

Med School Watercooler

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

Friday, July 10, 2020

Medical students find new ways to serve



Greg Overbeek, who serves as president of the USA Student-Run Free Clinic, delivers masks and hand sanitizer to Dumas Wesley Community Center.

In January, Greg Overbeek, a medical student at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, was just starting his term as president of the Student-Run Free Clinic when news emerged of a novel coronavirus spreading half a world away.

By March, the virus had reached the U.S., prompting colleges, including USA, to transition to online instruction. This also meant that students would no

longer be able to gain real-world experience by volunteering at the clinic, located at the Salvation Army.

"It was very frustrating because we chose this profession to help people, but we are not able to be in the clinic at this point. It is essential personnel only," Overbeek said, though he concedes that closing was the right decision. "We were looking for another way we can help out."

The students have poured their energy into helping the community in different ways – donating supplies, making hand sanitizer and even launching a GoFundMe page to provide for other needs.

"Since March, the students haven't stopped serving," said Alison Rudd, clinic director. "Even though the clinic doors were closed, the hearts of South Alabama students remained open. They have continued to care for the most vulnerable and support those who are on the front lines."

Franklin Primary Health Center could see the clinic's patients, but workers at the Salvation Army needed masks and hand sanitizer to safely provide meals and groceries for its residents and the homeless.

"We immediately emptied our clinic of anything staff and patients could use – PPE, Clorox wipes, hygiene supplies, socks, coffee, snacks and more," Rudd said. "I wish you could have seen the look on the face of the lady working at the front desk at the Salvation Army when I handed her several new masks and a big bottle of hand sanitizer."

Overbeek and other students began making masks and gathering them from the community. They donated 140 to the Salvation Army and 200 to the Dumas Wesley Community Center. "We looked up a recipe online for hand sanitizer that conformed to CDC guidelines and collected money to buy the supplies," he said.

The students' GoFundMe page, [USA SRFC Pandemic Supply Drive](#), raised more

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than \$580 toward the effort. The money helped to supply the Salvation Army with basic hygiene needs such as soap, wet wipes, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothbrush covers and toothpaste to distribute. Five blood-pressure cuffs were purchased and donated.

Dumas Wesley distributed the students' donations to seniors and families at the Sybil Smith Family Village, which provides transitional housing for homeless families.

"It helps me feel like I'm contributing, though I wish I could do more," Overbeek said. "The homeless population is definitely one of the most vulnerable during this time."

The rising third-year medical student said he is leaning toward focusing on family medicine as a career. "I'm interested in community health, and this sort of project – where I'm working with community organizers throughout the city – really confirmed that," he said.

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July pediatric grand rounds: Racism as a public health issue

Loren K. Robinson, M.D., vice president of medical affairs at CHRISTUS St. Michael Health System, will present the next pediatric grand rounds on racism as a public health issue at 8 a.m. on Friday, July 17.

Goals of the event include:

- Having participants reflect on their own comfort level when talking about race and racism
- The ability to identify implicit bias and describe how stereotypes can and do impact provider interactions and patient care
- Learning strategies to engage in open and honest conversations about race and racism



Robinson formerly served as Pennsylvania's deputy secretary of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention where she focused on health issues including lead poisoning, hepatitis and the Zika virus.

In 2016, she was named to the National Minority Quality Forum's 40 under 40 Leaders in Minority Health and received the National Medical Association's Rising Star Award. She was also selected for LinkedIn's "Next Wave: Game Changers 35 years old and younger in Healthcare." In January 2017, she was featured in Essence Magazine as a "Top Doc" to watch.

This is a virtual event presented through the digital platform Zoom. Participants are asked to pre-register using this link:

<https://southalabama.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJ0pceGgqTwtG9dB-abbvrV2uooHCbpjdH23>

Pediatric grand rounds is held the third Friday of each the month, from 8 a.m.



USA medical students collected supplies to be distributed to various community organizations.

Mark your calendar: Upcoming grand rounds

Whitehurst leads international clinical trial exam...

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until 9 a.m. For more information, contact Jessica Petro at (251) 415-8688 or jpetro@health.southalabama.edu.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [7:00 AM](#) No comments:

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

Register Now: USA Medical Alumni Association Virtual Reunion



The USA Medical Alumni Association and the University of South Alabama College of Medicine are excited to welcome alumni to its first virtual reunion set for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 29, via Zoom.

