Letter from the Chair

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Whether you are a patient, a referring physician, an alumnus, friend of Emory Urology, or a prospective candidate for employment or training, I hope that our newsletter will provide you a fitting introduction to our team and update you on current news within the department. Emory Urology is among the foremost programs for delivering sophisticated, patient-centered care across the entire spectrum of adult and adolescent urological conditions. Our doctors have been recognized by innumerable national and regional awards and commendations. We take care of more than 15,000 patients with urological diseases annually. Our surgical expertise spans the gamut from the most routine urological procedures to the most complex cases referred from urologists across the region and throughout the country. We practice at 4 hospitals: Emory University Hospital, Saint Joseph’s Hospital, Grady Memorial Hospital, and the Atlanta VA Medical Center. Our residents and fellows also work with affiliated Pediatric Urology faculty at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. In addition to exemplary patient-centered care, Emory Urology does much more: scientists and physician-scientists in our Department are developing new treatments for both urological cancers (including prostate, bladder, kidney, and penile cancer) and non-cancerous urologic problems (including kidney stones, male infertility, urinary incontinence, urinary reconstruction, erectile dysfunction and more). Many of the country’s top urological surgeons, including Department Chairs at other leading institutions, started their careers at Emory. It is an honor for me to have the opportunity to lead Emory Urology, and I welcome you to join or revisit our network of patients, referring physicians, alumni, and friends.

Reorganizing Department into Divisions - Sanda Names Three New Leadership Positions

New Emory Department of Urology Chairman, Martin G. Sanda MD, nominated Emory Urology faculty members to three new leadership positions within the department: Dr. Chad Ritenour as Vice Chair of Education and Faculty Affairs, Dr. John Petros as Associate Chair of Research, and Dr. Viraj Master as Associate Chair for Quality and Clinical Affairs. These appointments were supported by unanimous consensus at the March faculty meeting as part of strategic restructuring of the Department into 4 Divisions: Division of Oncology, Division of Minimally Invasive Surgery and Endourology, Division of Reconstructive Urology, and Division of Men’s Health, Infertility and Office Urology.

Emory Urology Service established at Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital

Emory Urology is leading the way among Emory surgical specialties in establishing clinical services at Emory’s newest affiliate hospital, Saint Joseph’s. Dr. John Pattaras, Associate Professor of Urology, is assuming leadership of this endeavor as the Director of the Emory Urology Service at SJH. Emory urologists Dr. Martin Sanda, Dr. Peter Nieh, and Dr. Wayland Hsiao as well as incoming Health Services Scholar Dr. Akanksha Mehta comprise the Emory Urology team at SJH. Clinic and office space for Emory Urology at SJH is being constructed in 5,500 square feet on the fifth floor of the “5973” Building adjacent to SJH. Starting in July, Emory urology will have a 5-day-per-week presence in both outpatient clinics and inpatient OR at SJH. On April 16, Sanda performed the first major robotic case by Emory Urology at SJH (a robotic prostatectomy).
Multidisciplinary Prostate Cancer Care Center Initiated at Saint Joseph’s Hospital

Under the direction of Dr. Martin Sanda, a Multi-disciplinary Prostate Cancer Clinic is opening at Emory’s newest affiliate hospital, Saint Joseph’s. Dr. Sanda, who previously directed such a Clinic at University of Michigan and established a multidisciplinary prostate center at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, will lead the center in coordination with Dr. Peter Rossi of Radiation Oncology and the Emory Winship Cancer Institute. Drs. Pattaras, Dr. Nieh, and Emory medical oncologists will also provide patient care in the center. The Center will serve as a “one-stop shop” for prostate cancer patients with urologic cancer experts, radiation specialists, and medical oncology specialists all under one roof. Along with an in-house lab, patient care coordinators will also be employed to enhance patient experience.

Emory Urology at the 2013 American Urological Association Convention

- Dr. John Petros was invited as a distinguished speaker at the AUA Urologic Oncology Research Symposium. He delivered a keynote presentation entitled “Mitochondrial Genetics and Cancer.”
- Dr. Viraj Master delivered a featured presentation about Emory’s innovative video-based educational tool that enhances patient comprehension of common prostate health terminology.
- Dr. Jeff Carney participated as a lead faculty in a postgraduate educational course to teach urologists on urethral reconstruction.
- Dr. Sanda’s research on PHI (prostate health index) as a new method to selectively detect aggressive prostate cancer was selected by the AUA for a press release. Dr. Sanda’s contribution to prostate cancer research was featured and highlighted by the AUA during the convention.

Overall, Emory Urology contribution to the AUA totaled 34 Emory scholarly activities, which included 29 scientific podium and poster presentations, 2 keynote presentations, 2 post-graduate educational courses and 1 educational video.

Urology PA Residency started at Emory - First in Southeast

Dr. Chad Ritenour, Dr. John Pattaras and Tania Soloman PA-c have begun the first Physician Assistants (PA) urological residency program in the southeast. The program provides a broad-based educational experience whereby a certified PA is trained in urological conditions. The PA resident program will emphasize patient care, medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills and professionalism. Training is provided in a well-established academic university, national cancer center and associated hospitals, focusing on intellectual stimulation, surgical skills and evidence-based medicine. Objectives include exposure to outpatients, inpatients and surgical settings, with peri-operative involvement, to enable the resident to gain the expertise necessary to practice in a urology setting of their choice. The inaugural resident started April 1.

