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No. 21, SPRING 2016 NEWSLETTER

CARDIOLOGY • CLINICAL DERMATOLOGY & CUTANEOUS SCIENCE • DIGESTIVE CARE & ENDOSCOPY • ENDOCRINOLOGY & METABOLISM •
GENERAL MEDICINE • GERIATRIC MEDICINE • HEMATOLOGY • INFECTIOUS DISEASES • MEDICAL ONCOLOGY • NEPHROLOGY •
NEUROLOGY • PALLIATIVE MEDICINE • PHYSICAL MEDICINE & REHABILITATION • RESPIROLOGY • RHEUMATOLOGY

DEPARTMENT HEAD MESSAGE

This issue of the Department of Medicine newsletter is indicative of the change to the Spring season; there is much happening within the Department and its divisions in research, education, clinical care and administration. In March, we welcomed **Denise Hatchette** to the role of administrator and bid a sad farewell to **Heather Macpherson** whose contributions to the Department of Medicine are immeasurable; we will soon have three Department of Medicine residents participating in Dalhousie's Clinical Investigator Program, a testament to the research strength in our department; and changes are underway to strengthen the selection of internal medicine residents who will begin their careers in the Department of Medicine.

I would like to congratulate the education portfolio on another successful CaRMS match and thank all those involved in the intense selection process. The CaRMS match makes for an incredibly busy time for the postgraduate education team and the selection committee. Thank you! We will soon welcome another 20 residents into our Department. I look forward to the energy and enthusiasm they will bring.



Many of the exciting initiatives underway in our department can be attributed to the implementation of our strategic plan. Over the next while the leads of each of the streams of our plan, research, education, and clinical care (frailty and appropriateness of care) will present the status of their work at the Department of Medicine monthly meetings. You, as department members, will have the opportunity to provide comments and ask questions about the various initiatives that are underway.

In the meantime though, if you have questions about the ongoing implementation of our strategic plan, I encourage you to bring them forward to me.

Simon Jackson, MD, FRCPC (C), MMedEd

*Interim Head, Department of Medicine, Dalhousie University
District Chief, Department of Medicine, Nova Scotia Health Authority
Professor of Medicine, Dalhousie University*



DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CLINICIAN SCIENTISTS

Drs. Caitlin Lees (PGY3) and **Alex Legge** (PGY2) have been accepted into the Dalhousie Clinical Investigator Program (CIP) with sponsorship from the Department of Medicine. This is an excellent opportunity for both residents and for the Department. It is also a testament to the Department's efforts through its research and education portfolios to encourage research interest among residents.



Dr. Caitlin Lees
PGY3

"This unprecedented level of interest in research is a great development for the core internal medicine residency program and for the Department. It raises resident awareness of research opportunities and the profile of research in our training program," says Dr. Ian Epstein, program director, internal medicine residency training program.



Dr. Alex Legge
PGY2

The CIP is an accredited postgraduate medical education training program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, which is available to residents concurrently enrolled in a specialty or sub-specialty residency program at Dalhousie and a Master or PhD program. The goal is to provide residents with a structured and stimulating research experience so they develop the research and critical thinking skills required to become clinician investigators upon completing their residency.

Dr. Lees' supervisors are **Drs. Ravi Ramjeesingh** and **Tallal Younis**, Division of Medical Oncology, and she has applied to the Medical Research Graduate Program (MRGP). Dr. Legge's supervisor is **Dr. John Hanly**, Division of Rheumatology, and she has applied to the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology master's program.

CIP participants receive financial support equal to that received for clinical residency training; however, the prospective CIP trainee must secure this funding before they can apply to the program. Dr. Legge was awarded Nova Scotia Department of Health & Wellness sponsorship, which provides funding for two years, and Dr. Lees was awarded a \$20,000 CIP stipend by the Dalhousie Medical Research

Foundation. The remainder of Dr. Lees' funding will be provided through the Department of Medicine University Internal Medicine Research Foundation.

