

Dr. Thomas Fabian Heads Section of Thoracic Surgery

Albany Med appointed **Thomas Fabian, MD**, section chief of thoracic surgery within the division of cardiothoracic surgery. As such, he leads the team involved in the surgical treatment of diseases affecting the lungs, esophagus, upper stomach, chest wall and diaphragm.

Fabian previously served as an attending thoracic surgeon at Yale University Hospital and Hospital of St. Raphael in New Haven, CT. He also served as site director of the Yale University cardiothoracic surgery residency program, minimally-invasive thoracic surgery fellowship director and director of trauma. During this time he published numerous articles advancing the care and outcomes of patients undergoing thoracic surgery. In addition to presenting at numerous international meetings, he regularly participates as an instructor to other attending surgeons throughout the United States and abroad, and has traveled as far as Dubai, UAE to operate on patients suffering from esophageal cancer.

Among his interests, Fabian specializes in minimally-invasive thoracic surgery in the treatment of benign and malignant disease of the esophagus and lung. Although his research focus is on lung and esophageal cancer, he brings with him years of treatment of common gastrointestinal disorders such as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), hiatal hernias, and Achalasia.



Pediatric Neurosurgeon Joins Albany Med

Matthew Adamo, MD, a neurosurgeon specializing in pediatrics, joined the department of surgery. Adamo joined the Medical Center following a fellowship in pediatric neurosurgery at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

After receiving his bachelor's degree in biology from Siena College, Adamo completed his master's degree in experimental pathology at the State University of New York at Buffalo's Roswell Park Cancer Institute. He then received his medical degree from the State University of New York Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. Prior to his fellowship at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Adamo completed his residency training in neurosurgery at Albany Medical College.

In addition to treating general neurosurgical conditions, he is highly skilled in performing neurosurgical procedures for pediatric patients. His expertise includes surgical treatments for brain and spinal cord tumors, epilepsy, traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, Moya Moya disease, arteriovenous malformations, Chiari malformations, spasticity associated with cerebral palsy, and treatments for developmental disorders such as spina bifida, hydrocephalus, arachnoid cysts, and craniosynostosis—the premature closing of the skull's bone plates in infants. Adamo is also involved in pre-natal diagnosis and consultation regarding conditions which may require surgery soon after birth.

Dr. Adamo uses a variety of technologically advanced techniques to perform neurosurgical procedures, including endoscopy, computer-assisted image guidance for localization of brain lesions, intra-operative ultrasound, brain mapping and electrocorticography.

Albany Med Names Assistant VP for Marketing

Monica Ryszytiwskyj has been named assistant vice president for marketing, with responsibility for overseeing all marketing and branding efforts, and providing leadership for a wide range of advertising and promotional initiatives utilizing all forms of media in support of the institution's strategic plan.

"We're delighted to have Monica join our communications team in this important leadership role," said **Kim Fine**, senior vice president for policy, planning and communications. "She brings tremendous positive energy and significant expertise that will help ensure that our institution's premier role in health care in the region continues to be appreciated and supported by both the public and the medical community alike."

She previously served as director of marketing for Medina Memorial Health Care System in Medina, N.Y. For five years prior, Ryszytiwskyj owned and managed Ayuda, a company in Rochester offering corporate concierge and event planning services. Earlier in her career, she was a marketing assistant for The Corning Museum of Glass, and has consulted with a number of organizations to offer strategic and tactical marketing solutions. She holds an MBA from the University of Rochester and a BS from Elmira College.



Albany Medical Center

43 New Scotland Avenue (Mail Code 125)
Albany, New York 12208

Change Service Requested

Workplace Wellness Focus of New "Healthy Choices, Healthy You" Initiative

Ever wonder how many calories are in the chicken noodle soup at Choices Café or where to find a temporary safe haven to de-stress in the midst of a hectic day? How about how to find some company on your lunchtime walk? The answers to these and many other wellness-related questions are now right at your fingertips thanks to a group of health conscious and enthusiastic employees.

