

# THE REVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES



**S**econd-year medical student, **Katie O'Brien**, has been elected to a national body which represents the interests and concerns of medical students, the Organization of Student Representatives, a division of the Association of American Medical Colleges. As chair for the Central Region, one of four in the country, she sees her new role as an opportunity to interact with students from all over the nation. The daughter of The Reverend Patrick and Audrey O'Brien of Oakes, ND, concludes UND has a great medical school, an outstanding curriculum, interested and caring faculty, and amenities that other schools do not. She says, "Seeing what's out there, I wouldn't want to be any other place."

## IN REVIEW

### *Renowned Hematopathologist*

## '57 Grad to Receive Sioux Award

**Richard Brunning, M.D. (B.S. Med. '57)**, Roseville, MN, has been selected to receive the Sioux Award during the annual Alumni Days activities this month on the UND campus.

The Sioux Award, the highest honor bestowed by the UND Alumni Association, will also be given to **Mack Traynor, M.D. (B.S. Med. '47)**, of Fargo; Marilyn Whitney, Nantucket Island, MA; John Nepper, Omaha, NE, and Morris Tschider, Bismarck.

Raised in Grand Forks, Brunning attended UND where he earned a bachelor's degree in natural sciences in 1954 and a bachelor of science in medicine degree in 1957. He went on to complete the doctor of medicine degree in 1959 at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

A renowned expert on bone marrow infiltrations and tumors, he has written many articles on this subject for publica-

tion in scientific journals. He co-authored the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology fascicle Tumors of the Bone Marrow.

As head of hematopathology at the University of Minnesota, he has trained many pathologists and hematopathologists in the United States and other countries. He also served as a faculty member of the Tutorial on Neoplastic Hematopathology for many years, as well as its director for ten years.

Now retired, he remains active in his profession as professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota.



*Richard Brunning, M.D. (B.S. Med. '57)*

## Need a Speaker for Your Club or Special Event? Check Out Our Speakers Bureau

A speakers bureau has been established at the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences to enhance efforts in informing the people of this region about the school, the exciting things happening here, and our mission of teaching, research and service.

Faculty and staff members are available to make presentations on a wide range of topics such as:

- \* eating disorders
- \* communicating with your doctor
- \* smoking and cancer
- \* caring for children with special needs
- \* health care workforce issues
- \* health care in former Soviet states

- \* women's health
- \* Parkinson's disease
- \* rural health issues
- \* nutrition and wellness

We look forward to working with you to offer the expertise and knowledge of our faculty and staff to your community.

**If your organization is interested in inviting a speaker from the UND medical school, please contact:**

UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Office of Public Affairs  
Box 9037, Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037  
ph: 701-777-4305  
fax: 701-777-3408  
email: spohlman@medicine.nodak.edu

### *calendar*

#### *August 6*

**White Coat Ceremony for M.D. Class of 2008**, 4 p.m., Reed Keller Auditorium, UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Grand Forks; for more information, call the Office of the Dean, 701-777-2514

#### *September 30-October 1*

**North Dakota Medical Association Annual Meeting**, Holiday Inn, Fargo; for more information, call 701-223-9475

#### *October 8-9*

**B.S. Med. Class of '64 40th Reunion**, Holiday Inn Select, Bloomington, MN; for more information, contact **Michael Howell, M.D. (B.S. Med. '64)**, Fargo, at 701-234-2251

#### *October 13-16*

**UND Homecoming**, for more information, call the Office of the Dean at 701-777-2514 or Stacy Nelson at the UND Alumni Association, 1-800-543-8764

### *Visit our web site:*

<http://www.med.und.nodak.edu>

**This and previous issues of THE REVIEW can be found online** at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences' Office of Public Affairs web site: <http://cf.med.und.nodak.edu/undsomhs/depts/publicaffairs/>

### **Change of address?**

Please send address changes to: **Kitty Monley**, Office of Administration and Finance, UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, P.O. Box 9037, Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037  
e-mail: [kmonley@medicine.nodak.edu](mailto:kmonley@medicine.nodak.edu)  
phone: 701-777-2431

**THE REVIEW, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES, University of North Dakota**, CHARLES E. KUPCHELLA, President, University of North Dakota; H. David Wilson, Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean, School of Medicine and Health Sciences. **The Review (ISSN 0888-1456; USPS 077-680) is published six times a year during January, March, May, July, September, and November by the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, P.O. Box 9037, Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037. Periodical postage paid at Grand Forks ND. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE REVIEW, Office of Public Affairs, UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, P.O. Box 9037, Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037.** Pamela D. Knudson, Director of Public Affairs, School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Editorial assistance from A. Scurry, Office of Public Affairs and Center for Rural Health, School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Computer graphics and photographic assistance from J. Lee, V. Swift and W. Weber, with Medical Media, and R. Fischer at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, and C. Kimmerle with UND Office of University Relations. Printed at Fine Print Inc. Grand Forks, ND. All articles published in THE REVIEW, excluding photographs and copy concerning patients, can be reproduced without prior permission from the editor. UND is an equal opportunity institution.

## DEAN'S LETTER

### 'Stepping Up to the Plate' to Meet National Needs in Disaster Readiness

"I'd love to have North Dakota be a model for the nation," said **Paul (P.K.) Carlton, M.D.**, former surgeon general of the U.S. Air Force, during his recent visit to the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences to assist the development of our bioterrorism education and training project, "BORDERS Alert and Ready."

