New Chair of Pediatrics Announced

by John Gollan, M.D.,
Dean, College of
Medicine

I am pleased to announce that John W. Sparks, M.D. has accepted the position of chairperson of the UNMC Department of Pediatrics, effective January 1, 2008. Dr. Sparks received his B.S. in Life Sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, his M.D. from Harvard Medical School, and completed his internship, residency and fellowship at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Following his training he began his academic career at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center as an Assistant Professor prior to his promotion to Associate Professor. In the next phase of his academic career he moved to Texas where he continued as a Professor and Director of the Neonatal-Perinatal Fellowship at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, before he was appointed Chairperson of the Department of Pediatrics. He served as Chairperson for 10 years.

As chairperson for the Department of Pediatrics, John will lead the effort to implement the Affiliation Agreement recently signed with Children’s Hospital. As a result of this Affiliation Agreement we believe that the care of children will reach unprecedented levels in Omaha, the state and the region.

John has participated in a variety of leadership roles. For example, he was the founding member of the University of Colorado School of Medicine’s University Hospital Ethics Committee and during his tenure at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston he served as their Compliance Officer. John brings a vast amount of administrative experience to this position.

Please join me in welcoming John and his wife, Patricia, to Omaha and the UNMC family.
Simpson to Lead CityMatCH into the Future

CityMatCH Board of Directors announced the appointment of Patrick Simpson, MPH as its new Executive Director, effective July 1, 2007. CityMatCH is the freestanding national membership organization of city and county health departments’ maternal and child health (MCH) programs and leaders representing urban communities in the United States. Patrick served as Acting Executive Director from 2005-2007, and previously led the day-to-day functions of the organization as Director of Operations for many years. As Executive Director, he will provide active leadership, guiding the organization’s vision, leading the CityMatCH national office staff in Omaha, and overseeing numerous federal grants.

Dr. Bruce Buehler, Chair of the UNMC Department of Pediatrics, reported, “Mr. Simpson is an excellent choice to lead CityMatCH. He brings a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm for the mission of the organization and will be an excellent leader for both the organization and within the university system.”

Mary Balluff, Chair of the CityMatCH Board of Directors and Division Chief at the Douglas County Health Department said, “Patrick brings enthusiasm, excellent qualifications and a background in public service that will position CityMatCH to carry on its tradition of cutting-edge strategies on local public health issues. I am confident that his extensive experience focused on aspects of promoting and protecting the health of the nation’s women and children will build a strong future for our organization.”

Patrick’s career in public service began in 1987 when he joined the Peace Corps as a recent college graduate and was assigned to Tanzania. This calling next took him on assignments to Japan with the National Marine Fisheries Service and in the United States as a youth counselor. In 1995, Patrick earned his Master’s Degree in Public Health Epidemiology from the University of Alabama/Birmingham.

“I am excited to lead such a dynamic association and look forward to the new challenges and opportunities this position affords me,” said Patrick. “I have always believed in the mission of CityMatCH and look forward to working with the many committed maternal and child health leaders and partners across the country to assure the health and well being of women, children and their families.”

CityMatCH founding CEO, Magda Peck, ScD, stepped down as Executive Director in 2004 to expand her work in social justice and public health. Dr. Peck voiced her enthusiasm for Patrick’s promotion, saying, “Patrick has a terrific understanding of the organization’s vision and operations and has fostered strong national partnerships. As Acting Executive Director, he gained the full confidence of staff and moved the organization into several new arenas.”

CDC Assigns Senior MCH Epidemiologist to CityMatCH

In October 2007, CityMatCH was pleased to welcome Laurin Kasehagen, MA, PhD, as she embarked on a three-year assignment by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a Senior Maternal and Child Health Epidemiologist. During her assignment to CityMatCH, Dr. Kasehagen will be the maternal and child health epidemiologist for 260 cities and localities across the nation.