Drs. Lees and Legge join a third Department of Medicine resident in the program; Dr. Bader Alamri enrolled in the CIP last year with external funding support. Up to now, a total of three Department of Medicine residents completed the CIP; all of whom are now department members: **Drs. Chris MacKnight, Melissa Andrew and Lisa Barrett.** The current level of participation in the program bodes incredibly well for the department's research strength.

For more information on the CIP, visit <http://medicine.dal.ca/research-dal-med/programs/cip.html>

UIMRF FUNDING

The Department of Medicine University Internal Medicine Research Foundation (UIMRF) has awarded the following funding for the 2015-2016 academic year:

INTERNAL FELLOWSHIP – CLINICAL INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM (CIP)

Dr. Caitlin Lees, PGY3

Dr. Alexandra Legge, PGY2

FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Cindy Forbes, PhD, "*Improving Cancer Survivors' Quality of life Using an Integrative eHealth/ mHealth Platform*"

EXTERNAL FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Ciorsti MacIntyre, Division of Cardiology, "*Catecholaminergic Polymorphic Ventricular Tachycardia: Assessment of therapeutic options*"

DEPARTMENT MEMBER AWARDS

Dr. Ferhan Siddiqi, Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, (\$11,946) "*Epigenetic Markers in Diabetic Nephropathy*"

Dr. Karthik Tennankore, Division of Nephrology, (\$49,375) "*Frailty and the Transplant Wait List*"

NSHA QUALITY TEAM AWARDS

Congratulations to the geriatrics team on winning a gold award at this year's NSHA Quality Team Awards for **CARES initiative, supporting our citizens to "Age Well and Die Fit" – A system-level strategy in the Nova Scotia Health Authority.**

Congratulations to the neurology team on winning a silver award at this year's NSHA Quality Team Awards for **Central Zone acute stroke protocol: Time is brain and the clock is ticking...**

CARMS MATCH 2016



We continue to have tremendous interest in the Department of Medicine's residency training program and a large pool of exceptional candidates from which to interview. As a result, we have filled all of our internal medicine spots in the first iteration again this year.

Recap:

Applicants to the program: 330

Interviews: 158 over 10 days

Halifax filled all 14 spots in the first iteration

Saint John filled all 4 spots in the first iteration

*In November 2015 we interviewed Visa Applicants for two PGY1 positions, which were also filled successfully. We are pleased to welcome the 20 incoming PGY1's to the Internal Medicine Program July 1, 2016.

The CaRMS match requires a great amount of time and effort on the part of residents, faculty and staff. Thank you to all involved in the selection process!

APPLYING BEST PRACTICES IN RESIDENT SELECTION

Earlier this year **Drs. Marko Balan and Alison Rodger**, chief residents, reviewed the selection process of internal medicine residents in consideration of the Best Practices in Application and Selection (BPAS) (Bandiera et al., 2013). The quality improvement project recognizes that the applicant selection for postgraduate residency programs is important and challenging, and significant variation exists between programs.



Drs. Balan and Rodger reviewed relevant documents and held discussions with program administrative staff and the program director. They found that the internal medicine selection process fulfilled, at least partially, many of the BPAS best practices, in particular those of fairness, process and assessment. Transparency and knowledge translation were the main areas of weakness.

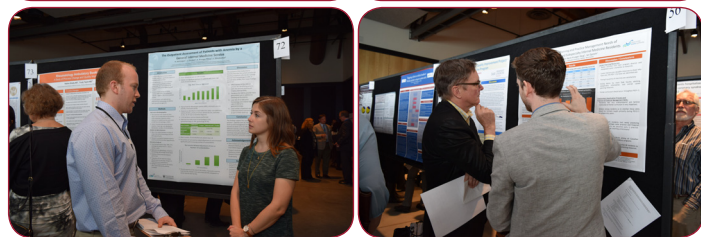
The review identified areas of the selection process that should be, and have since been, revised to comply with recently published best practices. It also led to the revision and documentation of program goals for the internal medicine residency training program, which have been adopted by the Residency Program Committee, and to the documentation and development of program-specific protocols for the applicant selection process.