We agree.

North Dakota is in a unique position to provide leadership in our country's urgent need to effectively address heightened security issues. Situated at the north-central point in a long, porous border, UND can and will make important contributions to our nation's ability to protect our citizens in an increasingly dangerous world.

Although there are "flashes of brilliance in different states, there is no cohesive plan" to address national bioterrorism readiness, Carlton said. "If we get this state up and running, others can copy it."

Lieutenant General Carlton served as U.S. Air Force surgeon general from 1999 to 2002. Currently serving as director of

the Texas Office of Homeland Security at The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center, he and two other officials from Texas were here to offer their experience and expertise: **U.S. Air Force Colonel Kerrie Lindberg**, director of the Defense Institute for Medical Operations, and **Gary Meaney** of the Training Division of the National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center at Texas A&M University.

They are assisting us in the planning of a community-based bioterrorism training event for health care professionals, including physicians, nurses, and allied health and mental health personnel, which is expected to take place this fall in Grand Forks. It will be conducted in conjunction with other local and statewide emergency preparedness events.

They were also in Grand Forks

▶ to help organize an international bioterrorism symposium, expected to occur in 2005;

▶ to meet with Air Force base personnel from Grand Forks and Minot to dis-

cuss future training collaborations with BORDERS

▶ to attend a meeting of the North Dakota Homeland Security Exercise Committee

Their visit was very important for the UND medical school and the people of this region. It marks the latest step in our quest to improve our readiness and ability to protect the lives and health of our citizens from potential threats of bioterrorism and other disasters.

**As a rural, border state - with two Air Force bases - we have been called on to build an integrated, responsive system for health profession education and training that can serve as a model for the country.** We are uniquely qualified to do this - we've been educating with a focus on rural medicine and rural health care for nearly 100 years.

BORDERS, which stands for Biochemical Organic Radioactive Disaster Educational Response System, is being developed by the UND medical school in partnership with the North Dakota Department of Health through a \$820,000 grant received last fall from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

The UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences is among 19 institutions, out of 104 that applied, to receive the grants, which nationally total \$22.3 million. Project co-directors are **Linda Olson, Ed.D.**, and **Rick Vari, Ph.D.**, of the UND medical school; executive project director is **James Hargreaves, D.O.**, associate professor of internal medicine and clinical associate professor of community medicine, who practices with the Altru Health System in Grand Forks.

Through our BORDERS project, we are making a significant contribution to the nationwide effort to provide security and safety for all Americans.

*H. David Wilson*

H. David Wilson, M.D.  
Vice President for Health Affairs  
Dean



Dean H. David Wilson, M.D. (left), greets P.K. Carlton, M.D., director of the Texas Office of Homeland Security, during a recent visit by the former surgeon general of the U.S. Air Force to the UND medical school.

## New Buildings Expand Medical School Presence in Minot...



The new \$3.7 million building under construction in Minot will house three components of the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences: the Minot Center for Family Medicine, the Northwest Campus office and a branch office of the Center for Rural Health. It is expected to be completed in February 2005.

**Construction has begun on a new building in Minot** which will house components of the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

The building will be the new home of the Minot Center for Family Medicine, a clinic where medical school graduates are educated and trained in a family medicine residency program; the Northwest Campus office, and a branch of the Center for Rural Health.

In late April, crews began stripping the site for the \$3.7 million structure just south of Minot's Magic City campus. The building is expected to be completed in ten months.

**With furnishings and equipment, the project totals \$4.2 million.** The building also will house the medical school's Northwest Campus offices and a branch office of the Center for Rural Health. The Northwest Campus, based in Minot, is one of four quadrants through which the UND medical school administers clinical medical education throughout the state; others are in Bismarck, Minot and Grand Forks. The Center for Rural Health is based at the UND medical school in Grand Forks.

*'The new state-of-the-art teaching clinic will help recruit the finest young people to train for practice in rural medicine.'*

**Dean H. David Wilson, M.D.**

Currently, the Minot Center for Family Medicine and the other UND medical school entities are located in a former bank building in downtown Minot. The new location "will be good for patients, and will be easily recognizable," said **H. David Wilson, M.D.**, dean of the medical school and vice president for health affairs at UND, Grand Forks.

The structure will provide about 23,000 square feet on two levels, including a "garden" level cut into a slope. It also will feature a pharmacy for the convenience of patients of the Minot Center for Family Medicine. Two driveway entrances will allow visitors to access the building from different directions, and so avoid potential traffic snares.

"The new facility is specifically

designed as a state-of-the-art teaching clinic and will make our family medicine residency program in Minot even more attractive for residents and patients," Wilson said. "It will help us recruit the finest young people to train for practices in rural medicine."

"Trinity Hospital in Minot has been a superb partner with the medical school in this whole endeavor," he said. The hospital's administrator "Mr. (Terry) Hoff has gone out of his way to make Minot an excellent place in which to learn family medicine."

**C. Milton Smith, M.D. (B.S. Med. '69)**, who directs the UND medical school's family medicine residency program in Minot, said, "This state-of-the-art facility will provide both physicians and patients a better health care environment. The new facility will allow our physicians to more efficiently care for patients."

Smith is planning to hire two additional faculty members for the program.

Sixteen physician-residents are training in the three-year program to become board-certified family doctors.

