

A bimonthly publication for the physicians of Stamford Health System.

volume 2 no. 4
September 2003

The Internet: A Tool for Physicians

The Internet is fast becoming an important tool for the medical community. New websites are being developed with regularity to offer doctors e-mail databases of colleagues for in-depth discussion of difficult cases, to exchange digital imagery, and to access electronic textbooks.

Dr. Rhett Drugge, dermatologist and founder of the Internet Dermatology Society, has been involved in this type of work for years. His organization's website, <http://www.teledermatology.org>, is comprehensive and includes, among other things, access to dermatology lectures, a skin cancer risk analysis database form, and an electronic textbook of dermatology. Member dermatologists are privy to information about other members and are able to communicate effectively throughout the world.

Dr. Drugge initiated a new form of teledermatology in 1992 with his pioneering work being performed here in Stamford with Dr. Joseph Connelly and

Dr. Nancy Schantz of the Family Practice Department. The software he developed for exchanging cases was soon sent to the Internet where it was discovered by David Simel, M.D., a Health Service researcher. Simel tested Drugge's concepts through the Veterans Administration, Health Research and Development Center in Durham, NC, in a series of studies that revealed that the exchange of still digital imagery and patient history was as effective a tool in making a diagnosis as seeing a patient in person. In rural areas, where there is only one physician and a second opinion is indicated, this type of communication is essential.

It is clear that electronic communication among physicians is here to stay. It can be a pathway to improved and more personal care, a conduit to meeting the challenge of difficult cases, and a way to eliminate some travel costs and other loss of income.

These are difficult times for healthcare in general, and for physicians in particular. We are faced with rising medical malpractice premiums, a limited number of qualified carriers, large numbers of uninsured patients, physician report cards, increased regulatory pressures from legislation such as HIPAA, and decreasing reimbursements. All of this is occurring in an environment of increased general anxiety regarding external threats of terrorism, new and emerging diseases and financial uncertainty. The best and the brightest are being steered away from medicine. These are the conditions under which I have assumed the position of

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Staff of Van Munching Rehabilitation Unit, named one of the best inpatient rehabilitation units in the country. (See story on last page.)

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all healthcare entities. JCAHO requires that each healthcare entity have a policy to ensure that "all medication orders are clear, accurate, complete and legible, such that there is no ambiguity regarding the order." Moreover, JCAHO states that each hospital must have a policy regarding "as needed" (prn) orders.

Whenever medications have more than one indication, The Stamford Hospital policy is that the indication be explicitly noted. For example, "acetaminophen 650mg po q4h prn" would be an example of an unacceptable order since acetaminophen could be used either for fever or pain. In situations where the indication is clear and in which there is no other possible indication, prn orders are allowed. If there is more than one indication for a medication that has been ordered in a prn manner without specifying the indication, the nurse and/or pharmacist will contact the clinician before such a medication is administered. If you have any doubts whether a medication has more than one indication, it is best to simply write the indication.

Medical News to Use

We will begin an interactive section in our next newsletter entitled "Medical News to Use" where our physicians can exchange medical information. Please submit abstracts or articles on new medical information that you have found interesting and that you think might be useful to other doctors in the Stamford Health System community. You will find contact information on the back page of this newsletter.

Speakers Bureau Information

Everyone benefits when SHS physicians share their expertise with the community. We'd like to expand our Speakers Bureau. If you are interested in speaking to groups and organizations in the community, please call Mary Judge at 7875 or 325-8775. She would like to know about your interests/expertise and will answer any questions you may have.

Publications and Presentations

Hamet, M., April 2003, instructor in hands-on practicum course on vertebroplasty at the

annual meeting of the Society of Interventional Radiology, Salt Lake City, UT

Hanna, B., Donthineni-Rao, R., Menkowitz, M., Moore, G., Lackman, R., *Multiple Bone and Soft Tissue Lesions in a 51-Year-Old Woman*, Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research, Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, Inc., July 2003, pp. 260-288

Lester, M., April 2003, Moderator, *Scientific Program*, New England Society of Allergy Annual Meeting, Marlborough, MA

Clinical Trial

Community Acquired Pneumonia in the Elderly

Dr. Michael Parry, with **Drs. McLeod, Street, Adler-Klein, Turnbull, and Shukovsky**, will be participating in a double blind research study comparing the use of two quinolone antibiotics (Moxifloxacin vs. Levofloxacin) for the treatment of CAP in persons aged 65 and older. Qualified persons will receive IV antibiotics initially and may be followed as outpatients or inpatients. There are several follow-up visits and serial EKG's will be performed.

