



# OB/GYN *Connection*

Monthly News for Faculty and Staff— December 2007

## OB/GYN Call Center goes live

The OB/GYN Women's Health Access Center opened for business on Monday, November 5, 2007. The call center will allow patients to communicate more efficiently with their doctor's office and also help the Department raise its level of customer service.

For now, the Access Center is taking calls from patients of Drs. Christopher Estes, Carla Lupi, Paul Norris and Ira Karmin. Eventually, the center will process all patient calls for the OB/GYN Women's Health faculty practices.

When patients call the center they can speak to a nurse about medical concerns, obtain test results, schedule appointments, and obtain necessary referrals for services. This is a great enhancement to the excellent clinical care we provide to our patients.

The OB/GYN Women's Health Access Center project has been led by Dr. Ira Karmin, Lily Corral, RN, Care Coordinator Phara Chery, and

Assistant Chair Ruth Srebrenik. Administration also thanks the following people for participating in bringing this project to fruition: Dr. Christopher Estes, Director of Administration and Finance Angela Fuste, Reproductive Health Services Manager Lina Echeverri, Generalist Division Manager Niurka Vazquez, Pam Vilaboy, RN, Mary Byrne, RN, and Assistant Director of Communications Jackie Taylor.

The Department of OB/GYN will be one of the first Miller departments to use a patient call center. We are looking forward to successful implementation of this important project, as it may serve as a model for other Departments and will make a significant impact on quality patient care.



## RHS Receives Ryan Grant for second year

For the second year in a row, the Department was awarded funding to continue the Kenneth J. Ryan Residency Training Program in Family Planning and Abortion, which is co-directed by Drs. Carla Lupi and Paul Norris, with Dr. Christopher Estes closely involved. Sponsored by an anonymous foundation, the **\$320,000** grant, of which Dr. Norris is the principal investigator, allows the Department to provide family planning and abortion services to the community and to train residents to perform these services.

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## REI offers fertility counseling for cancer patients

Being diagnosed with cancer is difficult enough, but imagine adding to this the worry that the treatment needed to save your life might also make you infertile? However, if cancer patients make informed decisions regarding their fertility between the time they are diagnosed and the onset of treatment, they will have greater control

over their reproductive futures.

Dr. George Attia is now offering fertility counseling for male and female cancer patients. This counseling will help patients explore their options and make decisions regarding fertility preservation before they undergo treatments such as chemotherapy or radiation which can kill gametes.

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## Events

### ► Friday, Dec. 15

The OB/GYN Holiday Party will be held at the Mic-cousukee Resort and Gaming at 7:30 p.m. If you have any questions, please call Administrative Assistant Karla Fuentes at 243-1609.

### ► Feb. 21-23, 2008

The New Concepts in Obstetrics and Gynecology conference will take place at the Mayfair Hotel in Coconut Grove. For more information, click [here](#).



Assistant Chair Ruth Srebrenik thanks support staff members for their contributions to the United Way.

As promised, Ms. Srebrenik increased her personal donation for every support staff member making a donation. All told, the contributions by support staff doubled last year's total.

## Update on Women's Scholars Program

The Department would like to provide an update on the students who participated in the Women's Scholars Program this summer.

Over the summer the students were paired with an OB/GYN faculty mentor and had the chance to observe them in the clinical setting and to assist them with research projects.

Here's what our participants have been up to since August:

UM second year medical student **Katherine Hoops** has worked with Dr. Twiggs in writing two pieces which were accepted for publication. One article was published in the *Journal of Lower Genital Tract Disease* and another short article in the *Trends in Cervical Health Newsletter*. She states, "We are looking forward to starting a new project this winter."

UM second year medical student **Priyanka Handa** continues to work with her mentor Dr. Victor Gonzalez-Quintero on obtaining IRB approval for a study which focuses on a comparative inventory of domestic abuse prevalence in patients at the hospital.

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey medical student **Leyaini Cabezas** began her second year and has enrolled in an elective called, "Women as Patients and Doctors." She is also participating in a program called "New Moms." The program is designed to help adolescent mothers with all issues related to their first pregnancy. The girls range from 14-20 years old and almost all are from a low socioeconomic status. Leyaini says of the program, "Our job is basically to serve as resources and support. A pair of us is assigned to one mom and we go with her to her appointments, help her understand any medical information, and we get to participate in the delivery. I'm really looking



From top left: Medical Students Jamee Paoloemilio, Leiyan Cabezas, Katherine Hoops, and Dr. Twiggs. Pictured from bottom left: Nabila Zambrano, Dr. Chakhtoura, and Andreina Zambrano.

forward to that!"

UM undergraduate student **Andreina Zambrano** is taking organic chemistry and is volunteering at Miami Children's Hospital. She is also working part time in the math department and is a chemistry workshop leader. She says of her busy schedule, "It's just the routine pre-med activities."

Her twin sister **Nabila** is also taking a full course load at UM and working part time. She just started taking a Kaplan course in preparation for the MCAT. She has joined several student activities as well.

