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News & Notes



Boston University School of Medicine

Issue No. 6
March 1, 1977

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COMMONWEALTH FUND ANNOUNCEMENT EXPECTED SOON: Favorable reports have been received from the Commonwealth Fund on a major BUSM/College of Liberal Arts grant proposal to integrate and coordinate instruction on the two campuses. An official announcement of the grant award is expected to be made by the University soon.

The grant would support the design of a new and more flexible curriculum for premed students and students of the basic medical sciences at the School of Medicine. The new curriculum would integrate science and liberal arts instruction at CLA and BUSM, thus eliminating much redundancy and making possible the completion of many of the basic medical science courses during the undergraduate years.

Primarily affected would be the last two years of liberal arts education and the first year of the medical curriculum.

ADMISSION APPLICATIONS TOP 7,800: More than 7,800 applications for admission to next fall's first-year class have been received--up from 4,200 last year--according to Jacob Swartz, M.D., associate dean for admissions. There are 133 first-year seats, of which approximately 50 are reserved for students in the Six-Year Program.

Swartz said the large increase in applications can be attributed to BUSM's having joined the American Medical Colleges Application Service (AMCAS). Under the AMCAS system, a prospective medical student submits a single application, its form agreed upon by the approximately 90 participating medical colleges, with a registration fee that covers applications to several medical schools.

Twenty-five percent of the applicants to the first-year class are women. This marks a 10 percent drop from last year's applicant pool, Swartz said. So far, 385 minority students have applied, and 22 have been accepted.

"Though BUSM's participation in AMCAS has increased the Admissions Committee's application load, it has made record-keeping much easier," Swartz said. "For example, the AMCAS computers tell us how many students apply to BUSM from each undergraduate college."

UH CONFRONTS DEFICIT, MOVES TO CUT EXPENSES: Stricter financial screening of potential patients and elimination of 60 positions from the UH payroll are among economy measures announced by University Hospital last week in response to a projected \$2.5-million deficit for this year.

A four-point program for reducing expenses and free care, to be effective immediately, was outlined by Hospital Administrator John H. Betjemann in a letter sent to all UH employees Feb. 24. The plan calls for (1) elimination of 60 personnel positions, with an accompanying effort to reduce the number of actual lay-offs by

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transferring employees to vacant positions, where possible; (2) a freeze on all capital projects, except those that produce revenue, and on the purchase of new equipment, except for emergency replacement; (3) tightening of financial screening policies for inpatient admissions and in the Emergency Room and clinics to reduce the amount of free care; and (4) close monitoring of services for Medicaid patients in an effort to keep the cost of these services in line with the \$268-per-day reimbursement schedule established by the state for Medicaid patients. It now costs the Hospital on the average \$40 per day more to care for Medicaid patients than the state will pay.

FACULTY APPROVES SPLITTING B.O.D. IN TWO: Biology of Disease will become two separate courses, each with its own final grade, as the result of faculty approval of a Curriculum Committee proposal. Beginning next year, the six-month-long, 400-contact-hour course will be split into two parts, between the cardiovascular and GI blocks, in February. The split is expected to cause no significant change in course content or in the order of the individual blocks.

John McCahan, associate dean and chairman of the Curriculum Committee, told the Feb. 9 faculty meeting at which the proposal was approved that the change was dictated by the difficulty of developing a workable makeup policy for a course of such length. In addition, he said, the Curriculum Committee felt a single grade was an inadequate reflection of the amount and scope of the work covered in the course.

HOSPITAL, UNION REACH AGREEMENT: University Hospital and the District 1199-Mass. bargaining unit reached agreement Jan. 31 on wage increases for the third year of a three-year contract, thus averting a strike that had been threatened.

The agreement calls for a 30-cent per-hour increase effective Feb. 1, 1977, and an additional five-cent increase effective April 1, 1977. New hires will start at existing wage rates until Aug. 1, 1977, when minimum hiring rates will be increased five percent. The total annual cost to the Hospital of the agreement is just under seven percent.

The District 1199 bargaining unit represents the Hospital's dietary and housekeeping employees, patient escorts and nursing assistants.

SANDSON TO SPEAK AT MARCH 9 FILM PROGRAM: Dean John I. Sandson, M.D., will be a featured speaker at a March 9 film and discussion program honoring Walsh McDermott, M.D., professor of public affairs in medicine at the Cornell University College of Medicine and vice president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Also participating in the discussion following the film on McDermott's career will be David E. Rogers, M.D., president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and McDermott himself. The film program, one in the series "Leaders in American Medicine," will be held at 4:30 p.m. in the Countway Library of Medicine at 10 Shattuck St., Boston. Refreshments will be served before the program at 4 p.m.