Issa Promoted to Professor

Dr. Muta M. Issa, Chief of Urology at The Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center, was recently promoted to Professor of Urology with tenure. The Emory Board of Trustees voted to approve his promotion at its most recent meeting in March. Dr. Issa earned his medical degree from the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, Ireland and received his urology training at Johns Hopkins University Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland and Stanford University Medical Center in Palo Alto, California. Dr. Issa began practicing at Emory in 1997.

Research Highlight: “Health Buddy” Incontinence Trial at Atlanta VA

A four-year research grant titled “Perioperative Post-Prostatectomy Incontinence Home Telehealth Program” recently received $1 million in federal funding. Dr. Muta M. Issa, Professor of Urology, at Emory University Department of Urology and Chief of Urology at the Atlanta VA Medical Center (AVAMC) is the Urology Site Director for the project at the AVAMC. The project involves testing pelvic floor muscle training program for urinary continence in patients following prostate surgery. The training program will be implemented using telehealth format through a Health Buddy. A Health Buddy is a home device that allows for remote monitoring and supervision of pelvic floor muscle training exercises. The device records patients’ activities and progress from the comfort of their homes. In an earlier pilot study, patients appreciated receiving the training in the privacy of their homes, and felt better prepared to deal with incontinence and empowered with new knowledge and skills. The study represents the next step in our continued commitment to help patients gain urinary continence and improve their quality of life. The earlier study, co-authored by Dr. Issa, was published in JAMA in January 2011.
Carney Recognized by the Atlanta Business Chronicle

Dr. Jeff Carney, Chief of Urology at Grady Memorial Hospital and Assistant Professor of Urology at Emory, was featured in the Atlanta Business Chronicle. Carney grew up in “a blue-collar family in a pretty small town” where his family lived payday to payday. Straight after high school, he joined the Air Force and worked as a bomb loader. He attended pharmacy school and obtained a doctorate degree in pharmacology. Most would have simply stopped but not Carney. He went on to chase his dream to become a urologist through medical school, urology residency and three separate fellowships (trauma, reconstruction, and urologic oncology), after which he joined Emory as a Urology faculty member in 2001. Carney stays grounded by remembering his roots growing up in a family of mill workers outside of Rome, Ga. He worked as a pharmacist to pay his way through medical school. His ability to connect with people has earned him a reputation for an outstanding bedside manner. “It’s very important to have a good bedside manner, so much so that they’re actually teaching that now in medical schools,” Carney said. “But I don’t think you can teach it. It’s an innate gift.”

“As far as his abilities and skills, they’re second to none,” said Dr. Pine, Emory University critical care specialist. “But he also has a great personality. Everybody wants to work with him, and he spends a lot of time training medical students, nurse practitioners, fellows and residents. If I call his cellphone at 10 at night, he’s still at the hospital. He’s really remarkable.” When Carney isn’t at Grady, he’s often donating his time to various causes. Every February for 10 years, he has traveled to El Salvador where he performs pediatric surgery. He’s now planning a similar excursion to Kenya. “It’s a demanding profession,” he said. “But it’s what God put me here to do, and I enjoy doing it.”

Emory Medical Student Sarah Holzman gets Brendler Award

The Urology Care Foundation awarded a prestigious fellowship to Sarah Holzman, a medical student at Emory University School of Medicine. Sarah won the Brendler Summer Medical Student Fellowship Program award, which will support a two-month study with Dr. Viraj Master to elucidate the molecular pathogenesis of renal cell cancer.

Urology Resident Accomplishments

- Dr. Lindsey Herrel (working with Dr. Hsiao) received the Best Research Award at the 2013 Georgia Urological Association spring meeting.
- Dr. Adam B. Shrewsberry received the highest in-service score for senior residents.
- Emory University urology residents beat the Georgia Regents University residents in the annual Resident Bowl at the 2013 Georgia Urological Association spring meeting.

Emory Urology Milestones

- Dr. Akanksha Mehta is joining the Department of Urology starting in July as the inaugural Emory Urology Health Services Scholar. Dr. Mehta completed her undergraduate, graduate medical degree and urology residency at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. She is currently finishing a 2-year fellowship in Male Reproductive Medicine, Infertility & Microsurgery at Cornell University.
- Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) accredits a collaborative Emory Urology and Gynecology Fellowship in pelvic floor reconstruction.

Emory Urology Scientific Publications January-May 2013 (Online and Print)

- Pathological Concordance and Surgical Outcomes of Sporadic Synchronous Unilateral Multifocal Renal Masses Treated with Partial Nephrectomy: Simhan, Canter, Sterioux, Smaldone, Tsai, Li, Viterbo, Chen, Greenberg, Kutikov & Uzzo. Journal of Urology, Jan 2013
- Epithelioid Pecoma (Epithelioid Angiomyolipoma) of The Kidney: A Rare Tumor Subtype For Patients Presenting with an Enhancing Renal Mass: Shrewsberry, Sica, Osunyoka & Canter. Canadian Journal of Urology, Feb 2013