MASA GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS CONFERENCE

Join MASA’s Washington Governmental Affairs Conference, February 5 through 8, at the historic Willard Intercontinental Hotel in Washington, D.C. The annual conference has received outstanding reviews from both physician attendees and the Alabama Congressional Delegation. The Monday evening congressional dinner in the Willard Ballroom has been a much talked about event. For registration material, call MASA’s Governmental Affairs Office at 334-261-2000 or 800-239-1333.

CLINICAL NEWS

Compassion At Life’s End

UAB EXPANDS ITS CENTER FOR PALLIATIVE CARE

“Americans are clear about end-of-life priorities. Research shows they want control in decision making, home-based emotional and spiritual support, and effective pain management.”

Rodney Tucker, MD, UAB Palliative Care Clinical Program

The Latin root for palliation, palliare, signifies to shield or to cloak. “Palliative care is a collaboration of professionals aimed at shielding and protecting patients from the violence of advanced disease, especially at the end of life,” Christine Ritchie, MD, MSPH, director of UAB’s Center for Palliative Care (CPC), says. Emphasizing the need for substantial improvements in end-of-life care in the United States, Rodney Tucker, MD, medical director of the CPC Clinical Program, offers a case study. “Recently, a patient with kidney and lung disease, coupled with early dementia, came to us. Three months ago, he went through bypass surgery, with major complications, and was in such pain from surgical complications he did not want to live. No further curative treatment was possible. “His final wish was to be at home, but he could not manage the pain on an outpatient basis. We initiated continuous aggressive pain therapy that allowed him to live comfortably and peacefully where he desired.”

CHOICES

In the United States, the field of palliative care has developed out of the recognition that acute care experiences often do not adequately address symptom management or fully identify patients’ wishes regarding treatment. The goal of palliative care is to promote quality of life in advanced illness and respect for patients’ wishes regarding their care.

Mortui Vivos Docent: Let The Dead Teach The Living

ANATOMICAL DONOR PROGRAM

UAB’s Anatomical Donor Program (total-willed-body donation) allows individuals to arrange posthumous donation of their bodies for anatomical study, enabling health professionals to advance their knowledge of medicine. “We receive approximately 100 donors a year serving some 550 students annually,” says Anatomical Donor Program and Gross Laboratory Director Richard Shane Tubbs, MS, PA-C, PhD. “Those utilizing donor bodies include medical, dental, optometry, physical therapy, occupational therapy, surgeons’ assistant, and nurse anesthetist students.”
Many palliative care principles emanate from the collective hospice experience. With a broader application of hospice concepts, palliative care applies to patients with a significant burden of illness, but who are much earlier in the disease trajectory. This care can be integrated with curative or life-prolonging treatments, while hospice is explicitly noncurative.

“Many people think palliative care is what you do when there are no other options,” says Dr. Ritchie, who was recruited from the University of Louisville to direct UAB’s CPC. “Palliative care addresses end of life care and prevents and relieves suffering through earlier assessment and treatment of pain and help for other physical, psychosocial, and spiritual issues.”

Advance planning is an important focus of palliative care. Like hospice, palliative care integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care and recognizes the importance of the family in the patient’s treatment plan.

UAB CENTER MOVES TO GERIATRICS

Imbuing these principles, the CPC — founded in 2000 and now a component of UAB’s Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology — has provided interdisciplinary support for patients with significant illness, including cancer. In fall 2004, the clinic moved to its new home at the William C. & Margaret Spain McDonald Clinic, 1521 11th Avenue S. Here, physicians and staff have more room to provide a full range of services to meet local patients’ nutritional, psychosocial, functional, and spiritual needs.

The Palliative Care Clinic, held on Wednesdays and Fridays, is accessible to any patient with a chronic, life-limiting illness, including cancer, heart failure, emphysema, Alzheimer disease, AIDS, and Parkinson disease. The Supportive Care Clinic sees primarily cancer patients.

“We support patients through the multitude of problems encountered during and after treatment,” Dr. Tucker says. Assistance is provided for control of symptoms, such as pain, fatigue, and nausea, as well as attention to emotional and spiritual support, food and nutrition counseling, and preservation of quality of life and dignity.

