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Rural medicine pilot program begins

Five future physicians who will serve rural Indiana have begun their first year of the pilot baccalaureate/doctor of medicine degree program offered by Indiana State University and IUSM. The new program, administered by IUSM's Terre Haute Center for Medical Education, was created to address the shortage of primary care physicians in rural areas of the state.

Hoosiers James Brinson of Linton, Kasie McIntosh of Bloomfield, Summer McKay of Spencer, Jennifer Mollencupp of Kewanna and Ryan Wetzel of Lyons are enrolled as undergraduates at ISU and will enter IUSM upon graduation.

We believe that students from rural communities are more likely to return to rural settings to practice medicine, said Roy Geib, assistant dean of IUSM and director of the Terre Haute Center for Medical Education. The goal of this program is to nurture students who have expressed an interest in practicing medicine in rural communities and provide them with career-related experiences throughout their undergraduate and medical school programs.

The program will offer students the opportunity to work along side rural physicians, participate in summer internships at rural clinics, take part in rural health and medicine seminars and courses, and participate in a summer research program.

Eligibility requirements for the program include a high school cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 and an SAT score of at least 1200. Applicants also must write an essay about their interest in rural medicine, submit professional and personal letters of recommendation and interview with the IUSM admissions committee.

Students accepted into the program receive a tuition waiver from ISU and are ensured a seat at IUSM, provided they maintain a 3.5 GPA throughout college and achieve an MCAT score equal to the average of that year's entering class.

Recruitment efforts are focused on students from rural communities with populations of less than 10,000 or from rural counties with a shortage of medical practitioners.

For people living in underserved counties, finding medical care can be challenging, especially in emergency situations, said Robert W. Holden, dean of IUSM. Physicians practicing in underserved areas are often overworked and unable to meet the needs of all the residents in the areas they serve. We expect this program to provide an answer to this problem for Indiana.

Despite an increase in the number of primary care graduates in Indiana during the past five years, more than one-fourth of Indiana's 92 counties have a shortage of primary care physicians according to federal guidelines.

Mark your calendar

Nobel Laureate Harold E. Varmus, MD, director of the National Institutes of Health, will receive the 1997 Steven C. Beering Award for Advancement of Biomedical or Clinical Science.

Dr. Varmus will present the Beering Lecture in 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 5, in the University Place Conference Center auditorium.

Dr. Varmus also will address the student body during a presentation at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 4, in the Emerson Hall auditorium.

Dr. Varmus shared the 1989 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine with J. Michael Bishop, MD, for demonstrating that cancer genes (oncogenes) can arise from normal cellular genes.

Animal research

The animal research program at IUSM has been awarded Continued Full Accreditation by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International.

AAALAC International is a private nonprofit organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals in science through a voluntary accreditation program. More than 600 institutions around the world have earned accreditation through AAALAC International.

To earn and maintain accreditation, a research program undergoes periodic, extensive internal assessments and rigorous evaluations by independent panels of experts from around the world.

Accreditation entitles IUSM to use the AAALAC International name and logo in its communication materials.

HONORS

David B. Burr, PhD, professor and chairman of anatomy and professor of orthopedic surgery, has been named honorary chairman of the 27th International Workshop of Hard Tissue Biology. Dr. Burr received the appointment during the group's meeting Aug. 11-15 in Sun Valley, Idaho.

First held in 1965 and attended this year by nearly 150 scientists with diverse backgrounds, the Sun Valley hard Tissue Workshop is an informal think-tank style workshop intended to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among skeletal scientists. It has been influential over the years in initiating many of the concepts that form the basis for current understanding about bone biology.

H. Glenn Bohlen, PhD, professor of physiology and biophysics, is the recipient of the 1997 Landis Award from the Microcirculatory Society of North America.

The Landis Award is the highest honor given annually by the society in recognition of the contributions during the recipient's career to the understanding of regulation of minute blood vessels.

Dr. Bohlen's primary research interests are the regulation of the intestinal microvasculature during absorption of food molecules, and the microvascular complications of hypertension and diabetes mellitus in the intestine, skeletal muscle and cerebral vasculatures.

Rose S. Fife, MD, assistant dean of research, professor of medicine, biochemistry and molecular biology and director of outpatient clinical research, is one of 32 women selected nationwide for the 1997-98 class of ELAM, which is designed to promote women leaders in the field of academic medicine.

The Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine Program for Woman addresses the disparity between the number of women entering medical schools and the number of women leaders in medicine. There are only six women deans at the 125 medical schools in the U.S. and only four percent of medical school department chairs are women.

The ELAM program helps future medical leaders surmount obstacles, while giving them the financial,

managerial, planning and communications skills needed to guide academic institutions during the changing times in health care.

Gale A. McCarty, MD, FACP, FACR, associate professor of medicine, has been named to the International Organizing Committee of the VIIIth International Symposium on Antiphospholipid Antibodies to be held in Sapporo, Japan, in October 1998. As a committee member, she will help develop and participate in the program for the biannual international meeting, which is the major worldwide forum for clinical and basic research on aPL

Robert M. Pascuzzi, MD, professor and vice chairman of neurology, currently is serving as associate editor of the quarterly journal *Seminars in Neurology*. He was named to that position in 1996.

In January, Dr. Pascuzzi will begin a three-year appointment as editor-in-chief of the publication.

Kick the habit-- new nicotine dependence program opens

A comprehensive clinical and counseling program to help tobacco users kick the habit has opened at the Indiana University Cancer Center.

The Nicotine Dependence Program, staffed by doctors and counselors from the IU schools of medicine and dentistry, will serve as a research center for tobacco cessation.

Participants are seen at the Indiana Cancer Pavilion. Phone consultations can be done for patients who live outside of the county or cannot make the trip due to health reasons.

Clinical trials for pharmacological agents which may help smokers and other tobacco users break their addiction will be conducted. The program also will provide educational programs for physicians and other health care professionals on the most effective ways to help others stop smoking, and it will serve as an information resource center for Hoosiers.

This program is an expansion of a successful tobacco cessation program initiated five years ago at the IU School of Dentistry by Arden G. Christen, DDS.

Dr. Christen and Stephen J. Jay, MD, a pulmonologist and an assistant dean at the IU School of Medicine, are the co-directors of the expanded program. Deborah M. Hudson, BS, RRT, is the program coordinator.

For additional information or to enroll in the program, call 317-278-3981.

IUSM researchers published in PNAS

Researchers at Indiana University have identified a novel viral mechanism that blocks cells from the human immune system, preventing white blood cells and other inflammatory cells from reaching the site of an infection.

The report on the discovery was detailed in the Sept. 2 issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The viral mechanism which evades the host immune system resembles human chemokines, which are small proteins that recruit inflammatory cells to the site of infection to begin the healing process. These are the first viral chemokine-like proteins shown to antagonize the cell-attracting activity of human chemokines.

The "decoy" protein was isolated when recent sequencing of the genome of molluscom contagiosum virus type 1, a poxvirus that causes contagious skin infections in humans, revealed a viral protein that closely resembled a human chemokine (macrophage inflammatory protein). Not only does this decoy protein fail to attract inflammatory cells to the site of the infection, but it inhibits other human chemokines from attracting additional inflammatory cells to the site. Similar proteins were identified in two different types of molluscom contagiosum virus.

This research emphasizes the variety of ways viruses have developed to escape the host immune system. Additional research is necessary, but it is possible that viral proteins could be used therapeutically to block inflammation in other conditions where chemokines play a role, such as asthma, rheumatoid arthritis and other auto-immune illnesses.

Authors of the PNAS article are Kenneth H. Fife, MD, PhD, professor of medicine, microbiology and immunology; Mitchell D. Krathwohl, MD, a fellow in the Division of Infectious Disease; Robert Hromas, MD, associate professor of medicine, biochemistry and molecular biology and a principal investigator with the Walther Oncology Center; Darron R. Brown, MD, associate professor of medicine, and of microbiology and immunology, and Hal E. Broxmeyer, PhD, professor of microbiology and immunology and scientific director of the Walther Oncology Center.

New Faculty

Mark P. Langer, MD, has joined the Department of Radiation Oncology as a clinical professor.

Previously, Dr. Langer was an associate professor of radiation oncology at the University of Texas Medical Branch.

He received his medical degree from the University of Chicago, Pritzker School of Medicine. Dr. Langer completed his internship at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, his residency in radiation medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and a fellowship in radiation medicine at Harvard Medical School.

His two primary areas of interest are the use of mathematical programming techniques to improve the design of radiation treatments and the use of 3-dimensional segmental conformal treatment in lung cancer.

<http://www.medicine.indiana.edu>