Employees from the Wellness and Weight Management Committees recently joined forces to launch "Healthy Choices, Healthy You"—an initiative aimed at promoting workforce wellness opportunities and making healthy choices easier for staff. According to **Sharon Wheeler**, healing arts manager and co-chair of the Wellness Committee, there are a number of activities aimed at promoting health—from Weight Watchers at Work and healthier menu options in Choices Café to walking clubs and on-site yoga classes—but many employees aren't aware of all the opportunities available to them.

"The healthier we are, the better able we will be to meet the ever-changing demands of health care and the ever-increasing needs of our patients," said Wheeler.

The first step of the "Healthy Choices, Healthy You" initiative was to help employees better identify the wide range of wellness opportunities by creating a new and improved Wellness site on the Intranet (Workforce/Work Life) complete with nutritional information on menu items at Choices Café and a blog from our registered dietitians. The site also contains details about employee benefits such as fitness facility discounts and the Employee Assistance Program, as well as special programs like the "Wellness Wednesdays" concert and lecture series (see box for list of upcoming topics).

Cathy Halakan, senior vice president for human resources, commends the group's efforts—particularly in today's environment.

"Everyone is pressed to successfully manage issues both at home and at work, and this has been harder to do during difficult economic times," she says. "But with the support of senior leadership and center-wide management, the 'Healthy Choices, Healthy You' initiative can help promote the many ways in which employees can reduce stress and make healthy choices that are not cost-prohibitive. These programs, combined with the benefits we are already offering, reinforce the healthy lifestyle that Albany Medical Center desires for its employees."

According to Wheeler, some services are being utilized. In fact, the D-4 East tranquility room, which is open to employees via swipe-card access 24 hours a day, was accessed nearly 1,000 times

in the month of September. But, Wheeler says, there are still many offerings that employees are unaware of.

The "Healthy Choices, Healthy You" initiative will be kicked off with an Expo held from 11am to 2pm Wednesday, Nov. 4 in Choices Café. The event gives employees the opportunity to learn about wellness benefits like smoking cessation, as well as employee-run offerings such as the Walking Club, healing arts, yoga and pilates classes.

To join the "Healthy Choices, Healthy You" committee, contact Roslyn Jefferson, EAP coordinator, at jefferr@mail.amc.edu or Sharon Wheeler at wheeles@mail.amc.edu.

Wellness Wednesday Concert and Lecture Series

Concert Series

"Corelli Consort"

Early Recorder music
with Dr. Lepow and friends
November 11
Noon-1pm
Choices Café

Holiday Concert

with **AMC Chorale**
December 9
Noon
Choices Café

Weight Management Series

"Healthy Choices, Healthy You" Expo

November 4
11am-2pm
Choices Cafe

Self Hypnosis and Weight Management

Iona Megas
December 16
12:30pm
Location TBA

Brown Bag Luncheon Series

"Creating Affirmations for Abundance"

Roslyn Jefferson, EAP
Coordinator
November 18
12:30pm-1pm
*Meet in congregation room
U125

"The Gift of Presence: Connecting with the Human Spirit"

Nancy McClearn
December 23
12:30pm-1pm
Location TBA

Area Hospitals Institute Visitation Guidelines to Protect Patients from Flu, Other Infectious Diseases

New visitation guidelines have been implemented at nine local hospitals including Albany Medical Center to further protect patients from influenza and other infectious diseases.

Patient units of Albany Med, Albany Memorial Hospital, Bellevue Woman's Center, Ellis Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital (Troy), St. Peter's Hospital, Samaritan Hospital, Saratoga Hospital and Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital will restrict visits by:

- children 12 and under;
- any visitor with respiratory symptoms (fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath), a rash or diarrhea; and,
- only two visitors will be permitted in a patient's room at one time.

Hospitals are also urging all visitors to use hand-washing stations before entering and upon leaving a patient's room.

Hand sanitizers are available at the hospital entrance and at many other locations throughout the hospital, including the doorways of many patient rooms.

