Dear faculty, students and friends:

I want to share a few comments we’ve received from patients recently about our faculty and resident physicians:

“Dr. Paul Wendel, Dr. Brian Burton, Dr. Bryan Yarnell and Dr. Whit Hall went over and beyond the call of duty to make our experience at UAMS a wonderful one. They should be commended for their hard work and compassion toward their patients.”

“My wife has epilepsy, and stress brings on seizures. Their concern for her as well as myself was outstanding.”

“[The physicians were] very understanding and listened to all my concerns. They put me at ease and treated me like a human, which can be a hard thing to find these days.”

We receive remarks such as these on patient satisfaction surveys every month, but we need to hear more of them. It’s worth noting that seven of the eight questions relating to physicians on the survey pertain to interpersonal interactions. Only one asks about the skills of the physician. Patients are asked if they were treated with courtesy and respect and whether doctors listened carefully and explained things well. They’re asked about the time physicians spent with them, if they seemed concerned about their questions, and whether physicians kept them informed.

Patient satisfaction is one of four areas of focus that must remain on the front burner for everyone in clinical care. The others are: increasing referring physician satisfaction, reducing length of stay, and continuing to improve quality and outcome measures. College of Medicine and UAMS Medical Center leaders are working diligently on all of these, and we’ll soon be able to track measures for individual clinicians. You’ll hear more about these initiatives in the months ahead.

For now, I want to thank everyone for the progress that already has been made. For example, the MD-Link program implemented by the Physician Relations Group in 2006 is helping to ensure that referring physicians have secure access to patient records and that we maintain essential communication with them.

While the four key areas mentioned above are the “tangibles” in clinical care, the broader challenge is to examine our core values as an institution and to redouble our efforts to practice those values in every encounter with patients.

One initiative you’ll hear more about is UAMS’ CARE program for clinical employees. CARE’s goal is to raise awareness of the values behind the acronym:

Compassion, positive Attitude, Respect and Excellence.

Jan Shorey, M.D., associate dean of continuing medical education and faculty affairs, is working with hospital leaders to incorporate faculty physicians into the program. CARE leaders and subcommittees use patient satisfaction data to focus on areas as needed. In short, they’re working to help all of us make our patients feel more like welcome guests.

In 2007, I’d love to hear more stories of clinical faculty “going the extra mile.” It’s what we’re all about. I’ll keep my ears open.

Sincerely,

Debra H. Fiser, M.D.
Dean, College of Medicine
Vice Chancellor, UAMS
**WELCOME NEW FACULTY**

**Timothy W. Gao**, Ph.D., has joined the Department of Radiation Oncology as an assistant professor and medical physicist. Dr. Gao earned his M.S. degree in medical physics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and a Ph.D. in physics at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Gao is board-certified in radiation oncology physics, therapeutic radiological physics and diagnostic radiological physics.

He gained extensive clinical experience in a variety of private practices around the United States since 1992. Dr. Gao has been the primary author or co-author on several peer-reviewed papers. He is on the radiological physics item writing task force (therapy) for the American Board of Radiology and also is a member of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine. His research interest is in the area of ‘computerized radiation therapy treatment planning based on Monte Carlo simulation.’

**Robert J. Griffin**, Ph.D., has joined the Department of Radiation Oncology as an associate professor and radiation biologist. He received his Ph.D. in biophysical sciences at the University of Minnesota and then became a postdoctoral associate and faculty member in the Department of Therapeutic Radiology-Radiation Oncology and a graduate faculty member in the Biophysical Sciences and Medical Physics program.

Dr. Griffin was the first author on 12 peer-reviewed articles and collaborated on 43 other publications. His research interests include biology and physiology of thermal therapy, molecular and physiological mechanisms of radiation and thermal sensitization, modulation of tumor blood flow, angiogenesis and oxygenation and oxygen partial pressure as a predictor of cancer treatment process. Dr. Griffin currently is the principal investigator on two R01 grants (one funded, the other undergoing competitive renewal) from the NIH/National Cancer Institute. He has been a grant reviewer for the U.S. Army Breast Cancer Research Program, Radiation Oncology study section, since 2004. Dr. Griffin is a member of several national organizations and is a manuscript peer reviewer on four national and international journals.