*The Women's Scholars Program was funded in part by the Forum on Women's Health. The Department expresses their gratitude to the Forum for their commitment to this important educational initiative. For more information on the program, contact Dr. JoNell Potter at [jpotter2@med.miami.edu](mailto:jpotter2@med.miami.edu) or by phone at 305-243-2173.*

### REI offers infertility counseling for cancer patients

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It is understandable that in the struggle to eradicate cancer, fertility is a lower priority and so oncologists may not discuss preservation options with patients prior to treatment. Dr. Attia's goal is to partner with specialists at the Sylvester Comprehensive Center in having cancer patients of reproductive age receive fertility counseling before they undergo treatment.

This interdisciplinary and holistic approach to care will be available

to male and female patients. Some standard options available for these patients include freezing sperm for males, and for female patients, freezing eggs and embryos, and suppression of ovarian function (this is a medical treatment which suppresses ovulation and preserves ovarian reserve).

In the future, Dr. Attia also hopes to test some experimental treatments, such as freezing ovarian tissue and in vitro maturation of the egg. To refer patients or to schedule an appointment for fertility counseling, please call 305-243-8642.

### Congratulations to Jeanne Constant-Edma

Division of Research outreach worker Jeanne Constant-Edma completed her Bachelor of Science in Health Services Administration this semester from Barry University. She will begin graduate school in January.

The Department congratulates her on this important achievement and wishes her all the best with her upcoming studies.

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## Nurses are poets too

The Department congratulates Jamile Munajj-Brown, ARNP, for her poem, "Big Fat Lie" which was published in the Journal of The Association of Nurses In AIDS Care, in the September/October 2007 Edition.

### Big Fat Lie!

What?!

The test must be a mistake!  
No, I'm a good girl. I took the test last year.  
It was negative then.  
I haven't been with other men.  
It must be a mistake!  
Oh God! I have a terrible headache.  
He took the test.  
He's negative, he wouldn't lie.  
Oh God, oh please, I just want to die!  
This is just too much!  
I can't, I won't believe it.  
Voo doo, a bad trick, anything but logic.  
God wouldn't let this happen to me.  
And what about this baby?  
Oh. . .I'm so afraid. Will he still love me?  
He'll probably leave because of this bad blood,  
this HIV.  
I'll be all alone and miserable.  
He won't want me.  
I can't tell my family, my community.  
If this is true. . .  
No, it can't, it must be a BIG FAT LIE!  
OK, stop!  
You don't have time to deny!  
No it's not, it's not a big fat lie.  
You've got to get a grip.  
Yes, it is horrible.  
It is unfortunate.  
But you've got that little one inside of you!  
Get the pills.  
Don't worry about how you feel right now.  
You count. . .yes you do.  
But the baby. . .the baby. . .the baby counts too!  
Time to cry.  
And you certainly cannot believe that this is  
a big fat lie!

By J. Jamile Munajj-Brown

## FYI: Residency interviews take place this month

Residency interviews for academic year 2008-2009 will take place on December 6, 8, 13 and 15. These will take place in rooms 4070, 3007 and 7007.

## RHS receives Ryan Grant for second year

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The grant is for a substantial amount, and some may wonder how all these dollars are put to work. Below are some of the ways the grant is being used.

### Resident Training

About seven OB/GYN residents have completed a six week rotation through Reproductive Health Services (RHS). One additional resident is currently in the process of completing the rotation, and six more will be completing rotations by the end of the academic year. Interested third and fourth year medical students are also gaining valuable clinical experience at the center, with some finding it the "best day" of their third year clerkship. Finally, family medicine residents have started rotating through RHS.

### Renovations

## Dr. Twiggs speaks at Palm Beach event

OB/GYN Department Chair Dr. Leo Twiggs along with Dr. Joyce Slingerland, professor, Department of Medicine, Division of Hematology/Oncology, participated in an event on November 5, 2007 at the Frenchman's Reserve Country Club in Palm Beach to introduce Dr. Alexis Federman, a member of the University Internal Medicine Group of Palm Beach Gardens, as a new distinguished woman's health care physician.

Besides introducing Dr. Federman, who is a member of the American Osteopathic Association and currently serves as a Clinical Instructor of Internal Medicine at the Univer-

Suite 201W at Cedars has undergone major renovations. Besides a fresh coat of paint, new furniture and plants, the suite received counseling, recovery, and procedure rooms. The procedure room is completely equipped to perform procedures such as endometrial ablation and outpatient hysteroscopic sterilization.

### Research and Community Partnerships

The physicians at RHS are applying for a variety of research grants, specifically related to STDs and post partum contraception.

RHS will also continue community partnerships with organizations like the Women's Emergency Network, which provides funds to indigent women who need abortions. Through the Ryan Grant, RHS is able to offer the Women's Emergency Network reduced fees.

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sity of Miami Miller School of Medicine, the event showcased the latest information on women's health-care issues including breast cancer, preventive medicine, lifestyle issues and the role of the primary care physician in caring for female patients.

Dr. Federman's focus on women's health issues includes osteoporosis, post-menopausal and cardiac care, to name a few. The addition of Dr. Federman to the Palm Beach practice will enhance the quality and awareness of women's health care needs in Palm Beach County.

