



Focus

JANUARY 2001

Caring for the Community

Second-year medical student John Weber doesn't mind the daily commute from Westchester because he feels he's getting exactly the educational experience he wants. "I chose Downstate not just for its academic reputation but for its involvement in the community. I wanted to be part of that outreach activity," he says.

Mr. Werber got his wish last fall when his proposal to organize an influenza/pneumococcal vaccination program was selected by the American Association of Medical Colleges and Pfizer to receive \$13,525 in grant funding.

"My interest in influenza and pneumonia began with my work as a lab technician prior to coming to Downstate," Mr. Werber explains. He was struck by certain ironies. Influenza and pneumonia are the fourth leading cause of death in

Brooklyn, but only 12 percent of the borough's elderly residents are vaccinated—and yet the pneumococcal vaccine was developed by Downstate scientist Dr. Gerald Schiffman, distinguished service professor of microbiology and immunology.

With the support of members of Family Practice, Preventive Medicine and Community Health, Family Health Services, the Arthur Ashe Institute, and other individuals who have strong ties to the community, such as Dr. Gerald Deas, director of community health communication, the project quickly got underway. Students for a Healthier Brooklyn was formed, open to first- and second-year students as a Family Practice elective.

The group was able to dovetail efforts with three other community initiatives: the Bond Street Foot Clinic, a student-run program at a homeless shelter; Professor

Robert Karp's ongoing health program at Holy Cross Parish; and the Strengthen our Seniors Program, a campaign by Family Practice and local community organizations to provide flu and pneumonia shots to people 65 and older.

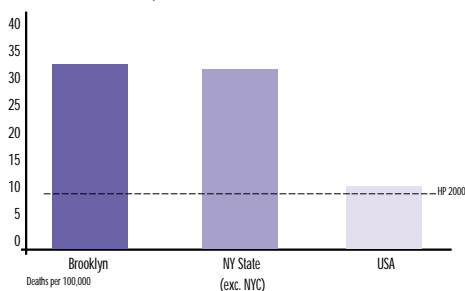
Since pneumonia is often triggered by respiratory infections or influenza, flu shots are an important part of the immunization program. The students buy vaccine and other supplies, arrange transportation, set their own schedules, and collect patient data to show the effectiveness of the work. Judging by preliminary reports, their efforts have been successful.

PRELIMINARY DATA ON THE COMMUNITY VACCINATION DRIVE FOR SENIORS*

- > 98 percent of those who received vaccine shots were African-American or Latino;
- > 98 percent were foreign-born immigrants;
- > 50 percent had Medicare coverage and would not have been able to get the vaccines otherwise;
- > About half speak a primary language other than English, mostly Haitian Creole or Spanish;
- > 4 out of 5 learned of the pneumonia vaccine through this outreach program.

*This data was collected at four sites but is representative of most others.

PNEUMONIA DEATHS, 1997



Pneumonia deaths are dramatically higher in Brooklyn and New York State than they are in the United States. Occurring primarily in those over 65, most pneumonia deaths are preventable through vaccinations. Brooklyn's rate of nearly 35 far exceeds the Healthy People (HP) 2000 goal of 7.3 deaths per 100,000.

Sources: 1997 Vital Statistics Report, NYSDOH Deaths: Final Data for 1997; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

ALONG CLARKSON AVENUE

CITING ADVOCACY ROLE, ADVISORY COUNCIL FORMS SUBCOMMITTEES

The SUNY Downstate Medical Center Council, an advisory group whose members are appointed by the Governor's Office, recently established four subcommittees in order to increase their knowledge of campus issues and activities.

"We believe that these committees, while remaining advisory, will help the entire council become a better advocate for Downstate," said Mary Anne Yancey, the new chairperson of the council. "There is a feeling among council members that we can do more to help Downstate at this critical moment in its history. To do that, though, we need a greater awareness of the challenges and opportunities the institution faces in several key areas."

Ms. Yancey believes that the subcommittees will enhance the council's ability to fulfill key responsibilities, including being knowledgeable about SUNY policies that affect Downstate and communicating the achievements and needs of Downstate to the university's trustees. The subcommittees that have been formed are Academic Affairs, Clinical Affairs, Business Affairs, and Public Relations.

"Feedback from the campus community can increase our effectiveness as council members," said Ms. Yancey. "Together, we can strengthen Downstate and build upon its well-deserved reputation of serving the community through education, research, and patient care."

