Medical Students Say Thank You
UHI Acknowledges Faculty and Community Partners

On May 30th, the Urban Health Initiative (UHI) celebrated the successes of the past year at its annual Appreciation Dinner, held at the Pennsauken Country Club. Among those in attendance were faculty and students of the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School - Camden, Cooper University Hospital administrators, and Camden community partners. The focus of the evening was to recognize the many individuals who dedicated their time and energy throughout the year in helping medical students to carry out the mission of UHI.

After opening remarks from UHI Co-Directors, Pia Bonura and Phillip Blanc, Dr. Paul Mehne, Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs offered those in attendance a glimpse of the progress made over the year by the medical students. Keynote speaker, Dr. Stephen Rimar, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Cooper University Hospital, delivered an inspiring message for students to channel their current zeal in their practice of medicine. UHI Faculty Advisor, Dr. Jeffrey Brenner, closed the evening with a message encouraging students to help in their own way in the fight against health disparities in our urban communities.

Welcome To Our New Health Outreach Project (HOP) Clinic Preceptors!

Dr. Aney Abraham
Dr. Stephen Akers
Dr. Michael Butler
Dr. Pola Delatorre
Dr. Anjali Desai
Dr. Kathryn Penberthy
Dr. Jerry Falasca
Dr. Dan Hyman
Dr. Anuradha Mookerjee
Dr. Steven Nguy
Dr. Joseph Ranieri
Dr. Antoinette Spevetz

Thank You to All of Our Current UHI Faculty Volunteers!

Dr. Jeffrey Brenner
Dr. Thomas Comerci
Dr. Renu Doshi
Dr. Lora Feldman-Winters
Karen Gersten-Rothenberg
Dr. Anna Headly
Dr. Minh Huynh
Dr. Kyungsook Kim
Dr. Jayci Knights
Dr. Mary Ann McMahon

Dr. Kim Parks
Dr. Barbara Porter
Dr. Vijay Rajput
Dr. Robert Risimini
Dr. Michelle Salvatore
Dr. Meena Sharma
Dr. Elise Singer
Dr. Fred Steinberg
Dr. Pamela Zee

If you would like to be a UHI volunteer, please contact Kristen Haughey (haughekm@umdnj.edu).
Ask the Provider: Restoring the Patient-Provider Relationship

In a society that affords only 15 minutes for patients to interact with their healthcare provider, where do they go to have their many health questions answered? To “Ask the Provider”… of course! Over the past year, local Camden residents have been drawn to this program, which provides an open forum for them to ask health providers any questions they have in an informal, intimate, and relaxed setting.

In cooperation with Respond, Inc., a local day care organization, several medical students have connected Camden residents with the medical expertise of local physicians. This year, the program has taken on new shape, integrating a teaching segment for medical students to present a health-related topic to the evening’s audience. Teaching topics this past academic year have included nutrition, infant feeding, and women’s health.

Special thanks to:
Robin Bilazarian  Cooper Employee Assistance Program
Dr. Jeffrey Brenner  Department of Family Medicine
Dr. Lori Feldman-Winter  Department of Pediatrics
Dr. Fred Steinberg  Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Barbara Zarebczan teaches Camden moms about infant feeding.

A Medical Student’s Perspective

Being a Patient Advocate by Scott Kuo

Most students participating in the Adult HOP clinic just hope to get a glimpse of what being a real doctor is like. I didn’t get a glimpse; I got a crash course in being a doctor. My experiences with one patient at Adult HOP touched upon almost every single aspect of what a doctor does as well as what a patient goes through during the whole medical process.

My patient was your average American citizen working at Burger King for a living, trying to make ends meet. One of her regular complaints was chronic knee pain. Her MRI and X-rays of the knees showed extensive damage that anyone could have seen from the radiology report. Although she could have received disability, she wanted to continue working. It was clear that bilateral knee replacements were needed; however, with the cost of knee replacements being so exorbitant, it would be impossible for HOP to absorb even a fraction of the costs. The good news is that we were able to secure a faculty advocate, Dr. Eric Hume, to perform the operation at no cost and Cooper agreed to absorb the procedural fees.

The patient’s post-operative physical rehabilitation would also be complicated by her lack of insurance.

Scott Kuo, medical student, meets with his patient for an appointment.
One week of inpatient rehabilitation is the standard for bilateral knee replacements before being discharged home. However, my patient could not afford it, so she would be sent home immediately following her surgery. Therefore, I learned the basics of physical therapy from the Cooper PMR physicians so that I could provide adequate physical therapy for my patient at her home. Another issue that had to be addressed prior to my patient’s surgery and discharge was her medication regimen. The student clinic pharmacy simply could not afford the standard medications that she would be given. Luckily, Dr. Hume recommended appropriate alternatives according to evidence-based medicine studies out of the University of Pennsylvania. Lastly, dental clearance for the surgery became tricky and I had to become my patient’s advocate in order to schedule her into the dentist’s completely booked schedule.

My patient is doing well. She is ambulating and she states that her pain is considerably reduced in comparison to before the surgery. In essence, with the combined efforts of Dr. Hume, Cooper University Hospital, and everyone in the HOP clinic, we were able to perform something unique – we were able to obtain bilateral knee replacements for my uninsured patient even with limited resources and substantial projected costs. Through it all, I was able, take part in the continuum of my patient’s healthcare, which allowed me to supplement and expand the education I had obtained through my clinical rotations.

“I am impressed by our students’ commitment to support Camden residents who have no access to care. I am pleased to be able to support their efforts.”

-Dr. Eric Hume
(Cooper Orthopedic Surgeon)
On June 7th, a commencement ceremony was held to celebrate the achievements of the Health Science Academy’s inaugural class. This event marked the completion of the pilot program by Camden high school students: Najle Butcher, Chela Rainford, and Elizabeth Toro. The students were selected from a pool of applicants to participate in a program created by UMDNJ-RWJMS students and Cooper University Hospital. Volunteer hospital staff members and physicians played a crucial role in the program’s success. Medical student and coordinator, John Mills reflects, “We were able to bring in a few students and enrich their education by teaching them the basics of some preventable health issues and giving them some exposure to the hospital.”

The Academy was designed to teach the students about health related issues affecting their community and provide hands-on learning opportunities. Peer teaching and mentorship by medical students were integral to the program’s success. For Rainford, who intends to pursue a career in obstetrics and gynecology, the program affirmed her career goals. “I want to thank the program for allowing me to confirm what I want to do in the health professional field.”

The students plan to further their education at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Howard University, and Rowan University. They each plan to pursue careers in healthcare.