EVANS CLINIC OPENING CALLED SUCCESSFUL: Approximately 20 patients were seen on opening day of the new Evans Medical Clinic Feb. 14, and, in spite of what clinic manager Laurie Schoen described as "a few hectic moments," the debut of the new University Hospital general medical and medical subspecialty clinic was "a generally successful day."

Five of the Evans group's six clinics occupy newly constructed quarters on the first floor of the Doctors Office Building; the dermatology clinic is on the fifth floor. Each clinic occupies its own small suite area.

The general medicine, allergy and dermatology clinics began operation in their new offices during the week of Feb. 14-18. All other medical subspecialty clinics began to operate out of the DOB on Feb. 22.

The Evans Medical Clinic brings together in one system and in one place the former UH general medical and medical subspecialty clinics with the former private practices of the participating physicians. The Clinic is staffed by the Evans Medical Foundation, established 18 months ago exclusively for the benefit of the Hospital and School of Medicine in carrying out patient care, research and teaching activities.

Chuck Schwager, Evans Medical Clinic administrator, said Boston University employees who have Master Medical coverage might be interested to know that Master Medical covers 100 percent of the costs of all visits to Evans group clinics, excluding those for routine physical check-ups.

UH ANNUAL REPORT TO BE NEWS SUPPLEMENT: University Hospital's 1976-77 annual report will take the unusual form of a 16-page supplement to 24 Eastern Massachusetts newspapers, scheduled to appear March 23 and 24. The report will highlight six UH "Centers of Excellence": its Cardiovascular Programs, Cancer Care Programs, New England Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center, Evans Medical Clinic, Institute for the Correction of Facial Deformities, and Neurological Programs. The supplement is expected to reach 330,000 homes and more than a million readers.

"CHILDREN AT RISK" COURSE ATTRACTS ATTENTION: Attracting the attention of lawyers and health professionals from various parts of the Northeast is a unique course called "Children at Risk," being given by the Masters in Public Health Program during its winter term, which began Jan. 17. Douglas Decker, Ph.D., the program's associate director, reports that the course has prompted inquiries from law schools in New Jersey and New York and from persons in Washington, D.C.

The course is taught by Joel Alpert, M.D., chairman of the Department of Pediatrics and director of the Division of Pediatrics at BCH, and by Leonard Glantz, J.D., staff attorney at the BU Center for Law and Health Sciences and a BUSM instructor in socio-medical sciences and community medicine. It deals with a broad spectrum of legal and medical issues affecting children in various risk groups, and includes such matters as the legal status of the child, child neglect and abuse, children with special needs, experimentation with children, adoption and foster care, poverty, adolescence, and the child's rights with respect to reproduction.

The 28 persons enrolled in the course include a pediatrician who heads a school health system in Rhode Island and commutes to Boston for lectures. Several other physicians and a number of nurses from outside the University are enrolled, as are more than a dozen persons from various graduate programs on the Charles River campus. The course is the only one offered by the MPH program that has been opened to persons not enrolled in the degree program, Decker said.

HEALTH LAW EXPERTS INCREASE BUSM ROLE: The involvement in School of Medicine courses of staff members from the Center for Law and Health Sciences, who already conduct popular seminars in law and medicine as part of the first-year socio-medical sciences course, is increasing with the addition of health-law courses to the curriculum of the Masters in Public Health program. During the first semester, George J. Annas, J.D., director of the Center and an assistant professor of socio-medical sciences and community medicine, and Leonard Glantz, J.D. (see story above), taught Public Health I, an introductory course described by program administrators as very popular with students.

Next fall a course entitled "Regulating Science through Law" will be added to the program and will deal with the various legal aspects of genetics research, including the controversial research into recombinant DNA. The course will be taught jointly by Annas and a geneticist-physician.

A course in health regulation and policy will be taught by Annas and Glantz during the winter term next year, and plans are in the works for the two law professors to teach a full-semester course in human experimentation that would probably be introduced into the MPH curriculum a year from next fall.

VISITING PROFESSOR GAFFNEY TO GIVE CREASY LECTURE: Thomas E. Gaffney, M.D., director of the Department of Pharmacology at the Medical College of South Carolina in Charleston, will deliver the prestigious Creasy Memorial Lecture on Thursday, April 14, at 4 p.m. in Keefer Auditorium. The title of the lecture is "Hypotheses Related to the Development of New Cardiovascular Drugs."

The School of Medicine is one of 10 medical schools nationwide to be awarded a William N. Creasy Visiting Professorship of Clinical Pharmacology for the current academic year by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund.