Morgan Street Family Medicine

Drs. Kathleen Nurena and Henry Yoon partnered this month to begin a new practice at 90 Morgan Street in Stamford. They came to The Stamford Hospital in 1999 and 1998 respectively when they began their residency training in family practice. Dr. Nurena has been an attending physician in the Stamford community since completing her residency in June 2000. Her special interests are in children's health, adolescent medicine and women's health. Dr. Yoon, a Chicago native, has been an attending physician in the community since completing his residency in June 2001. He is Associate Director of the Stamford Hospital/Columbia University Family Practice Residency Program. His special interest is in Geriatric Medicine.

New Provisional Members of The Stamford Hospital Medical Staff

- **William Brown, M.D.**, Courtesy Staff, Department of Surgery, The Urology Clinic of Greenwich
 - **Stephen M. Gallousis, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Obstetrics/Gynecology, starting a private practice in New Canaan, CT
 - **Shieva Ghofrany, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of OB/GYN, joining Drs. Gennaro and Cahill
 - **Harris A. Greenberger, D.P.M.**, Ancillary Courtesy Staff, Colony Podiatry Associates
 - **Jason Klenoff, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Surgery, Division of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology, joining The Ear, Nose and Throat Center of Stamford
 - **Judson Krosney, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Emergency Medicine with EMP
 - **Keith Landesman, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Medicine, joining The Heart Physicians, PC
 - **John Liu, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Family Practice, Stamford Family Practice
 - **Carolyn McKay, APRN**, Ancillary Staff, Department of OB/GYN, Maternal-Fetal Care, PC
 - **Taras Napora, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Emergency Medicine with EMP
 - **Jayson Podber, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Emergency Medicine with EMP
 - **Betty Ann Robustelli, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Anesthesia, joining Stamford Anesthesiology Services
 - **Remi Rosenberg, M.D.**, Active Staff application, Department of Medicine, Primecare Medical, LLP
 - **Lisa Rothman, D.P.M.**, Ancillary Staff, Department of Surgery, Stamford Podiatry Group
 - **Lisa Rowe, APRN**, Ancillary Staff, Department of OB/GYN, Dr. Irene Komarynsky's office
 - **Richard Scott, Jr, M.D.**, Courtesy Staff, Department of OB/GYN, with The Center for Advanced Reproductive Surgery
 - **Avi Silber, M.D.**, Active Staff application, Department of Pediatrics, Pediatric Associates of Norwalk and Darien
 - **Rhett Silver, M.D.**, Active Staff, Department of Emergency Medicine with EMP
 - **Heena Sultan, M.D.**, Active Staff application, Department of Anesthesia, Stamford Anesthesiology
- ## Physicians Applying for Privileges
- **John Crouch, Ph.D.**, Provisional/Ancillary Staff, Department of Psychiatry, solo practice in New Canaan
 - **Natalie Neu, M.D.**, Provisional/Consulting Staff, Department of Pediatrics, Division of Infectious Disease, solo practice in New York
 - **Christos Pappas, M.D.**, Provisional/Active Staff, Department of Surgery, Division of Thoracic Surgery, solo practice in Norwalk, CT
 - **Liselotte Pieroth, M.D.**, Provisional/Active Staff, Department of Surgery, Division of Ophthalmology, Stamford Ophthalmology
 - **David A. Rubin, M.D.**, Provisional/Courtesy Staff, Department of Medicine, Division of Cardiology, practice in White Plains

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Senior Vice President for Medical Services here at The Stamford Hospital. However, I believe there is room for hope and optimism.