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## and in Grand Forks *where Construction Progresses on Neuroscience Research Facility*

Since ground was broken last September, progress has been steady on construction of the \$3 million Neuroscience Research Facility, just west of the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, at Fifth Avenue and North Hamline in Grand Forks.

Expected to be completed this fall, the one-story-plus-basement building will include eight laboratories to house biomedical scientists working to unlock the mys-

teries of the human brain in order to find the causes of diseases such as Alzheimer's, ALS (Lou Gehrig's), epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson's disease.

Neuroscience research at the UND medical school is also aimed at furthering scientific knowledge of mechanisms in the brain which lead to drug-seeking behavior.

Federal funds from the Health Resources and Services Administration are

financing most of the cost of constructing the 14,000-square-foot building.

The Neuroscience Research Facility is part of the Center for Excellence in Neurosciences at the UND medical school.

According to **Manuchair Ebadi, Ph.D.**, associate dean for research and program development at the school, Grand Forks, "It will be the best research building at UND."



*Construction is proceeding on the \$3 million Neuroscience Research Facility just west of the UND medical school, on the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue North and Hamline. The one-story building, plus basement, is expected to be completed this fall.*

## UPDATE

### One of Four in the Country

## O'Brien Elected Chair for National Med Student Organization

For the first time, a medical student at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences has been elected regional chair of a national medical student organization.

**Katie O'Brien**, a second-year medical student and the daughter of The Reverend Patrick and Audrey O'Brien of Oakes, ND, was elected chair of the Central Region of the Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

One of four in the country, the OSR Central Region consists of 32 medical schools in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Although UND has four representatives in OSR each year, O'Brien is the first to run for national office.

O'Brien became UND's primary OSR representative as a freshmen medical student, in the fall of 2002, and was elected to become the national committee's communications chair shortly thereafter, she said.

O'Brien, elected at the region's annual meeting in April at Key West, FL, won on a platform of medical student debt, increasing communication within the organization,

medical student health insurance, investigation into the efforts of tort reform on medical students, improving the clinical skills exam process and medical professionalism.

"Having this position gives me the opportunity to get the name of our school out there," said O'Brien. "Our curriculum at UND is very innovative and people want to learn more about it."

"Katie O'Brien is a natural leader," said **Judy DeMers**, associate dean for student affairs at the UND medical school, Grand Forks. "Being elected to a major committee of the AAMC's OSR as a first-year medical student, and now winning the top leadership position in the Central Region's OSR as a sophomore, only serves to confirm her abilities.

"The medical school and North



O'Brien

*'Katie O'Brien is a natural leader... The medical school and North Dakota are fortunate to be represented by her.'*

**Judy DeMers**

*Associate Dean for Student Affairs*

Dakota are fortunate to be represented by Katie."

O'Brien will begin her duties in November and serve for one year. She will organize the regional meeting, direct attention toward region-specific issues, serve as a conduit of information from the OSR Administrative Board to individual OSR representatives and coordinate information exchange within the region.

The OSR is charged with the representation of the undergraduate medical student body of the U.S. to the academic medicine community.

O'Brien is planning to pursue training in internal medicine and, eventually, wants to work in medical administration.

### National Initiative

## CRH Chosen by RWJ Foundation to Help Inform Leaders on Health Care

The Center for Rural Health (CRH) at the University of North Dakota (UND) medical school has been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation of Princeton, NJ, to participate in a national initiative to inform state leaders about current health and medical care issues.

The Foundation has awarded the CRH a two-year, \$125,000 grant, matched by the UND medical school, to participate in the State Forums Partnership Program (SFPP), a national network of health policy organizations providing timely, nonpartisan analysis to policymakers and health care leaders and providers.

The CRH is the seventh partner in the nation to be selected for this prestigious program, according to **Mary Wakefield, Ph.D.**, CRH director, Grand Forks. Others

selected for this prestigious program are based in Texas, Kansas, Wisconsin, Washington and Tennessee.

The CRH will develop and implement a series of North Dakota Health Policy Forums for both state and tribal governments. Using video-conferencing, the forums will provide timely health policy briefs, presentations from experts, and the latest health research on key health and medical care issues to state and tribal health policy leaders.

An advisory panel, representing various professions, will guide the North Dakota Health Policy Forums. Members of the group, which first met in April at Bismarck, are: **Clara Sue Price**, state representative, Minot; **Tim Mathern**, state senator, Fargo; **Janis Cheney**, North

Dakota Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Bismarck; **John Joyce, M.D. (B.S. Med. '78)**, North Dakota Department of Health, Hettinger; **Arvy Smith**, deputy state health officer, and **Terry Dwelle, M.D.**, state health officer, both of Bismarck; **Jo Burdick**, MeritCare Home Care, Fargo; **David Gipp**, president, United Tribes Technical College, Bismarck; **Cheryl Kulas**, North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, Bismarck; **Fred Baker**, New Town; **Carole Ann Heart, J.D.**, Rapid City, SD, Aberdeen Area Tribal Chairman's Health Board; **Biron Baker, M.D. '95**, Bismarck, and **Monica Mayer, M.D. '95**, New Town.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care.

## Med Students Teach, and Promote Healthy Lifestyles, on 'Science Day'

About 170 fifth- and sixth-grade students from throughout the Grand Forks area attended Science Day recently, hosted by medical students at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

The event is organized by local members of the American Medical Student Association as a means of stimulating elementary school students' interest in the sciences.

Hands-on learning focused on human health and anatomy, computers to learn about organ function and disease, and awareness of the dangers of tobacco use.