Dr. Kasehagen is an accomplished researcher with comprehensive knowledge and experience initiating, directing, and executing scientific research studies in Epidemiology and Anthropology. She has expertise in study design, protocol development, and study implementation and conduct. Dr. Kasehagen earned her PhD in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, and an MA in Anthropology with a minor in Experimental Statistics from New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Recently, she served as the CSTE (Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists) Fellow in Oregon for the past two years. While there, said Dr. Ken Rosenberg, Oregon Pregnancy Risk Assessment and Monitoring Systems (PRAMS) Project Director, she exhibited an
Infrastructure to support your research efforts is now in place. The Pediatric Clinical Research Support Center (PCRSC) can offer assistance and guidance, whether this is your first trial or the renewal of a study.

Where do you start? Give us a call at 402-559-2511. Melanie Schrack will start the process by reviewing the study protocol with you. Consideration should be given to how the study fits into your practice. Do you have a patient base to support the study? If not, do you have colleagues who could act as sub-investigators and add participants for the study? Do you have a relationship with other physicians who would be willing to direct study participants to your trial?

Secondly, does your schedule allow the time for you to participate as the Principal Investigator of the trial? Generally, you will need to be available for a study start-up conference. You will meet with study monitors, evaluate and treat potential and eligible participants, and complete the necessary paperwork required by the trial.

Thirdly, consideration must be given to the budget offered by the sponsor. Close scrutiny will be given by the office of the PCRSC to assure study participant expenses are fully covered and that you will be fairly compensated for your efforts. Some studies may not offer financial compensation to you, but may allow you to be a part of a pilot study with the potential of prestigious publication.

Still want to move forward? It is now time to complete the Sponsored Programs Administration Contract Questionnaire which can be found at:
http://www.unmc.edu/media/spa/forms/spa_contract_questionnaire_21407.doc

Once the Contract Questionnaire is submitted to Sponsored Programs the clinical staff of the PCRSC, currently Lorrie Palmer and Suzie Cunningham, will begin actual preparation of the Regulatory Documents for submission to the University of Nebraska or Children’s Hospital IRBs, or both. In the past, these documents seemed to be the biggest hurdle to participation in a study. Now, our staff provides the experience necessary to smoothly process your IRB approval. They also participate in a number of other tasks. Some
Publications


- Needelman H; Schroeder B; Sweeney M; Schmidt J; Bodensteiner JB, Schaefer GB: Post-Term Closure of the Cavum Septum Pellucidum and Developmental Outcome in Premature Infants. J. Child Neurol. 2007; 22(3) 314 - 316.


Clinical Trial (Continued from page 3)

examples follow:
- Ensuring compliance with protocol requirements
- Interacting with sponsors and study monitors on protocol implementation
- Patient screening, accrual, scheduling, and follow-up
- Collecting data and compliance reporting
- Maintaining protocol and patient case report forms
- Applications management, training and support for Protocol Information and Patient Enrollment
- Coordination of quality assurance activities with Regulatory Management
- Development of forms including patient forms, standardized and protocol-specific Case Report Forms (CRFs)

Still interested? The staff of the PCRSC is available to discuss any study with you. Our mission is to provide the support necessary to make your participation in Clinical Research as productive as possible.

If you would like to discuss a study, please feel free to call Melanie Schrack at (402) 559-2550 to set up a meeting. The office hours are 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Comprehensive Pediatric Sleep Disorders Center Opens

Sleep disorders are common in children. According to the National Sleep Foundation, 69% of children under the age of 10 experience some type of sleep problem. Some are unique to children; others differ in their presentation compared with adults. Sleep disorders like sleep apnea are prevalent in 3-5% of children in the preschool age and have been associated with mood problems, attention problems and school failure. There is increasing awareness of sleep disorders in children and Children’s Hospital is taking a leadership role in the emerging field of Pediatric Sleep Medicine.

