH AT 3:00 PM IN THE VAMHCS'S JOHN DENNIS AUDITORIUM. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!