The restrictions, which were developed after discussion between the chief medical officers at each institution, were implemented as the New York State Department of Health reported that the H1N1 virus is widespread across the state.

As such, area hospitals, including Albany Med, are experiencing a significant increase in patients presenting in emergency departments with respiratory and/or influenza-like symptoms. These temporary restrictions are intended to help limit the transmission of the virus and protect the health and safety of patients and the professionals who provide their care during the outbreak.

Albany Med

TODAY

NEWS AT ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER

Health Care Watch

National News

In October, a vote to allow action to proceed on a bill intended to improve the physician payment system under Medicare failed, necessitating legislative intervention to avoid a 21 percent decline in physician payments scheduled to take effect in January. Concerns about costs associated with the bill that provided a 10-year fix were cited as the reason the measure failed. An effort will be made to pass a one-year fix after the Senate takes action on the broader health care reform bill. That bill continued to be debated, as efforts were made to reconcile bills passed by the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Despite differences in opinion on current health care legislation, some consensus emerged among the Democratic majorities in both the House and Senate that health insurance companies' exemption from the federal antitrust law should be revoked. The House Judiciary Committee approved the change with advocates suggesting it will protect health care consumers and promote competition among insurance providers by outlawing price-fixing and market allocation.

Thank you to Congressman Tonko and Senator Gillibrand for contacting the National Institutes of Health in support of Albany Med's requests for capital funding through the stimulus plan to support improvements to our research facilities.

On the State Level

In mid-October, Governor Paterson called for sweeping cuts in health care as part of a plan to trim the projected \$3 billion state budget deficit for the fiscal year that ends March 31, 2010. Proposed cuts included a \$287 million reduction in Medicaid funding to hospitals and others, which are planned to recur in the next state fiscal year. HANYS estimates these cuts will cost Albany Med more than \$4 million annually. We will reach out to our elected representatives in the State Senate and Assembly to explain the risks posed by these cuts.



Increased Police Presence Good News for Neighborhood



In front of 409 Myrtle, from left, Officer Michael Fiorino, Lt. Paul Kirwan, John Herritage, Sgt. Darrell Gibson, Officer Dan Meehan, and Officer Kevin Meehan.

Officer Michael Fiorino is fast becoming a familiar face to many people associated with the Medical Center. Each night, he walks the streets in the vicinity of Albany Med—talking to residents, watching out for crime, responding to it when it happens. He's been on this particular beat for six months now, but just recently he has had the convenience of having a station right in the area. Albany Med has donated the use of a house at 409 Myrtle Ave. (former site of the Albany Med legal department) to the Albany Police Department. As of October, eight members of the APD's strategic deployment unit now use the property as a home base.

"The more police presence we have in the area, the better the crime deterrent," says **John Herritage**, director of Albany Med security, who has welcomed the APD with open arms. "We've always had a great working relationship with the Albany Police Department and I expect that will only get stronger."

"I am thrilled by this. We care about the safety of all of our employees, patients, visitors, and our neighbors in the Park South area. We are pleased to work with the City of Albany to promote a safer environment," said Albany Med President **Jim Barba**.

Albany Medical Center's 45-member security team is responsible for safety and security at

the Medical Center, including using sophisticated technology including a closed-circuit TV monitoring system and high-level card-reader access systems. On duty 24 hours a day, the team maintains security within the Medical Center and all its properties and provides courtesy services (including escorts to accompany employees to their cars after dusk).

But because the security team is limited to the Medical Center, Herritage says it's a positive development to now have a police office right in the neighborhood. In fact, the APD office now has access to Albany Med's security cameras as an added level of safety.

Continued on inside

Consumers Choose Albany Med Again

Albany Medical Center was the only hospital in northeastern New York to be honored with a Consumer Choice Award based on a recent survey of consumers conducted by the National Research Corporation (NRC). This is the 12th consecutive year that Albany Med has received this distinction.