**Barbara Swenson**, second-year medical student, served as coordinator for the event. She is the daughter of Jan and **Bruce Swenson, M.D. (B.S. Med. '72)** of Minot.



*Jon Solberg (right), second-year medical student, explains the function of the eye to the elementary school-children who took part in the Science Day event this spring at the UND medical school. Using a camera to demonstrate optics and the lens, he described how the eye focuses and accommodates to light. Originally from Stanley, ND, Solberg is the son of Richard and Barb Solberg of Minot.*

## PA Program Earns Five-year Accreditation, After External Review

The physician assistant program has been accredited for another five years by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA).

**This is the first time in recent years that the program has received full five-year accreditation, said Mary Ann Laxen**, associate professor of family medicine and director of the program which is administered through the UND medical school's Department of Family Medicine and the UND Graduate School.

Laxen credits the high rating from the review commission to "outstanding faculty and staff, state-of-the-art facilities, committed physician-preceptors and very supportive deans and department chair."

"The program has gone through many changes in the past few years," she said.

"We have successfully transitioned from a certificate program to a master's degree-granting program. We are also developing an on-line master's program for our graduates."

In the letter to UND

**President Charles Kupchella**, ARC-PA Executive Director John McCarty said, "The ARC-PA wants to acknowledge and congratulate the program on its innovative on-line learning and computerized patient and clinical skills log system... (T)he suc-



*Mary Ann Laxen*

cess of this program is partly due to the thorough on-site evaluation of the clinical preceptor sites associated with the potential students during applicant screening."

**Elizabeth Burns, M.D.**, professor and chair of the family medicine, said, "This is a high quality physician assistant program that has been in existence since 1970, with more than 1400 MEDEX, nurse practitioner and physician assistant graduates.

**Recent statistics from the American Academy of Physician Assistants show that more than half of our graduates are working in rural and under-served areas throughout the U.S. and Canada and abroad.**

"Our faculty do an excellent job in assessing potential students and their proposed clinical sites, and in curriculum development. The success of the program is due to their efforts."

## Longest Term Possible

# Minot Family Medicine Residency Reaccredited for Five Years

The family medicine residency program in Minot has been accredited for another five years, the longest term possible, by the Family Practice Residency Review Committee which acts for the national Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

The program, conducted at the Minot Center for Family Medicine and directed by **Milton Smith, M.D. (B.S. Med. '69)**, associate professor of family medicine, in past years has received three years of accreditation.

"I am really excited about this," Smith said. "This is a testament to the work of UND and Trinity Hospital and our relationship."

The five-year accreditation gives the Minot residency program time to develop and grow in a new location with excellent faculty and rural-oriented programs, said Smith. The program will move into a new facility for which ground is expected to be broken this spring in southwest Minot and completed by spring 2005.

**Smith credits the high rating from the residency review committee to "outstanding faculty,** a very supportive hospital and a dean and chair who believe in us.

"Plus, we do a great job at training doctors."

Fifteen residents are training in the three-year program in Minot. Upon successful completion of the program, they are



*C. Milton Smith, M.D.  
(B.S. Med. '69)*

eligible to sit for examination to become board-certified family doctors.

According to **Elizabeth Burns, M.D.**, chair and professor of family medicine, Grand Forks, "**The faculty of the Minot Center for Family Medicine, under the direction of Dr. Milt Smith, are doing a terrific job of educating their resident-physicians to be family physicians of the 21st century.**"

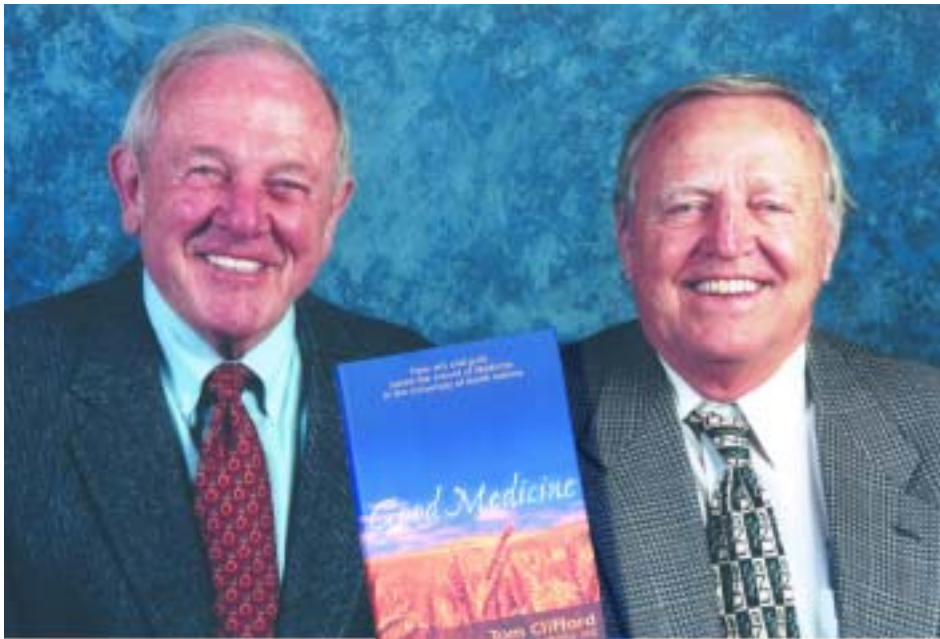
"They are to be congratulated on this latest achievement. The close working relationship with Trinity Health System and the community outreach programs that Dr. Smith has developed are a testament to the dynamism and vision he brings to the residency," she said.