**Antoine Makdissi**, M.D. has joined the Division of Endocrinology in the Department of Internal Medicine as an assistant professor. Dr. Makdissi is a board-certified endocrinologist and will see patients at UAMS and CAVHS. He also will assist in the endocrinology fellowship training program.

He received his medical degree from the University Of Aleppo Faculty Of Medicine in Syria in 1996 and completed a three-year residency in internal medicine at Aleppo University Hospital. He also completed a three-year internal medicine – categorical residency at State University of New York in Buffalo. Dr. Makdissi completed a two-year fellowship in endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio, and a one-year clinical scholarship in advanced endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism.

**Xiomara Garcia**, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an assistant professor in the Cardiology and Critical Care Section. Dr. Garcia obtained her medical degree at the Hospital Miguel Perez Carreno of the University of Central Venezuela, where she also completed a pediatric residency and a pediatric intensive care fellowship. She completed a pediatric residency, pediatric critical care fellowship and a cardiac intensive care fellowship at the Baylor College of Medicine at Texas Children’s Hospital. Her special clinical interests include nitric oxide and pulmonary mechanics.

**Kristin Jarrard**, M.D. has joined the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation as an assistant professor. Dr. Jarrard received her medical degree from UAMS in 2002 and completed a residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Dr. Jarrard will see outpatients in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinic in the Jackson T. Stephens Spine and Neurosciences Institute, as well as at the department’s inpatient rehabilitation service at Baptist Health Rehabilitation Institute. She also will be part of the PM&R consult service at University Hospital.
Radhakrishnan Nagarajan, Ph.D., has joined the UAMS Biostatistics faculty as an assistant professor. He will be actively involved in the bioinformatics and systems biology initiatives at UAMS. He has been a principal investigator of grants funded by the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM/NIH). His research focuses on determining heterogeneity, causality, functional relationships and network structure from microarray/clonal gene expression profiles. He is especially interested in pursuing collaborative research in the areas of bioinformatics and systems biology.

Ralph Kodell, Ph.D., will join the faculty of UAMS Biostatistics as a part-time professor on January 1, 2007. Dr. Kodell retired at the end of November from a distinguished career at the National Center for Toxicological Research, where he had served as director of the Division of Biometry and Risk Assessment since 1996 and had been on staff since 1975. Dr. Kodell is a fellow of the American Statistical Association, an elected member of the International Statistical Institute and a fellow of the Academy of Toxicological Sciences. He was the1996 recipient of the Don Owen Award for excellence in research, contributions to editorial activities, and service to the statistical community. He has held associate editor positions for several professional journals. He is an author of well over 150 published manuscripts and book chapters and has served on numerous committees for federal agencies and professional societies.

AWARDS AND HONORS

The Arkansas Chapter of the American College of Physicians presented the 2006 Volunteerism and Community Service award to:

Keyur Vyas, M.D. current ID Fellow, Chief Resident of Internal Medicine 2005-2006

Blair Greenwood, M.D. Chief Resident of Internal Medicine 2005-2006

Matthew A. Sparks, M.D. Chief Resident of Internal Medicine 2006-2007

Allison M. Johnson, M.D. Chief Resident of Internal Medicine 2006-2007

The award was given for their efforts during the Hurricane Katrina Disaster, when medical care and transportation was coordinated for 30 patients who were moved from the New Orleans VA to the Little Rock VA in one night.

Brendan C. Stack Jr., M.D., vice chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, recently received a Distinguished Service Award from the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery. Stack, a professor and director of the Divisions of Head and Neck Oncology and Clinical Research and holder of the James Y. Suen, M.D., endowed chair in the department, received the award at the academy’s annual meeting in September. The organization gives the award annually in recognition of outstanding service through the presentation of instructional courses, scientific papers, or participation on a continuing education committee or faculty.

Stack, a board-certified head and neck surgeon, is a fellow of the academy as well as the American College of Surgeons. His clinical interests include head and neck endocrine surgery, head and neck oncology, microvascular reconstruction, skull-base surgery and cranio-maxillofacial trauma.

