

# NEWSLETTER

## CHAIR'S REPORT

We have emerged from a tough winter, which was highlighted by icy temperatures, lots of snow and a sudden and unexpected economic downturn. The snow may be gone, but the reality of the world's economy seems to have settled in for a while longer at least. The ramifications are being felt in belt tightening at all levels, perhaps more so at the university. It will be essential for the Department of Paediatrics to ensure that none of our academic programs are seriously threatened and that we work closely with the hospital and university to ride out the crisis with as little wobble as possible.

Despite widespread economic pessimism, these are exciting times of renewal in the Department of Paediatrics.

### Division Heads

1. We welcome Dr. Shoo Lee as the new University Head of the Division of Neonatology, Paediatrician-in-Chief at Mount Sinai Hospital, Division Head at SickKids and the Women's Auxilliary Chair in Neonatology. Shoo comes from Edmonton where he built up the Canadian Neonatal Network™ into a formidable international presence. He takes over the reins from Keith Tanswell, whose more than 11-year tenure as Division Head was marked by tremendous enhancement of our academic mission. Welcome Shoo, and thanks Keith for a magnificent job!
2. Dr. Rosanna Weksberg stepped down at the end of 2008 as Division Head of Clinical and Metabolic Genetics. Daune MacGregor will be interim head until the appointment of the new Division Head. Thanks to Rosanna for an excellent 10 years.
3. External reviews followed by searches are underway in Haematology/Oncology and Paediatric Emergency Medicine as both Victor Blanchette and Bill Mounstephen reach the end of their 10-year terms. Internal five-year reviews are also scheduled for later this year in Infectious Diseases (Upton Allen) and Paediatric Medicine (Jeremy Friedman).

### Other Faculty News

1. Dr. Ron Laxer returned to full-time academic practice in Rheumatology in March after six years as the VP of Medical Affairs. To quote one of the division members: "Yoda returneth!" What greater compliment can be paid!
2. We welcome Dr. Rulan Parekh who has joined the Division of Nephrology from Johns Hopkins University. Rulan is cross-trained in both adult and paediatric nephrology and is currently situated in the CHES Research Program at 123 Edward.
3. Dr. Tal Finkelstein-Schechter has joined the BMT Section of the Division of Haematology/Oncology. Tal has been working in BMT for some time and provides a much needed addition to our burgeoning BMT program.
4. Dr. Tina Martimianakis is our first departmental education scholar – 50% of her time will be protected for her own research, with the remaining 50% dedicated to enhancement of education scholarship in the department at large. Her office is in room 1447, along with the Postgraduate Education Offices. This is an exciting new direction for our department
5. Drs. Yaron Avitzur (from Schneider's Children's Hospital in Israel) and Binita Kamatha (from CHOP) will join the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition later this year. Yaron's special interest is in bowel failure and intestinal transplantation, and Binita's is in hepatology.



6. Dr. Catherine Walsh of GI is the recipient of a doctoral scholarship from the Canadian Child Health Clinician Scientist Program (CCHCSP), and Dr. Tom Akiyama of Neurology is this year's Transition Position Awardee. Dr. Shaun Morris of ID is a recipient of the Paediatrician Scientist Development Program (PSDP) scholarship from the Association of Medical School Paediatric Department Chairs. All are highly deserving of these honours.
7. On February 27, Dr. Earl Silverman of Rheumatology was awarded the Ho Chair in Autoimmune Diseases. Earl is a clinician-investigator in the Department of Paediatrics and a Senior Associate Scientist in the Research Institute. He is internationally known for his research in lupus. Well done Earl!
8. This year the Canadian Paediatric Society will bestow its most prestigious award, the Allan Ross Award, to Dr. Victor Blanchette, Head of the Division of Haematology/Oncology, for his outstanding contributions to paediatrics in Canada.