Members of the campus community are encouraged to contact the committee chairs and administrative liaisons (listed above) with suggestions or issues they wish the committees to consider.

Academic Affairs

Attallah Kappas, M.D., Chairperson
212-327-8494

Eugene Feigelson, M.D., Liaison, x1101

Clinical Affairs

Steven Bodine, M.D., Chairperson
914-793-6900

John Fallon, M.D., Liaison, x2611

Business Affairs

Peter Bellacosa, Esq., Chairperson
212-446-4820

John O'Hara, Liaison, x 3176

Public Relations

Sadie Feddoes, Chairperson
718-230-9151

Brian Kell, Liaison, x3946



In observance of World AIDS Day, the Student Center Governing Board displayed panels from the AIDS quilt in the Atrium of HSEB.



At the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources' Xmas party, President John LaRosa congratulates Leroy Taylor, a senior lab animal caretaker who has never been late in more than 30 years on the job.

Students from P.S. 254 in South Brooklyn enjoy an anatomy lesson made possible by the Health Science Academy, a program of the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health to encourage young students' interest in science and medicine.



FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

All members of the Downstate community are invited to attend a series of special events celebrating Black History Month. On opening day, February 1, come hear guest speakers Jeannette Gadson, Brooklyn deputy borough president, and Dennis Walcott, president of the NY Urban League, from 12-1:30 p.m. in Alumni Auditorium. And be sure to mark your calendar for these coming events:

- Feb 2 Arthur Ashe Institute Program
- Feb 7 MOTTEP Gift of Life Program
- Feb 14 Buffet and play: "For the Love of My Black Woman"
- Feb 16 BHC All-Stars vs WWRL basketball game at Wingate HS
- Feb 19 Family Day at Empire Roller Rink
- Feb 21 UHB Health Fair
- Feb 22 Youth Inspirational Gospelfest
- Feb 26 Historical Program
- Feb 27 Financial Planning Seminar
- Mar 2 Cultural Fair/Children's Day



At the annual Minority Student-Faculty Reception sponsored by the Office of Minority Affairs, doctors and future doctors enjoyed learning more about each other in a collegial, informal setting.

BETTER TO GIVE AND RECEIVE

When Cynthia Young succumbed to breast cancer, after fighting the disease for five years with the help of her oncologist, Dr. William Solomon, her sisters decided to do something special in her memory: Along with more than 20 nieces and nephews, they saved enough money to buy dozens of toys for hospitalized children at UHB. Shortly before Christmas, they traveled to Downstate to donate several bulging bags of toys, which were gratefully received by Dr. Jamesetta Halley-Boyce, interim CEO of UHB, and Laurel Whitaker, director of the Child Life Center.



Dr. Jamesetta Halley-Boyce and Laurel Whitaker receive toys donated by Cynthia Young's extended family.

OVER THE TOP

Preliminary reports indicate that our campus succeeded in raising \$129,257 for the State Employees Federated Appeal. This is far more than last year's total (\$103,786) and exceeds our stated goal of \$114,000. We had 1,044 donors, compared to 900 last year. President John LaRosa thanks everyone who helped make this year's campaign such an unqualified success.

BOOKMARKS

Certified nurse-anesthetist Joyce P. Nightingale-Holder writes poems that span two cultures: Barbados and the United States. Here is an excerpt from her latest published collection, *Mosaic of Thoughts*:

In My Garden

In my garden lies a path to harmony.

Species existing

Relating and sharing

Yielding one to each other.

The daring of survival...and bees.

In my garden lies a path to memories.

Nature performing to repeated encores.

Costumes submitting

Assembling in evolution...and butterflies.

In my garden lies a path to life.

Rocks and gravel bruising yet holding my footsteps.

Building blocks in disguise.

Appropriate contradictions creating balance...and birds.

WOMEN'S HEALTH CONFERENCE

This year's annual conference on Women's Health Challenges of the Inner City, sponsored by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, was chaired by Dr. Diane Ashton, the department's director of women's health. The conference focused on issues in perinatal medicine and gynecological endocrinology. Phyllis Leppert, M.D., who is active in the NIH Women's Health 2000 program, was the keynote speaker. Other invited guests included State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, who addressed the problem of Brooklyn's high infant mortality rate, its causes, and ways to reduce it.