"I am proud to be associated with this program."

The accreditation process takes about a year and begins with a written report to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). In the report the status of the hospital and UND and the agreements between them, biographies of faculty members and residents, data on patient visits and other issues are presented.

Reviews are conducted by experts in graduate medical education program evaluation, using the guidelines of the Family Practice Residency Review Committee.

Family medicine residency training is also conducted by the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Bismarck and Grand Forks.



## **Book Describes Conversion to MD Degree-granting Program**

*Former UND President Tom Clifford (left) and Robert Eelkema, M.D. (B.S. Med. '59), professor emeritus of community medicine, both of Grand Forks, have written a book, "Good Medicine," which chronicles UND's efforts to win approval to convert its two-year basic science education program to a full, doctor of medicine degree-granting program. This was achieved by action of the state legislature in 1973; the first M.D. graduates received their degrees in 1976. "Good Medicine" is available through selected bookstores and may be ordered through [www.cliffelkpress.com](http://www.cliffelkpress.com).*

## Outstanding Rural Health Providers and Programs Recognized

Four awards were presented during the Dakota Conference on Rural and Public Health in March to those individuals and groups for their contributions to and support of quality health care in rural areas.

**Anthony Rayer, M.D.**, a staff physician at Altru Clinic-Lake Region, Devils Lake, was named the 2004 Outstanding Rural Health Provider. The award is presented to a rural North Dakota health care professional who has made important contributions to his or her community and the area.

**A clinical assistant professor of family medicine with the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Rayer has dedicated his career to rural health care** through his medical practice, program development and training.

As an advocate for Children Against Child Abuse, Rayer works with Social Services and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to identify cases of child abuse. He is a member of a steering committee organized by the Lake Region Human Service Center to identify and meet

deficiencies in delivery of mental health care. He also serves on the board of directors for Mercy Hospital in Devils Lake.

*'Dr. Rayer is noted for going above and beyond the call of duty to enable patients to receive the optimum care needed.'*

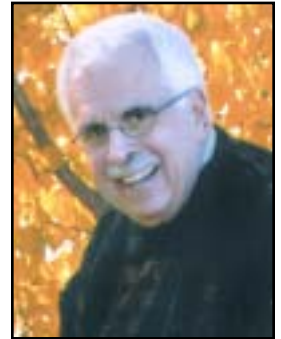
**Marlene Krein**

President and CEO, Mercy Hospital, Devils Lake

**Gary Allen**, Cando, a member of the Towner County Ambulance Service, was named the 2004 Outstanding Rural Health Volunteer. The award recognizes those who have contributed their energy, time and skill on a volunteer basis toward the improvement of rural health care.

Allen, who has been a part of the emergency medical services team in Towner County for more than 30 years, has served continuously as a training officer, established protocols, equipped ambu-

lances, purchased supplies and written numerous grants. He also is a member of the local volunteer fire department and the board of directors of the Towner County Ambulance Service.



*Anthony Rayer, M.D.*

**Kathleen Hoeft**, administrator for the Ashley (ND) Medical Center, was named the 2004 Outstanding Rural Health Professional. The award is presented to a health care professional in rural North Dakota who has demonstrated leadership in the delivery of rural health services.

Hoeft, a registered nurse, is a distinguished past chair of the North Dakota Long Term Care Association and was recently elected to the American Hospital Association's governing council for small or rural hospitals. She serves on the North Dakota Healthcare Association's Legislative Council promoting rural health care delivery in North Dakota.

**Western Sunrise, Inc.**, based in Williston, was named the 2004 Outstanding Rural Health Program. The award is presented to programs that deliver services in innovative ways, highlight coordination among providers, or improve the quality of care for rural residents.

Western Sunrise, Inc., is a consumer-run, non-profit organization that serves those with serious and persistent mental illness in rural northwest North Dakota. The organization has recently implemented a peer support and advocacy program which consists of a team who assists those who are chronically mentally ill with the skills they need to stay in their homes and communities.

*Nominations for the 2005 Dakota Conference on Rural and Public Health are being accepted. For more information, contact Brad Gibbens or Lynette Dickson at the Center for Rural Health, 701-777-3848.*

## Bismarck Family Medicine Residency Program Receives Full Accreditation

The family medicine residency program in Bismarck has received continued full accreditation status from the Family Practice Residency Review Committee which acts for the national Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

**Guy Tangedahl, M.D. '82**, associate professor of family medicine, directs the program at the Bismarck Family Practice Center where physician-faculty members are training 15 residents in a three-year program to become board-eligible in family medicine.

"Since it was established in 1976," said Tangedahl, "the residency program at the Bismarck Family Practice Center has graduated 113 physicians, two-thirds of whom have established practices in North Dakota."

"This residency program has a long tradition of educating family physicians for

urban and rural North Dakota," said **Elizabeth Burns, M.D.**, chair and professor of family medicine, Grand Forks. "In partnership with the two medical centers in Bismarck, Medcenter One and St. Alexius

Medical Center, and the physicians in the Bismarck-Mandan area, the faculty have developed a quality program.

**"Dr. Tangedahl has done a terrific job in guiding the program's development.** We are excited about the potential for this program in the future."



