Ronald Epstein, MD, Honored with STFM Gold Humanism Award

The Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM) recently honored Ronald Epstein, MD, faculty member of the University of Rochester Department of Family Medicine, with the 2017 STFM Gold Humanism Award. The award recognizes attributes of humanism in medicine, defined by respectful and compassionate relationships with other physicians, the health care team, and patients. It reflects attitudes, behaviors, and values that are sensitive to the values and backgrounds of others.

“I am very honored to receive this award,” said Dr. Epstein. “STFM is a group that nurtured me during my early years as a faculty member and to be recognized and honored in this way is very meaningful.”

Dr. Epstein directs the Center for Communication and Disparities Research and co-directs the Dean’s Teaching Fellowship program and Mindful Practice Programs at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. He also sees patients at Highland Family Medicine and through Palliative Care service. A graduate of Wesleyan University and Harvard Medical School, he completed his residency at the University of Rochester Department of Family Medicine, remained in Rochester and has cared for many of the same patients for close to 35 years.

“The criteria for this award could have been written expressly for Ron Epstein,” said Tom Campbell, MD, chair, and Susan H. McDaniel, PhD, vice chair, in a letter of nomination for Dr. Epstein. “He embodies the compassionate physician; he has dedicated his career to practicing, teaching, and studying humanistic medicine.”

Dr. Epstein is recipient of lifetime achievement awards relating to communication and humanism, a

Nurse Practitioners Have Growing Role at HFM

Nurse practitioners at Highland Family Medicine are assuring that more patients have better access to care. The number of nurse practitioners in the practice is now at 16 – and has more than doubled in the past few years, according to co-directors Mel Callan, FNP and Ginger Agnello, FNP. Nurse practitioners have their own panel of patients for whom they serve as the primary care provider.

The University of Rochester Nurse Practitioner Residency Program at Highland Family Medicine recently graduated two nurse practitioners; one will join the staff of Highland Family Medicine. The program, one of the first in the country, is funded by a grant

continued on page 2.
Clinician burnout has become a national crisis in healthcare. Primary care physicians and nurse practitioners are particularly susceptible with over 50 percent reporting burnout. Physician burnout has been shown to have a major impact on patient quality and safety as well as overall healthcare costs. Not surprisingly, it is a major challenge in our Department of Family Medicine. We have made promoting clinician wellness and reducing burnout a major priority in the Department.

Wellness was the theme of a recent resident-faculty day-long retreat. Residents and faculty broke into small groups and brainstormed about workplace interventions that would promote clinician wellness. The recommendations ranged from the availability of healthier foods and standup desks to reduced clinic schedules and better use of team-based care. These suggestions will go to a newly formed Wellness Committee which consists of faculty, residents, and staff representatives. This group will prioritize these suggestions and help determine which are feasible and make recommendations to the Department’s Executive Committee, which will make the final determination of which ones to implement.

The second half of the retreat was focused on activities that individuals could do to help promote one’s own wellness. These include mini-workshops on mindfulness, yoga, meditation, massage, and building exercise and good nutrition into one’s life. Feedback from residents and faculty was very positive.

EMR documentation and paperwork are two major sources of stress and burnout for clinicians. The Department has been trying to address these items for the past two years as part of an “Ease of Practice” initiative. The major focus has been on trying to shift paperwork and EMR documentation to other members of the team when appropriate. Having staff devoted to prior approvals and form completions has made a huge difference. A pilot using scribes has been very successful and will soon be available for all faculty. Ongoing training in EMR efficiency has also helped. A longer term goal is to implement a team-based documentation or “enhanced MA” model, which has been shown to improve efficiency and clinician satisfaction in other institutions.

While these interventions have helped to promote wellness and reduce burnout, we still have a long way to go. A recent visit by Chris Sinsky, MD, Vice-President of Physician Wellness at the AMA, was very successful. She met with members of the Department to brainstorm about how best to redesign our practice to improve efficiency and reduce meaningless work by clinicians. There are many challenges, and we have lots of work to be done, but I’m optimistic that we can make significant improvements that will help promote clinician wellness.

