More students than ever before are studying medicine at the John A. Burns School of Medicine. The new MD Class of 2014 includes 64 men and women, up from 62, and the new Imi Ho'ola Post-Baccalaureate Program class is now 12, up from 10. The expansion aims to begin addressing a worsening shortage of physicians. At a Hawaii Physician Workforce Summit co-hosted by the medical school in June, data was presented showing that based on its population, the state is at least 600 physicians short of the number who should be practicing here. “The expansion, during a time when state funds have been reduced to the medical school, has required additional dedication and innovation by our faculty and staff, said Dean Jerris Hedges. “We’re grateful our employees realize the workforce shortage is a problem that we can’t afford to ignore.”

The incoming Imi Ho'ola Class includes college graduates from Kaua‘i, the Big Island, Moloka‘i, Maui, O‘ahu, Guam and Rota. If they successfully complete this intensive year of study, they will join the incoming medical doctor Class of 2015.

Quick facts about the MD Class of 2014:

- 64 selected from 1,600 applicants
- 90% are Hawaii‘i residents
- 85% attended Hawaii‘i high schools
- 5 Big Island students, 1 Kaua‘i student
- Ages, 21-31, average age 24
- 18 attended UH Manoa, 2 UH Hilo
- 16 already have advanced degrees

Read more, see videos at http://jabsom.hawaii.edu

In this issue...

New Partnership with 12 Schools, page 2
100 Alumni Turn Out, page 3
Alzheimer’s Experts Gather, page 3
Student Corner, page 4

Record-size Classes to Address Physician Shortage

A Message from Dean Jerris Hedges

It’s been a busy and productive couple of months! In late June, more than 130 leaders in health care and public policy from all islands met for the first-ever Hawaii Physician Workforce Summit, convened by JABSOM. Dr. Kelley Withy presented the latest findings from the physician workforce assessment, which the Hawaii State Legislature has funded through a fee charged on physician licenses. The full report will be presented to lawmakers in January. But the findings continue to show our physician workforce shortage is getting worse.

Dr. Withy and her team reported Hawaii has 644 fewer physicians compared to what the state should have to meet national averages. The graying of our workforce is also a concern. The average age of a Hawaii physician is 51, three years older than the average across the country. Forty percent of our doctors will be eligible to retire within this decade, which could make the deficit even bigger.

JABSOM is taking a number of steps to address the shortage, including modest increases in our class sizes for both the incoming medical student class (to 64) and the Imi Ho'ola Post-Baccalaureate Program, which now annually helps 12 college graduates from Hawaii and the Pacific overcome barriers to medical school.

In July, the medical school and The Queen’s Medical Center launched the first fellowships in cardiology, for post-residency training in a specialty Hawaii needs the most.

We are also moving forward in our efforts to establish a family medicine residency training program on Hawaii Island. JABSOM’s effort – and those of the community and our training partners in the residency program – were enhanced recently, when the state administration approved the release of $140,000 of support appropriated by the Hawaii State Legislature. We hope this Hilo residency will be just the first of several to train physicians in specialties while they live, work – and hopefully consider making their careers – on our neighbor islands.
Alzheimer’s Experts Gather at JABSOM

More than 65 scientists and students from the UH campuses and some mainland U.S. universities attended a preconference meeting of the International Conference of Alzheimer’s Disease (ICAD) at JABSOM on July 9.

The preconference was organized by Dr. Robert Nichols, Professor in the Department of Cell & Molecular Biology, and Dr. Patricia Blanchette, Professor in the Department of Geriatrics and Chief Operating Officer of UCERA, JABSOM’s physician practice plan.

Presentations from internationally renowned experts covered the range from basic to clinical studies on Alzheimer’s Disease, including exciting new approaches to diagnosis and treatment.

Gift Helps Fund Alzheimer’s, Other Research

The Litchman family of Honolulu has donated $150,000 to fund JABSOM research into neurodegenerative disorders and mental illness. The donation will help fund various projects, including Dr. Christina Bell’s research on Alzheimer’s disease.

Alumni Gathering: Sharing Facts and Fun

Almost 100 MD Alumni heard updates from the medical school’s leadership about Hawaii’s physician workforce situation and the School’s expanded education missions during the 3rd Annual Alumni Gathering July 17.

The Class of 1985, celebrating its 25th, traveled from as far as Texas, Chicago and New York to attend. (Thanks to Dr. Kenric and Mrs. Norma Murayama for organizing the ’85-ers.)

See a slide show from the event at: http://jabsom.hawaii.edu/JABSOM/alumni/news.php.

UHM One of 18 Minority Research Centers

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa has been designated one of 18 Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI). The institutions will promote network-wide collaborations aimed at reducing racial and ethnic disparities in health.

The medical school’s Dr. Richard Yanagihara, co-director of the Manoa research center’s Translational Research Network, encourages all UH research faculty to visit http://rtrn.net to create a profile in the Research Centers in Minority Institutions Scientists Directory.

In May, the medical school and several UH Mānoa partners welcomed Dr. Edwina Barnett and Theresa Perry from the RCMI Translational Research Network’s Data and Technology Coordinating Center to take part in multi-disciplinary faculty briefings.

Dr. Barnett and Ms. Perry also attended the Department of Native Hawaiian Health’s He Huliau conference to meet with health disparities experts, including the medical school’s Dr. Marjorie Mau.

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