*Guy Tangedahl, M.D. '82*

## In Training at Minot

# Knutson Named 'Resident of the Year' by State Family Physician Group

**Scott Knutson, M.D.**, a third-year physician-in-training at the Minot Center for Family Medicine, has been named as the William M. Buckingham, M.D., Resident of the Year by the North Dakota Academy of Family Physicians.

The award was presented by **Kim Krohn, M.D. '96**, associate director of the Minot Center for Family Medicine, at the Academy's annual meeting in March in Mandan.

A graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Knutson served as a general medical officer at the Minot Air Force Base prior to entering residency at the Minot Center for Family Medicine, where family medicine residency training takes place under the auspices of the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

"Dr. Knutson has taken responsibility not only for his own education, but for the education of others around him. He has provided leadership in all areas of the residency, and has given his patients excellent care," Krohn said.



Scott Knutson, M.D.

**Knutson has been very involved in the administration of the residency's prenatal care program** for the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, which seeks to reduce the health disparity in prenatal care of North

Dakota women of different backgrounds.

After completing his family medicine training June 30, Knutson plans to join the faculty of the Minot Center for Family Medicine. He and his wife, Shannon, have made their home in Minot, along with their children, Zachary, Seth and Brooklynne.

**The William M. Buckingham, M.D., Resident of the Year Award** is named for a 1949 B.S. Med. alumnus and former faculty member of the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences and family physician who practiced and taught for UND for many years in Bismarck. Buckingham is retired and lives in Encinitas, CA.

About 50 medical school graduates are training in UND medical school-affiliated, three-year, family medicine programs in Minot, Bismarck and Grand Forks.

## 'BORDERS Alert and Ready'

# Bioterrorism Preparedness Project Unveils Logo

A logo has been designed to create awareness for *BORDERS Alert and Ready*, a new and innovative education and training project aimed at improving the ability of health professionals and other emergency personnel to prepare for and respond to acts of bioterrorism.

*BORDERS Alert and Ready* is being developed by the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the North Dakota Department of Public Health through an \$820,000 grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, and is part of a nationwide effort to improve bioterrorism preparedness.

**The project title, BORDERS, is an acronym for Biochemical Organic Radiological Disaster Educational Response System.**

The *BORDERS Alert and Ready* project, which builds on existing public health infrastructure and involves partners from across city, state, regional and international borders, is a means for achieving a more coordinated, efficient and effective public

health emergency detection and preparedness system that recognizes no boundaries when it comes to being "Alert and Ready."

"Effective responses to public health emergencies need to cross all disciplines and promote collaboration among all the professionals who are on the front lines of a disaster," said **Linda Olson, Ed.D.**, director of the UND medical school's Office of Medical Education and a principal investigator for BORDERS, Grand Forks.

"This project will actually create a 'borderless' system so that practitioners and other emergency preparedness and disaster management personnel have access to standardized training and resources that will increase their understanding of each other's roles and lead to more integrated, efficient and effective public health responses."

BORDERS participants will be trained to be "Alert" so they can:

- better recognize indications of a terrorist event or public health emergency



- more rapidly and effectively alert the public health system of such an event, and understand and appreciate the roles of other front line responders. BORDERS participants will be trained to be "Ready" so they can:
- provide immediate, efficient, coordinated and multidisciplinary responses to disasters, and
- meet the acute care needs of victims, including vulnerable populations such as those living in rural underpopulated or overpopulated areas.

For more information on the BORDERS Alert and Ready project, contact **Douglas Jackson**, project coordinator, at 701-780-5924, [djackson@medicine.nodak.edu](mailto:djackson@medicine.nodak.edu).

## Video Link Program Recognized by Social Security Administration

**Robert Rubeck, Ph.D.**, chief information officer, Grand Forks, has received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Social Security Administration (SSA) for his efforts in establishing a video link between the SSA office in Minot and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Reservation.

The Video Medical Interviewing program, funded by the General Services Administration, is organized through the Health Information Technology Center at the UND medical school in partnership with the SSA. The program also has been nominated for a Grace Hopper Government Technology Leadership Award, known as a "Gracie" award.

"This innovative use of technology, which Rubeck has coined 'V-Gov,' is seen as a model for the efficient delivery of government services, especially in rural areas," according to Rick Schremp, director of electronic service delivery for the SSA Denver region.

Through the Video Medical Interviewing program, people of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Reservation who wish to apply for Social Security disability benefits use the secure video conferencing system from the Quentin Burdick Memorial Healthcare Facility in Belcourt, ND, to complete their disability application with the Social Security staff in Minot.

This system reduces the risk, expense and inconvenience of traveling 120 miles to Minot for persons with disabilities, Rubeck said.



*Robert Rubeck, Ph.D.*

The UND-SSA Video Medical Interviewing program is the first in the country to take Social Security claims via a video channel, Schremp said. This connection has exponentially improved the level of service Social Security provides to the Belcourt area. Since the link was activated in October 2003, more than 70 claims for Social Security disability benefits have been processed.

"Everyone wins with this program," Rubeck said. "North Dakota has federal dollars coming in, rural communities have money coming in, the Indian Health Service and Quentin Burdick Memorial Healthcare Facility can better serve their patients, SSA can better serve their clients, and individuals can more easily file for Social Security disability."

## CRH Staff Assists Health Department with Insurance Survey

In March staff members at the Center for Rural Health (CRH), UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, conducted a telephone survey of North Dakotans to gather information about health coverage for the North Dakota Department of Health.