Best Wishes,

Thomas L. Campbell, MD (1982)
William Rocktaschel Professor and Chair,
Department of Family Medicine

Epstein, from page 1.

Fulbright fellowship in Barcelona, and fellowships at the University of Sydney and the Brocher Institute in Geneva. He has published over 250 articles and book chapters.

Most recently he published a book that offers an inside look at how doctors think and work. It is believed to be the first book for the general public about mindfulness in medical practice. (Attending: Medicine, Mindfulness, and Humanity, Scribner, January 2017)

Dr. Epstein has built a worldwide reputation for physician training while teaching at the UR School of Medicine and Dentistry. In addition to Drs. Campbell and McDaniel, Dr. Epstein was nominated for the award by Professor Shmuel Reis, MD, MHPE, Academic Director, Center for Medical Education/Faculty of Medicine at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel, and by William B. Ventres, MD, MA, Visiting Professor at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, as well as several esteemed colleagues in the United States.

A hallmark of his success has been to understand what makes a really good doctor—qualities such as self-awareness, good judgment, and communication skills—and to revamp education to include those qualities in assessments of professional competence.

In addition to his teaching and medical practice, Dr. Epstein is a well-funded researcher who focuses on doctor-patient communication, particularly in cases of advanced cancer, and how to promote mindfulness and compassion in health care.

The STFM award is sponsored by The Arnold P. Gold Foundation, which has funded some of Dr. Epstein’s studies.

The Society honored Dr. Epstein at its annual spring conference in May in San Diego. His colleagues in URMC Family Medicine hosted a reception in his honor at the meeting.

55 Word Story

A tribute to the 50th anniversary of STFM by Colleen Fogarty, MD.
Read more on the STFM website under 50th Anniversary blogs.

The Annual Meeting

Across a crowded room, I spot them.
They exchange a “High-Five”
Hands meeting in an audible “smack.”
Two faculty—
One from the Midwest, a man, taller
Another from the Northeast, a woman, shorter
Protégé and mentor—
Connecting again—STFM—their professional nexus
Broad smiles convey enthusiasm—
Connecting to each other and to the larger whole.
Family Medicine Physicians Travel to Angola

Dr. Elizabeth Loomis and Dr. Stephen Schultz travelled to Luanda, Angola, for one week, to conduct a brief survey of the healthcare and medical education systems to identify needs and potential solutions to those needs, with a specific focus on family medicine residency training.

The delegation was sponsored by the Angolan Sovereign Wealth Fund (FSDEA), a governmental organization funded by taxes on the oil industry to fund education and health care.

During the delegation’s brief time in Luanda, Djembe Communications facilitated the delegation meeting with leaders and other key individuals at a number of representative medical education and healthcare institutions in Luanda.

There are currently close to 5,400 doctors in Angola for a population of 25 million; the reported ratio of physicians per 1000 population is 0.08 (2004 data), 179th out of 200 countries who reported. This includes physicians who work in public and private institutions, as well as foreign doctors. Life expectancy at birth in Angola is 56, ranking it 208 out of 224 countries (2016 CIA World Factbook).

Approximately 35 percent of physicians practicing in Angola are specialists; the four most common specialties in Angola are internal medicine, general surgery, OB/GYN and public health. On their last day there, the physicians met with the faculty of the country’s only family medicine residency program, a three-year program that graduated their first class of 23 last year.

The team wrote a SWOT (Strength-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis, only recently translated into Portuguese, the country’s national language, which Dr. Loomis speaks fluently. Future collaboration possibilities will be explored.

Reaching Out to Underserved Across the Globe

Each spring and fall groups of Department of Family Medicine faculty, residents, medical students, and community volunteers travel to San Jose San Marcos de la Sierra in the Southwestern state of Intibuca, Honduras. The group works on a variety of public health issues such as improving access to year-round filtered water and providing more food variety through fish farming and home gardens. In collaboration with the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, new and continuing scholarships are awarded each year to middle and high school students. This year marked the 100th scholarship. Students are eager to advance their education and find careers.