Gaffney, whose visit is being co-sponsored by the departments of Pharmacology and Anesthesiology, will spend the week of April 11-15 at BUSM. In addition to the Greasy Memorial Lecture, he will deliver the following talks:

1. Tues., April 12, 9 a.m. "Criteria for the Choice of Antihypertensive Drugs," for BUSM II clinical pharmacology course, in lecture room.
2. Tues., April 12, 3 p.m. "Miscellaneous Pharmacology for Anesthesiologists," for anesthesiology weekly seminar, room to be announced.
3. Wed., April 13, noon "Studies Perhexiline in Experimental Myocardial Infarction," for departmental seminar, L-301.
4. Wed., April 13, 2 p.m. "Usefulness of Mass Fragmentography and Echo Cardiography in Pharmacology," for methods course, place to be announced.

DRUG RESEARCHERS PUBLISH BOOK ON BIRTH DEFECTS: Three researchers at the Drug Epidemiology Unit, all associate professors of medicine, are co-authors of a book entitled "Birth Defects and Drugs in Pregnancy," just published by Publishing Sciences Group, Inc. The authors are Olli P. Heinonen, M.D., Dennis Slone, M.D., and Samuel Shapiro, M.B., F.R.C.P.

The book presents data from a prospective study of drugs used by more than 50,000 women, between 1958 and 1965, in relation to birth defects identified in their children. "It includes material that should be of interest to scientists concerned with all aspects of teratology, and particularly to epidemiologists engaged in exploring birth defects, whether from the perspective of hypothesis generation, or from that of hypothesis testing," a spokesman for the publisher said.

The Drug Epidemiology Unit, located in Cambridge and headed by Drs. Slone and Shapiro, is currently involved in four research projects: an intensive drug surveillance study of hospitalized pediatric patients; a study testing the hypothesis that female hormones, in general, and oral contraceptives, in particular, are associated with an increased risk of myocardial infarction in women under 50; a study to identify possible causal relationships between certain drugs and certain diseases; and an exploration of the hypothesis that use of diazepam (Valium) in pregnancy may be associated with an increase in cleft anomalies in offspring.

STUDENTS WEIGH COMMUNITY HEALTH RESOURCES IN PRECEPTORSHIP PROGRAM: Fourth-year School of Medicine students enrolled in the Community Diagnosis rotation are experiencing first-hand the rigors of primary care and family practice in medically underserved communities throughout New England.

Each of the 40 to 50 students participating in the program is assigned to a physician-preceptor who is in either solo or group practice. In the past, students have been sent all over the country, from Indian reservations in the Southwest to a town near Juneau, Alaska. New federal regulations now limit the program to New England.

Program Director Summer H. Hoffman, M.D., director of the home medical service and a professor of socio-medical sciences and community medicine, said he is currently awaiting action on a \$697,000 grant proposal submitted to DHEW in December. The funds would be used to reimburse preceptors and help defray the costs of the program for the next five years.

In addition to their medical responsibilities, students in the program evaluate the community's resources for delivering medical care to its citizens--such things as emergency medical services, nursing home care, and mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation therapy. "It's one thing for a student to be just an apprentice and quite another for him or her to be medically attuned to the community environment," said Hoffman. "In some instances the students' community reports have served as a basis for long-term health planning in the community."

87 M.D.s LEARN, ARGUE, SKI AT SMUGGLER'S NOTCH: Eighty-seven physicians from all over the country met with 14 School of Medicine faculty members in the scenic mountains of Vermont early last month for a continuing-education course entitled "Controversies in Internal Medicine."

The course was held at Smuggler's Notch in Jeffersonville from Jan. 31 to Feb. 3. Discussed were such diverse topics as the prevention of coronary heart disease; controversies in the management of kidney stones and the use of steroids and immunosuppressive drugs in SLE; whether cell kill is the answer to treatment of leukemia; controversies in the management of nodular goiter; and the use and abuse of steroids in clinical medicine. In addition to the six hours of course material given daily, medical "fireside" chats were held in the evenings among faculty members and practitioners.

In the time between sessions, physicians skied, played tennis and swam at the Vermont resort.

The course was directed by Daniel S. Bernstein, M.D., associate dean for continuing education, and Robert M. Levin, M.D., program director of postgraduate education for the Department of Medicine. "We have received nothing but raves about the intellectual and recreational aspects of the program," Dr. Levin said.

Because of the favorable response to the program, plans are being made to hold the course at Smuggler's Notch again next year.

SANDSON MEETS WITH FAR-FLUNG ALUMNI: Dean John I. Sandson has met with alumni groups in recent months as far away as San Francisco and Puerto Rico, and as close to home as Providence. In November the Dean met informally with several alumni in San Francisco, where he was attending the Council of Deans meeting during the annual meeting of the American Association of Medical Colleges.

During a January trip to Puerto Rico, Sandson had dinner with a group of local alumni at the home of Carlos Muñoz McCormack, M.D., Class of '30. The dean showed slides of the School and of the University and told the group about recent developments at BUSM. The following week a small group of Providence-area alumni gathered at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Edward Spindell (he is Class of '53 and assistant secretary of the Alumni Association) on Jan. 28 to talk with Sandson and hear the latest news about the School.