Women's Health Conference Speaker:
Velmanette Montgomery

UHB HAPPENINGS

UHB Opens New Primary Care Center



Amid festive ribbons and balloons, members of Downstate, local legislators, and community residents celebrate the opening of the Center for Health Care Services at Midwood.

In celebration of the opening of the Center for Health Care Services at Midwood, UHB held a gala ribbon-cutting ceremony on December 14. Located at 2171 Nostrand Avenue, near Brooklyn College, this ultramodern new facility offers specialty care in pediatrics, adult internal medicine, women's health, and family care. Two primary care physicians, Otis Jeans, and Serena V. Ferguson, are now on staff, with additional practitioners due to sign up in the coming months. Suzanne Hector George, R.N., who formerly served as an intensive care nurse at UHB, is the center's site administrator.

Several local businessman and legislators were represented at the opening, including Congressman Major Owens and State Assemblymember Rhoda Jacobs. Even though the new health center is not in his district, Assemblymember Nick Perry (Dist. 58) made a point of showing up as a sign of support.

"I hope that this new health center will turn out to be a bonanza for the hospital," he said, in reference to less successful attempts by many New York hospitals to establish viable community satellites. University Hospital of Brooklyn already has a proven track record: Its first neighborhood health center, the Family Health Services at 840 Lefferts Avenue, which opened in 1994, is thriving, with an average of 1,100 patient visits each month.



Congressman Edolphus Towns (l.) and Dr. Ivan Bodis-Wollner (r.), professor of neurology at Downstate and head of the Parkinson's Disease Center of Excellence at Kings County Hospital Center, confer at a campus health fair cosponsored by the Syncope Center, UHB's new treatment center for patients suffering from recurring faints.



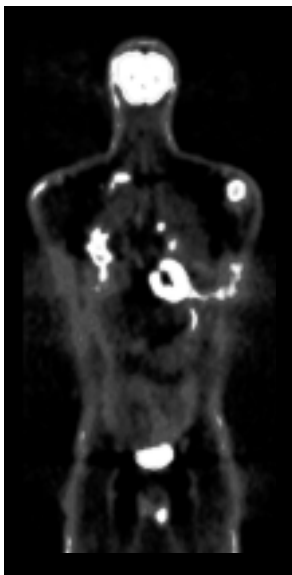
Brooklyn Diabetes Club Off to a Good Start

Despite the heavy snowfall, the turnout was excellent for the second meeting of the new Brooklyn Diabetes Club of Downstate, which met on campus at the beginning of January. Sponsored by UHB's Institute of Continuous Learning, the Department of Nursing, and the Department of Medicine, the group meets the first Wednesday of every month and is open to the community. It's a good way to meet other people living with diabetes and to get advice from health professionals about managing the disease. For more information, call Linda Cohen, R.N. (270-1548) or Maria Yomtov, R.N., (270-2020).

New Scanner Works Wonders

Physicians and researchers at SUNY Downstate now have a remarkable tool for visualizing internal body organs and tissues. University Hospital's new positron emission tomography (PET) scanner is the only one of its kind in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. Housed within a gleaming white vehicle parked near the hospital's Clarkson Avenue entrance, this mobile imaging device promises to shed new light on our understanding of the brain. It will be a boon to researchers in mapping brain functions, studying the effects of stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and other neurological disorders.

It promises to be enormously useful in clinical practice by enabling physicians to diagnose brain tumors and the effects of stroke, as well as to detect early stages of cancer and coronary artery disease. PET will help avoid unnecessary exploratory surgery and thereby reduce costs. But best of all it will help save lives.

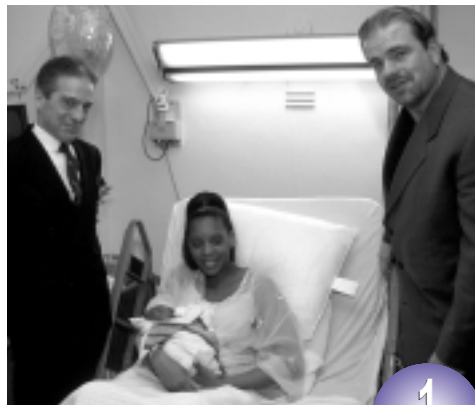


Example of PET imaging >

Unlike more conventional imaging devices such as MRI and ultrasound, PET provides both exact data and a clear visual image of metabolic processes within the body.