Douglas Stockman, MD, is Director, Global and Refugee Health and Barbara Gawinski, PhD, is Associate Director.

Your gifts help support the efforts to help the people of this impoverished community. Please visit www.urmc.rochester.edu/family-medicine/global-health/support-us.cfm where an online donation can be made.

Fostering Quality Improvement is Goal of FLC-PCCE

With funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), The University of Rochester Department of Family Medicine has developed the Finger Lakes Center for Primary Care Clinician Education (FLC-PCCE) to provide educational assistance to practicing Primary Care Clinicians (MDs, NPs, and PAs). At the end of June 2017, two cohorts of the Primary Care Practice Transformation Fellowship (PC-PTF) were completed.

Colleen T. Fogarty, MD, MSc, the director of the FLC PCCE, collaborated with Finger Lakes Performing Provider System (FLPPS) to identify practices that would benefit from the learning collaborative model. The pilot cohort, conducted in winter and spring of 2016, represented six practices in the Hornell area. The cohort completed in June 2017, represents four practices from the Western Naturally Occurring Care Network (NOCN); thus far a total of 36 participants have attended. Topics include quality improvement, team-based care, and practice transformation. All participants have designed quality improvement practices and implemented changes in practice based on these QI projects.

Watch the University of Rochester Department of Family Medicine website for updates.
Resident Spotlight

Anna Jack, MD
“Family medicine was a natural choice for me,” said Anna (Annie) Jack, MD, co-chief resident in the University of Rochester Medical Center Department of Family Medicine Residency program. “Caring for families and patients of all ages in a holistic, interdisciplinary and patient-centered way always felt like the best way to provide primary and preventive care.”

Dr. Jack received her doctor of medicine from Boston University School of Medicine after participating in a post baccalaureate pre-med program at Harvard University. After visiting the country’s top family medicine programs, she chose the University of Rochester because of its strong academic program that was well integrated into the community.

“When I visited Rochester I left with the impression, which has only been confirmed during my time here, that the UR Department of Family Medicine is invested not only in improving the health of the local community, but in the national advancement of family medicine,” she said.

Dr. Jack and her husband Mike, recently welcomed their second child Lana, who joins their son, Louis, born at the end of her intern year. “The residency program has become our second family here,” said Dr. Jack. “I can’t say enough about the residents – their friendship, inspiration and support has been more than I could have imagined. And the faculty, who are so impressive in their accomplishments, are down to earth, kind, and would be there for me in the blink of an eye, personally and professionally.”

Dr. Jack has a specific interest in adolescent medicine. After finishing residency, she plans to practice outpatient family medicine in the Rochester area and to eventually transition to an academic position.

UR/Highland Hospital Welcomes Department of Family Medicine Class of 2020

The University of Rochester/Highland Hospital Department of Family Medicine welcomes 12 residents from medical schools across the country to the Class of 2020.

One familiar face in the class is Zoe Gravitz, MD, a recent graduate of the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry.

“Getting to know the outstanding faculty and excellent residents at the Department of Family Medicine made my decision to stay in Rochester for residency easy,” said Dr. Gravitz. “I am so looking forward to being a member of this wonderful community of care providers.”

Rachel R. Bian, MD
University of Michigan Medical School
Highland Family Medicine

Caroline R. Brotzki, MD
Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University of Buffalo
Brown Square Health Center

Jingnan Bu, MD
New York Medical College
Highland Family Medicine

Jacob M. Castiglia, MD
Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University of Buffalo
Highland Family Medicine

Alissa D. Correll, MD
University of Vermont College of Medicine
Highland Family Medicine

Jeffrey A. Geisendorfer, MD
State University of New York Upstate Medical University
Brown Square Health Center

Zoe Gravitz, MD
University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry
Highland Family Medicine

