

# NEWSLETTER

## CHAIR'S REPORT

I hope everyone has had a good summer with some time for rest and relaxation. The start of the new academic year always brings with it a sense of excitement and uncertainty. Will this year be as productive as last? What is happening in our health economy to challenge our mission of excellence in clinical care, education and research? Will we be able to renegotiate our current AFP to ensure that much needed new positions are created in key areas? How will the new faculty fit in our department? And so on.

As the eternal optimist, confident in our department's impressive prowess, I look forward to another stellar year. True, the economy remains in intensive care and ongoing funding of key programs remains somewhat in limbo. Here are some of the challenges we need to address this year:

- Creation of a Department of Paediatrics' Office of Faculty Development to ensure that all staff members receive similar mentorship, support and guidance as their careers evolve. In the next few months we will advertise for the position of Director of this office – in all likelihood it will be a 0.25-0.3 FTE position but a few last discussions need to occur in advance of this decision.
- Patient Safety (PS) and Quality Improvement initiative: Ron Laxer has agreed to take on the PS initiative in our department and with Trey Coffey is developing a plan of action. This will dovetail very nicely with the PS program of the UofT and SickKids. More on QI to follow.
- The eternal tweaking of the CDCP will continue. This past summer, Peter Coyte, a health economics professor in Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at UofT, worked closely with the Paediatrics Executive, interviewed more than 30 key stakeholders. He has provided us with a preliminary report. The recommendations include:
  - faculty development as discussed above
  - a more flexible approach to job profile descriptions for established faculty
  - combining of two profiles, clinician teachers and clinician specialists, into a single profile, called, e.g. Academic Clinician, in order to ensure a minimum of protected time for all faculty
  - consideration of the triennial review using a single dossier and combined Tripartite Advisory Committee
  - beginning to address the departmental financial plan in light of the absence of mandatory retirement.
- Appointment of Division Heads in Clinical Genetics, Paediatric Emergency Medicine, Haematology/Oncology and Nephrology. Thanks to the many of you who serve on these search and review committees – no small task!
- Renegotiation of the AFP – things are stalled in most of the AFPs across the country given the economic meltdown. However, we have some key commitments to meet and have started to discuss these with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.
- Innovation cannot be forgotten as funding for clinical and research programs tighten. The development and application of new knowledge in the laboratory or at the bedside remain essential components of who we are and what we do.



We have once again welcomed a remarkably talented group of residents and fellows from all corners of the world. In addition, five new faculty members have joined us in this academic year – see their photos and bios below:

- Binita Kamath, from CHOP, is a hepatologist in Gastroenterology, Clinical Nutrition and Hepatology.
- Yaron Avitzur, from Schneider's Hospital in Israel, has also joined GI/CN/H. Yaron's expertise is in intestinal failure.
- Komudi Siriwardena has come from New Zealand to join Clinical Genetics and Metabolics.
- Rakesh Bhattacharjee has returned from his "sleep fellowship" in Louisville and is spending this year in Respiratory Medicine.
- Deb Levy, from New York, has joined Rheumatology supported by an NIH career development award.

Again, welcome them, support them and collaborate with them.

We have also said goodbye to some of our faculty: Paul Pencharz retired in June, but continues his research program; Rod McInnes is off to lead the Research Institute at Montreal's Jewish General Hospital; and Angelo Mikrogianakis has gone to head the Division of Emergency Medicine in Calgary. We wish them all well in these new endeavours.

We have also made a small change to our Academic Leave Policy such that sabbaticals of six months or less are taken at full pay, while those of 12 months are now in line with the University of Toronto at 82.5% income for the period of leave. This allows the remaining funds to be used to support clinical coverage where needed.

Finally, please attend the weekly Grand Rounds: Neil Sweezey has taken over the Grand Rounds Committee from Lisa Robinson who did a superb job. This year's program promises to be quite outstanding once again.

With best wishes for the new academic year.

Denis

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## UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

### Change to the Transcription of Grades in the Undergraduate Medicine Program

The Faculty of Medicine will transcribe undergraduate medical grades for all courses as Credit/No Credit (i.e., no more honors!). The changes will take place for Years 1, 2 and 3 and 4 as of September 2009. The principal reasons for the change include the following:

- It is better aligned with the focus on competency-based education.
- Most medical schools across Canada are adopting, or have already adopted, this model.
- In our current system, "honors" is not discriminating and has relatively little meaning since the course averages usually hover around 80% (H).
- Students have overwhelmingly voted for this system.
- Institutions that currently have a credit/no-credit system report significantly less stressed students with no evidence of "just passing behavior".
- Students will see credit/no-credit on their transcripts, but will continue to see their subcomponent marks in rotations as F-P-H as a way of giving them some feedback on their progress.

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## PHYSICIANS ARE ESSENTIAL PLAYERS IN INFLUENZA A H1N1 READINESS AT SICKKIDS

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In April 2009, a new variant of Influenza A H1N1, the swine variant, reared its head. By June 12th, WHO had declared a pandemic. Fortunately at SickKids, earlier pandemic planning positioned us favourably to respond.

Our Influenza Management Team (IMT), led by Cindy Bruce-Barrett, is in charge of SickKids preparedness planning. Our goal and challenge is to ensure that globally, we maintain our core business, i.e., safe patient care, in the face of a surge in emergency room visits and admissions (including to ICU) for febrile respiratory illnesses, and in the face of an illness which may render up to 50% of our workforce and supply chain inactive.

The IMT has been using a multipronged approach to consider capacity needs (see below), staff health and safety, patient management, communication and education, and maintenance of core Research Institute activities. In the near future, a skills inventory will be circulated to identify which staff, including MDs, could be redeployed to other hospital areas should the needs arise.