About 3,200 North Dakotans were asked their opinions about health insurance issues, including adequacy of insurance coverage and barriers to obtaining insurance. Survey results will help the Department of Health and the Governor's Health Insurance Advisory Committee explore ways to improve access to health insurance for individuals, families and employees in the state. Results will be available later this year.

At the CRH, **Alana Knudson**, assistant professor, and **Kyle Muus, Ph.D.**, assistant professor and director of research, are heading the project. Other CRH staff members working on the project include **Mike Cogan**, research analyst, and **Garth Kruger**, project assistant, with the support of many other CRH staff. **John Baird, M.D. (B.S. Med. '76)**, field medical officer for the North Dakota Department of Health, Fargo, is managing the project.



Six current and former faculty members (pictured above), who gathered recently at the Hilton Garden Inn in Grand Forks, represent 152 (and counting) years of teaching in the Clinical Laboratory Science (formerly Medical Technology) Program. They are (standing, from left) - with years of teaching in parentheses: **Malva Waters, BSMT ©61 and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology '93 (1969-80)**, Grand Forks; **Mary Coleman, MSCLS ©96 (1975-present)**, instructor in pathology, Grand Forks; **Jane Johnson, BSMT ©62 (1972-77)**, Williamston, MI; **Linda Larson, MSMT ©81 (1971-present)**, assistant professor of pathology, East Grand Forks, MN; and (seated, from left): **Jean Holland (1949-85)**, Grand Forks, and **Eileen Nelson, BSMT ©55 (1956-94)**, Grand Forks. All, except Holland, are graduates of the program.

# ALUMNI

## 'An Officer of Unlimited Potential'

### PA Grad Commended for Outstanding Military Service

**Cristal Horsch, Physician Assistant Program '98**, has received two awards for outstanding service to the U.S. Army while deployed with the 35th Infantry Division in Bosnia: the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

She has been recognized for community and civil service, specifically "for outstanding volunteer services to the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina while serving as deputy brigade surgeon and the Aviation Task Force Aeromedical physician's assistant during the SFOR-13 deployment.

"Your exceptional enthusiasm and dedication to your profession inspired the respect of all," the commendation stated. "Your devotion to the health and welfare of hundreds of (Bosnia-Herzegovina) men, women and children singles you out as one of the Army's exemplary AMEDD officers.

She "demonstrated exceptional willingness to provide medical care and ensure the Task Force Med Eagle MEDCAPs had a female medical provider," the award recommendation states. "These missions were outside her regular duty assignment and expectations.

"She participated in numerous... missions," the statement continued, and "volunteered for these missions as the only female medical provider available. Culturally Bosnian women prefer to see a female provider and to have their children seen by a female provider."

Over the course of deployment, she provided medical care and evaluations to more than 300 Bosnian men, women and children, the report said. "Her care was of the highest quality and was very much appreciated by everyone."

According to her supervisor, Colonel Larry Wilson, "I have worked with many physician's assistants and nurse practitioners during my 25 years of family practice in western Nebraska; my three years starting

*'I am sending you this... in tribute to the PA program at UND. You believed in me, and steered me through a difficult academic year that has enabled me to accomplish many goals. I am proud to serve our country as a physician assistant.'*

**Captain Cristal Horsch, SP, APA**  
(Writing to Annette Larson, PA Program)

up an outpatient VA clinic in North Platte, NE; my five years with the FAA, and my 15 years with the Army National Guard.



*Captain Cristal Horsch (center; in rural Bosnia) has been recognized as "one of the most admired and respected Army medical officers," according to letters of nomination written in her behalf. The care she provided to the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina was "of the highest quality" and she is described as "a shining example as a representative of the United States Army" in the peacekeeping mission in the Balkans.*

**"Without a doubt, Cristal is the most caring and compassionate medical provider I have ever worked with... (Her) professionalism is beyond reproach. She is superbly capable of working independently without supervision, Wilson said. She is equally qualified and has demonstrated her cooperative nature in working closely with her supervisors and other health care providers.**

**"I do not know of any health care professional who is more dedicated to her patients and to her organization than Cristal,"** he added. She "possesses an extraordinarily high degree of motivation, willingness to help others, and desire to accomplish the mission or task at hand. She is very self-sacrificing and goes out of her way to assist others at any time of the day or night...

"I seriously doubt that there is a more dedicated, compassionate or competent physician's assistant anywhere."

Horsch is from Fort Scott, Kansas. A member of the PA program's faculty, **Annette Larson**, assistant professor in the PA Studies Program, Grand Forks, says, "I remember her well and have had contact with her on occasion after she completed her studies here.

**"She arrived on campus with more than 20 years of nursing experience, a wife and mother of six children. Her desire to become a PA and work with people in a new role was very apparent."**

Horsch says she had "a difficult academic year" as a student in the PA program, Larson says, yet "she is a tribute to all the students who diligently study but their grades are not reflective of the energy and passion they have as students. But then they go on to be successful professionals in their chosen field, making a big difference in people's lives."

Last November, Horsch returned to the U.S. following a term of active duty. She completed the Pathway II Exam in a week and has gone back to active duty, this time in Afghanistan.

"I was recalled to command a medical detachment of four Army National Guard physician assistants and 16 medics in the Provincial Reconstruction of Afghanistan," she said.

She left April 8.

