

# Connections

*“Staying in Touch with Colleagues, Community, and Patients”*

## Division of Academic Medicine, Geriatrics, & Community Programs

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Chief

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Associate Clinical Chief

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Division Manger

Vickie Vereas, BA  
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Sunil Pandey, MD

Vivek Vadhera, MD

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Medical Director, UMDCare

Ana Natale-Pereira, MD  
Medical Director, FOCUS

Elizabeth Alger, MD

Stefanie Brown, MD

Mary Cantey, MD

Diana DeCosimo, MD

Rajesh Dhirmalani, DO

Augustine Eleje, MD

Arezou Fatemi, MD

Rey Rosario, MD, MPH

Keerti Sharma, MD

Blanche Skurnick, MD

Maria Soto-Greene, MD

Yolette Sterling-Jean, MD

### Occupational Medicine

Lawrence Budnick, MD

Director

Gwen Brachman, MD

Carolina Mangura, MD

## Chief's Corner

It has been six months since I addressed all of you about our division's goals for the upcoming year. It has been an unbelievable journey with many accomplishments and successes. We are publishing, *Connections*, the first issue of our division's quarterly newsletter. We have succeeded in establishing the division's first House Calls for Seniors Program and welcomed our geriatrician, Dr. Keerti Sharma. She will initially focus on chronic care for New Community Corporation senior citizens, but we will be expanding the service in the near future to other senior citizen complexes.

We have galvanized our Section of Hospital Medicine with six clinician educators that excel in the delivery of quality in-patient clinical care and education. We will soon strengthen this service with the addition of physician assistants. This section will lead the division in areas of hospital medicine, quality improvement, and education of residents.

UMDCare has increased patient volume by 33% and has successfully recruited Dr. Rajesh Dhirmalani. He is a graduate of our internal medicine residency program and we look forward to his contributions to our clinical programs. We are relocating UMDCare to the Doctor's Office Complex. The new location will boast spacious waiting areas, exam rooms, and offices for our faculty. Focus Community Health Center (Focus) has experienced much growth. The traditionally slow month *(continued on page 2)*.

## New “House Calls for Seniors” Program

The Division of Academic Medicine, Geriatrics and Community Programs will offer geriatric services to senior citizens residing in the greater Newark area by helping maintain their health and managing chronic health problems while maximizing their independence. We will launch our commu-

nity-based geriatrics service at New Community Corporation (NCC). This program represents a partnership between the New Jersey Medical School Department of Medicine, University Hospital, and NCC. We will expand this service to other community based organizations *(continued on page 2)*.

## Chief's Corner (continued from page 1)

of July saw 493 patients. Consultants have evaluated the practice to advise on its sustainability. Focus has welcomed the addition of new faculty members to the practice, Drs. Rey Rosario, Mary Cantey, Christine Gerula, Sita Chokhvatia, and Mark Sterling as well as the return of our endocrinologist, Dr. Javier Torrens who just completed a fellowship at The Rockefeller Center. The Hyde and Watson Foundation funded our "Diabetes Related Cardiovascular Disease" program which has enabled the purchase of an echocardiogram at Focus Community Health Center.

We have been actively cultivating strong relationships with the community we serve. In collaboration with University Hospital and the Ironbound Community Corporation, we will be launching an outreach program for preventive screening and referrals. We are working with the Newark Housing Authority on the Hope VI housing initia-

tive. We are also exploring collaborations with Casa Israel, an adult medical daycare facility, to establish geriatric service initiatives. Through these community partnerships, we hope to improve our patient's quality of care, facilitate access to our services, and increase referrals to our institution.

**"Through community partnerships, we hope to improve our patient's quality of care and facilitate access..."**

We are working with the Office of the Chair to establish our division's first budget. With this, we hope to align faculty responsibilities and development with our resources. This will require the development of a transparent infrastructure to include a dashboard that will serve as our key performance indicators. With fiscal autonomy comes fiscal responsibility and accountability. As such, we have invited our UPA representative to be a part of our divisional meet-

ings and retreat to help us with this endeavor.

We are recruiting research assistants and physician scientists as we establish a Section of Primary Care Research. As such, we are working with the VA and the Departments of Family Medicine, Preventive Medicine, and Pediatrics and other divisions within our Department to develop collaborative infrastructures and research projects that will support this area. This will help decrease our reliance on hard dollars to sustain faculty salaries and will be a crucial component of our division's academic growth.

I'm looking forward to our division retreat and our future as a team. I firmly believe excellence in the division's clinical, research, and education programs will be attained through collaboration with one another, university colleagues, the surrounding community, and beyond.

## New "House Calls for Seniors" Program (continued from page 1)

Dr. Keerti Sharma, Assistant Professor of Medicine, will provide on-site geriatric services to NCC senior citizen residents and day care program clients.

Dr. Sharma joins our team after having completed a fellowship in Geriatric Medicine at NYU Medical Center in New York.