### **Promotions 2009**

Please join me in heartily congratulating the following members our faculty who will be promoted on July 1, 2009:

*To Full Professor:*

Gabrielle deVeber, Neurology  
Moshe Ipp, Paediatric Medicine  
Miriam Kaufman, Adolescent Medicine  
Lorelei Lingard, Medical Education

*To Associate Professor:*

Adelle Atkinson, Medical Education/Immunology/Allergy  
Stacey Bernstein, Medical Education/Paediatric Medicine  
Hartmut Grasmann, Respiratory Medicine  
Eyal Grunebaum, Immunology/Allergy  
Hans Hitzler, Haematology/Oncology  
Bob Jankov, Neonatology  
Angelo Mikrogianakis, Paediatric Emergency Medicine  
Patrick McNamara, Neonatology  
Savithiri Ratnapalan, Paediatric Emergency Medicine  
Chris Parshuram, Critical Care  
Prakesh Shah, Neonatology  
Brenda Spiegler, Psychology  
Lillian Sung, Haematology/Oncology  
Diane Wherrett, Endocrinology

Well done!!

We thank, once again, Mel Freedman and our Departmental Promotions Committee members for their invaluable contributions. For those contemplating promotion in 2010, please contact Mel early in the summer.

### **Grants**

The last funding season was brutal at a number of the national agencies, especially CIHR. Nonetheless, congratulations are in order for the following grant recipients of CIHR funding: Brian Feldman, Rae Yeung, Kathy Boutis and Bob Jankov. Congratulations too to all those whose grants were funded by other agencies, including Heart and Stroke, CF and OICR.

### **Clinical Challenges**

We have been working very closely with the CHS portfolios on a couple of key stress points in our clinical systems.

Emergency Department: We weathered the first part of the ED renovations with collaboration of all groups. The enhanced hours of Urgent Care, now adjacent to the ED in Orthopaedics Clinic, the staff-to-staff consultations, the morning scrums, and the imperative to move admitted patients more rapidly into the units, have all helped. The first new section of the magnificent new ED opened in March.

Chemotherapy delays: Our next challenge is to ensure that there are no delays in chemotherapy for children on the Oncology service. The successes of the Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplantation teams are dependent on timely access to therapy.

With Marilyn Monk, VP for Child Health Services and a member of our Paediatric Executive, we are working towards an ever increasing collaboration between the division heads and CHS directors – this approach is already reaping rewards.

## Strategic Priorities

The Five Strategic Priorities of the Department of Paediatrics are:

1. Provide leadership in clinical care, education and research to promote child health.
2. Develop expertise to ensure collaborative and co-ordinated care for children with complex health-care needs.
3. Establish sustainable resources to support current and future delivery of excellence in education.
4. Develop and sustain a cadre of well-trained clinician researchers.
5. Advocate for principles that the generation of new knowledge and its application are fundamental to excellence in child health-care.

The complete document can be found in the “Who We Are” section on the departmental website at [www.sickkids.ca/paediatrics](http://www.sickkids.ca/paediatrics). It is presented in three parts: first, the five pivotal statements, followed by explanations of their intent, and finally by the strategic plans for each of the three advisory committees from which the five statements were developed.

As we look forward to the warmer environmental temperatures, let us hope that we will also see a warming of the economic climate in the near future.

Best wishes,

Denis

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Resident Research Day** will be held on June 3, 2009. Dr. Shoo Lee will be the keynote speaker.

**The Annual Awards Day Celebration** will be held on Wednesday, June 17, 2009 at 9 a.m. in the Hollywood Theatre. Please join us to honour this year’s award recipients. Refreshments will be served following the ceremony in the Rotunda.

**The 2009 Annual Recognition Dinner** will be held at the Toronto Cricket Club located at 141 Wilson Avenue. This event will take place on Wednesday, June 17, 2009. Join us to recognize those reaching normal retirement age and our 25-year service awardees. Those reaching normal retirement age include: Dr. Robert Hilliard, Dr. O. Carter Snead and Dr. Paul Pencharz. Those who have completed 25 years of service include: Dr. Lee Benson, Dr. Victor Blanchette, Dr. Joe Clarke, Dr. Denis Geary, Dr. Anne Griffiths, Dr. Jonathan Hellmann, Dr. Anthony Hui, Dr. Paul Hwang, Dr. Beverly Kupfert and Dr. Rosanna Weksberg. The evening will begin with cocktails at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. We hope to see you there.

