

Med School Watercooler

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

Thursday, December 21, 2017

USA Stanton Road Clinic Coat Drive A Success



Pictured from left: Lesley Fearn, radiation technologist coordinator; Ali Shropshire, clinical nurse practitioner; and Robin Geary, clinical registered nurse; pose for a photo with the coats collected for patients at the University of South Alabama Stanton Road Clinic.

The University of South Alabama Stanton Road Clinic recently hosted a coat drive, collecting over 500 coats, gloves, hats and scarves.

Ali Shropshire, family medicine practitioner and nurse manager at Stanton Road Clinic, said the purpose of the drive was to address the needs of the patients seen at the clinic. "Many of our patients often have to decide between paying for their medicine or groceries," she said. "Last winter, we noticed a need for cold weather clothing items for many of our patients. This year we decided to fulfill those needs within the walls of our clinic."

USA Health employees were urged to drop off their gently used items at one of the four drop-off locations in an effort to create a coat closet at the clinic. "If one of our staff members recognizes a patient in need of cold weather clothing, they will notify the supervisor who will then assist them in getting the clothing they need," Shropshire said.

Shropshire said she is touched by the outpouring of support from USA Health. "Many of our patients live in the community surrounding USA Medical Center and Stanton Road Clinic," she said. "This coat drive speaks to the quality of employees we have at USA and how much they care about taking care of the surrounding community. Stanton Road Clinic is built on a team of dreamers and doers. Through our teamwork we are able to create programs that truly benefit our patients."

The Stanton Road Clinic will be hosting a health fair in early 2018 that also will provide community members with coats.


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Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Dr. John Bass Leaves Legacy of Mentoring, Medical Education

Dr. John Burrell Bass Jr., one of the founding faculty members at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and one of Alabama's most prolific medical educators, passed away on Dec. 16, 2017. He was 73.

"We are grateful for the decades of dedicated service Dr. Bass provided to our school," said Dr. John Marymont, vice president for medical affairs and dean of the USA College of Medicine. "His early involvement in our medical school help set a trajectory for excellence in medical education that remains today."



Dr. Bass, noted as one of the nation's leading tuberculosis experts, started his academic career at USA in 1974 as an assistant professor of internal medicine, rising through the academic ranks to lead the department of internal medicine as professor and chair on two separate occasions.

"Dr. Bass leaves a tremendous legacy at our medical school," said Dr. Errol Crook, Professor and Abraham Mitchell Chair of Internal Medicine at the USA College of Medicine. "John served as a mentor for thousands of physicians and physicians-in-training. Many physicians today provide outstanding medical care with the benefit of lessons they learned from Dr. Bass."

According to Dr. Crook, Dr. Bass was the first pulmonologist at the USA College of Medicine. He also was instrumental in establishing the first fellowship program at USA, as well as the division of pulmonology at critical care medicine.

Officially retiring in December 2009 as assistant dean for student affairs at the USA College of Medicine and Distinguished Professor of Medicine, Dr. Bass continued to follow his passion for teaching, volunteering his time to supervise medical students and residents in training. He took great pride in sharing the fact that he was the only faculty member to have lectured to each and every medical student since the medical school was established.

An extremely bright, humble and unassuming person, Dr. Bass lit up with enthusiasm when teaching medical students and resident physicians about the art and science of medicine. Outside the hospital, he was an avid reader of Walker Percy. He wrote poetry and played folk and bluegrass music using many acoustic musical instruments. The banjo was his instrument of choice.

According to Dr. Crook, being a physician educator was always a large part of Dr. Bass' life. His teaching style was very unique, explaining concepts in a way that left everyone feeling good about themselves and confident in what they can do. "He loved music, literature and history, and he incorporated that into his teaching and lectures in a way that made them even more effective," he said.

From 1999 to 2005, Dr. Bass served as professor and chair of the USA Department of Internal Medicine, having also served as department interim chair on two separate occasions. He also served as vice chair from 1989 to 1997, and for 25 years served as director of the USA Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care.

Throughout his career, Dr. Bass was recognized for his talents as a teacher and a mentor to physicians in training. In 2004, USA's Housestaff Award for Best

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Attending was renamed the John B. Bass Jr. Award by the housestaff. He was honored with the medical school's Best Clinical Professor Award nine times. In 2006, this award -- given by the College of Medicine's senior class -- was renamed the John Bass Award for Teaching. Dr. Bass was honored with the Red Sash Award each year since it was established in 1990. Given by the senior class, this award recognizes medical school faculty who excel in teaching.

"Dr. Bass was teacher, mentor and good friend to me. I had such respect for him that it took years before I could call him 'John'," said Dr. William "Jet" Broughton, professor of internal medicine at the USA College of Medicine. "In addition to teaching almost every student throughout our medical school's history, it's also true that he had almost every one of them over to his home for dinner at some point. All will remember these special moments."