MARCH 15 IS APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR CRC MEMBERSHIP: Application deadline for the current membership election to the Cancer Research Center at Boston University is Tuesday, March 15. Two more elections will be held this year.

Among other benefits, members of the center may receive assistance in developing multidisciplinary scientific/clinical programs and will have access to the center's resources and to lists of available equipment.

Applications and further information are available from the Cancer Research Center office, L-310, Boston University School of Medicine, 80 E. Concord St., Boston 02118, tel. 247-6076.

The center is funded through a core grant from the National Cancer Institute.

OSKI TO GIVE ELI FRIEDMAN LECTURE MAY 18: Frank A. Oski, M.D., a professor of pediatrics at the State University of New York, Upstate Medical Center, Syracuse, will give the fourth Eli Friedman Memorial Lecture on May 18 at 4:30 p.m. in the Harriet McCormack Building Auditorium of Boston City Hospital at 35 Northampton St. Oski will speak on "Iron Deficiency: A Total Body Disease."

The lecture honors Dr. Eli Friedman, one of Boston's first pediatricians, who was associated with BCH for more than 40 years. The public is invited. For further information, please contact Joel J. Alpert, M.D., professor and chairman, Department of Pediatrics, Boston City Hospital, 818 Harrison Ave., Boston 02118.

HEALTH LAW LIBRARY TO OPEN ON CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS: The BU Center for Law and Health Sciences will open its new health law library May 15 with a dedication gathering at the Center. The only library of its kind in New England, it will be one of only a few health law libraries in the country. Cardiologist Elliot Sagall, M.D., and George Annas, J.D., director of the Center for Law and Health Sciences and a BUSM assistant professor of socio-medical sciences and community medicine, will serve as codirectors.

The library will be called the Boston University-American Society of Law and Medicine Library of Law Medicine and will be located on the fourth floor of the Center's office building at 209 Bay State Road. It will include some materials too specific in subject matter to be found in either medicine or law libraries.

BRIEFLY NOTED: The lead review in the book column of JAMA for Jan. 31 was devoted to Quality Assurance in Health Care, edited by Richard H. Egdahl, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Medical Center, and Paul M. Gertman, M.D., chief of the Health Care Research Section, BUSM Division of Medicine. The highly laudatory review described the book as "a mine of information," and "a valuable reference source for those who try to define quality in health care and ways to achieve good health care".... A \$10,000 grant from the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation to continue support of the History of Medicine programs at BUSM has been received by George E. Gifford, Jr., M.D., an assistant professor of socio-medical sciences. Gifford also received a \$3,500 grant from the Macy Foundation to support publication of his book Psychotherapy, Psychoanalysis and the New England Medical Scene, 1894-1944, to be published this spring....

A conference on the protection of human research subjects and the role of institutional review boards will be held on April 16 and 17 at Suffolk Law School, 41 Temple St., Boston. George Annas, J.D., and Leonard Glantz, J.D., of the Department of Socio-Medical Sciences and Community Medicine, will discuss "Informed Consent and Assessment of Risk," and "The Needs of Special Subjects," respectively. For additional information regarding the conference, call Joan Rachlin at 617/357-0202....

To insure optimum security at BUMC, all faculty, students and staff must wear a valid identification badge. If you have lost your badge, it is important that you notify the Personnel Department to arrange for a replacement....The appointment of Christine Mather to the position of personnel representative in the Personnel Department has been announced by Howard D. Buzzee, personnel and payroll manager.... The schedule for the recreational facilities at the Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center, originally published in the January Front & Center, has been changed. Effective Feb. 1 to May 31, the hours are as follows: The gymnasium will be open Monday from 11 a.m. to noon and Thursday from 2 to 3 p.m.; the swimming pool will be open on Tuesday from 11 a.m. to noon, Thursday from 6 to 7 p.m., and Friday from 12 to 1 p.m.....

School of Medicine staff members needing extra help with clerical tasks can take advantage of a service offered by the Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center. Clients of the Glendale House, which serves functionally disabled adults, work at the Fuller Center on Wednesdays, and at Glendale House in Dorchester on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, performing such tasks as collating, folding, labelling, stuffing and sealing envelopes. The work is done free of charge and is supervised by the Glendale House staff. For more information contact Patience Kowal, director of the Glendale House program, at 265-3726.

News & Notes is a publication of the Office of Informational Services. If you have news of possible interest to the School of Medicine community, call News & Notes editor Lorraine Loviglio at ext. 5606, or write to her at the Office of Informational Services, P-300. From outside the Medical Center, call 247-5606, or write to Suite 300, 720 Harrison Ave., Boston 02118.