Michael S. Hudson, MD
University of Vermont College of Medicine
Highland Family Medicine

Sumaiya Y. Kabir, DO
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine
Highland Family Medicine

Timothy Smilnak, MD, MPH
State University of New York Upstate Medical University
Highland Family Medicine

Shivani Sockanathan, MD, MS
Chicago Medical School at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine & Science
Highland Family Medicine

Natasha Vadera, MD
New York Medical College
Highland Family Medicine

Nurse Practitioners, from page 1

from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the department of Health and Human Services. Two more nurse practitioners are enrolled in the residency program for the coming year.

Nurse practitioners are encouraged to assume leadership roles at Highland Family Medicine, according to Agnello, and are suite leaders and members of the clinical leaders committee.

“The leadership team and physician faculty are very supportive of utilizing nurse practitioners to the fullest extent of their education and experience,” said Callan. “Our NPs are involved in research projects and interprofessional education with medical students, nurse practitioner students and residents and family medicine residents.”
Beth P. Bell MD, MPH, FIDSA, FACPM, FAAFP

Dr. Beth P. Bell (’85) joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1992 and served in various positions until her retirement earlier this year. She spent about 10 years working in the area of viral hepatitis, focusing on the epidemiology of hepatitis A and hepatitis B and implementation of the then newly-licensed hepatitis A vaccine domestically and of hepatitis B vaccine globally. Beginning in 2010, she served as Director of CDC’s National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID), responsible for a broad array of infectious disease areas, including food safety, antibiotic resistance and healthcare-associated infections, and vectorborne and zoonotic diseases.

Dr. Bell led NCEZID’s response to several major infectious disease outbreaks, including the largest Ebola epidemic in history affecting multiple countries in West Africa and the emergence of Zika virus in the Americas, as well as a multistate outbreak of fungal meningitis that exposed thousands of patients who had received contaminated steroid injections, and dozens of foodborne and healthcare associated outbreaks that occur each year. Her work was recognized in a congressional record tribute entered by U.S. Senator Patty Murray on the occasion of her retirement.

Dr. Bell received a BA from Brown University, an MD from Yale University, and an MPH from the University of Rochester School of Medicine. She completed residencies in Preventive Medicine and Family Medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. She is a Fellow of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the American Academy of Family Medicine, and the American Academy of Preventive Medicine. She has published over 120 scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Prior to serving at the CDC, Dr. Bell was an Instructor, then Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine University of Rochester School of Medicine, and a solo practitioner at the Rushville Health Center in Rushville, New York, which subsequently became a training site for Family Medicine residents.

“It was during my Family Medicine residency that I first learned about how to see each person in the setting of their family and community,” said Dr. Bell. “It was the appreciation of the impact of this context on individual health that set me on my path to public health.”

Highland Family Medicine Expands Chemical Dependency Program

The Highland Family Medicine buprenorphine program is expanding to serve more patients. Co-directed by Dr. Holly Russell and Dr. Elizabeth Loomis, the chemical dependency program now includes six physicians, one nurse practitioner and Kelly Lame, a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC). Lame is available to conduct evaluations for opioid use disorders and any concern about substance use for all patients at Highland Family Medicine. Along with Family Medicine physicians, she will be starting a Group Medical Visit for Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT).

“Our program is addressing the growing need for patients who are seeking long term treatment for opioid use disorders,” said Dr. Russell. “We began the program with Highland Family Medicine patients, but have expanded to serve outside referrals in the maintenance phase of treatment. As our understanding of the pathology of substance use disorders expands, we believe that primary care clinicians will be critical in meeting the demand for treating addiction as a chronic disease.”

Beginning this year all Family Medicine physician residents and nurse practitioner residents will rotate in the program. “We are working on funding to help us train more community doctors and NP/PAs in both prescribing buprenorphine and setting up a MAT program within a primary care office,” said Dr. Loomis.

