ASA Task Force Develops Stroke Care Guidelines

UAB’S ACKER A PRINCIPAL WRITER

The American Stroke Association (ASA), a division of the American Heart Association, recently formed a national task force to establish guidelines for treatment of stroke patients throughout the United States. The task force was composed of nationally recognized experts in stroke prevention, emergency medical services, stroke rehabilitation, stroke treatment, and health policy development.

Task force goals were to describe the current system, define components of an ideal system to prevent, diagnose, and care for stroke patients, and recommend methods to implement such a system," says Birmingham Regional Emergency Medical Services System (BREMSS) Executive Director Joe Acker, who continued on page 3
procedures, *U.S. News* reports. “They follow, and often pioneer, advanced treatment guidelines. They conduct bench-to-bedside research. And they exploit advances in imaging, surgical devices and other technologies,” according to guidelines released by the magazine on its methodology for the rankings.

“These rankings confirm University Hospital’s continued commitment to the highest quality health care for our patients,” UAB Health System CEO David Hoidal says. “We will continue to expand our mission, improving the health and lives of individuals in Alabama, and beyond.”

**RANKED UAB PROGRAMS**

- Cancer — 22
- Ear, Nose and Throat — 29
- Geriatrics — 27
- Gynecology — 15
- Heart and Heart Surgery — 10
- Kidney Disease — 15
- Neurology and Neurosurgery — 35
- Orthopedics — 34
- Rheumatology — 6

Cardiology has been ranked for the past 10 years and gynecology for 7 years. This is the 16th year that *U.S. News* has published its “America’s Best Hospitals” issue.

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**Kharbanda Joins Pediatric Hematology/Oncology**

UAB Professor and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics Sergio Stagno, MD, and Professor and Director of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Thomas H. Howard, MD, announce the appointment of Sandhya Kharbanda, MD, as assistant professor.

Dr. Kharbanda graduated from Government Medical College in Jabalpur, India, with a bachelor of surgery and bachelor of medicine degree. She completed her pediatric residency at Children’s Medical Center of Brooklyn, State University of New York, where she was chief resident. She completed a pediatric hematology and oncology fellowship at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and a pediatric bone marrow transplantation fellowship at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Dr. Kharbanda’s clinical interests center on bone marrow transplantation in children with a particular focus on bone marrow transplantation for hemoglobinopathies, such as sickle cell disease and pulmonary complications in bone marrow transplantation. She pursues her academic and clinical work in the UAB Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Program, housed in the Lowder Pediatric Stem Cell Transplant Unit at Children’s Hospital.

She is currently accepting patients at Children’s Hospital and may be reached at 939-5848 for academic and administrative calls and at 939-9285 for patient appointments; e-mail skharbanda@peds.uab.edu.

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**PULSEBEATS**

**UNINSURED NUMBERS CAN BE REDUCED**

The number of Americans without health insurance can be reduced by more than 50% in the next 10 years, according to results from a recent Commonwealth Fund survey. Most respondents — experts in health care practice and policy — believe that employer-sponsored insurance should continue to provide coverage for most people under 65 years of age.

The Commonwealth Fund is a private foundation supporting independent research on health and social issues that makes grants to improve health care practice and policy. It works to help individuals become more informed about their health care and improve care for vulnerable populations, including children, elderly individuals, low-income families, minority Americans, and the uninsured.

The survey also indicated respondents’ levels of support for several policy efforts to improve insurance coverage:

- 82% favor employer incentives to provide a minimum insurance standard and tax credits or other subsidies for low-wage workers;
- 70% support a requirement that employers who do not provide health benefits pay into a fund to insure workers and their families;
- 60% would permit employers to buy into Medicaid or children’s health insurance programs for their employees;
- 42% support replacing employer coverage with a single-payer plan;
- 33% favor association health plans for small employers and the self-employed;
- 22% support health savings accounts as a policy option for expanding coverage.

For more information, visit www.cmwf.org/surveys/surveys_show.htm?doc_id=263060
“The site was designed to serve several audiences including our patients; local, national, and international physicians and scientific colleagues; and trainees,” says Jennifer Croker, PhD, AMC program manager/Web site administrator.

The patient care section offers basic information such as clinic locations, descriptions of conditions treated, how to make appointments, support groups, and links to related Web sites.

Education and training encompasses the center’s outreach development program, summer science institutes for high school students, undergraduate educational programs, internships, fellowships, and postgraduate training, all designed to prepare students for medical and research careers, as well as continuing medical education. The grants and funding section

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NEW STOP SMOKING TOOLS

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released a new consumer tool for Palm™ and Pocket PCs to help smokers. Quit Smoking: Consumer Interactive Tool, is drawn from evidence-based recommendations of the Public Health Service Guideline, Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence, and helps smokers devise a stop-smoking program tailored to individual needs. The AHRQ Palm™ and Pocket PC applications can be downloaded at: http://pda.ahrq.gov.

Quitting smoking information: www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco.htm

Toll-free National Quitline at 800-QUIT NOW.

To access a Synopsis article from the last 2 years, visit our Web site at www.health.uab.edu/synopsis. You can search by date or subject in the left sidebar.
PHILIPS BENEFIT

One benefit of the recently signed strategic alliance with Philips is that UAB, UAB Health System (UABHS), and University of Alabama Health Services Foundation (UAHSF) employees may purchase items from the Philips Electronics Store. Philips merchandise is available online. The prices are generally excellent and shipping may be at no cost.

Before purchasing items, employees may want to check prices from other online merchants using a service such as BizRate (www.bizrate.com) or MySimon (www.mysimon.com) to make sure they are getting the best deal.

The Philips Employee Store can be accessed at www.employeestore.philips.com/medical. Once the site is accessed, click on the Register Now button. Log in using your UAB e-mail address and provide your own personal (minimum 8 digit) pass-...