The survey identified hospitals which health-care consumers said had the highest quality and image in more than 300 markets throughout the United States, according to Ginny Martin, president of NRC's Healthcare Ticker study. A list of award winners appears in a recent issue *Modern Healthcare* magazine (Oct. 12).

"Dedication to providing high-quality health-care has become essential for all hospitals," said Martin. "In the face of adversity, these Consumer Choice award winners exemplify the dedication it takes to provide quality health care to their com-

munities, and we are pleased to honor them through the eyes of their patients."

NRC's Healthcare Market Guide Ticker study is the nation's largest and most comprehensive study of its kind. The organization states that no other study used to measure hospital performance and preferences contains more consumer responses than NRC's study.

To conduct the study, the NRC surveyed more than 250,000 households representing more than 450,000 consumers in the contiguous 48 states and the District of Columbia. Winners were determined by consumer perceptions on multiple quality and image ratings collected. Of the 3,200 hospitals named by consumers in the study, the winning facilities ranked highest in their Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.

All-Star



Frederick Williamson Patient Care Associate, C-6 Orthopedics

"Fred is phenomenal," sums up a colleague of the C-6 patient care associate. Not only has Fred established a good rapport with every member of the C-6 team, but co-workers say he is also much appreciated by his patients. According to one colleague, "He serenades patients and staff on their birthdays. He makes sure patients are well taken care of and feel comfortable." Learn more about Fred below.

What's the most rewarding thing about working here?
I've been happy working with my patients, I enjoy my job all the time and I love singing to my patients!

Why did you choose a career in health care?
I love helping people.

What is your best advice for success on the job?
To make patients satisfied, to do my work on time, and to be honest.

How long have you worked at Albany Med?
Almost two years.

Where do you live?
Albany

Family?
My wife, three sons and a daughter.

Do you have any hobbies?
I love to sing. I read the Bible and go to church.

What is your dream vacation?
A cruise going around many countries.

Who are the people you admire most?
The staff on C-6!

If you could have lunch with a historical figure, who would it be and why?

In the summer of 1995, my family and I went to Georgia and we visited the home and museum of Martin Luther King, Jr., and if he were living, I would like to have lunch with him because he made a huge difference in the world and he is one of the reasons why all races can get along.

Learning More About What We Do

More than 30 staff representing members and committees of the New York State Senate and Assembly attended "Project Medical Education" in September. The event, which was hosted by the College, was designed to educate attendees about the significance and impact of an academic medical center in upstate New York. Participants enjoyed a full day of educational and interactive learning sessions conducted by various physicians, administrators, clinical chairs, IRC directors, medical and graduate students, and residents, followed by a lunch and networking opportunity. Pictured: Dr. Stanley Glick discusses advancements in biomedical research at the Medical College.



Police Presence *Continued from cover*

The APD station at 409 Myrtle is officially open from 6pm until 2am, however Fiorino says that officers are coming in and out of the building at many times during the day. The site will also be the base of community outreach operations and eventually a neighborhood watch program.

The APD Strategic Deployment Unit is a 24-person operation that covers the City of Albany with car, foot and bike patrols. While some members of the team now headquartered at 409 Myrtle have beats in other parts of the city, the increased police presence is positive for the Park South area, says Herritage.

The strategic deployment unit is headed by Lieutenant Paul Kirwan. "We're very excited to add this home base for some of our staff to use while they are on the job. Albany Medical Center has been fantastic to work with. We all share a goal of improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the city," says Kirwan.



Area Beat Officer Michael Fiorino

Navy Vets Visit Children's Hospital

United States Navy submarine veterans recently visited the Children's Hospital and showed patients including Jacob Shell, left, and Jacob Kaminski a submarine Lego model they put together. The veterans also gave honorary mariner caps and certificates to children and teenagers with a cancer diagnoses. Left to right: Fred Carlson, Albany-Saratoga Base Treasurer; Jim Irwin, Past NYS District commander and Albany-Saratoga Base Chief of The Boat; and Al Singleman, Jr., Albany-Saratoga Base Commander and United States Submarine Veterans National Secretary.



