

The FAOEM Times – March 2011

Message from the Editor:

Please email me if you would like to be featured in one of our upcoming newsletters: dmcclusk@health.usf.edu

Occupational Medicine Residency Programs Face HARSH Budget Cuts!

Are you an occupational medicine physician who went to an occupational medicine residency? If you were, then likely much of the funding to support that residency program came from NIOSH. Part of the NIOSH budget goes to fund Education and Research Centers (ERC's) at 17 universities across the country (including the University of South Florida, in Tampa, FL). Occupational medicine residency programs are funded through the ERCs. For example, in 2008-09 (most recent data listed on the NIOSH website), 73% of occupational medicine residents were supported by NIOSH funding. Unlike almost every other major medical specialty, occupational medicine does not receive residency funding support from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. NIOSH is the only federal agency responsible for funding training programs for occupational physicians and allied occupational health providers and conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related illness and injury.

The President's FY 2012 budget proposes to eliminate funding for the ERCs within NIOSH with an explanation that: "the intended goals of the program have been met" and "These Centers provide seed money for academic institutions to develop occupational health training programs, which has already been accomplished." Dr. Natalie Hartenbaum (Immediate Past President of ACOEM) wrote a letter to representatives in both the House and Senate. In her letters she emphasized the fact that by cutting the ERC funding, the White House proposes to jeopardize funding for occupational medicine training programs at a time when 1) there is a recognized shortage of physicians training in occupational medicine; 2) a core strategy of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) is prevention; and 3) workplace health promotion and disease prevention programs are part of PPACA's National Prevention Strategy.

We as a component should consider writing letters to the House and Senate. If you have strong feelings on this matter, or if you have personal experiences related to NIOSH funding, please share these with me. Several of the occupational medicine residency directors have written letters. Since we have an ERC in our state, it may help if we as a component group also write letters to the House and Senate.

Monthly Physician Spotlight:

Thanks to Dr. Karen Carlson for being our March 2011 Physician in the spotlight!

Dr. Karen Carlson is an intriguing person. First I would say that she is entrepreneurial - her company Occupational and Environmental Medicine Consultants (OEMC) has been in operation since 1997. OEMC keeps her busy and demands an ability to change gears instantly due to the variety of jobs she takes on. One day she might conduct a workplace safety evaluation, the next day she might be investigating incidents of illnesses related to chemical exposures and finally, she might wrap the week up by performing utilization review.

Karen received her medical and residency training through the military. She is board certified in occupational medicine, and she served in the United States Public Health Service for many years. When I asked her what attracted her to occupational medicine, she explained that it was her husband - Dr. Ken Phillips. While they were in medical school, he described the field of occupational medicine to her and it was then she realized it was a bit like detective work. There are so many issues to consider - what caused the problem and was it actually occupationally related. Karen explained that when she actually got to work in the field, including doing an occupational health and safety evaluation of the chemical demilitarization facility on Johnston Island she became hooked. There were so many issues to consider, from chemical exposures to biological hazards, to radiation! One of her greatest achievements was receipt of the Surgeon General's Medal for Exemplary Service, from the esteemed Surgeon General C. Everett Koop.

The FAOEM Times – Page 2

Karen is a warm and friendly person. She loves to travel, and is heading to China soon. After her trip to China, she will have visited 6 of the 7 continents (which only leaves Australia as the 7th continent). Each time she goes to a new country, Karen tries to learn a few phrases. As a result, she knows a little French, Portuguese (Brazilian), German (mostly Austrian German), Arabic, and a few dialects of Spanish (mostly Mexican, but also Costa Rican, Puerto Rican, Castilian, and Argentinean). As you can imagine, learning a little Mandarin in preparation for her upcoming trip to China, has been a very difficult task! You may also be surprised to learn that Karen studied ballet for many years, and moved from Oshkosh, Wisconsin (where she was born and raised in West Bend, WI) to join Ballet West in Utah. So it didn't surprise me when she said that she has been working hard to learn the 24 form Yang-Style T'ai Chi in preparation for her upcoming trip to China. Her husband, Ken calls her a truly 3-D person because she also was a professional scuba diver, so she was a Dancer, a Diver and, now a Doctor!

In closing, I would like to say that Karen is very enthusiastic and always ready to help. When I send out my periodic questions or I receive a call from someone in the community, Karen always responds. Her ready to help attitude and cheerful suggestions for our FAOEM group are very much appreciated and are always helpful!



Save the Date!

We finally have a date and location for our annual meeting. After much discussion, several surveys of our members, and contemplation of the various options, the FAOEM Board has determined that the 2011 annual meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 23rd, from 12:30 – 3:30. The meeting will take place at the Orlando World Marriott, with the room to be determined. Dr. T. Warner Hudson, III, ACOEM president, will be attending our meeting on behalf of ACOEM. We still don't have a sponsor for the luncheon, so please send any ideas or suggestions my way.

Odds and Ends:

1. Physician's Health Center is seeking a Physician for Miami-Dade and Broward County. They are looking for an individual who is a Florida Licensed MD or DO, with experience in Occupational Medicine, the Emergency Room, Urgent Care or similar experience. If you would like more information, please contact Maxine Boyer at max@ommanagement.com. You can email her your CV or you can fax it to: 305-888-7404.
2. According to a recent publication by OSHA, from 10/01/10 to 02/28/11, there were 16 fatalities in Florida, and 6 hospitalizations.