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It's been another beautiful day in Michigan as we move toward a busy Fall grant period. We are currently putting the finishing touches on Year 3 of our grant project and have recently received the news that we have continuing funding for Year 4. We have completed strategic planning for Year 4 with the help of our partners, and are looking forward to several new endeavors which we will detail in subsequent newsletters. Thank you to all who have contributed their excellent work toward completion of reports and further movement towards our grant goals for Optimal Aging in Michigan. This is great news for all who understand the importance of our mission.

As we advised you in our last newsletter, our grant sponsored the series of geriatric based lectures at the Michigan Osteopathic Association (MOA) 115th Annual Spring Scientific Convention in May. Richard Pascucci, DO; Michael Weiting, DO; David Neff, DO; Edward Rosick, DO; and Carol Monson, DO were our featured speakers with emphasis on the Optimal Aging philosophy of our grant work. Our presentations were well received. Should you have missed them, the PowerPoint presentations and the videos are currently being loaded onto the Department of Family and Community Medicine Website. Please be our guest and peruse them at your convenience on our website listed further down this page.

We continue to be involved in the curriculum revision at MSUCOM. Geriatric content has been inserted in the third year clerkship curriculum and new educational materials are being developed with the support of our grant.

With regard to our fellowship curriculum, much of the development work has been completed and accomplishments have really become evident over the past year. Our list of completed educational modules has grown to include: Ambulatory Care, Inpatient Care, Hospice and Palliative Care, Neurology, Nursing Home Care, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Geriatric Psychology.

These educational modules will eventually be made available in several formats including course outlines, content and materials, and video and audio presentations to use online and for distance learning. This will give instructors many options as to how they can use the educational modules in working with their students.

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You can check out our Geriatric Grant Website at the following link:

http://com.msu.edu/FCM/Geriatrics.htm

We will continue to work on our website development to make it a useful site for all types of information and education on caring for geriatric patients. Future plans for this site include additional resource information and library links.

With the help of Dr. Jon Rohrer and SCS (State-Wide Campus System) we will be afforded an opportunity to distribute our newsletter and educational materials to a wider audience. In addition, Dr. Rohrer has agreed to include us in at least one luncheon presentation, to be scheduled, to offer further geriatric education to our FM and IM residents. As part of our continued relationship with the Governor’s Office on Services to the Aging, they have agreed to distribute our newsletter across Michigan. So if you are new to our newsletter, we welcome you. We want to involve all of Michigan in helping our aging citizens receive care toward Optimal Aging with MSUCOM.

HELP US RECRUIT GERIATRICIANS FOR MICHIGAN!

Geriatric Position Available
The department is looking to hire a geriatrician. If you are interested, please contact: Family & Community Medicine Chair, Dr. Edward Rosick at (517) 355-7542.

Geriatric Fellowships Available
Attention graduating residents or currently practicing physicians:
Our grant continues to support Geriatric Fellowships at the following sites: Sparrow (Lansing), Botsford (Farmington), Metro Health (Grand Rapids), and (FQHC) Federally Qualified Health Center (Detroit).
If you (or someone you know) are interested in applying for a Geriatric Fellowship or want more information about grant activities and educational material development, please contact our grant office at:

Carol L. Monson, DO, MS, Project Director

My Journey to Geriatrics

Like many people who work in the field of geriatrics, I did not set out to be a geriatrician. In medical school, I knew surgical specialties were not for me. Family medicine was too broad for me to manage. So the natural choice was Internal Medicine. I did my residency in internal medicine. Towards the end of the residency, I did not feel comfortable managing the most complicated geriatrics patients. I decided to spend another year in geriatrics fellowship to gain some experience in this area.

After the fellowship, I started a solo private practice in internal medicine. I had an office based practice that included ambulatory care, nursing home, and hospital inpatient care. Over a period of five years, the practice slowly gravitated to geriatrics. By the time I closed my practice in Dec 2013 (12 years later), it was composed of about 1/3 ambulatory geriatrics and 2/3 long term care (nursing facilities and assisted living facilities).

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I came to geriatrics for reasons other than academic or clinical interest in the field. I (like many others) stayed because of the gratification experienced in serving this population. From the outset, one cannot see how geriatrics can be an attractive specialty. Clinically, geriatric patients are most complex and the visits are very time consuming. However, the enjoyment of practicing geriatric medicine comes in many other forms. 1) My patients and their families are among the most appreciative people. 2) I learned many life’s lessons from my patients. Patients in their 70’s and beyond have the wisdom of a life time to offer. 3) The flexible schedule associated with long term care make it possible for me to balance professional and personal life. 4) If well managed, a practice in geriatric medicine can be financially rewarding. 5) Most importantly, it is the feeling of doing something good for the most vulnerable population in society that keeps me in the field of geriatric medicine. I sincerely hope that some of you will have the chance to experience the joy of working with geriatrics patients.