RESEARCH DAY 2016

A very successful Department of Medicine Research Day 2016 was held on April 7th, where we welcomed **Dr. David Juurlink** as keynote speaker to present *Reflections on the North American Opioid Epidemic*. Dr. Juurlink is Eaton Scholar and professor of medicine, pediatrics and health policy at the University of Toronto, where he is director of the Division of Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology. He is also senior scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES), where he maintains an active research program with a focus on medication safety, the consequences of drug interactions in clinical practice, and the epidemiology of suicide and self-poisoning.



Research Day also featured 10 faculty and resident presentations on a wide range of topics; we received 115 abstracts, an exceptional response that deserves both recognition and praise. Research Day is a highlight for our department and a testament to the hard work of the department's research champions and researchers at all levels.

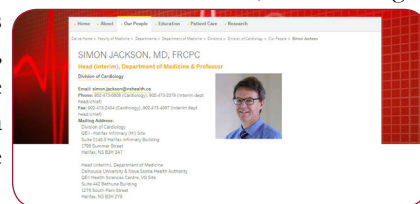


ACADEMIC NEUROSCIENCES PROGRAM

Construction has begun to build a new IMCU on the 7th floor of the HI Site – a significant milestone in the work to create an [academic neurosciences program at the QEII](#) to help advance neurosciences for all Atlantic Canadians. The academic neurosciences program, which will include a new IMCU and an Epilepsy Monitoring Unit, will see the neurology, neurosurgery and spine teams come together on 7.3 and 7.4 to provide more integrated and comprehensive patient care. The teams will share common spaces that enable them to better draw upon each other's knowledge and experiences. For patients, the academic neurosciences program will result in the most comprehensive care in Atlantic Canada, including prevention, intervention, long-term management, outreach and links to community providers. A lot of work has gone into preparing for the construction and the changes to the 7.3 and 7.4 areas, which has also meant inadvertent inconvenience for many. The teams are to be commended for their continued patience and enthusiasm for this project.

FACULTY PROFILES ONLINE

With the Department of Medicine's continuing efforts to improve its online presence, that is to make it more robust, ensure it aligns with Dalhousie's guidelines and is kept up to date, **faculty members are asked to maintain an online profile via the department's website.**



Faculty profiles include information such as research and/or clinical interests, publications, education, biography, memberships. They may also include links to an external or internal project or organization website, twitter feed and more, and easily enable you to participate in the [Experts @ Dal](#) program, which identifies you as a subject expert who is willing to speak to the media on your designated topic area(s). Alternatively, the minimum required information in a profile is the faculty member's name, academic rank and contact, which has already been inputted for each faculty member in the Department as part of the website project.

The profiles allow others, such as potential collaborators, granting agencies, students and residents, to search for faculty members and retrieve their clinical and research interests, current projects and more. To learn more, please review the profile guidelines. To get started with your profile, contact Cindy Bayers, communication advisor, at pebblecomms@eastlink.ca

RESIDENT OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to **Dr. Andrew Caddell** (PGY2) and **Dr. Rahul Bhayani** (PGY3) on being recognized as Residents of the Month for January and February respectively. The peer nominated award was initiated by the Department of Medicine's chief residents to recognize outstanding resident performance in clinical, professional or leadership domains.



Dr. Caddell is recognized for his work ethic, flexibility and willingness to step up and help out when needed, especially in regards to MTU-ED call. In January, he volunteered for a third month of MTU-ED this year on late notice in order to fill a resident shortage. He is also an avid squash player who routinely invites residents to participate in the sport.