Dr. Bass' close connection to the medical students at USA is reflected in the number of speaking invitations he received. He delivered the medical school's convocation address in 1999, 2001 and 2003. The rising junior classes in 2004, 2005 and 2007-2009 selected him to speak during the College's annual White Coat Ceremony. He deeply touched every student that he taught at USA, and many students often asked him to hood them at their graduation ceremony.

In the past, the USA College of Medicine Alumni Association presented Dr. Bass with the Distinguished Service Award. He has been listed in America's Best Doctors each year it has published.

On a regional level, Dr. Bass served as president of the Alabama Thoracic Society from 1975 to 1976, later serving as a representative to the Medical Association of the State of Alabama Interspecialty Council. From 1986 to 1989, he served on the Mobile County Medical Society board of trustees. For almost a decade, he served on the board of directors for the American Lung Association of Alabama. From 1995 to 1999, Dr. Bass served as governor of the Alabama Chapter of the American College of Physicians, also chairing the chapter's scientific program from 1991 to 1995.

Dr. Bass was active on a national level in shaping policy for the care of tuberculosis patients and medical education. He served on numerous committees for the American College of Physicians, including vice chair of the education committee. He chaired the subcommittee of tuberculosis statements for the American Thoracic Society, also chairing the scientific assembly on microbiology, tuberculosis and pulmonary infections for the organization.

He shared his leadership and expertise in the field of tuberculosis treatment, from 1989 to 1993, serving as chair of the Advisory Committee for Elimination of Tuberculosis for the United States Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control. From 1992 to 1993, Dr. Bass served as president for the Association of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Program Directors.

In addition, Dr. Bass served on the executive committee for the National Lung Health Education Program and the Data and Safety Monitoring Board for Division of Tuberculosis Elimination at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to Dr. Broughton, who followed in Dr. Bass' footsteps and chose a career in pulmonary medicine, Dr. Bass was beloved and famous on a global scale. "At international lung meetings, well-known researchers from all over the world greeted him by his first name," he said. "All of them -- as we did -- thought of him as brilliant and a friend. We will all miss him and are grateful for the opportunity to have known him."

During his career, Dr. Bass served on the editorial boards for the American Review of Respiratory Disease and Pulmonary Perspectives. He also served as an ad hoc reviewer for Chest, the Journal of the American Medical Association, the Archives of Internal Medicine, the Journal of Infectious Diseases, the American Journal of Medical Sciences, the American Journal of Medicine, the New England Journal of Medicine, the Southern Medical Journal and the Pulmonary Infectious Forum.

Dr. Bass was a Master in the American College of Physicians, a fellow in the American College of Chest Physicians, a member of the International Union

Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, the Medical Society of Mobile County and the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, as well a member of the American Thoracic Society and the Alabama Thoracic Society.

Born in Abilene, Texas, Dr. Bass was a fourth-generation physician. He grew up in Gadsden, Ala., attended Auburn University and received his undergraduate degree from Tulane University in New Orleans in 1965. He also earned his medical degree at Tulane University, graduating with honors.

Dr. Bass completed his internship and residency training at the University of Alabama Hospital and Clinic in Birmingham, Ala., serving as chief medical resident. In 1974, he completed his fellowship in pulmonary medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "While completing his fellowship training at UAB, leaders who had moved to Mobile to start our medical school recognized Dr. Bass as an outstanding clinician and educator and recruited him to USA where he would complete his entire medical career," Dr. Crook said.

Dr. Bass is survived by his wife Rebecca Fordham Bass of Mobile, Ala.; two adult children, John Burrell Bass III (Johnnie) of Memphis, TN, and Anna Fordham Bass of Houston, TX; and grandchildren Ella Rose Bass and Nathaniel Jay Bass.

Donations may be made to the John B. Bass Endowment Fund for Education in Internal Medicine, USA Office of Medical Development, 300 Alumni Circle, Mobile, AL 36688. This fund is used to enhance the mission of the USA Department of Internal Medicine and continue the legacy made by Dr. Bass during his career.

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Terry O'Neil Appointed Director of Operations for Neurosciences at USA Physicians Group




Terry O'Neil recently was appointed director of operations for neurosciences at USA Physicians Group.

In her new position, O'Neil manages the day-to-day operations of USA neurosciences clinics, as well as spreads awareness of the comprehensive care, academic services and research that is available in the neurosciences department. In addition, she will continue to support physicians and staff members in the growth of electronic medical records.

Prior to her appointment at USA, O'Neil served as practice manager of Infirmary Health in Mobile, Ala. She has also served as clinic manager of women's health at Coordinated Health in Allentown, Pa., a practice and program manager at Lehigh Valley Physician Group in Allentown, Pa., and a practice and program manager at Lehigh Valley Neurology and Neuropsychiatry at Lehigh Valley Health Network in Allentown, Pa.

O'Neil earned her respiratory therapy degree from Wadley University Medical Center in Texarkana, Ark.

O'Neil spent 25 years in Allentown, Pa. and recently moved to Fairhope. She brings experience of having worked in a diversified environment on the east coast. She is married with two grown sons. When not working, she enjoys time with friends and family, as well as practicing yoga.