Healthcare has entered into a brave new world where consumerism is the rule of the day. Patients come to us with Internet searches about their conditions and, in some cases, educate us. Meaningful tort reform is being discussed at both the state and federal level. New classes of drugs are becoming available to treat formerly incurable diseases and improve the quality of life for those with chronic conditions.

Interventional radiological procedures result in improved survival and far fewer major operations, and surgery, when required, is frequently performed using minimally invasive techniques. Access to information for physicians has never been easier.

I look forward to working with the Executive Team, Board of Directors, Medical Staff leadership, and most importantly, with an outstanding Medical Staff, all of whom are committed to providing excellent patient care and to our vision of becoming the preferred regional center for health. We will build upon the solid foundation laid down by my predecessor, Dr. Michael Parry. While there will be many challenges ahead, I believe that by working together, we can and will achieve our goals and make The Stamford Hospital all that it can be. Thank you.

John Rodis, M.D.
Senior Vice President for Medical Services and C.C.O.

inthe news

Update on Nursing 1:4 Ratio

In April of 2003, The Stamford Hospital instituted a new program to add 29 nurses to units devoted to medical and surgical care. This will result in a nurse-to-patient ratio of one to four — the best in the state and among the best in the nation. Research links improved nurse-to-patient ratios to better patient outcomes and higher patient and staff satisfaction.

To date, 25 of the 29 nurses have been hired, several coming from Norwalk Community College. Nurses from Canada and our local area have been hired as well. The first unit to be fully staffed will be general surgery.

In addition to the new nurse-to-patient ratio's potency as a recruiting tool, an attractive employment package is being offered to promote nursing retention. This consists of tuition reimbursement and medical and dental insurance as of the first day of hire.

Profile: Dr. Noel Robin, Musician Extraordinaire

Dr. Noel Robin, physician-in-chief of the department of medicine, is a man of many talents. A violinist since the age of seven and pianist since 30, he has been mastering the disciplines of music and medicine for most of his life.

Dr. Robin was concert master of his high school orchestra and won a music scholarship to Hofstra University. He has played violin with the Physicians Orchestra in New York, the Boston Civic Symphony Orchestra, the Stamford Symphony and the Bard Hall Players, a student-faculty orchestra at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Dr. Robin has also given piano recitals at Edgehill, where he entertains the residents and staff.

Though many of Dr. Robin's favorite composers, such as Mozart, Mahler, Beethoven, Chopin, and Sibelius, are purely classical, he is also interested in other composers such as Scott Joplin, a ragtime composer who lived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

"There is a great similarity between music and medicine," says Dr. Robin. "They are both

creative and strive for order and perfection." When asked about how he has found time to integrate music into his busy life as a doctor, Dr. Robin says, "When you want something badly enough, you will always find a way."

White Coats Important to Patients

In a new report published by *Reuters Health*, survey participants agreed they would rather see their doctors wearing white lab coats and nametags than no medical attire at all. Dr. Lawrence Brandt of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York evaluated 31 studies on people's attitudes about what constitutes appropriate attire for healthcare providers. According to Brandt, the physical appearance of healthcare workers strongly influenced patient's expectations of the care they would be receiving. Though patients dislike scrubs, excessive jewelry, long fingernails, jeans and sneakers, a neat appearance perpetuated by wearing a white coat seems to be more important than the particular outfit a physician wears!

Successful Physician Connectivity Pilot - Now Live

A new remote access solution for physicians has been developed by the IS Department.

Physicians can now access SHS systems in a streamlined, secure manner from any computer connected to the Internet. Applications available include ERA, Care Manager, CS1, MRS, STAR and the Medical Staff Directory.

The system was tested with a pilot group of physicians for a few weeks, and on August 18th the solution was made available to all SHS physicians. To sign up, please contact the Help Desk at xHELP (x4357) or 355-4357. Look for the link to SHS MD Connect on the top right-hand corner in the 'What's New' section of the website.

Patient Safety - PRN Orders

By: John Rodis, M.D.

Patient safety is always a concern and reduction of medication errors should be a goal of

