



# The Morning Report

Volume 1, Issue 1  
Fall 2010



*continuing*  
The *saga of the Sleepless Knights twice a year!*

## Medical Education blossoms in the Valley

California's Central Valley is one of the most fertile areas in the Northern Hemisphere. Our agricultural economy contributes billions of dollars to the state economy. Yet this region has some of the poorest health statistics and ranks among the lowest physician per capita ratio of anywhere in the nation.

Despite these challenges, the region has grown tremendously spurred by urban flight from the costly coastal regions, an influx of immigrant families from across the globe and the appeal of small town lifestyle with access to many natural amenities.

Now we can add another asset to the fertile Central Valley: Medical Education. The recent development of a branch campus of UC Davis School of Medicine to begin training students from UC Merced portends a flourishing of efforts to train more physicians for the region.

In concert with this effort, the *Valley Consortium for Medical Education (VCME)*, was formed as a non-profit health consortium of Doctors Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center and the County of Stanislaus to develop graduate medical education for the community. These large health care systems are partnering to sustain family medicine training, and to explore the further growth of other medical residencies in the our area.

The timing couldn't be better. Health reform is likely to put additional pressures on health systems in the near future. The *Valley Family Medicine Residency of Modesto* has a proven record of training physicians who stay in the region. We are now exploring the feasibility of residencies in Orthopedics, and Emergency Medicine, as well as partnering with San Joaquin County for co-training of Surgery



Members of the VCME Board celebrate the first of hopefully many residencies and Internal Medicine residents.

Add to the mix medical students from UC Davis and UC Merced, as well as students from our new affiliation with Midwestern University in Arizona, and Stanislaus County becomes a dynamic garden for growing physicians.

We have all the right ingredients, from great physicians to excellent health care facilities. Cultivating medical education seems a natural next step for a region that has had such success growing other produce.

### Save the date!

- **Fall Theme Day**  
"Treating Patients with Pain"  
(CME Event)  
November 11, 2011
- **Interview Season**  
December 1 to January 14, 2011
- **UC Davis Spring Ed. Conference**  
March 4-6, 2011
- **Residency Match Day**  
March 17, 2011
- **Residency Graduation**  
June 25, 2011

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## New Faces around the Old Places

Transitions are never easy. This summer we converted the family medicine residency from sponsorship under the County of Stanislaus to a new non-profit organization that includes the County, Doctors Medical Center and Memorial Medical Center.

*Valley Consortium for Medical*

*Education* now employs all the residency staff and residents, including two new faces in the residency office. Michele Helwick and Lara Ahuna have hit the ground running and our new residency is flying high with their capable help. So stop by the residency office and welcome them to the party!



Ms Lara Ahuna (right) and Ms Michele Helwick joined the Residency Staff in September

## Graduates Off to Great Things!



The class of 2010 was another banner year. In June, we graduated ten family doctors who are off to successful careers

**Todd Bouchier, MD (USC-Keck School of Medicine)** Todd joined a small group family practice affiliated with Catholic Healthcare West in Grass Valley, California.



**Jerry Chastain, MD (Ross University School of Medicine)** Jerry joined another alumnus from the program, Florence Leung ('XX) in a Kaiser-affiliate in rural Oakhurst, California.



**Ben Colton, MD (UC Irvine School of Medicine)** Ben is joining the residency faculty, and leading the curriculum in Global Health as well as practicing on Modesto's Westside.



**Claudia Epple, MD (Universidad Autonoma San Luis Postosi)** Claudia is planning solo family practice in Long Beach, California.



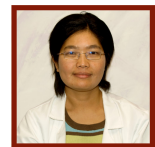
**Bhoomika Khamath, MD (Dr. DY Patil Medical College)** Bhoomika is joining an FQHC clinic system, focusing on outpatient family medicine, in Pleasanton, California.



**Marc Nielsen, DO (Touro University School of Medicine)** Marc is joining a small full-scope family medicine group associated with Seneca Hospital District in rural Chester, California. Marc was also a recipient of the Steven M. Thompson Loan Repayment Award



**Girgis Sharmoukh, MD (Ain Shams University School of Medicine)** Girgis is joining the residency faculty in practice at the Paradise Medical Office. He is also completing a faculty development fellowship at UC San Francisco.



**May Shein, MD (Medical Institute I Myanmar)** May is staying in Modesto, California, practicing outpatient family medicine, and joining many of her friends at the Kaiser affiliate.



For too long, treatment of mental health issues has been isolated from medical treatment. The Resident Clinics now have support with behavioral health professionals.

## Integrated Behavioral Health connects mind and body

Aristotle suggested that the mind was “not mixed with the body”, but in our *Stanislaus Community Health Clinics* we see it differently.

Recently we embedded mental health counselors and psychiatrists into our primary care system. This merging of mental and medical health is a growing trend

in primary care, which recognizes that health encompasses both physical and psychological domains.

Our residents work side-by-side with mental health professionals to develop comprehensive treatment plans. Together with psychiatrists and licensed clinical social workers, they see patients both in the clinic and hospital

who have conditions that bridge Aristotle's dualism.