The program began in 2014. More than 120 patients have been in the program so far, with approximately 90 of them still active.
**Welcome**

**FACULTY**

Dawn Pruett, MD, is a Senior Instructor in Family Medicine and most recently served as a Maternal Child Health fellow in the program. She attended medical school at Oregon Health & Science University, in Portland, Oregon, and moved to Ogden, Utah, for residency. Dr. Pruett is interested in obstetrics and women’s health, comprehensive care for patients and their families, as well as academic family medicine and teaching.

Sarah Hudson, MD, is an Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and most recently served as a physician at the University of Vermont Medical Center. She received her doctor of medicine degree from the University of Vermont College of Medicine and completed her residency at Lawrence Family Medicine Residency in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where she was a global health track participant.

Soumya Bindiganavile Sridhar, MBBS, recently joined the faculty. She received her medical degree from Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bangalore, India, and completed her residency in Family Medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry Department of Family Medicine program. She most recently served as a hospitalist for Fraser Health Authority in Vancouver.

**FELLOWS**

Ethan Beaudett, DO, is a Sports Medicine Fellow. He is a graduate of the New England College of Osteopathic Medicine and recently completed his Family Medicine residency as Chief Resident at South Nassau Communities Hospital.

Jessica Edwards, DO, is a Maternal Child Health fellow. She is a graduate of UNT Health Science Center –Texas College of Osteopathic medicine and completed her residency at Christ Hospital Care Point Health in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Erin Peck, MD, PhD, is a Faculty Development Education fellow. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and served as Chief Resident, University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine and Community Health. She also holds a PhD in Environmental Toxicology.

Anna K. Zheng, MD, is a Maternal Child Health fellow. She received her medical degree and completed her residency at S.U.N.Y. Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn.

**Congratulations**

Ian Deutchki, MD, received the Division of Geriatrics & Aging Physician of the Year Award. This annual Division award recognizes a physician whose dedication, talents, and skills have improved the care of older adults in the health system and helped move the Division’s mission forward to provide high quality, goal-based, and patient centered geriatric care.

Anne Nofziger, MD, was named co-director of the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry’s Dean’s Teaching Fellowship, a competitive two-year program for faculty who are dedicated to academic careers and want to become master educators.

Kristen Thornton, MD, received the Outstanding Junior Clinician Educator of the Year Award from the American Geriatrics Society. This prestigious national award is given to an AGS clinician-educator junior faculty who has made a significant contribution to the education and training of students/trainees in geriatrics and the progress of geriatrics education in health professions schools.

Colleen Fogarty, MD, Receives Director’s Award

Congratulations to Colleen Fogarty, MD, Medical Director, Highland Family Medicine, on receiving the University of Rochester Family Medicine Residency Program Director’s Award. The award is given for fostering clinical and educational excellence while maintaining a sense of humility and humor and demonstrating the ability to advance and support the Family Medicine Residency Program of the University of Rochester. Dr. Fogarty serves as Associate Chair of Clinical Practice and Interprofessional Education of the Department of Family Medicine, as well as Director, Finger Lakes Center for Primary Care Clinician Education; Director, Family Medicine Faculty Development Fellowship; and Co-Editor, Families, Systems and Health.
Selected Publications

September 1, 2016 - May 1, 2017

Barnett S; Matthews K; Sutter EJ; DeWindt L; Pransky J; O’Hearn A; David T; Pollard RQ; Samar VI; Pearson TA. “Collaboration with deaf communities to conduct accessible health surveillance.” American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2017;52(3S3):S250-S254

Buckley G; Smith S; DeCaro J; Barnett S; Dewhurst S. “Building community with deaf scientists.” Science. 2017;355(6322):255

Carroll JK; Moorhead A; Bond R; LeBlanc WG; Petrella RJ; Fiscella K. “Who uses mobile phone health apps and does use matter? A secondary data analytics approach.” Journal of Medical Internet Research. 2017;19(4):e125.

Devine MJ; DeCaporale-Ryan L; Lim M; Berenyl J. “Psychological issue in medically underserved patients.” Primary Care: Clinics in Office Practice. 2017;44(1):99-112.