To schedule an appointment with the University Internal Medicine Group of Palm Beach County, call 561-939-4444.

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### **RHS receives Ryan Grant for second year**

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#### **Expansion**

RHS has expanded by adding Dr. Christopher Estes, who specializes in second trimester abortion. Dr. Estes completed residency at UM/Jackson, a fellowship in family planning and a master's in public health at Columbia University. Another addition to the RHS staff is an ARNP on Mondays for half a day (Faith Doyle). She provides conscious sedation and sees follow-ups and medical abortion patients. Conscious sedation allows for more complicated, advanced cases. This also gives patients who can't tolerate local anesthesia an option. Additionally, HIV testing is now offered at the clinic.

Finally, RHS is working toward becoming sustainable. To this end, they have started a Google advertising campaign to help increase

## **Published**

► Dr. Cotter also participated in a Global Network for Perinatal and Reproductive Health multicenter study, "Expectant management compared with physical examination—indicated cerclage (EP-PEC) in selected women with a dilated cervix at 14-25 weeks: results from the EM-PEC international cohort study," published in the November 2007 issue of the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. To read the study click [here](#).

Dr. Cotter also worked with the Public Health Service Taskforce in publishing its latest recommendations for the use of antiretroviral drugs in pregnant HIV infected women for maternal health and interventions to reduce perinatal HIV transmission in the United States on November 2, 2007. These guidelines update the October 12, 2006 recommendations. The recommendations were published in *HIV CareLink*, a newsletter for HIV/AIDS Primary Care Providers.

Additionally, Dr. Cotter wrote a chapter on HIV in pregnancy in a new book called *Maternal-Fetal Evidence Based Guidelines* edited by Vincenzo Berghella and published by [Informa Healthcare](#).

► Drs. Carlos Medina, Peter Takacs, Chief Resident Dr. Clara Croce, and UM Anesthesiologist Dr. Keith Candiotti, had their study, "Comparison of vaginal length after ilioococcygeus fixation and sacrospinous ligament fixation," published in the November issue of the *International Journal of Gynaecology and Obstetrics*. To read the study, click [here](#).

► Dr. Ira Karmin had his study, "Does a surgical simulator improve resident operative performance of laparoscopic tubal ligation?" published in the November issue of the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. Click [here](#) to read the study.

## **Presentations**

► Dr. Victor Gonzalez-Quintero presented, "State of the Art Maternal Fetal Medicine," and "Special Issues in Healthcare Among Hispanic Women," at the District III meeting of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology held November 9-10, 2007 in Santo Domingo, Republica Dominicana.

► Drs. Matt Pearson, Nahida Chakhtoura, and Leo Twiggs spoke at the "Women's Awareness Conference," hosted by the staff of East Tower 7A on November 27, 2007.

► Gynecologic Oncology Fellow Dr. Namita Jhamb had her abstract, "Influence of Ethnicity on Outcomes in Uterine Sarcoma," accepted for poster presentation at the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists 39th Annual Meeting on Women's Cancer; March 9-12, 2008, Tampa Convention Center.

► Dr. Tarek Bardawil was asked to be a moderator at the 17th annual meeting and Endo Expo of the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons (September 17-20, 2008; Chicago, Illinois).

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## Quoted

- ▶ Dr. Gene Burkett was quoted in the *Miami Herald* on November 15, 2007 in an article about CNN anchor Nancy Grace's hospitalization after the premature delivery of her twins. Mrs. Grace developed blood clots in her lungs after the delivery. Read the full article [here](#).
- ▶ Dr. Christopher Estes was interviewed by *WebMD* on a story examining the latest advances in contraception. The story will run as part of a Health Zone special later this month.
- ▶ Dr. Salih Yasin and chief residents Clara Croce and Gregory Guell were mentioned in a Miami Herald story, "Make No Mistake: UM med students learn how to prevent errors that cost lives and money," that ran on November 13, 2007, in the Tropical Life section. Click [here](#) to read the story.
- ▶ Dr. Mary Jo O'Sullivan was mentioned in the article "For whom the bell tolls," in the September issue of the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*. The article discusses the development of protocols for HIV testing, particularly among pregnant women. The article recognizes Dr. O'Sullivan, among others, for her work in fighting AIDS.

## HR Corner

The Department extends a warm welcome to the following new hires:

Sandra Burgos, Patient Clinical Assistant, Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility.

Nelly Diaz-Mendez, Nurse Practitioner, Division of Research.

Elizabeth Santarsiero, Nurse Practitioner, Division of Gynecologic Oncology.

Aisha Washington, Patient Clinical Assistant, Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine.

## Employee Spotlight

**Name:** Yesenia Vazquez

**Job Title:** Ultrasound Technician

**If I could travel to any place in the world** I would go to Italy. It's actually funny, but I'm a fan of any mob movie, so that would be why.

**Most people don't know that** I can actually get mad at things.

**Three words my friends would use to describe me are** funny, energetic, and at times crazy.

**What I like most about my job** is the atmosphere, my co-workers, my boss and the many benefits that come with working for UM.



Yesenia Vazquez shows her UM spirit!

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