Kelley W. Suskie, administrator in the Department of Pathology, has been named a fellow in the American College of Medicine Practice Executives (ACMPE). Suskie was recognized at the ACMPE Convocation held in conjunction with the Medical Group Management Association’s 2006 Annual Conference Oct. 22-25 in Las Vegas.

The department’s budget and personnel have more than doubled since Suskie’s arrival, and she has played a central role in developing new programs, strengthening outreach efforts and creating a new organizational structure. Suskie serves on many campus committees and was a member of the inaugural class of the UAMS Leadership Institute. Fellowship in the ACMPE is the highest distinction in the medical
practice management profession. To achieve fellowship, Suskie earned the certified medical practice executive designation by passing essay and objective examinations that assess knowledge of the broad scope of medical practice management. She also completed a presentation, maintained continuing education credit hours and submitted a paper documenting the objectives and results of an investigation into a health care management topic.

Mohy Morris, M.D., an associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics, Pulmonary Section, was awarded the Emily Bissell Award for Medical Excellence by the American Lung Association of Arkansas during its Annual “Take A Breather” Gala on Oct. 7.

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Fusun Kilic, Ph.D., an assistant professor, is the corresponding author of “At diabetes-like concentration, glucose down-regulates the placental serotonin transport system in a cell-cycle dependent manner,” which will be published in the Journal of Neurochemistry. The manuscript is the result of collaborative studies by Dr. Kilic along with Timothy Chambers, Ph.D., a professor and vice chairman in the department, and former College of Medicine Dean E. Albert Reece. The work was supported by a grant to Dr. Kilic from the National Institute of Health/National Institute of Child Health Development.

Biostatistics
Paula K. Roberson, Ph.D., professor and chair, was invited to serve as an ad hoc member of the NIH Clinical Oncology Study Section (CONC) at its fall meeting in Bethesda, Md., in November. She also served on two special-emphasis panels to review applications for multi-center clinical trials and associated statistical data coordinating centers for the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke of the NIH in December.

Family & Preventive Medicine
Research Coordinator Marcia Bias, R.N., B.S.N., presented at the 40th annual anniversary meeting of the American Association for Cancer Education (AACE) in San Diego in October. Her poster was titled, “Colorectal Screening in Family Medical Patients: A Pilot Study.”

Department Chairman Geoffrey Goldsmith, M.D., M.P.H., will be published in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Family Medicine. The article, titled “Patient Recommendations about how to Improve Communications Regarding Colorectal Screening,” was co-authored with Carrie Chiaro. Dr. Goldsmith is Garnett Professor and Chairman of the Department of Family & Preventive Medicine.

Daniel A. Knight, M.D., residency director and an associate professor, published “A Process to Meet the Challenge of Program Evaluation and Program Improvement,” in the September issue of the ACGME Bulletin. Co-authors were Patricia Vannatta, M.S.P.H., the UAMS Area Health Education Center (AHEC) associate director for education, and Patricia S. O’Sullivan, Ed.D., of the UAMS Office of Educational Development.

Geriatrics
Ronni Chernoff, R.D., Ph.D., a professor and director of the Arkansas Center for Geriatric Education, has been appointed to the Medicaid Coverage Advisory Committee of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Chernoff is the first dietitian appointed to the committee as a voting member and will serve a two-year term. She has been a member of the College of Medicine faculty for 20 years.

Steven W. Barger, Ph.D., an associate professor, has been chosen to serve as a handling editor on the editorial board of the Journal of Neurochemistry. Dr. Barger will oversee the review of articles submitted for publication and will direct additional reviewers in his specialty. Dr. Barger joined the College of Medicine in 1996.
Medical Humanities
Charles M. Anderson, Ph.D., an associate professor, has been named the next editor of Literature & Medicine. Anderson has served as a book review editor and board member for several years and was the unanimous choice of the editorial board. His tenure as editor will begin in 2007. The editorial offices will be located with the Division of Medical Humanities in Freeway Medical Tower.