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Monday, December 18, 2017

USA Medical Students Attend APPA Conference



Anna Williams, a third-year medical student at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, and Caleb Wilson, a fourth-year medical student at the USA

College of Medicine, tied for first place in the poster contest at the Alabama Psychiatric Physicians Association (APPA) fall conference in Birmingham, Ala.

At the conference, Williams presented "Serotonin Syndrome: Common but Easily Overlooked," and Wilson presented "The Interplay Between Depression and Cosmetic Surgery" to psychiatrists, residents, fellows and medical students from across Alabama.


According to Williams, serotonin syndrome can be a reaction to many commonly used drugs such as antidepressants, pain medicines, and certain antiemetic and illicit substances. "The condition can present very subtly at first, so it can be easy to miss," she said. "It can be caused by either excessive dosing of a particular medication or the interaction between different but similarly acting substances."

Williams said conducting research and attending conferences is a good way for medical students to meet potential mentors, explore possible career interests and increase their comfort level with medical literature. "I had a chance to speak with several doctors who had encountered and treated serotonin syndrome throughout their career and they each had a very different story to tell," she said. "It was interesting to hear how each of them managed their particular patients and their input definitely added to my overall understanding of the subject."

Wilson's project studied the relationship between mental illness and cosmetic surgery, a connection that has been well-established for decades. "Our case highlights the role of depression in our patients' decision to undergo cosmetic surgery, as well as the need for mental health professionals and cosmetic surgeons to better understand how surgery can affect patient depression and vice versa," he said.

According to Wilson, the prevalence of body dysmorphic disorder among those who undergo cosmetic surgery has been estimated to be between seven to 15 times that of the general population, and it has also been shown that these patients are more likely to be dissatisfied with the results of their surgery. "This information – along with repeated studies showing a two-to three-fold increase in suicide rate among cosmetic surgery patients when compared with the general population – has led many cosmetic surgeons to regularly screen for mental illness and often refer patients for psychiatric evaluation prior to performing surgery," he said.

The Alabama Psychiatric Physicians Association is a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association and is the only association representing psychiatrists in the state of Alabama. [Click here](#) to learn more.

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Dr. Malozzi Weighs in on New Blood Pressure Guidelines



Last month, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association announced new guidelines for blood pressure that lower what a healthy blood pressure looks like.

According to Dr. Christopher Malozzi, assistant professor of internal medicine at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and a cardiologist with USA Physicians Group, the new standard lowers optimal blood pressure numbers from 140/90 to 130/80 millimeters of mercury (mmHg). This means that more patients, who were previously not under surveillance from their physicians for high blood pressure, will now be more closely monitored.

Blood pressure is determined both by the amount of blood the heart pumps and the amount of resistance to blood flow in the arteries. The more blood a heart pumps and the narrower the arteries, the higher blood pressure can become. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, can exist in patients for years without any noticeable symptoms. Even without symptoms, damage to blood vessels and the heart continues and can be detected.

Lowering the target blood pressure guidelines will impact patient treatment. Many hypertension patients who were previously at goal blood pressure may need to have their medications increased -- and in some cases medications added -- to bring them to the new target range. For those patients with borderline symptoms of hypertension, a medication regimen could be recommended.

"As physicians, our ultimate goal is to prevent diseases," Dr. Malozzi said. "We will have to urge medication compliance with our patients so that their blood pressures remain controlled as much as possible in an attempt to avoid serious health issues."


Beyond medication, patients looking to lower their blood pressure should also consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products in conjunction with a reduction in dietary sodium intake. This dietary regimen is otherwise known as the DASH (Dietary Approaches to treat Systolic Hypertension) diet.

Hypertension also can be controlled by participating in physical activity three to four days a week and moderating alcohol consumption. In many cases, hypertension can be managed with these lifestyle changes.

The USA Heart Center serves a population of patients who are at risk of or suffering from the long-term complications of hypertension such as heart attack, congestive heart failure, stroke, kidney disease and death.

"We have an obligation to our patients to provide the most cost-effective, quality-

driven, patient-centered and evidence-based medical care," Dr. Malozzi said. "The new guidelines give us updated and comprehensive recommendations on how to best fulfill that obligation."

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USA Welcomes Dr. Bassam Rimawi



Dr. Bassam Rimawi recently was appointed assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and serves as a maternal-fetal physician with USA Physicians Group.

Prior to joining USA, Dr. Rimawi served as an associate of obstetrics and gynecology at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta.

Dr. Rimawi earned his medical degree from Ross University School of Medicine in Portsmouth, Dominica, West Indies, in 2006. He completed an internship in general surgery at Lutheran Medical Center in New York and his residency training in obstetrics and gynecology at The Brooklyn Hospital Center in New York. He then completed a clinical research fellowship at Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich., and a reproductive infectious diseases fellowship at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, S.C. Dr. Rimawi also completed a maternal-fetal fellowship at Emory University School of Medicine.

He is a member of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine and the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials Network.

To make an appointment with Dr. Rimawi, call (251) 415-1496.

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