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Transitions

Transitions – defined by Merriam-Webster as “passage from one state, stage, subject or place to another” but also as “an abrupt change in energy state or level (as of an atomic nucleus or molecule).” Transitions are a hallmark of academic surgery.

The coming of spring leads me to reflect on the annual professional transitions that we experience – beginning with the National Resident Matching Program, aka “The Match,” in March. Our Sidney Kimmel Medical College students learned where they will commence their post-medical school training. Our Department did exceptionally well again this year, and we will be welcoming our new group of surgical interns in mid-June; interns who will spend 6 or 7 years with us at Jefferson.

As we welcome new interns, we also bid farewell to our outgoing chief residents and fellows. These amazing young surgeons go forward, for more training, fellowships, or their first positions as newly minted fellowship-trained surgeons. Their emotions of excitement, trepidation, achievement, fulfillment and anxiety are palpable.

For our faculty complement, the summer months commonly bring change. We typically welcome new faculty who will be joining our Jefferson family (this spring and summer it appears we will be welcoming 8 or 9 new faculty members). We also have several faculty members departing Jefferson – one for new professional challenges (promotion and leadership opportunities), one or two for new experiences (change of practice focus) and one who will be completing their active surgical career (retirement from active practice). We wish those departing our very best, and congratulate them on their many contributions to Jefferson.

Transitions: we will experience an impressive number this summer of 2019.

In the Spotlight



David Greene, Practice Manager

Whether seeking an initial consultation or receiving post-surgical care, patients of Jefferson’s colorectal, general, and trauma surgeons see their physicians at Jefferson’s Medical Office Building (MOB) at 11th and Walnut Streets.

Since October 2016, David Greene has served as Practice Manager at “5MOB”. Greene came to Jefferson after managing other area practices for five years.

“I work with a great staff who makes my job as manager a little easier. We work very hard to ensure every patient has the ideal experience every time they interact with our office. I look forward to many more productive years here at Jefferson and am very excited about the direction the institution is heading.”



In addition to their clinical duties, transplant surgeon Ashesh Shah, MD (right), and surgical resident Brock Hewitt, MD, are leading the Department’s newly formed Wellness Committee.

Wellness Committee Explores Intersection of Patient Care and Self-Care

Growing up, Ashesh Shah, MD, watched his parents balance their dual medical careers with the demands of family life. Back then, he says, they set their own clinic hours based on their children’s schedules and went home together for lunch. Even administrative challenges were simple, with unpaid bills filed in a recipe box.

“When it comes to well-being and work-life balance, times have changed,” Dr. Shah says. “The consequences can be dire.”

Last May, Michael S. Weinstein, MD, FCCM, brought surgeon wellness to the forefront with his “Out of the Straitjacket” column in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Dr. Weinstein wrote about his personal battle with depression and burnout while working as a trauma surgeon at Jefferson. His candor contributed to the launch of the Department of Surgery Wellness Committee last summer. Now led by Dr. Shah and Surgical Resident Brock Hewitt, MD, the committee aims to “foster a supportive community that promotes the well-being of each individual within our department.”

“There’s been a push to acknowledge that things aren’t always perfect for physicians and we need to take care of ourselves as we take care of others,” says Dr. Hewitt. Indeed, Dr. Shah believes physician wellness is vital to patient care: “If you’re feeling stressed or unappreciated, it’s hard to provide the emotional support you need to give patients so they will feel well cared for.”

The Committee’s first initiative was a formal survey to understand how the

Department compares to national benchmarks on wellness. They selected an instrument called the Well-being Index – a brief, anonymous survey that is helping identify where the Committee should focus its efforts.

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About two-thirds of the Department completed the survey, revealing that employees’ wellness is generally comparable to national averages for attending physicians, resident physicians and other clinical and non-clinical employees. Advanced practice professionals (physician’s assistants and nurse practitioners) were the only cohort with slightly above-average levels of stress. The survey also identified a trend of higher stress during the first three years of residency and the first few years of working as an attending physician.

The Committee is now soliciting suggestions for how to enhance wellness in the Department. Preliminary possibilities range from adding more staff to facilitating on-the-job exercise, on-site massage and group social outings.

“Effective wellness solutions are all very local, so we’re hopeful we’ll be able to derive some good ideas from the people in the Department,” Dr. Shah says. “Over time, we want to make changes to bring our wellness levels above the national averages.”