New Internal Medicine chair to help clinicians balance teaching, research and patient care

It is often a balancing act for clinicians to combine all three aspects of academic medicine into their schedule: research, teaching and patient care.

Dr. Daniel Shapiro, the new H. Edward Manville, Jr. Endowed Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine, aims to work with faculty members in his department to break down any existing barriers to performing all three disciplines effectively.

Shapiro’s clinical background includes caring for patients in urban, suburban and rural medical centers, and treating illnesses specific to a geographic location. Shapiro will be in the classroom this fall teaching microbiology to medical students, giving lectures to residents and consulting on inpatients with infectious disease issues.

The H. Edward Manville, Jr. Endowed Chair for Internal Medicine became the first endowment designated for the University of Nevada School of Medicine in 1968, a year before the school was officially founded. The endowment was established through a $1 million pledge from the Hiram Edward Manville Foundation. Manville was among the earliest supporters of establishing the medical school and a charter member of its advisory board.

Shapiro, an infectious disease internist with expertise in emerging pathogens including biodefense, comes to Nevada from Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, where he was a faculty member, infectious disease specialist and the director of the clinical microbiology laboratories at the Lahey Clinic in Burlington, Mass.

Shapiro said the position at the University of Nevada School of Medicine appealed to him on several fronts.

“Here, there is the expansion potential to grow fellowship and subspecialty programs,” Shapiro said. “The medical student class size is also growing, so there are plenty of opportunities to teach. The School of Medicine has collaborations with several hospitals in the area, which is attractive.”

In addition to helping his colleagues effectively balance the rigors of academic medicine, Shapiro has set a goal of establishing more subspecialty fellowships in major areas of internal medicine, including endocrinology, cardiology and infectious diseases. He plans to reach out to faculty with expertise in these areas, including infectious disease researchers Tom Kozel and Greg Pari of the microbiology and immunology department, along with other basic scientists.

“We also want to recruit new faculty who have an interest in conducting basic science research, as well as seeing patients,” Shapiro said.

In addition to bioterrorism and emerging pathogens, Shapiro’s academic interests include zoonotic infections—those that can be transmitted from animals to humans—including mad cow disease and avian flu, which have led to a current textbook project geared toward both human and animal health care providers.

The textbook will be organized by type of animal and the specific diseases they may transmit to humans. Shapiro said this approach toward textbook writing differs from most others, in that textbooks are typically organized by disease, which presents a problem for physicians. If a patient presents with symptoms and the physician can’t immediately identify the condition, it may help if the patient says he or she was recently exposed to rabbits, for example. The physician could then refer to Shapiro’s book and look under the chapter on rabbits for a possible diagnosis.

Outside of the medical school, Shapiro is a member of the Reno Chess Club and competes in United States Chess Federation-sanctioned chess tournaments.
Our Families First offers University employees priority access to care

By Matt Lush and Anne Pershing ’83

Dr. Vani Dandolu has achieved several milestones in her 11 short months as chair of the obstetrics and gynecology department at the University of Nevada School of Medicine.

One of her recently completed endeavors was the creation of the Our Families First program, designed specifically for employees of the University Medical Center, the University of Nevada School of Medicine, the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

“They will be seen within three days of their phone call for problem visits and within one week for annual exams,” Dandolu said. “To meet increased demand, we are hiring more faculty providers in our 8,800-square-foot faculty practice in Las Vegas.”

Dandolu had the idea to create the program while seeking a way to increase the patient base at the obstetrics and gynecology clinic. According to Dandolu, the simplest way to increase the patient base was to bring in the 5,000 employees who work at University Medical Center and the University of Nevada School of Medicine and offer employees and their families priority at the clinic. Dandolu also helped to reopen the resident continuity clinic, housed in the 10,000-square-foot Women’s Healthcare Center of Las Vegas facility, which opened in January.

“At the clinic, resident physicians have their own schedules and are able to follow their patients throughout the four years of residency training,” Dandolu said. “Our resident physicians are quite excited about the opportunity to experience their ‘own practice.’ ”

Dandolu’s career began in India, where she went to medical school and completed her initial residency training. She moved to the United States for an additional obstetrics and gynecology residency at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine.

She completed subspecialty training in urogynecology at Temple University Hospital, where she served as a member of the Institutional Review Board, the steering committee for the Center for Women’s Health Research and Leadership and was the OB/GYN representative on the graduate medical education committee. She joined the University of Nevada School of Medicine last August.

Along with creating the Our Families First program, Dandolu has been instrumental in obtaining new equipment for the School of Medicine and has greatly improved the efficiency of procedures and interaction with patients.

“We have state-of-the-art channel urodynamic equipment, biofeedback, pelvic floor rehabilitation, anal manometry and pelvic floor ultrasound,” said Dandolu, a member of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Urogynecologic Society.

Dandolu’s current research projects involve a comparative effectiveness analysis of various management options for urogynecologic conditions, and measuring the physiologic parameters of bladder function and dysfunction in women with chronic disease conditions, including diabetes.

To schedule an appointment with Dandolu or any other physician at the obstetrics and gynecology practice, please contact the School of Medicine’s Patient Care Center at (702) 671-5140.

—Matt Lush, Class of 2015, is a public relations intern at the School of Medicine. Anne Pershing ’83 (speech/theater) is a longtime, award-winning Nevada journalist.