Epstein RM. “What’s the opposite of burnout?” Journal of General Internal Medicine. 2017 Epub March 27


Epstein RM; Duberstein PR; Fenton JJ; Fiscella K; Hoerger M; Tancredi DJ; Xing G; Gramling R; Mohile S; Franks P; Kaesberg P; Plumb S; Cipri CS; Street RL; Shields CG; Back AL; Butlow P; Walczak A; Tattersall M; Venuti A; Sullivan P; Robinson M; Hoh B; Lewis L; Kravitz RL. “Effect of a patient-centered communication intervention on oncologist-patient communication, quality of life, and health care utilization in advanced cancer: the VOICE randomized clinical trial.” JAMA Oncology. 2017;3(1)92-100.

Epstein RM; Privitera MR. “Physician burnout is better conceptualized as depression — author’s reply.” Lancet. 2017;389(10077):1398.


Gramling R; Fiscella K; Xing G; Hoerger M; Duberstein P; Plumb S; Mohile S; Fenton JJ; Tancredi DJ; Kravitz RL; Epstein RM. “Determinants of patient-oncologist prognostic discordance in advanced cancer.” JAMA Oncology. 2016;2(11):1421-1426.


Rodenback RA; Brandes K; Fiscella K; Kravitz RL; Betow PN; Walczak A; Duberstein PR; Sullivan P; Hoh B; Xing G; Plumb S; Epstein RM. “Promoting end-of-life discussions in advanced cancer: effects of patient coaching and question prompt lists.” Journal of Clinical Oncology: Official Journal of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. 2017;35(8):842-851.

Rosenberg T; Fogarty CT; Privitera M; McDaniel SH. “Team-based integrated primary care.” In: Psychiatry, Primary Care, and Medical Specialties: Pathways for Integrated Care. Oxford University Press. Feinstein RE; Connelly JV , eds. 2017

Thornton K; Caprio TV. “Falls & Gait Disorders.” In: Geriatrics: From Bedside to Curbside. CRC Press. Poduri KR ed. 2017

Members of University of Rochester Department of Family Medicine gather for photo.
Congratulations to 2017 Graduating Class

Congratulations to our residents who are embarking on exciting futures!

Marina Fomina-Nazarova, MD
Primary Care, Toronto

Anna Jack, MD
Chief Resident
Highland Family Medicine

Vivian Jiang, MD
Health Policy Fellowship
Family Medicine for America’s Health

Irene Koplinka Loehr, MD
Community Health Centers
Burlington, Vermont

Angela Kristan, MD
Geriatrics Fellowship, Rochester, NY

Branko Matich, MD
Brown Square and Highland Family Medicine

Marlon Mitchell, MD
Geriatric Fellowship
Washington Hospital Center/
Georgetown University

Amanda Pannu, MD
Chief Resident, Highland Family Medicine

Navraj Pannu, MD
Faculty, Highland Family Medicine

Annie Pfahl, MD
Outpatient Primary Care
Southcentral Foundation,
Anchorage, Alaska

Amber Robins, MD
Assistant Professor and Fellow
Georgetown University
Also work with PBS NewsHour

Soumya Sridhar, MBBS
Chief Resident/Faculty
Highland Family Medicine

Shaula Woz, MD
Primary Care
Medical Associates of Penfield

Liz Meehan, MD
Family Medicine practice, Vermont

Nicole Tetreault, MD
Capital Care Family Medicine Group
Albany Area

Front: Marlon Mitchell, MD.

Left to right second row is Amber Robins, MD; Marina Fomina-Nazarova, MD; Soumya Sridhar, MBBS; Anna Jack, MD; Amanda Pannu, MD; Irene Koplinka Loehr, MD; Shaula Woz, MD; Annie Pfahl, MD; and Vivian Jiang, MD.

Rear left to right is Branko Matich, MD, and Navraj Pannu, MD.