A TIME TO GROW

CPC faculty include Amos Bailey, MD (medical director of the Birmingham Veterans Affairs Palliative Care Clinical Program), Elizabeth Kvale, MD, Carol Griffin, MD, Charlotte Williams, and Cindy Baker. They offer fellows, residents, and medical and nursing students training in a fundamental palliative care skill — communication.

They also offer education in ethical issues at end of life, psychosocial considerations, and symptom management. Special areas of focus include ethical decision-making, spirituality, and interface with cultural norms. Training stresses a team approach. Research is integrated with clinical care, and studies aimed at symptom control for seriously ill patients and caregiver support are a major focus.

“Prior studies evaluating end-of-life care showed that, as a health-care system, we have a long way to go to improve quality of life in patients with advanced illness,” Dr. Ritchie continues. “Improvements are best achieved by identifying concerns important to individual patients, communicating patients’ concerns to the treating medical team, and working collaboratively with the team until all concerns are addressed.”

The CPC was designed to promote palliative care not only at UAB and local affiliated programs but also throughout the regional medical community. It works with community hospices for service outreach and partners with community networks. “It is important for patients to know there are many things we can do to help,” Dr. Tucker concludes. “Much of our work is the ministry of presence. We are here to help alleviate suffering.” For more information, call 975-8190.

Russo Joins Vascular Surgery

Fay Fletcher Kerner Professor of Surgery and Chairman of UAB’s Department of Surgery Kirby I. Bland, MD, and Professor and Section of Vascular Surgery Chief William D. Jordan, Jr., MD, announce the appointment of Gilberto C. Russo, MD, PhD, as assistant professor. He joins UAB from Case Western Reserve University Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio, where he completed a vascular surgery fellowship under Jerry Goldstone, MD.

Dr. Russo was born in Milan and graduated with honors from the Polytechnic Institute of Torino in Italy. As a Fulbright Fellow, he attended Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he was awarded a PhD in nuclear engineering and joined the School of Engineering faculty, winning numerous awards and obtaining substantial funding for his research. He then completed his MD degree at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine.

He completed a general surgery residency at the University of California at San Francisco and New York University’s Albert Einstein School of Medicine, where he was honored with the Award for Academic Excellence as a general surgery resident.

Dr. Russo has published more than 75 peer-reviewed publications, book chapters, and abstracts in medicine, science, and nuclear engineering. Fluent in Spanish, French, Italian, and English, he plays the guitar and enjoys painting, skiing, sailing, and sky diving. He is a Formula 3 pilot, a certified scuba diving instructor, and holds a blue belt in karate. He also has traveled extensively in Europe, Africa, Australia, and the Americas.
Dr. Russo’s clinical interests center on vascular surgery and evidence-based medicine. His research focuses on a hardcore approach to applications of modern engineering to surgery, particularly vascular surgery, as well as to establishment of a scientific base for clinical decision-making. Graduate students, undergraduates, and medical students interested in participating in such research are invited to call him.

Funding/credits/thesis issues can be discussed on a case-by-case basis. He invites any faculty, staff, students, or other interested individuals to contact him.

Dr. Russo is currently accepting patients at the vascular surgery clinic at The Kirklin Clinic on Thursday afternoons; call 934-2003 for patient appointments. He can be reached via e-mail at gcrusso@uab.edu.

CON APPLICATIONS OF INTEREST IN JEFFERSON/ SURROUNDING COUNTIES

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2004

◆ Brookwood Medical Center — letter of intent to renovate and add four new operating rooms − 12/07/04
◆ Outpatient Specialists of Alabama, LLC — letter of intent to construct ambulatory surgery center in Jefferson County
◆ Brookwood Medical Center — letter of intent to renovate/expand postoperative care unit (POCU), add 12 new operating rooms, and construct a new POCU and post-anesthesia care unit space — 11/02/04
◆ Brookwood Medical Center — addition of fourth therapeutic cath lab — 10/22/04

For more information, contact Martin Nowak at mnnowak@uab.edu or 975-7545.

Mortui Vivos Docent: Let The Dead Teach The Living
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To become a registered total-willed-body donor, one must complete the necessary paperwork and be at least aged 18 and of sound mind. The required $750 fee may be prepaid at the time of registration or paid within 90 days after death. This fee covers transportation from the death site within a 35-mile radius of Birmingham, anatomical embalming, and maintenance and cremation of the body. Potential donors are advised to discuss their decision with family members to ensure their wishes are honored and to carry an anatomical donor card at all times.