Albany Med Receives Award for Work with Disabled Community

Michael Thomas, director of environmental services, has accepted an award on behalf of Albany Medical Center from the Capital Region Employer Alliance (CREA). The "National Disability Employment Awareness Month Award" was presented at a luncheon at the Holiday Inn on October 20.

The CREA Alliance is a partnership of private sector employers, job placement specialists, and government agencies promoting workforce development and employment of people with disabilities.

The award recognized Albany Med as an employer that has made significant contributions toward the promotion of employment of New Yorkers with disabilities. Specifically, the Medical Center was noted for: attracting qualified employees with disabilities; providing reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants with disabilities; and implementing programs to provide career opportunities for qualified employees with disabilities.

"Everybody has something to offer and it's a matter of finding a match where people with disabilities can be successful here," said Thomas. "It's quite humbling to receive this award. It's a good feeling to know that someone who may struggle in some areas of life can join the workforce and make an independent living."

Thomas works with the Capital District Office of VESID (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities) to bring in qualified candidates for positions at the Medical Center.

Agreement Could Speed Clinical Trials of Anti-Obesity Agent Developed at Albany Med

Albany Medical College and Aegis Therapeutics have announced an agreement designed to speed the development and commercialization of an anti-obesity peptide that could also benefit those with Type 2 diabetes.

Specifically, the agreement authorizes Aegis to develop a partnership with a pharmaceutical company with the goal of beginning clinical trials in humans of the Albany Med-discovered OB-3 peptide. If successful, the trials could result in this new drug becoming commercially available to potentially benefit millions of overweight individuals as well as many others who are struggling with diabetes.

"This is an exciting development in our more than two decade-long research with hormone-related peptides and, more specifically, with leptin, a hormone that plays a major role in how the body regulates food intake and body weight," said Patricia Grasso, PhD, associate professor of medicine. "Through a series of studies in mice and rats, we have developed a synthetic fragment of leptin that decreases appetite and increases metabolism, resulting in significant weight loss and lower blood glucose levels in animal models. Now we hope to demonstrate that the OB-3 peptide can be similarly effective in humans."

In 1997, a team of Albany Medical College researchers headed by Grasso first isolated a very small fragment of leptin, which experiments revealed was responsible for



Dr. Patricia Grasso, front right, with, clockwise: Marilyn Brown (research assistant); and Endocrinologists Drs. Matthew Leinung and Daniel Lee.

curbing appetite and increasing metabolism in animal models. The team injected genetically obese, leptin-deficient mice with the OB-3 peptide and they began losing weight. Subsequent studies showed that the effectiveness of the OB-3 peptide was increased by administering it to the animals as nose drops, as opposed to needle injections into their peritoneal cavities. In fact, these studies showed that the amount of OB-3 entering the blood stream of the mice was four times greater when the agent was administered nasally. The

latest study, soon to be published, suggests that an even more efficacious approach results when the OB-3 peptide is administered orally. All of these studies suggest that the OB-3 peptide might play a role in not only helping obese humans to regulate their body weight, but also in assisting Type 2 diabetics to better control their blood glucose level.

"Peptide drugs are particularly exciting for chronic disease applications because they metabolize to natural amino acids and thus are intrinsically devoid of the

chemical toxicity issues that have plagued many of the earlier anti-obesity and anti-diabetic drugs," said Edward T. Maggio, PhD, CEO of Aegis Therapeutics. "The combination of Albany Medical College's highly-effective peptide with Aegis' non-invasive Intravail peptide delivery technology promises to lead to the first orally-active peptide anti-obesity and diabetes drug."

Much of Grasso's research has been funded by the estate of Willard B. Warring, MD, a surgeon who had strong ties to Albany Med and an intense interest in endocrinology.