Sleep Disorders Center

Established at Children’s Hospital in January 2007, the Center, in affiliation with the University of Nebraska Medical Center, provides a full complement of sleep diagnostic and therapeutic services for children in the State of Nebraska. Dr. Hari Bandla, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, is the Medical Director of the program and is the only board certified pediatric sleep specialist in Nebraska. The multidisciplinary sleep medicine team includes Dr. Brett Kuhn (Behavioral Sleep Medicine), Dr. Mark Wilson (Pediatric Pulmonology) and Dr. Ivan Pavkovic (Pediatric Neurology) supported by Ryan Bojanski, Sleep Coordinator, 3 night-time sleep technicians, Cindy Galles, RN, and Tina Mace, clinic secretary. Children of all ages are seen in the sleep clinic and sleep disorders that are evaluated include obstructive sleep apnea, insomnia, narcolepsy, restless leg syndrome and circadian rhythm problems. Behavioral Sleep medicine services are provided by Dr. Kuhn, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and certified Behavioral Sleep Medicine specialist. Center Physicians also provide sleep medicine expertise by participation in the Child Developmental Clinic, Cranio-Facial clinic. The Sleep Center provides an array of diagnostic services that include overnight sleep studies and multiple sleep latency tests in the sleep laboratory, actigraphy and sleep endoscopy.

Education and Research

Faculty and staff are very active in providing education to increase the awareness of sleep disorders and educational efforts are directed at the community, physician groups, allied health professionals and medical trainees. The Center actively participates in the ACGME approved Sleep Medicine Fellowship Program and one month electives are being offered to medical students and pediatric residents. Research projects are initiated and several questionnaire-based research studies are currently in progress.

The next year will see another giant step in the progression towards a Comprehensive Pediatric Sleep program in Omaha due to Children’s Hospital’s plans to open a 2700 sq. ft. 4-bed sleep laboratory at 7815 Farnam Street. In conjunction, there will be an expansion of clinical services by initiating a dedicated clinic for children who receive non-invasive positive pressure ventilation. More importantly, the American Board of Pediatrics has acknowledged “Sleep Medicine” as a new specialty with a unique body of knowledge, by awarding a certificate of special qualification in Sleep Medicine after successful completion of a common examination administered by the American Board of Internal Medicine. Thus, Pediatric Sleep Medicine is coming of age. The Sleep Disorders Center is dedicated to providing excellent patient care, education and research and serves as a primary source of referral for pediatric sleep services in the Upper Midwest. Patients can be referred to the Sleep Clinic by calling (402) 955-REST(7378).
New Hospitalist Team at Children’s Hospital Enhances Care

Children’s and UNMC believe a dedicated pediatric hospitalist service can offer great healthcare to patients, families, and referring physicians. Being available at the hospital throughout the entire day not only enhances the personalized care that patients receive, but also offers families more opportunities to be involved with the healthcare team and their child’s care. Both patients and families have come to appreciate the additional face-to-face interactions that having a physician present in the hospital affords. Referring regional physicians who are unable to travel to Omaha to care for their own patients can access care through a group of hospitalist physicians at Children’s to whom they can refer patients who require complex or specialized care.

Joining Dr. Jay Snow, hospitalist medical director, are Drs. Nadia Abraham, Gary Lerner, Sheilah Snyder, Sharon Stoolman, and Stephen Dolter. The hospitalists perform a wide variety of duties, including caring for patients as the primary attending physician or a consultant, performing procedures such as LPs and circumcisions, and moderate sedation for procedures. The hospitalists are the primary educators of residents and medical students at Children’s hospital.

National studies show decreased hospital stays, increased trainee education, and improved patient care with a dedicated hospitalist program.

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"...exceptional degree of ingenuity, creativity and resourcefulness, applying advanced technologies and cross-disciplinary principles, theories, and concepts..." Dr. Kasehagen has significant management, research, and strategic planning skills, superior communication skills and has a track of work that has been published in scientific journals.

Dr. Kasehagen recently told CityMatCH that, “I am very pleased to have been selected for the assignee position in Omaha – the position provides me with opportunities to use all of my academic, work, and post-doctoral training – and I get to work with a really great group of dedicated professionals from many disciplines who are committed to using the best research, best data, best practices to help the CityMatCH members improve the lives of people in their communities. I'm very motivated and eager to get to work.”