Alumni will enjoy a brief State of the College presentation from John V. Marymont, M.D., MBA, vice president for medical affairs and dean of the USA College of Medicine. Following his presentation, break-out Zoom rooms will be

available for the classes that were set to reunite at the 2020 Reunion Weekend: 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015.

Due to limited space, the Medical Alumni Association will only be sharing the Zoom event link with those registered for the event. Please encourage any USA COM alumni you may know to visit this URL to register and receive the event link upon registration.

Register by Monday, July 27, at <https://medicalalumni.southalabama.edu/pages/2020-virtual-maa-reunion->

Ann Eleece Kouns, associate director of medical alumni relations at the USA College of Medicine, said the virtual reunion is not intended to replace the in-person reunion that originally was scheduled for June. Rather, it is an opportunity for alumni to connect with one another and to hear from the College of Medicine's leadership.

Next year's Medical Alumni Association reunion is scheduled for June 11-13, 2021, at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. Kouns said the 2021 reunion will be an expanded event that celebrates alumni from class years ending in 0, 1, 5 and 6.

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Mark your calendar: Upcoming grand rounds

Mark your calendar for the following grand rounds:

Cardiology Grand Rounds

"Radiation Safety in Cardiology"

David Wiik, M.S., Director of Radiation Safety, USA Health

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, July 10

Zoom

Contact: Angela Hunt at 251-471-7923 or

arhunt@health.southalabama.edu

OB-GYN Grand Rounds

"Quality, Safety and Performance Improvement Update"



Amy McRae, BSN, MHA, JD, Quality Department Manager, USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital

7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, July 10

Zoom

Contact: Nicolette Holliday, M.D., at 251-415-1563 or nholliday@health.southalabama.edu

For more information, visit the [CME Tracker website](#).

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [12:03 PM](#) No comments:

Monday, July 6, 2020

Whitehurst leads international clinical trial examining treatment of newborns with opioid withdrawal



Richard M. Whitehurst Jr., M.D., professor of pediatrics and assistant professor of pharmacology at the USA College of Medicine, monitors a neonate at USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital.

As the opioid crisis continues to impact communities across the world, a physician-scientist at USA Health has been named the principal investigator of an international phase II clinical trial to evaluate the safety of a drug for babies born with neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome.

Richard M. Whitehurst Jr., M.D., professor of pediatrics and assistant professor of pharmacology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, was selected by Chiesi Farmaceutici di Parma, Italy, to lead a five-year multi-center study spanning at least 19 clinical locations in the United States and abroad.

Use of opioids during pregnancy can result in a drug withdrawal syndrome in newborns called neonatal abstinence syndrome or neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome. An analysis of the extent and costs of the syndrome found that it's rising in the United States, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. From 2004 to 2014, an estimated 32,000 infants were born with neonatal abstinence syndrome, which is equivalent to one baby suffering from opioid withdrawal born every 15 minutes.

Whitehurst and other clinical staff in the department of pediatrics at USA Health have participated in previous studies with Chiesi related to neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, previously known as neonatal abstinence syndrome.

The study is a double blind, randomized, two-arm parallel study to evaluate the efficacy, safety and pharmacokinetics of CHF6563 in babies with neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, said Ellen Dean, RNC, the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) research study coordinator at USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital.

This summer, Whitehurst and NICU staff will begin enrolling infants that were exposed to opioids during the last month before delivery, Dean said.

"Unfortunately, the rates are high across the nation for babies who are suffering

because they are born with opioid withdrawal syndrome,” Whitehurst said. “We want to find the best methods possible to help those babies through a variety of measures and protocols.”

Research shows newborns with the syndrome are more likely than other babies to have low birthweight and respiratory complications. Nationally, rates of opioid use disorder at delivery caused hospitalizations to more than quadruple from 1999 to 2014, to 6.5 per 1000 births in 2014. That year, \$563 million was spent on costs for treatment of the syndrome, the National Institute on Drug Abuse reported.

Whitehurst, who begins visits with mothers as part of the prenatal care team prior to childbirth, has a long history of building successful relationships with parents before they deliver, Dean said, to help ensure the best outcomes for babies. Because of other protocols established by Whitehurst, the length of stay for newborns withdrawing from opioids and other drugs has decreased significantly in the past five years at USA Health Children’s & Women’s Hospital.

“We’ve adopted non-medication treatments, such as swaddling the babies differently, adapted the light and noise levels so they are not over stimulated, and taught parents how to care for them when they go home,” Dean said.

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