

Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Monday, June 30, 2014

Class of 2016 Medical Students Begin Clinical Rotations



The University of South Alabama College of Medicine recently held clerkship orientation for third-year medical students. Orientation week served as the introduction to the students' clinical years and included briefings on topics ranging from hospital policies to mini board exams.

Beginning with this class, students who enter the USA College of Medicine receive instruction in all competencies from the beginning of their educational experience. Milestones of achievement toward competency will be assessed and documented throughout the four-year continuum leading to graduation.

"With the new curriculum, I had the opportunity to interact with patients in a

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Blog Archive

- 2023 (10)
- 2022 (249)
- 2021 (269)
- 2020 (191)
- 2019 (245)
- 2018 (236)
- 2017 (231)
- 2016 (206)
- 2015 (205)
- ▼ 2014 (241)
 - 12/14 - 12/21 (4)
 - 12/07 - 12/14 (4)
 - 11/30 - 12/07 (4)
 - 11/23 - 11/30 (4)
 - 11/16 - 11/23 (5)
 - 11/09 - 11/16 (5)
 - 11/02 - 11/09 (5)
 - 10/26 - 11/02 (6)
 - 10/19 - 10/26 (5)
 - 10/12 - 10/19 (5)
 - 10/05 - 10/12 (5)
 - 09/28 - 10/05 (6)
 - 09/21 - 09/28 (7)
 - 09/14 - 09/21 (5)
 - 09/07 - 09/14 (5)
 - 08/31 - 09/07 (6)
 - 08/24 - 08/31 (4)
 - 08/17 - 08/24 (5)
 - 08/10 - 08/17 (4)
 - 08/03 - 08/10 (4)
 - 07/27 - 08/03 (4)
 - 07/20 - 07/27 (4)
 - 07/13 - 07/20 (4)

primary care clinic as a first-year student," said third-year USA medical student Anna Crutchfield of Columbus, Ga. "Hopefully my experiences in the clinical setting along with what I've learned in the classroom will help me adjust to this new in-patient environment."

"Patients are the reason I continually work hard to become a competent doctor," Crutchfield said. "I'm excited about my interactions with them, and I am looking forward to changing lives for the better."

Despite the nerves associated with starting clinical patient care, the third-year medical students agree that this milestone is one they have anticipated for years.

Monica Kumar, another third-year USA medical student from Seattle, Wash., speaks in accord with many students when she says that the transition from studying in the classroom to working in the clinical setting is a huge step in the pursuit of their careers in the medical field. "It's what we've all been looking forward to these past few years."

"One of the aspects of working with patients that I'm most looking forward to is getting to know patients and hearing their stories," she said. "It's really humbling when a patient opens up to you about his or her life and trusts you to be a part of their care."

Moving forward in her medical career, Kumar says that the USA College of Medicine has properly prepared her to work in a clinical setting by providing medical students with a firm foundation in the basic sciences, on which they can now begin to build the rest of their careers.



Posted by Med School Watercooler at [10:10 AM](#) No comments:

Dr. Bauer Receives Grant for PAH Research



► [07/06 - 07/13](#) (4)

▼ [06/29 - 07/06](#) (5)

[Class of 2016 Medical Students Begin Clinical Rota...](#)

[Dr. Bauer Receives Grant for PAH Research](#)

[Snapshots: Mobile Street Clean-Up Day](#)

[Dr. Ronald Allison Retires After 34 Years of Service](#)

[Dr. Estrada Featured on AL.com](#)

► [06/22 - 06/29](#) (4)

► [06/15 - 06/22](#) (5)

► [06/08 - 06/15](#) (4)

► [06/01 - 06/08](#) (4)

► [05/25 - 06/01](#) (4)

► [05/18 - 05/25](#) (4)

► [05/11 - 05/18](#) (4)

► [05/04 - 05/11](#) (5)

► [04/27 - 05/04](#) (5)

► [04/20 - 04/27](#) (5)

