



The Changing Face of Primary Care Time for a Facelift

“The time is ripe.”

This statement reflects an underlying theme presented by Julia Andrieni, MD, at the 16th Annual Primary Care Dinner on December 2. Chosen by medical students to speak at the event, Dr. Andrieni, associate professor of medicine, vice chair of clinical services and chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine, addressed “The Changing Face of Primary Care” and several of the challenges facing the field, including physician shortages, medical student interest in other fields, low levels of reimbursement and the perceived image problem. Yet, where others see difficulties, Dr. Andrieni sees opportunity and envisions primary care as a “new specialty” under any type of health care reform.

The Annual Primary Care Dinner offers medical students the opportunity to ask questions of primary care physicians who practice at UMass Memorial and in the community to better understand what primary care medicine is all about. More than 70 first- and second-year medical students and 40 primary care faculty and administrators attended.

“It was my pleasure to have this opportunity, and I was glad to see such lively conversation afterward,” said Dr. Andrieni, a member of the Center for the Advancement of Primary Care Executive Committee. “Many of the students stayed well beyond the dinner to continue the conversation. Hopefully, I gave them something to think about.”

This year’s event was organized by Matt Ducey, Liz Herrup and Jonathan Klaucke, student leaders in the Generalist Physician Program interest group.

“Dr. Andrieni emphasized that despite our country’s reputation, knowledge, advances and financial investment in the health care field, we still pale in comparison to many other countries and the effectiveness of their health care systems,” said Ducey. “There is a strong association between better health and outcomes and the percentage of practicing primary care doctors, and it is time we try to shift our physician workforce distribution back to 50/50 and away from the 70/30 specialist-dominated ratio we have now.”

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Julia Andrieni, MD, second from right, joined student organizers Matt Ducey, Liz Herrup and Jonathan Klaucke at the dinner.

The New Specialty: Primary Care The Health Care Reform Solution*

- Individualized health care of the “whole” person to include cultural and spiritual belief systems
- Chronic disease management with patient and health care teams
- Comprehensive coordination of appropriate patient care services
- Emphasis on health outcomes and continuous quality improvement
- Focus on wellness and prevention of disease in a community

**Slide from Dr. Andrieni’s presentation, December 2, 2009*

Practice Improvement Corner

Patient Registries

The “medical home” is a term being used with increasing frequency, and there are many definitions. All would agree that a medical home does the following:

1. Provides enhanced access for patients
2. Features proactive practice teams
3. Supports patient self-management

In this month’s column, we focus on a key tool that allows for proactive management: patient registries. Most registries are disease-specific and can be sorted by a variety of parameters. An example is a list of a provider’s patients with diabetes. Typical data fields include demographic information, date of last visit, and dates and results of various measures, such as A1C, LDL, ACR and BP.

The registry now becomes an essential tool in the management of an identified population. A provider could, for example, identify all those patients with an A1C > 8.0 or an LDL >100, or no visit in the last six months. Specific interventions can then be prioritized for delivery to patients most likely to benefit from them.

As with any database the information extracted from it relies on the accuracy and quality of the information entered into it, a concept known by some as “garbage in, garbage out.” In our Diabetes Collaboratives organized through the Center for the Advancement

In our Diabetes Collaboratives, organized through the Center for the Advancement of Primary Care, we have helped practices build and maintain accurate registries that include all patients in the practice with diabetes.

of Primary Care, we have helped practices build and maintain accurate registries that include all patients in the practice with diabetes: they are not limited by insurance carrier, nor do they contain “noise,” such as patients with a history of gestational diabetes or those with isolated readings of high glucose but no diagnosis of diabetes. The center is continuing to test the analytical capabilities of the electronic medical record to make the creation of practice-specific registries more accessible to all practices.

A registry allows a practice to involve other members of the office staff in helping patients get the interventions they need. It creates a “win-win-win” situation, in which patients receive better care, staff experiences more satisfaction from making valuable contributions, and providers are often pleasantly surprised at the efficiency with which previously challenging interventions can now get done.

Primary Care ... By the Numbers

**UMass Memorial Health Care-affiliated
physicians who:**

Are primary care physicians:

526

Taught medical students or residents in 2008 – 09:

268

Trained at UMass Memorial/UMass Medical School :

201

The Changing Face of Primary Care

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Mr. Ducey also appreciated Dr. Andrieni’s description of the satisfaction she receives from caring for her patients. “The personal satisfaction as well as an increasing role in the health care system is exactly why I am interested in primary care right now and why I think it is so important to advocate for,” said Mr. Ducey.

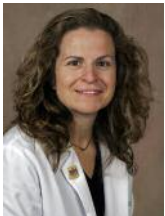
The dinner was cosponsored by the UMass Medical School Office of Educational Affairs (OEA), the Center for the Advancement of Primary Care and the Meyers Primary Care Institute. Emily Ferrara and Sherly Jean-Bart of the OEA assisted with event coordination and support. Ms. Herrup and fellow student Sara Barmettler provided classical music entertainment.

Haven't Had Time to Tune Into Prime Time Conversations?

Prime Time Conversations is our monthly interactive webinar program targeted to UMass Memorial Health Care primary care physicians. If you missed one of our presentations, or just want to review what you heard, go to our [archives](#). There you will find the following programs:

- June 2009: The UMass Geriatric Psychiatry Consultation Project: 06/11/09
- July 2009: Gordon's Gems: "Dr. Allscripts" Best Tips for Working in Allscripts: 07/15/09
- August 2009: Coding and Billing: Top 10 List of Tips You Need To Know: 08/12/09
- September 2009: The Latest Recommendations for Pneumococcal Vaccination: 09/09/09
- October 2009: More Gordon's Gems — "Dr. Allscripts" Updates and Tips: 10/21/09
- November 2009: Reminders for Your Health: 11/18/09
- December 2009: Coding for Medical Necessity in the Physician's Office: 12/16/09

Fischer Appointed Associate Dean



Melissa Fischer, MD, MEd, associate professor of medicine and a member of the Center for the Advancement of Primary Care's Quality Improvement Curriculum Grant Work Group, was appointed associate dean for undergraduate medical education following a national search.

Dr. Fischer

Dr. Fischer will be responsible for academic administration and leadership of the School of Medicine curriculum, including design, management and implementation; student performance assessment; and scholarship and research in medical education.

The creation of this position coincides with the reorganization of the Office of Medical Education (OME). All undergraduate programs and curriculum oversight formerly within the OME will now be managed through the newly named Office of Undergraduate Medical Education under Dr. Fischer's direction.

Known widely in the UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial communities as an outstanding teacher and educational leader, Dr. Fischer is an internal medicine practitioner at the University Campus.

The **Center for the Advancement of Primary Care** at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and UMass Memorial Health Care will create, strengthen and integrate activities across the Medical School and the clinical system to ensure a robust primary care network that will serve as the main portal of care for patients and will provide excellence in teaching and research.

Welcome New Colleagues!

Srilakshmi Anamandala, MD



Family Medicine

Marlborough Primary Care
640 Bolton Street, Marlborough

Medical School: Kilpauk Medical College (India)
Residency: Marquette General Hospital

Susan Shih, MD



Internal Medicine, Rheumatology

112 Main Street, Northborough

Medical School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Residency: Emory University School of Medicine

Fellowship: Emory University School of Medicine (Rheumatology)

The Center for the Advancement of Primary Care is supported by UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial Health Care.

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