Myeloma Institute
Faculty members from the UAMS Myeloma Institute presented six major presentations at the American Society of Hematology 48th Annual Meeting and Exposition in Orlando, Fla., Dec. 9-12. The annual meeting provides hematologists from around the world a forum for discussing critical issues and the latest and most exciting developments in scientific research. Nearly 20,000 clinicians, scientists, and others attended the four-day meeting.

Frits van Rhee, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine and director of immunotherapy at the Myeloma Institute, moderated the “Multiple Myeloma: Immunotherapy” session. Guido Tricot, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine and director of clinical research at the Myeloma Institute, gave a talk entitled, “Activity-dependent changes in the H-reflex in human and in animal models of spinal cord injury.” Other participants from the College of Medicine included: Bangzheng Chen, Ph.D., assistant professor of medicine, Shmuel Yaccoby, Ph.D., associate professor of medicine, and John Shaughnessy, Jr., Ph.D., professor of medicine and director of the Lambert Laboratory of Myeloma Genetics. For more information, visit http://www.hematology.org/meetings/2006/index.cfm.

Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences
Robert D. Skinner, Ph.D., and Max Dobretsov, Ph.D., gave seminars on their research at the Pavlov Institute of the St. Petersburg State University in St. Petersburg, Russia, on in November. Dr. Skinner, a professor in the Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences, gave a talk entitled, “Activity-dependent changes in the H-reflex in human and in animal models of spinal cord injury.” Dr. Dobretsov, an associate professor in the departments of Anesthesiology and Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences, spoke on “Pain in Diabetic Neuropathy: Triggers and Mechanisms.”

Ophthalmology/ Jones Eye Institute
Shannon Hughen has been named assistant director of development for the Harvey and Bernice Jones Eye Institute (JEI). A Little Rock native, Hughen will coordinate fund-raising efforts for JEI, one of 20 free-standing eye institutes in the country. Hughen previously worked in donor development for the American Red Cross. She also supervised recruitment efforts for that organization’s apheresis program. Hughen is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where she earned bachelor’s degrees in advertising and marketing. Hughen is a member of the Arkansas Young Professionals Network, where she is chairman of its outreach committee and a member of its Board of Governors Committee.

Inci Irak-Dersu, M.D., a glaucoma specialist at the JEI and an assistant professor in the Department of Ophthalmology, was recognized by the American Glaucoma Society as one of 10 physicians for their best ideas for improving patient care in the treatment of glaucoma. Dr. Irak-Dersu was recognized at an awards ceremony during the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology in Las Vegas in November.

Internal Medicine
The American Society of Nephrology accepted a record 19 abstracts from the Division of Nephrology in the College of Medicine’s Department of Internal Medicine in 2006. The abstracts were presented at the ASN Renal Week in San Diego in November. Authors included 28 faculty and fellows from the division, 20 faculty members from collaborating departments at UAMS, and two from medical departments outside the United States.

A UAMS abstract was selected for a two-hour poster discussion session that the outgoing president of the ASN described as featuring the “most exciting original science” of senior investigators. The selected abstract, titled “Acute Kidney Injury after Contrast Exposure is Associated with Increased Long-Term Mortality,” was authored by Muhammad Alam, M.D., M.P.H. (Division of Nephrology), Muhammad Yousaf, M.D. (Department of Radiology), Irfan Sohail, M.D. (Division of Nephrology), and Fakhar Ijaz, M.D.,( Division of Nephrology).
**Pediatrics**

**Sadia Malik**, M.B.B.S., M.P.H., an assistant professor in the Cardiology and Birth Defects Research sections, received a Heartland Affiliate Beginning Grant-in-Aid program award from the American Heart Association. Her two-year research project is titled “Maternal Smoking, Cytochrome p450 Polymorphisms and the Risk of Congenital Heart Disease.” Total approved funding is $143,000.

Congenital heart defects (CHDs) are the most prevalent and serious of all recognized birth defects, occurring in 8 to 10 of every 1,000 live births in the United States. In preliminary work, Dr. Malik and colleagues found that a maternal history of smoking during pregnancy significantly increased the risk of CHDs in infants. Results of the population-based study were presented at the American Heart Association’s annual meeting in November and received considerable publicity in *The Chicago Tribune*.