Qingping Wang, MD, PhD

Spotlight On…

Geriatric Fellows

We asked our recently graduated Geriatric Fellows to share brief stories of where geriatric education has led them in their career path.

Why Geriatrics and where has it led me?  Where has my journey led me?

Dr. Kristy Beckholt, D.O.

Dr. Allison Turner, D.O.

Geriatrics has always held a close place in my heart. My dad has had multiple health issues. He was always healthy, ate right, exercised, etc. However, he has been stricken with many etiologies, including viral cardiomyopathy and prostate cancer. He is presently 73 years old and I can honestly say he is the main reason I have a love for geriatrics. The population aged 65 and over will only continue to grow and so will their need for excellent care. I enjoy taking the time to get to know each patient as a person. With this approach, their care is not as daunting as it may seem. My journey as a geriatrician has led me to be a hospitalist at Sparrow where I am able to provide care to the elderly while they are acutely ill.

Kristy Beckholt, D.O.

This question is best answered by borrowing the title of a book by J.R.R. Tolkien: There and Back Again: A Hobbit’s Tale. I started my journey with a general surgery internship followed by one year of general surgery residency. After realizing that surgery was not my calling, I changed to family practice. While completing my family practice residency, I fell in love with helping older adults which then caused me to pursue a geriatric fellowship. During my time working with geriatric patients, I developed a passion for hospice and palliative care. Fortunately, I was able to transition into a palliative medicine position in beautiful St. Joseph, Michigan.

Allison Turner, D.O.
Zest for Life—Inspirational True Story...

Note: This is one of a series of articles about people over 60 years old who might be encountered by an osteopathic doctor in medical practice. Individuals described have a “Zest for Life.” They are people with interesting ideas, people who have had interesting life experiences, and they are people you might like to get to know!

Gwen is a vibrant, black 82-year old woman with a mixed heritage including Irish, Native American of the Cherokee tradition, and African American. She is aware, alert, full of laughter, and in very good health. She takes no medications, has no major health problems, and is active and involved in her neighborhood and community.

Born in Michigan in 1932, she grew up in one of the few black families in predominantly Polish Hamtramck. For three years of her childhood, she was sent to a special school because she had had scarlet and rheumatic fevers and it was believed she needed special care. She has wonderful memories of those days, though, like getting a cookie for a penny at the grocery or a scoop of ice cream at the corner creamery for 3 cents a scoop, 5 cents for a double! (Gwen had – and still has - a sweet tooth!) At the age of 9, she remembers the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and the newspaper boy hauling his wagon full of newspapers around to sell, yelling out the tragic news that would change the lives of so many people for so many years.

Gwen worked from the age of 18 until she retired at a variety of jobs, many of which led to life-long friendships. Gwen has the gift of making good friends, wherever she is, regardless of the situation she finds herself in. Gwen has three sons, from two marriages, both of which ended in divorce, one in part because of the husband’s problems with jealousy and need to control, and one in part because of the husband’s use of alcohol and a single episode of violence, which was enough to get her to leave.

Gwen has lived in Michigan, Maryland (to help a friend), Illinois (Chicago near Lake Michigan), Washington (she loved Seattle!), Alabama (to take care of her ailing mother), and back to Michigan (where she wanted to be near family). She has traveled extensively, enjoying going to places like Alaska (where she got frightened by a 10’ foot tall stuffed brown bear!), a wonderful trip to see London and Paris, and a trip to the Bahamas for her 65th birthday.

Artistic in nature, Gwen has acted in theatrical productions, written poetry that might be turned into song lyrics, and often journals and writes to express her thoughts and emotions. Gwen likes to read, and once set herself the goal of reading 100 books in one year – and she did it! She is a kind, considerate, good-natured friend, and often finds herself helping her neighbors in all kinds of ways.

Most delightfully, since returning to Michigan, life has brought her into contact once again with a man she loved years ago. They are rekindling their friendship, and it appears to be turning into a lively romance!

Gwen says she is in “a good place” in her life. She is content. As a committed Christian, she feels that God plays a central role in her life, and she feels very blessed. She says her life is a joy, and laughingly says “I amaze myself!”

You would consider yourself quite lucky if you had a chance to get to know Gwen as a patient or a friend!!

Jan Bocskay, MSCMH, MSW