Comprehensive training in Behavioral Health is a cornerstone of Family Medicine, and its one of our strengths. Reconnecting mind and body is yet another way Family Medicine proves itself as the specialty of integration.

## Central Valley diversity reflected among the residents

California’s Central Valley is one of the most culturally diverse regions in the world. There are over 50 different languages spoken in this region.

Spanish is certainly the most common behind English, but many seasonal workers from Mexico and Central America speak dialects derived from Mayan and Aztec origins.

Hmong is the third most common language spoken in the Central Valley, but Vietnamese, and Cambodian are also very com-

mon Southeast Asian languages here. In fact, Modesto has one of the largest Cambodian communities outside of Cambodia.

There are large Sikh communities throughout the Valley, speaking Punjabi or Hindi, as well as Indian immigrants from Fiji. Recent immigration from the Ukraine brings Russian and Ukrainian to our language mix. Portuguese, Farsi, Assyrian, Urdu, and more can be heard throughout the Valley.

Correspondingly, our family

medicine residents also bring a wealth of language skills, speaking over 20 different languages. Health care in the Central Valley is global, and so is the residency.

Residents and faculty hail from all points of the compass, and speak over 20 languages to match the diversity of our community.



## Faculty expand into new capacities

Life-long learning is a paradigm for the professional. Our residency faculty embrace that with enthusiasm.

This year, we expanded the roles of several faculty to enhance their skill set. Five faculty members now dedicate an additional ten-percent of their week to becoming master educators and advisors. They meet for professional development and skill building with Dr. Kate Kearns,

the Associate Director, who herself is expanding her repertoire while attending a year-long National Program Director Development Fellowship, sponsored by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine.

Dr. Girgis Sharmoukh ('10), one of our new junior faculty members, was accepted into the UC San Francisco Faculty Development Fellowship, while Dr. Ben Colton ('10) has taken the lead

directing our Global Health Area of Concentration. Dr. Gretchen Webb-Kummer ('08) now heads up our hospital curriculum as the Medicine Service Chief, and Dr. Michael Gorman will have increased duties as our EHR Lead Physician.

Residencies can boast about their faculty commitment, but our program has a depth of talent that would make any program director proud.

*“Our unique Advising system gives me a way to better know my residents than other systems I have been in.*

**Del Morris, MD,  
Medical Director  
and Advisor**

## 21st Century classroom hits the residency big league

In July, the residency started its new computer-based curriculum, capitalizing on the growing quality and selection of excellent online material. The trend in outcome-based education, and the ability for learners to select relevant education at their own pace is replacing the outdated mode of lectures in many residencies.

Now we substitute one-third of our face-to-face lectures with

material that residents access online. From case-based clinical scenarios to visual diagnosis of dermatology, residents work through sets of electronic assignments during a dedicated period every week.

This November, we convene the residents, faculty and community physicians for a full-day of training on Pain Management. Presentations from pain management

experts, patients with pain, and current policy standards will be interspersed with role-play on discussing pain management risks and benefits and videos on the interplay of substance abuse and pain.

Medical education no longer means sitting in a dark classroom listening to a talking head. So, strap on your keyboard and get ready to learn!



Residents during the Annual In-training Exam. Now online curriculum supplements the book learning and clinical experience of our residents



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*The Valley Family Medicine Residency of Modesto was founded in 2010 as the successor to a thirty-five year commitment to train family physicians for Stanislaus County.*



**Valley Consortium for Medical Education** is a public-private part-

*nership with Doctors Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center, and Stanislaus County Health Services. Our mission is to train physicians through service to those in need. Our residents*



*continue the four-decade legacy of comprehensive care for the underserved, ethnically diverse population of Stanislaus County.*

## Sisters pair up to care for the Hmong

Dr. Lesley Xiong-Moua and Dr. Lasley Xiong know what hard work is. They come from a family that survived the war, relocation and cultural displacement.

Yet that hard work is part of what inspired them. As children growing up in the refugee Hmong community of Merced, they faced many obstacles, both cultural and financial. Inspired by the determination and dedication of their parents, the sisters went on to excel in high school and beyond.

Now the sisters are completing their three-year family medicine training at our residency, and plan to return to Merced to provide much needed medical care to the Hmong community.

Nationwide, there are less than 300 Hmong physicians, but only a handful of female physicians, to provide culturally competent care to a population of over 300,000 members. The largest Hmong community in America is in Fresno, with Merced being within the top five nationally.

Our residency mission is training culturally-diverse residents for this multicultural region. By 2012, the *Valley Family Medicine Residency of Modesto* will have trained seven Hmong physicians in family medicine with the graduation of the Xiong sisters. We are proud of the impact such graduates have. By bringing health care to those in need, they inspire others that hard work can make a difference.

### Our Sponsors:



**UC Davis School of Medicine- Affiliated**



Lasley Xiong (left) and older sister, Lesley Xiong-Mua are in their second year of residency. They plan to stay in the Central Valley to provide care for the Hmong community after training.