Dr. Malik’s project will identify specific genetic polymorphisms encoding for critical enzymes in tobacco metabolism pathways (specifically cytochrome p450 pathways) that increase the risk for CHD-affected pregnancies.

**Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation**

**Patrick M. Kortebein**, M.D., an assistant professor, has been selected by the Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP) as one of the eight candidates for the Program for Academic Leadership 2007. The program is designed to provide a basic administrative framework and skill set to promising physiatric academic faculty to enhance their leadership role with a department, medical school and the field of rehabilitation medicine. Candidates will attend a one- or two-day course during each of three consecutive AAP annual meetings. The content will focus on department administration (year one), teaching and education (year two), and research (year three).

**Shirley McCluer**, M.D., a retired UAMS professor, died Dec. 3. Known for her caring nature, great energy, determination and dedication, Dr. McCluer was one of the founding faculty members of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (then a division). She was a professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation from 1984 until she retired in 1991. Dr. McCluer became the first PM&R residency program director in 1987. Her area of expertise – and her passion – was the rehabilitation of persons with spinal cord injury and making life better for all individuals with disabling conditions. Dr. McCluer served as medical director of the Arkansas State Spinal Cord Commission from 1985 to 1998. She had numerous accomplishments as an educator, administrator and clinician.

**Physiology and Biophysics**

**Rosie Simmen**, Ph.D., has been appointed to the Reproduction, Andrology and Gynecology Subcommittee, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Initial Review Group. Her term will run through June 2010. The subcommittee is an advisory group to the directors of NIH and NICHD on research in reproduction, andrology and gynecology. Dr. Simmen’s research at UAMS, the Arkansas Children’s Hospital Research Institute and the Arkansas Children’s Nutrition Center is in the areas of pregnancy and fetal/perinatal development and the impact of early nutrition on adult chronic diseases such as breast cancer.

**Radiology**

**Linda Deloney**, Ed.D., an instructor in the Department of Radiology, along with colleagues from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine and the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, prepared and presented a two-hour skills acquisition session at the Generalists in Medical Education annual meeting in Seattle in October. The workshop was titled “Grab your audience and hold their attention: It’s easier than you think.” Also during the annual meeting, Dr. Deloney and **Linda J. Perrot**, M.D., J.D., a professor in the Department of Pathology, led a breakfast roundtable discussion, “Where have all the mentors gone?”
Thanks to the following list of people who serve as the contacts for the information you see in the BUZZ. Please send any information that you’d like to see in the BUZZ to the appropriate person within your department.

Anesthesiology  
Coleen Habenicht

Biochemistry & Molecular Biology  
Alan Elbein, Ph.D.

Dermatology  
Tony DeJarnatt

Emergency Medicine  
Hillary Burress

Family & Preventive Medicine  
Frances Cockcroft

Geriatrics  
Marsha Hines, RCOA

Internal Medicine  
Gib Ann Berryhill

Microbiology/Immunology  
Roger Rank, Ph.D.

Myeloma  
Janet Aronson

Neurobiology & Developmental Sciences  
Gwen Childs, Ph.D.

Neurology  
Joe Cook

Neurosurgery  
Amy Keeland

OB/GYN  
Helen Kay, M.D.

Orthopaedics  
Paul Stover

Ophthalmology  
Pam Leidermann

Otolaryngology  
Beth Seward

Pathology  
Kelly Suskie

Pediatrics  
Cindy Collie

Pharmacology & Toxicology  
Raven Gregory

Physiology & Biophysics  
Mike Jennings, Ph.D.

PM & R  
Jennifer L. Smith

Psychiatry  
Caroline Sloan

Radiology  
Teresita Angtuaco, M.D.

Radiation Oncology  
Dawn Bolt

Research  
Charles G. Winter, Ph.D.

Surgery  
Kay Allen

Urology  
Alex Finkbeiner, M.D.

The contact in the Dean’s office for submission of Buzz information is Hillary Burress. Please call 686-8614 or send an e-mail to burresshillaryn@uams.edu.

An e-mail link is available for students to submit information to the BUZZ to acknowledge honors, prizes, presentations, leadership positions, and other noteworthy COM accomplishments. Go to:  
http://www.uams.edu/com/students/