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## **Health fairs aid medical students, community**

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Peggy Michelle Stein slumps under the weight of the firefighter's helmet and gear as a handful of curious youngsters swarm around her. "Man, this really is heavy! I wouldn't want to wear this stuff every day," she says with a grin, gently steering her entourage into the Westside Community Health Center.

Stein's outfit isn't the typical attire of a medical student, and she's not looking to put out fires. But the firefighting outfit and her enthusiasm were all she needed to spark the children's interest to enter the clinic. Stein and many of her colleagues at Indiana University School of Medicine set their sites on promoting health, wellness and safety at this and the North Arlington Community Health Center during National Primary Care Week in early October.

Blase Polite, a fourth-year student, originated the idea of conducting the health-screening fairs and set out to enlist the help of medical students at all levels. They answered the call: about 60 students were on hand at both fairs.

"These events were a chance for students to actually design a project from the ground and then take the lead to in directing patients' education," says Polite, who plans to specialize in hematology and oncology. "Several of us thought National Primary Care Week would be more meaningful if we got out in the community and practiced primary care."

The fairs offered the participating students a break from the routine of lectures, labs and late-night study sessions. "The life of a medical student can be pretty hectic, but sometimes you just have to step outside of the classroom and into the community," says Benjamin Bauer, also in his final year of medical school. "The fairs give us the opportunity to apply our education and, more important, serve the community."

The Westside and North Arlington centers were selected because they are in areas where the community is medically underserved, reports Wilma Griffin, student clerkship coordinator with IUSM's Department of Medicine. More than 125 adults and children took advantage of the services offered at both fairs.

The students assisted IUSM physicians with screenings for blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, colon cancer, and prostate exams for adults. Vision and hearing screenings, and dental examinations were offered to children. Free literature about dental hygiene, bicycle helmet safety, exercise and diet, osteoporosis and other health and safety brochures also were distributed.

To make the health fairs more comprehensive, the future physicians also invited students from the IU schools of Dentistry and Allied Health Sciences to participate.

Stein and Jackie Kramer, both co-chairs of the Pediatrics Student Interest Group, arranged to have an Indianapolis Fire Department truck and crew and the "Buckle Up Bug" a costumed critter on hand to greet youngsters arriving at the health centers. "We wanted to address issues that physicians often don't have time to talk about with kids and parents, such as fire safety and wearing seat belts," Stein says.

While they were giving a service to the community, students at the fair also were on the receiving end, claims Palmer MacKie, MD, MS, clinical assistant professor at IUSM's residency in internal medicine. "Standard medical practice is good for setting bones and removing appendices, but I think the students discovered that people and communities have different needs and different voices."

"The students learned to speak in ways both communities could relate to and embrace," Dr. Palmer adds. "As a result, students learned to be more flexible and responsive. There's great satisfaction in reaching out and interfacing with people."

For Polite and his colleagues, the prognosis for future fairs is favorable. "Many of those involved in the planning were second- and third-year students," he says. "It's my hope the lessons learned will make future health fairs even more successful. My hope is that it will become a yearly tradition."

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## Acting dean

Herbert Cushing, MD, has been named acting associate dean of Medical Student Academic Affairs.

He succeeds Joseph Chu, MD, MPH, who resigned earlier this month.

Dr. Cushing is a clinical associate professor of medicine. He joined the IUSM faculty in July 1992.

He attended medical school at State University of New York/Upstate and completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of Virginia Hospital and served as a fellow in infectious diseases at the University of Washington.

Dr. Cushing was an acting instructor of medicine and infectious diseases at the University of Washington from 1989 until he joined the IUSM faculty.

## Ethics seminar

"Blaming Patients: Victims or Culprits?" will be the topic of Richard Gunderman, MD, PhD, at the Nov. 17 Medical Ethics and Humanities Seminar.

The presentation, co-sponsored by the Department of Philosophy, will be from noon to 1 p.m. in the Medical Library, room 301. Lunch will be served. Seating is limited. For reservations, call 274-4740 or e-mail [jizukac@iupui.edu](mailto:jizukac@iupui.edu).

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## Medical outreach of a different sort

There's a Y2K situation that doesn't portend computer crashes and a countdown to doomsday. IUSM students recently helped launch the Yes To Kids program for Haughville kindergarten youngsters on Indianapolis' west side. Medical students joined the kindergarten Class of 2000 in sharing computer skills and conducting scientific experiments.

Patricia Keener, MD, says the goal of the program is to nurture healthy lifestyles and the wholesome development of youths so they can meet challenges as adults in the 21st century. It's part of an ongoing community-based outreach partnership sponsored by the IUSM Office of Medical Service-Learning.

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## Dermatology video gets award

A video commissioned by IUSM Department of Dermatology and produced by Creative Services of the Medical Educational Resources Program/Continuing Medical Education has won high praise from The Communicator Awards, 1998 Video Competition.

*Examination of the Skin: Indiana University Skin Exam Series*, received an award of distinction in the competition. The series is four distinct programs used as teaching tools for IUSM physicians and students, and the IU School of Dentistry. The video project was created by Ginat Mirowski, DMD, MD, and supported by Antoinette Hood, MD. It is an expansion of a project originally completed by Holly Faust, MD.

The Communicator Awards is an international competition recognizing outstanding work in

communications. There were more than 3,200 entries in the 1998 contest. The same video series also won a 1998 Bronze Telly Award.

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## **Free counseling services offered students/residents**

The Office of Counseling Services, a free support service for medical students and house staff, opened its doors in September.

Individual counseling, couples or family counseling, group counseling and emergency intervention are offered by Suzanne Kunkle, MS, NCC, a doctoral candidate in counseling psychology at Purdue University. Confidentiality is guaranteed.

The office also will assist, organize or present education programs on a range of topics, including alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault, eating disorders and diversity.

For additional information or to schedule an appointment, call 274-4750.

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## **Grant to fund gene therapy**

The Herman B Wells Center for Pediatric Research at Riley Hospital for Children recently received a gift of \$400,000 to support gene therapy research. The money will be used to support the Gene Therapy Working Group and the clinical gene therapy protocols at IUSM.

The gift comes to the Wells Center from Takara Shuzo, Ltd., a biotechnology company based in Otsu, Japan, in recognition of the company's long-standing relationship with the center.

This gift is a continuation of the Takara Shuzo Company's philanthropy which began in 1996 with a \$500,000 gift to the Wells Center.

Funding for the Wells Center has increased dramatically since its creation in 1991. The department of pediatrics now ranks 11th in the funding rankings out of the 91 pediatric departments in the country that receive National Institutes of Health funding. In 1998, the department received \$8.3 million in NIH funding.

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# Submissions to Scope

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- -- fax the information to 278-3502;
- -- e-mail the information to [mhardin@iupui.edu](mailto:mhardin@iupui.edu);
- -- or mail the information to Mary Hardin, LO 401, IUPUI.

The deadline for copy is 8:30 a.m. Mondays, the week prior to publication.

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