## Alum's Family Suggests Memorials to Scholarship Fund

**Ron Batstone-Cunningham, Ph.D. (B.S. in Clinical Laboratory Science '00)**, was killed tragically in a car accident near Alexandria, MN, in January 2004. He was 49.

His family has requested that memorials be given to the Clinical Laboratory Science Scholarship Program at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

At the time of his death, he was employed at Altru Health System Clinical Laboratory in Grand Forks.

In life and in dying, Dr. Batstone-Cunningham showed his altruism and his love of science. He earned a bachelor of science degree from the University of Puget Sound in 1975 and the doc-



## In Memoriam



**Bernard Varberg, M.D. (B.S. Med. '62)**, an orthopedic surgeon in Minot, passed away Jan. 4, after a battle with cancer. He was 65.

Dr. Varberg was born in Minot and raised on the family farm five miles southwest of Minot. After graduating from Minot High School in 1956 he went on to enroll at the University of North Dakota where he earned the bachelor of science in medicine degree in 1962 from the UND School of Medicine.

He went on to complete the doctor of medicine (M.D.) degree at Temple University Medical School in Philadelphia. He took his internship in Spokane, WA, and then served in the U.S. military at the Minot Air Force Hospital. He completed orthopedic residency in Milwaukee, WI.

He practiced in Bozeman, MT, and Bullhead City, AZ, before moving to Minot in 1991 to practice with Orthopedic Associates and Trinity Health System. In the mid-'90s, he served as Trinity's chief of staff, and was a member and chairman of its credentials committee and a member of the executive committee of the Trinity Health staff for many years.

In addition to caring for thousands of local orthopedic patients, he commuted weekly to provide medical care to patients at outreach clinics in Belcourt, Rolla and Cando, ND.

Dr. Varberg is survived by his wife, Jackie, of Minot; three daughters; two sons, and seven grandchildren.

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Please send your news notes to us at: [spohlman@medicine.nodak.edu](mailto:spohlman@medicine.nodak.edu) or write to: UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Office of Public Affairs, PO Box 9037, Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037. (Include your daytime phone number.)

toral degree in chemistry at the University of California-Berkeley in 1981. His career included teaching at Washington State University, Clemson University, University of Nevada-Reno, University of South Dakota, Moorhead State University and UND.

In 1994, he came to Grand Forks. He earned a bachelor's degree in clinical laboratory science at UND in 2000. He enjoyed analyzing the mechanisms and interferences that occurred in analyte testing procedures.

He is survived by his wife, Betsy, Grand Forks, and children, Benjamin, San Francisco, and Leah, St. Paul, MN.

"The faculty and staff of the CLS Program thank the family for the generosity they have shown in their time of sorrow," said **Mary Coleman, Master of Science in CLS '96**, instructor in pathology and CLS scholarship program chair, Grand Forks.

*Former NIH Research Fellow*

## Biomedical Scientist Explores Calcium's Role in Diseases

*The human body is made up of trillions of cells that fulfill a myriad of purposes. But how do cells know what to do, when to do it and how to coordinate their actions?*

**Brij Singh, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, Grand Forks, is developing a better understanding of calcium's role as a messenger in cell signaling and the channels that enable it to occur.

Advances in this area could help solve a variety of human health problems, ranging from neurodegenerative diseases to cancer to Sjogren syndrome, a disease of the glands that make saliva and tears. It could also serve as a useful diagnostic tool in detecting and treating cancer.

"Calcium signaling is used from cell division to cell death," Singh said. "Most of those processes – from when a cell divides until it dies – are controlled by calcium."

The simple act of picking up a pen requires muscle cells to contract in a manner that makes the arm move toward the pen and the fingers grasp it. Calcium stored within muscle cells is released, sending the signals that tell the cells to contract.

**While calcium's role in cell signaling is well-known, what's not well-understood is how calcium channels are controlled.** Singh's research has identified transient receptor potential (TRP) proteins as ion channels which transfer calcium into cells.

Muscle cells and nerve cells, which function by generating electrical pulses, are excitable. They have a multitude of calcium channels besides TRP proteins. All other cells are nonexcitable, and TRP proteins are the major calcium channels in these cell types.

"What we are doing is fairly new," he says. "The calcium channel activity of TRP proteins was identified only a few years ago. We are studying how the TRP calcium channels function and attempting to discover the mechanisms to turn them on and off whenever needed.

"These channels are very tightly regulated. If there's no calcium



*Biochemist Brij Singh, Ph.D., has identified channels that not only transport calcium but also regulate cell processes such as those that cause cancer, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. A former researcher with the National Institutes of Health, he joined the UND medical school early in 2003.*

**Researcher's work on the role of calcium in cell signaling may lead to a better understanding of cancer, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.**

in the cell, the cell will die. If there's too much calcium in the cell, it will die," Singh says. "If there's a problem with these channels, we need to understand the causes for it happening."

Some TRP proteins are found only in cancerous cells, which make them a useful biomarker for the early discovery and treatment of cancer.

"If these proteins are there, we can say the cancer will develop in a certain amount of time," Singh said. "If we don't see those proteins, we can say that there is no cancer."

**With Parkinson's disease, Singh's research indicates that a certain TRP protein stops neurons from dying.** Through gene therapy, he believes it might be possible to stimulate the production of the protein to protect brain cells. The same treatment might also be effective for Alzheimer's disease, which functions in a similar manner.

*Story and photo by Patrick Miller, communications professional, BRIN (Biomedical Research Infrastructure), with offices at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Grand Forks*

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