Previously, she served as faculty at Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center (Albert Einstein College of Medicine) in the Bronx.

The geriatrics team consists of Dr. Keerti Sharma and Doreen Monks, a Geriatrics Advanced Nurse Practitioner with extensive experience in the Newark

community. Dr. Sharma believes the house calls program will bring "dignity, sensitivity, inclusiveness and candor to the care of the aged".

They will work collaboratively with the Social Workers at each senior home to coordinate comprehensive (continued on page 3).

# House Calls for the Elderly (continued from page 2)

health and social services for all NCC patients. These services will be provided in a designated office space in the NCC senior complex or in the patient's home based on their degree of frailty or their medical condition.

The team provides primary care to the elderly and specializes in diagnosing and treating conditions such as memory loss, insomnia, depression,

diabetes, hypertension, urinary incontinence, osteoporosis, frailty, and abnormalities of

**"The program will bring dignity, sensitivity, inclusiveness, and candor to the care of the aged..."**

gait that are commonly associated with aging. Home environment assessments will be done to ensure patient

safety. Specialty services would be provided at UMDNJ-University Hospital. The NCC on-site social worker will arrange patient appointments including referrals. All emergency services will be provided at the University Hospital ER.

For further information, you may contact Dr. Sharma at (973) 972-5672.

## Newest Members of the Division

**Sam P. Pappas, MD**, Associate House Staff Program Director



and Associate Chief for Clinical Programs, for our Division. Dr. Pappas received the

MD degree from Pennsylvania State College of Medicine and completed internship, residency and chief residency at Case Western Reserve University and University Hospitals in Cleveland. His research interests include health care delivery, medical management, and geriatrics.



**Rey Rosario, MD, MPH**, is the newest full-time addition to FOCUS. He is a

graduate of Ponce School of Medicine and has a MPH from Boston University with a concentration in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Dr. Rosario completed his residency training in our program in June 2003. He is also Captain of the Medical Corp in the New Jersey Army Dr. Rosario is interested in addressing the healthcare needs of the underserved, particularly those of the Latino population.

**Keerti Sharma, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine,



joined our team in August 2003 after having completed a fellowship in Geriatric Medicine at New York

University Medical Center. She previously served as faculty at Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center (Albert Einstein College of Medicine). Dr. Sharma earned her

Medical Degree from Govt. Medical College, Jammu, India. She completed her residency in Internal Medicine and later was Chief Resident at Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center. Dr. Sharma has been actively involved in Faculty and Curriculum Development. Her current interests include Memory Disorders in the Elderly and End of Life Issues.

**Rajesh Dhirmalani, D.O.**,

Assistant Professor of Medicine, returned to NJMS in September 2003 after working in Washington



State as a Hospitalist. He is a graduate of our Internal Medicine Residency Training Program. Dr. Dhirmalani's primary practice site is UMDCare. He aims to provide quality and compassionate health care to the residents of the greater Newark area.

UMDNJ



# NEW JERSEY MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

Division of Academic Medicine, Geriatrics,  
& Community Programs

(formerly the Division of General Internal Medicine)

Department of Medicine

University Hospital


150 Bergen Street, H-251

Newark, NJ 07101

For further information about

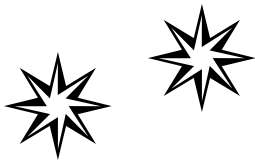
Division initiatives, please call

(973) 972-5672.

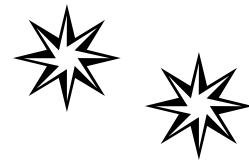


*Success is the  
sum of small efforts,  
repeated day in and  
day out...*

Author: Robert J. Collier (1876-1918), Writer, author.



## All-Star Team



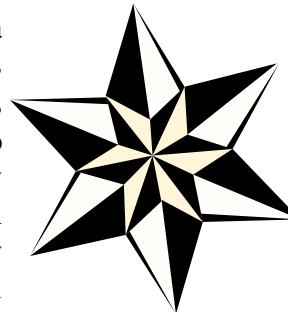
**\*Drs. Suzanne Atkin and Diana R. Decosimo** have been named Top Doctors by Castle Connolly's Top Doctors in the New York Metro Area

**\*Dr. Ana Natale-Pereira** was named 2003 Rising Star in Cancer Research by Redes En Accion, The National Hispanic Latino Cancer Network for her research on cancer screening practice in the Latino community.

**\*Dr. Salas-Lopez** received \$50,000 grant award from the Hyde and Watson Foundation for a Diabetes Related Cardiovascular Disease Program.

**\*Dr. Debra Goldson-Prophete** has been accepted to the AAMC Early Career Women Faculty Professional Development Program.

**\*The Hospital Medicine Section** was profiled in the Hospitalist in July/August 2003 issue.



To submit items for publication in the next issue of *Connections*, please email Carmen McLaughlin @ [guzmancl@umdnj.edu](mailto:guzmancl@umdnj.edu).