Capacity plans have been developed by clinical divisions and non-clinical departments, framed by addressing the following question: What will our service look like if we are forced to cut down 30-50% of our activities? CHS Directors have shepherded this exercise in each of their areas, and many MDs have featured in these discussions. It is absolutely imperative that MDs be part of the conversation, that you contribute to the discussion and agree on priority activities for your area, and that you plan the level of medical staffing that will be required. Our goal is to have the hospital function as a unified healthcare delivery system, rather than as isolated silos of clinical work. Larry Roy and I will be developing a comprehensive MD strategy for pandemic that we will present. Meanwhile, Cindy or I are happy to attend any rounds or discussions. Most importantly, be involved and stay informed.

Anne Matlow

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### **Paediatric Consultants Annual General Meeting**

The Paediatric Consultants Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 2, 2009 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the Hollywood Theatre.

### **Holiday Party**

The Holiday Party will be held on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 once again at The Gallery Grill of Hart House, University of Toronto. Invitations will be sent out in November. We hope that you will be able to come out and help to celebrate the season.

### **Residents' Skits**

This year's skits will be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2007 in the Hollywood Theatre. Come and have some fun as you watch the residents perform.

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## NEW RECRUITS

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### **Division of Clinical and Metabolic Genetics**

Dr. Komudi Siriwardena is a graduate of University of Otago Medical School in New Zealand and completed her General Paediatric Medicine training in Dunedin, New Zealand. Her training included a two year research fellowship at the Cancer Genetics Research Laboratory working on imprinting defects associated with somatic growth abnormalities. At the end of her training, she worked as a Senior Lecturer and Paediatrician at University of Otago prior to a three year fellowship in Clinical and Metabolic Genetics at Sickkids between 1999 and 2002. On her return to New Zealand, Komudi worked as a Clinical Geneticist, and Acting Clinical Director of Northern Regional Genetic Services in Auckland that provides genetic health services to half of the population of New Zealand. She returns to work as a Staff Physician in the Metabolic Services.



#### **Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition**

Dr. Yaron Avitzur is a graduate of Sackler Medical School at Tel-Aviv University, Israel. He completed his pediatric residency in Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel and was licensed as a Paediatric Gastroenterologist in 2005 after a dual fellowship in Paediatric Gastroenterology and Pediatric Academic Muti-Organ Transplantation at Sickkids. Upon the completion of his fellowship, he returned to Israel and joined the Institute of Gastroenterology, Nutrition and Liver Diseases at Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel as a senior Pediatric Gastroenterologist. While in Israel he led the establishment of the national pediatric small bowel transplantation program and cared for children with chronic liver diseases before and after liver transplantation and for children with gut failure. Yaron joined the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition in July 2009 as Medical Director, Intestinal Rehabilitation and Transplantation. His main research interest is in the field of short and long term outcomes after paediatric liver and small bowel transplantation and in clinical aspects of intestinal failure and rehabilitation.



Dr. Binita Kamath completed her medical training at Cambridge University, England. She did her pediatric residency training between several London hospitals, including Kings College Hospital. She moved to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in 2000 to further her specialist training and there completed her Fellowship in Pediatric Gastroenterology and Hepatology. During this time, she developed a strong research interest in cholestatic liver disease and specifically focused on Alagille Syndrome. She has approximately 20 publications in this field and regularly speaks at national conferences on this topic. Binita joins the Division of Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition as a Clinician Scientist. She plans to establish a Canadian Alagille Syndrome Centre at the Hospital for Sick Children. Her clinical interests are in paediatric hepatology and liver transplantation.



#### **Division of Respiratory Medicine**

Dr. Rakesh Bhattacharjee completed his Bachelor of Science degree at The University of Alberta, and Medical Doctorate degree at McMaster University. He completed his paediatric residency training program at the University of Toronto in June 2005. Also in Toronto, he completed a clinical fellowship in Paediatric Respiratory Medicine in June 2007. Rakesh has attained certification in both Paediatrics and Paediatric Respiratory Medicine in Canada. He completed a second clinical fellowship in Adult and Pediatric Sleep Medicine at the University of Louisville in June 2008. He has attained certification in Behavioral Sleep Medicine in 2008, and is eligible for certification in General Sleep Medicine in the United States this year. He was a junior faculty member at the University of Louisville where he completed a year of grant supported academic research investigating the cardiovascular consequences of obesity and obstructive sleep apnea in children, work that led to his selection as the American Academy of Sleep Medicine young investigator award in 2009. Rakesh now joins the Division of Paediatric Respiratory Medicine at the Hospital for Sick Children where his responsibilities will concentrate on both paediatric sleep and respiratory medicine. His research interests continue to examine the dual effects of obesity and obstructive sleep apnea on child health. In addition, he plans to collaborate to develop formalized sleep education to future trainees in Canada.



#### **Division of Rheumatology**

Dr. Deb Levy received her medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1995. She completed her postgraduate training in Pediatrics at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City, and then completed Rheumatology training at both the Hospital for Sick Children and Columbia University in New York City. Deb joined the faculty at Columbia University in 2003, and also completed a Masters Degree in Biostatistics at Columbia's School of Public Health. Deb has now returned to Toronto, joining the Rheumatology Division at SickKids as an Associate Staff Physician. She will continue her research into neurocognitive function in childhood-onset Lupus, research that is supported by a career development award from the National Institutes of Health. Deb has started clinics at Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga and also at The London Health Sciences Centre, making Paediatric Rheumatology more accessible to patients living outside of Toronto.