► [04/13 - 04/20](#) (4)

► [04/06 - 04/13](#) (6)

► [03/30 - 04/06](#) (5)

► [03/23 - 03/30](#) (5)

► [03/16 - 03/23](#) (5)

► [03/09 - 03/16](#) (6)

► [03/02 - 03/09](#) (6)

► [02/23 - 03/02](#) (5)

► [02/16 - 02/23](#) (5)

► [02/09 - 02/16](#) (5)

► [02/02 - 02/09](#) (9)

► [01/26 - 02/02](#) (4)

► [01/19 - 01/26](#) (5)

► [01/12 - 01/19](#) (4)

► [01/05 - 01/12](#) (4)

► [2013](#) (232)

► [2012](#) (245)

► [2011](#) (262)

► [2010](#) (247)

► [2009](#) (88)

Dr. Natalie Bauer, assistant professor of pharmacology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, recently received a grant from the American Heart Association for her research project, "Microparticles as Mediators and Biomarkers of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension." The four-year award totals \$308,000.

Dr. Bauer's work is focused on identifying a non-invasive biomarker for pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), a fatal progressive illness that causes severe shortness of breath and right heart failure.

Pulmonary arteries carry blood from your heart to the lungs, where it picks up oxygen to be delivered throughout your body. In PAH, the pulmonary arteries constrict abnormally. This forces your heart to work faster and causes blood pressure within the lungs to rise.

Dr. Bauer said current treatments for PAH do not prolong life, and median survival following diagnosis is approximately three years.

Currently, the gold-standard for diagnosis of PAH is the use of invasive right heart catheterization. Dr. Bauer said one goal of her research is to identify a circulating biomarker – called microparticles – that can help with diagnosis as well as staging of this progressively fatal disease.

Dr. Bauer is also hoping to determine if microparticles can assist with an earlier diagnosis and potentially better or faster treatment. "By characterizing these circulating microparticles, we hope to identify patients earlier in the disease course when current therapies may be more beneficial," she said.

In addition, Dr. Bauer said the microparticles – that carry a variety of factors that can change cell behavior – promote changes in lung circulation. "Microparticles may actually play a role in the progression of PAH," she said. "As we understand their function, we hope to develop drugs to inhibit their influence and treat this devastating disease."

[Click here](#) to learn more about this research from Dr. Bauer. To learn more about PAH, [click here](#) and [here](#).

Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [9:16 AM](#) No comments:

Snapshots: Mobile Street Clean-Up Day



Steve Lancaster, food services manager at the University of South Alabama Medical Center, trims branches from one of the crepe myrtle trees along Mobile Street. A team of administrators and personnel from the hospital performed a general clean-up of the street. The hospital planted the crepe myrtle trees last year as part of the Mobile Street beautification project.



University of South Alabama Medical Center administrators employees work to clean up Mobile Street south of the hospital.

Employees at the University of South Alabama Medical Center and USA Physicians Group recently participated in a work day to clean up Mobile and Fillingim Streets. Volunteers completed landscaping work - including mowing, trimming, and raking - and picked up trash.

The work day is part of USA Medical Center's commitment to maintain the intersection.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [9:15AM](#) No comments:

Dr. Ronald Allison Retires After 34 Years of Service



Dr. Ronald Allison, professor of internal medicine at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and a pulmonologist with USA Physicians Group, recently retired after 34 years of service to the University.

We caught up with Dr. Allison, who also served several years as director of the internal medicine residency program, on his last day at the hospital. Watch the video below to learn more about his service to the University and the legacy he leaves behind.

02:58

[Dr Allison Retirement from USA Health System on Vimeo.](#)

Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [9:15 AM](#) 1 comment:

Dr. Estrada Featured on AL.com



Dr. Benjamin Estrada, a pediatric infectious disease specialist and professor of pediatrics at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, recently was interviewed by [al.com](#) about the resurgence of measles, a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by the measles virus. [Click here](#) to view the full story.