After the body is embalmed using a special procedure that prepares it for long-term study, the university may hold it for up to a year. Program staff then cremate it in an on-site dedicated facility, and the ashes are returned to the family, if requested, or interred in UAB’s Meditation Garden at Cook Springs.

For safety reasons, preregistered donor bodies with a diagnosis of infectious disease, such as HIV or hepatitis, are accepted but cremated upon receipt. Preregistered bodies that are morbidly obese, severely injured or mangled due to trauma, or those who have had vital organs removed for transplantation are not used for anatomical study and will be cremated.

“Students hold a Service of Gratitude for donors from the previous year. This service takes place in late February and is attended by family and friends, providing a sense of closure,” Dr. Tubbs adds.

To prevent illegal trade or sale of donor parts, as occurred at the University of California in Los Angeles and in Galveston, Texas, and led to suspension of its willed body programs, UAB has security measures in place. “All students, faculty, and staff have keycards they must swipe to gain laboratory access. This enables us to know who is in the lab at all times, since it has 24-hour access,” Dr. Tubbs explains.

In addition, the laboratory has security cameras and Volker Hall security staff regularly patrol the building. There is also heightened awareness among faculty members.

Dr. Tubbs notes the transport team that moves donors from the death site to the university receives a thorough background check.

Program Administrator Ann Harrell is available 24 hours a day and maintains contact with interested parties after completion of paperwork. If donors change their minds or move from the area, they should notify the office in writing; their names are then removed from the database and prepayment is refunded.

Those interested in donation of their bodies for anatomical study may contact the Anatomical Donor Program at 205-934-4494 for information, or visit www.uab.edu and type “anatomical donor program” in the search box. Necessary forms and anatomical donor cards are available on the site.

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UAB SYNOPSIS

DIAL 911 FOR UAB POLICE

When you dial 911 on the UAB campus, it automatically rings the UAB Police Station.

SURFING THE INFOBAHN

NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Nutrition & Physical Activity site features databases, publications, state and federal policies, consensus statements, and information on obesity and weight control for consumers and professionals. www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition.htm

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.

UAB physicians: visit MSI, the password-protected Medical Staff intranet site, at https://horizon.hs.uab.edu.
## Active Staff Appointments

**Todd B. Brown, MD**, 996-7385, JTN 266, Emergency Medicine, *Effective September*

**Angelo M. de Mattos, MD**, 934-6145, THT 638, Division of Nephrology, *Effective September*

**Beth L. Dinoff, PhD**, 801-8250, TKC 1st Floor, Pain Center, *Effective October*

**Harvinder S. Dod, MD**, 934-4078, SW S102, Cardiovascular Disease, *Effective September*

**Fred L. Griffin, MD**, 996-2452, SPC 4th Floor, Adult Psychiatry, *Effective September*

**Steven J. King, MD**, 975-5676, MCLM 274, Gastroenterology/Hepatology, *Effective September*

**Silvio H. Litovsky, MD**, 975-6941, PD6A 149, Anatomic Pathology, *Effective September*

**Robert A. Nordal, MD**, 326-4417, WTI 102A, Radiation Oncology, *Effective September*

**Silvio E. Papapietro, MD**, 939-0827, BDB 383, Interventional Cardiology, *Effective September*

**Melissa L. Peters, MD**, 934-2116, MTC 205, Pediatric Emergency Medicine, *Effective September*

**Priya Prabhakaran, MD**, 939-9387, ACC 504, Pediatric Critical Care, *Effective October*


**Linda J. Schultz, MD**, 934-3007, FOT 720, General Internal Medicine, *Effective September*

**R. Matthew Stephenson, DMD**, 934-2552, RWUH B50, Hospital Dentistry, *Effective October*

**LaTamia M. White, MD**, 939-9193, SPC 3rd Floor, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, *Effective October*

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

- Brain Resource Program for those suffering from Alzheimer, Parkinson, and Huntington Chorea diseases. Telephone: 205-934-4476 or 934-0946.
- Anatomical Gifts Program at the University of South Alabama in Mobile. Telephone: 251-460-6764.

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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