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## NEW RECRUITS



### Division of Haematology/Oncology

Dr. Tal Finkelstein-Schechter joined the Division of Haematology-Oncology in February 2009. She received her university training at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Medical School and graduated in 1999. She subsequently trained in Paediatrics at Schneider Medical Center, Tel-Aviv University. Following her residency, she trained in the field of bone-marrow transplantation under the leadership of Dr. Morris Kletzel at Children’s Memorial, Northwestern University in Chicago and conducted research related to chronic graft-versus-host disease. She then moved to Toronto and from 2005 to 2008, she did subspecialty training in paediatric Haematology-Oncology here at SickKids. During her training, she conducted pharmacokinetic research studies with Pharmacy and Clinical Pharmacology. In her final fellowship year, Tal trained in the Bone-Marrow Transplant Program and worked as a junior staff in the Blood and Marrow Transplant Section. Her main clinical and research interests are in the fields of graft-versus host disease therapy responses and pharmacokinetic studies of medication related to conditioning regimens. She has published several peer-reviewed articles in those fields and she plans to continue researching these areas in children undergoing bone-marrow transplantation.



#### **Division of Neonatology**

Dr. Shoo Lee is a neonatologist and health economist. He is a Professor of Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Head of the Division of Neonatology at the University of Toronto; Paediatrician-in-Chief and Director of the Maternal-Infant Care (MICare) Research Centre at Mount Sinai Hospital; and The Women's Auxillary Chair in Neonatology and Head of the Division of Neonatology at The Hospital for Sick Children. He received his medical degree from the University of Singapore, completed paediatric training at the Janeway Children's Hospital in Newfoundland and neonatal fellowship training at Boston's Children's Hospital, and received his PhD in Health Policy (Economics) from Harvard University. He established the Canadian Neonatal Network™ and the International Neonatal Collaboration to foster collaborative research and leads the CIHR Team in Maternal-Infant Care. His research focuses on improving quality of care, patient outcomes and health-care services delivery. He has received many awards for his work, including the Knowledge Translation Award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Aventis Pasteur Research Award and the Distinguished Neonatologist Award from the Canadian Paediatric Society, and the Premier Member of Honour Award from the Sociedad Iberoamericana de Neonatologia.



#### **Division of Nephrology**

Dr. Rulan Parekh recently joined the Division of Nephrology as an Associate Professor of Paediatrics and Medicine. She completed her combined Pediatric and Internal Medicine Residency and Pediatric and Internal Medicine Nephrology Fellowships at the University of Michigan. During her fellowship, she also obtained a Master's of Science in Biostatistics and Clinical Research Design at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. She joined the faculty at Johns Hopkins University and concentrated on clinical research with two areas of interest: 1) risk factors such as genetic risk leading to the progression of chronic kidney disease; and 2) sequelae of chronic kidney disease and end stage renal disease. She has recently published a seminal paper describing the discovery of a gene, MYH9, and the association with non-diabetic end stage renal disease among African-Americans. This novel genetic finding has the potential for screening high-risk individuals for kidney disease and also understanding potentially common pathways leading to kidney failure.



#### **Medical Education**

Tina Martimianakis was recently appointed to the Department of Paediatrics as an Education Researcher. She holds a Master's in Political Science from Wilfrid Laurier University and a Master's in Education with a focus on health professional education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, where she is currently completing a Doctorate in Higher Education. Tina also completed a fellowship in Medical Education at the Wilson Centre, sponsored through the Department of Psychiatry. Her work focuses on the impact of socio-economic priorities on institutional restructuring with a focus on power relations that manifest systemically and are reproduced within and between disciplines. She is currently researching interdisciplinarity as a process of knowledge production, and exploring the impact of related governance arrangements on faculty experiences. Her work also examines how researchers interface with clinical teachers and explores ways to use faculty development for improving the integration of science into clinical teaching. Tina is an active teacher and program developer and contributes to the enhancement of education scholarship within the Departments of Paediatrics, Psychiatry and the Faculty of Medicine more broadly.