Popular Fundraisers Will Kick Off Holiday Season

The Dancing in the Woods champagne ball and the Melodies of Christmas concert series will be held in December. This year marks the 30th annual Melodies of Christmas, which benefits the critical missions of the Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders at the Children's Hospital. The concerts will be held at Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady. Performance dates are as follows:

- Thursday, Dec. 3 at 7pm
- Friday, Dec. 4 at 7pm
- Saturday, Dec. 5 at 7pm
- Sunday, Dec. 6 at 3pm

Tickets are \$25 per person and payment can be made by cash, check or credit card. For more event or ticket information, please contact Veronica Ciullo at CiulloV@mail.amc.edu or 262-8890 or contact the Proctor's box office. The event is sponsored by Freihofers, Price Chopper and WRGB-TV (Channel 6). The programs will feature the Empire State Youth Orchestra and Chorale and will be broadcast by Channel 6 on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Dancing in the Woods, a black-tie event that also benefits the Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders, is the Medical Center's largest fundraiser. It will be held from 9pm-1am on Friday, Dec. 4 at a location to be determined.

Tickets are \$175 per person (\$350 per couple) and on-line registration can be made at www.amc.edu/dancing. For more information, call 262-3322. Since its inception in 1984, the idea behind Dancing has been to enlist dozens of community volunteers and area businesses in transforming vacant retail space into a space fit for a gala dance. The lead sponsor of Dancing is CDPHP.



This year will mark the 30th annual Melodies of Christmas.

Albany Med Team Walks for Important Cause

Several employees participated in AIDS Walk 2009 in Washington Park this year, and the division of HIV Medicine raised \$10,000, which goes to local associations that provide needed services for AIDS prevention and care. Pictured: Team Leader Hank Albrecht, case manager; Joe Kerwin, AIDS Program manager; Lillie Langford, C-4 nutrition care supervisor; George Clifford, PhD, administrator, medicine/HIV medicine and AIDS Program; Cathryn Corlew (sitting), HIV education coordinator. Albany Medical Center is a designated regional AIDS Treatment Center, charged with the provision of a wide range of services to people with HIV infection and AIDS.



ALBANY MED TODAY

Vol. 4, No. 10 • November 1, 2009

Albany Med Today is published monthly by the Public Relations Department for the employees, staff, students, alumni, board members and volunteers of the Albany Medical Center.

Comments and story suggestions can be directed to the Albany Medical Center Public Relations Department, 43 New Scotland Avenue (Mail Code 125), Albany, N.Y. 12208 or by faxing to (518) 262-3880, or by calling (518) 262-3421.

ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER OFFICERS

- James J. Barba
President and Chief Executive Officer
- Steven M. Frisch, MD
Executive Vice President of IDS and Hospital Systems General Director
- William C. Hasselbarth
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
- George T. Hickman
Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer
- Gary J. Kochem
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
- Vincent Verdile, MD
Dean and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs
- Terri Cerveny
Senior Vice President for Development
- John DePaola
Executive Associate Dean and Chief Operating Officer, Albany Medical College
- Timothy W. Duffey
Hospital Director - AMC South Clinical Campus

- Louis Filhour, RN
Senior Vice President for Clinical Quality
- Kim Fine
Senior Vice President for Policy, Planning and Communications
- Catherine Halakan
Senior Vice President for Human Resources
- Lee R. Hessberg
Senior Vice President and General Counsel
- Noel Hogan
Senior Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer
- Dennis McKenna, MD
Vice President for Medical Affairs and Medical Director of AMCH and SCC
- Bernadette Pedlow
Senior VP for Hospital Business Services and Hospital Chief Operating Officer
- Mary Ellen Plass, RN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer
- Henry Pohl, MD
Vice Dean for Academic Administration
- Ferdinand Venditti, MD
Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs and Chair, Department of Medicine

ALBANY MED TODAY STAFF

- Gregory J. McGarry
Vice President for Communications
- Nicole Pitaniello
Assistant Vice President for Public Relations
- Beth Engeler
Editor
- Walter Snyder
Printer, Inc.
Printing Services

- Willow Graphics
Graphic Design
- Contributors
Sue Ford
Kristen Cook