Neither Rain Nor Sleet Nor Snow

During the recent snow emergency, we made the Post Office's famous motto our own. Downstate members from every department and station pitched in to make certain that patient services would not be impaired. Housekeeping and FM&D crews kept the sidewalks and entranceways clear; Public Safety arranged frequent pickups from bus and subway stations to bring stranded travelers to campus; and everyone who could make it in worked long shifts. Jeannette Marrero, chief nurse executive, for example, did extra duty by helping to triage patients in the ACRC.



Showing split-second timing, Peter Ashfield III beat the competition by being born at UHB at the stroke of midnight, January 1. Both President John LaRosa (shown here) and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani made special visits to congratulate the proud parents of the city's first baby of the New Year.

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Interview with John Fallon, M.D., M.B.A.

In November, Dr. John A. Fallon joined the Downstate community as senior vice president for clinical affairs. In this newly created position, Dr. Fallon will be working closely with UHB administrators, nursing staffs, department chairs, and the physician clinical practice plan to coordinate and strengthen clinical care, improve ambulatory services, and expand community outreach efforts. In this interview, Dr. Fallon discusses some of his reasons for coming here and his goals for Downstate.

Q. What made you decide to leave your position as executive vice president of Boston's North Shore Medical Center and come to Downstate?

A. I wanted to continue to work in an academic medical center and was attracted by Downstate's reputation for excellence, its service to the Brooklyn community, and its diversity. During the interview process I made an effort to meet many people besides the ones on the interview team in order to get the fullest picture of the challenges and opportunities ahead. In the end, among the deciding factors in my decision to come here were the many wonderful people I met, especially Dr. John LaRosa himself. His enthusiasm and excitement captured my imagination. His goal to bring physicians and hospital administration closer together is also my strong desire, and he made me believe that we can accomplish great things.

Q. How does your past experience prepare you for what you will face here?

A. I am fortunate to have had a broad-based career that exposed me to all aspects of health care. At the onset of managed care, about 15 years ago, while still practicing internal medicine full time, I decided to become more involved in the hospital system. I familiarized myself with the hospital side of health care delivery by working in many different administrative capacities. The capstone of that learning experience was the completion of my M.B.A. It added an important component to my breadth of experiences, which ranged

from physician care, community and academic hospitals, managed care organizations, and state-wide political issues.

Q. Do you find that Downstate is a more complex environment, given the many layers of authority that exist within our decentralized, departmental structure?

A. The academic component does lend a significant level of complexity, but part of my experience as chair of Partners Community Healthcare, the physician network for Massachusetts General and Brigham and Women's Hospital (Harvard's teaching hospitals), involved working with three community hospitals and two academic medical centers, as well as 5,000 physicians, so that complexity was even greater.

Yes, the structure here is very decentralized, but the enthusiasm is palpable and a wonderful cohesiveness is emerging.

Q. One of your initial tasks will be to lead the development of the Strategic Plan for the clinical enterprise. What will be your priorities?

A. The strategic planning process is tied to all the things we've been discussing. It brings together the best creativity of the people at Downstate to decide the directions for our growth. As the only academic medical center in Brooklyn there are certain things we do that no one else does. We need to identify the services we provide that the community needs most and how we can improve them and provide better access. We must grow new services and expand our current clinical programs.

Q. How do we start that process?

A. Some of the community's needs we know but we also have to further expand our understanding. Since the opening of the ACRC, the unbelievable increase in patient volume tells us that even though we are an academic medical center we are in many ways also a community hospital. We need to meet both sets of needs: to be the provider of choice for routine medical care and Brooklyn's premier tertiary and quaternary facility, providing highly



Dr. John A. Fallon

specialized services.

Q. Since yours is a newly created position here, many people don't know what the relationship is between your office and the top hospital administration.

A. As interim CEO of University Hospital of Brooklyn, Dr. Jamesetta Halley-Boyce has responsibility for the operation of the hospital. My role is to support her. Multidisciplinary meetings are bringing physicians and administrative leadership closer together. Through these efforts of tight integration, we are able to realize untapped synergies. As a cohesive team, we will be able to deliver the highest quality care in the most efficient manner while we explore together new growth opportunities.

In these incredibly difficult times for healthcare nationally and locally, the physicians and the staff of UHB, along with the College of Medicine, are creating an environment that doesn't exist elsewhere in Brooklyn. With hard work, innovation, and a strong commitment to quality and

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