

Med School Watercooler

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

Thursday, May 7, 2020

Petty champions the prevention of e-cigarette use in children

Melody Petty, M.D., MPH, FAAP, assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, was selected as the e-cigarette chapter champion for the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). In this role, she will serve as an advocate for the prevention of childhood nicotine use of products such as e-cigarettes.

E-cigarettes are electronic devices that heat a liquid and produce an aerosol, or mix of small particles in the air. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, the addictive drug also found in regular cigarettes and other tobacco products.

More than six million children are using tobacco products in the United States, according to recent estimates from the American Lung Association.

Petty, who also serves as a pediatric hospitalist for USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital, will represent the State of Alabama at a national kick-off meeting at the AAP national headquarters in the Chicago area this summer, said David A. Gremse, M.D., FAAP, Hollis J. Wiseman Distinguished Professor and Chair of the USA Department of Pediatrics.

"We are delighted Melody has committed her time and energy to represent our health system and state," Gremse said. "E-cigarettes pose a serious health risk to our nation's youth. As pediatric physicians, we play a vital role in protecting children from such dangers."

As a state pediatric champion, Petty will be tasked with leading local advocacy and educational initiatives related to youth e-cigarette prevention and addiction support. She will also learn strategies to address e-cigarette use with youth and families, and then take what they've learned to lead educational sessions and communication activities back in Mobile and across the state.

The in-person training gives participants access to the academy's new evidence-based e-cigarette curriculum as well as a hands-on media and communications training. The initial commitment is for 12 months, with the option to continue in this role every two years.

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Surgery and pharmacology faculty member featured in ACCESS Magazine



Jon Simmons, M.D., FACS, associate professor of surgery and pharmacology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, was recognized in the April issue of ACCESS Magazine, which focuses on wellness and top doctors in the Gulf Coast area.

"It's always an honor to have the accomplishments of our trauma center highlighted within the community that we are so proud to serve," said Simmons, who is the medical director for trauma and acute care surgery at USA Health.

Charla Evans, D.O., family medicine physician at USA Health Hillcrest Primary Care, was also included in the issue.

"We chose Dr. Simmons and Dr. Evans to be in our Top Doctors On The Bay special issue simply because they are revered by everyone," said Hayley Hill, ACCESS editor-in-chief. "From patients to peers, they are known not only for their professional talents and achievements, but for their genuine kindness as well."

See the Top Doctors issue of ACCESS Magazine here.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [10:32 AM](#) No comments:

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

New addiction medicine fellowship first of its kind in Alabama

The University of South Alabama College of Medicine is collaborating with AltaPointe Health to offer a fellowship in addiction medicine. The new program is the first in the state to receive accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) to train and provide a pipeline for the next generation of addiction medicine experts in the state of Alabama.



J. Luke Engeriser, M.D., associate professor of psychiatry, speaks with family members at AltaPointe.

"Our nation has experienced unprecedented levels of problems related to addiction during the opioid epidemic, and physicians with expertise in addiction medicine are in very short supply in the United States generally and in Alabama in particular," said J. Luke Engeriser, M.D., associate professor of psychiatry.

"Early evidence shows that problems related to addiction to alcohol and other drugs have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, so high-quality addiction treatment will be in even greater demand in the coming years."

"This will be a benefit to all Alabamians as there are few of us that are not touched in some way by addiction either in ourselves or in people that we care about," Engeriser added.

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The new fellowship program will train physicians from any medical specialty to provide specialized care to individuals struggling with addictive disorders. The next step is to secure funding to begin the recruitment process for the first fellow. Engeriser is hopeful the fellowship could start as early as July 1, 2020.

In addition to Engeriser, core program faculty will include Ashlen Aggen, M.D.; Praveen Narahari, M.D.; Marianne Saitz, D.O.; and Lori Lowthert, M.D. Narahari, Saitz, Lowthert and Engeriser are board-certified in addiction medicine.

"We are fortunate at AltaPointe to have a team of physicians that demonstrate the ability to add value to everything we are doing with their dedication to serving patients, fighting addictions, and keeping up with the demands of the healthcare industry," said Tuerk Schlesinger, chief executive officer of AltaPointe Health. "Obtaining the addiction medicine fellowship is a true testament to that dedication and hard work."

The addiction medicine fellowship program is the latest collaboration between AltaPointe and the USA College of Medicine, a relationship that began in 2004 with the establishment of a psychiatry rotation for third-year College of Medicine students. The partnership grew to include a psychiatry residency program in 2007 and a child-adolescent psychiatry fellowship in 2014.

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