Dr. Rahul repeatedly steps up to cover the MTU in Saint John during times of resident shortages. He has covered a last minute call shift on a travel day and he has been known to alter his vacation or pick up an extra weekend of rounding to ensure the MTU is well staffed. On one occasion he weekend rounded on both MTU teams! Not only does Rahul step up to help in these scenarios, but he does so with a smile on his face!



WELCOME!



Dr. Malcolm Wells joined the Division of Digestive Care & Endoscopy in mid February for a three-month locum. Dr. Wells is alumni of Memorial University and completed residencies in internal medicine and gastroenterology at the University of Western Ontario. He most recently completed a transplant hepatology fellowship at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. We are thrilled Dr. Wells has joined the Department of Medicine.



Ms. Denise Hachette joined the Department of Medicine in March and assumed the role of department administrator on April 1st upon Ms. Heather Macpherson's retirement at the end of March. Denise has held increasingly senior administrative roles with Capital Health and now the Nova Scotia Health Authority over the last 17 years. Most recently she was part of the NSHA finance team as Manager, Research Restricted and Continuing Care Program Funds, in the finance department. Denise holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from St. Francis Xavier University and is an experienced human resource and project manager with an excellent reputation for being a collaborative and hard worker and a problem solver of complex issues. She is well recognized for the dedication, energy and quick-wit she brings to the workplace – all of which she will call upon as she transitions into her new role with the Department.

As for what drew her to the Department of Medicine and the role of administrator, Denise says, "I am most looking forward to applying my knowledge of health system policy and process, and experience with varied stakeholders to help advance the goals and growth of the Department of Medicine. This Department is uniquely positioned to improve the health system especially in the current environment wherein the Nova Scotia Health Authority is still early in its development." She notes that her first priority will be ensuring the appropriate supports are in place to enable the Department and its members to meet their clinical and academic deliverables and provide the best possible health care experience for patients and their families.

Please welcome Denise to the Department!

FAREWELL AND BEST WISHES



On March 31st we bid a sad farewell to **Ms. Heather Macpherson** who has served as administrator in the Department of Medicine since 1998. To say that Heather has been instrumental in the development and strength of the Department undervalues her contributions to the Department of Medicine, which are truly immeasurable.

Heather has been a leader in our department, stepping up whenever needed to lead many substantial projects including the production of the department's annual and deliverable reports to stakeholders, kiosk implementation, recruitment and serve as acting manager for several divisions. She has also lent her knowledge and expertise to the hospitals, health authority and Dalhousie, serving on many committees within these organizations. Heather's experience and institutional knowledge, dedication and administrative savvy will be sorely missed in the Department of Medicine.

We wish Heather all the best on her well-earned retirement!



Kate MacWilliams has moved on to new challenges as educator in the emergency department at St. Joseph's Health Centre, Toronto, after ably filling a one-year term position as Quality Program Leader in the Department of Medicine. Kate was responsible for establishing the department's quality management program. She worked with the Quality and Performance Appraisal Committee and with the divisions to identify quality performance indicators, benchmarks and measurement tools thus facilitating quality improvement projects across the department.



Jeremy Walker, IT Technical Service Representative (TSR) in the Department, was recently reassigned as part of the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) and Department of Health & Wellness IT restructuring. He, like many of his TSR colleagues, are now provincial employees, effectively ending an arrangement the Department of Medicine had with the Central Zone IT Department that enabled exclusive access to Jeremy's expertise. In March, the Department was advised that this arrangement would no longer be possible, however, to best enable this transition, Jeremy will continue to take Department of Medicine requests for service until the end of June 2016. Beginning July 1st, requests for service will be addressed by a pool of IT service technicians, who will continue to be located on-site within the hospitals. While you may still see Jeremy on occasion, he will no longer be exclusively assigned to the Department.

Many thanks to Jeremy for serving the Department so well for many years and we wish him the very best on this new chapter in his career.