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# The Vibe @

The School of Medicine

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This is a publication of the University of Massachusetts Medical School Office of Alumni and Parent Relations.

## Alumni Profile | Jeff Gold, MD



**Class:** 2002  
**Specialty:** Internal Medicine

Jeff Gold, MD, has found a pathway back to the area where he grew up and is providing the type of patient care that is at the heart of SOM's mission. After completing his residency at Scottsdale Healthcare in Arizona, Dr. Gold, who is chair of the UMMS Class of 2002 Reunion

Gift Committee, returned to the Boston area, eventually joining the North Shore Physicians Group, a multispecialty office in Marblehead, Mass. He and fellow SOM alumna Cindy Walendziewicz, MD '04, are among three family practitioners there working closely together to provide the region with more family medicine opportunities.

"The way we work together is very reflective of how we learned in medical school," said Gold, who provides family-centered care to patients of all ages, ranging from newborns to the elderly. "It's very much a group learning process. We feed off each other, learn from each other. That's the type of environment we had at UMMS, with faculty supporting everyone and students wanting their classmates to do well."

In addition to his primary care work, Gold focuses on non-operative sports

medicine and adolescent medicine, and is the medical director of a nursing home. Now a clinical instructor at Tufts Medical School, Gold has a new perspective on students' clinical preparedness and issues affecting the primary care pipeline.

"I remember starting my surgery rotation at St. Elizabeth's and feeling like the other students would be so much smarter. But in the end, I felt we were 100 times more prepared to work with patients, to take histories," he said. "There's no better value in terms of education, even beyond the price, than UMMS Medical School." ■

**Anyone with news to share is encouraged to send their class notes to [alumni@umassmed.edu](mailto:alumni@umassmed.edu). You may also submit notes by visiting the UMass Alumni Online Community at [www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical](http://www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical) and clicking on "Class Notes."**

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# The Vibe @ The School of Medicine

Winter 2012

## Geriatrics Education Elective Takes Off

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (SOM) and Graduate School of Nursing (GSN) students are paving the way for more comprehensive geriatrics education and care through a unique elective. The Navigator Program in Geriatrics is designed to improve the health of older patients by pairing them with students for their primary and subspecialty care appointments.

"We want to raise the bar for students' knowledge of geriatrics, no matter what specialty they will choose as future physicians and nurse practitioners," explained Sarah McGee, MD, MPH, assistant professor of medicine and a faculty advisor to the program.

The clinically based elective, which was initiated two years ago by a SOM student, pairs GSN and second-year SOM students with patients for at least three outpatient medical encounters.

Combined with a series of small-group discussions facilitated by faculty, the elective provides foundational information and experiences that reflect the future of geriatrics education as an interdisciplinary, non physician-centric model that will depend on a team approach.

"Most people say that their 'eureka moment' is less of a single epiphany and more of a gradual realization of how difficult it is for an older person to make sense of multiple doctors, appointments and medications," said Gary Blanchard, MD, assistant professor of medicine and a faculty advisor for the program. Those lessons, however, can take many forms and are influenced by the individual relationships students form with patients and family members, as well as a patient's medical progression and clinical interactions.

Seth Levin, a second-year medical student, has learned much about an older patient's perspective, particularly regarding the unique communications challenges clinicians and older adults may encounter. "I'm trained to interview patients and counsel them, but when you're placed in their shoes you realize that it's not as simple as telling them what they need to do," said Levin. "It's really much more complicated, depending on their situation."

"Sitting in on the appointments, you become the patient's advocate and the patient becomes a teacher in some ways," he continued. "When you talk with them afterward, you learn where



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they are coming from." Levin is also a co-leader of the UMMS Geriatrics Interest Group (GIG), which is organized and run by first- and second-year medical students and provides opportunities for them to shadow geriatricians, participate in community-based screenings for older adults and attend lunch-time lectures by academic geriatricians.

In the program's small-group sessions with faculty, students discuss how to effectively communicate with older adults as well as issues regarding prescribing medications, including the dangers of polypharmacy and not prescribing

*Continued on page 2*



## Students Awarded Alumni Scholarships at Annual Dinner

FOR SEVERAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (SOM) students whose dreams of a medical career once seemed financially out of reach, the SOM Alumni Association has been a lifeline. At the Alumni Scholarship Dinner in September, 24 students received almost \$100,000 in scholarships made possible by generous donations to the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. Nine other students also received more than \$36,000 in scholarships named in honor or remembrance of others.

"This dinner celebrates those who

have generously supported scholarships at UMass Medical School and the outstanding students who benefit from this remarkable philanthropy," said Irv Heifetz, MD '79, president of the UMass Medical School Alumni Association. At the event, five medical students receiving awards shared personal stories of how they chose to pursue medicine and why they decided on UMMS. All offered heart-felt thanks to donors. A video highlighting the personal stories of scholarship recipients is available online at [www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical](http://www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical).

Five scholarships were also given in memory of alumni and friends, including the Linda Rafuse Goudey, MD, Memorial Scholarship, presented to Shannon

◀ Attendees of the Alumni Scholarship Dinner include, from left to right: Guest of a student; Oksana Babchenko, Class of 2014; Matthew Dewolf, Class of 2014; and Andrew Piper, Class of 2015.

Demas, and the Neil Grover Memorial Scholarship, presented to Mitchell Li. Dr. Goudey (Class of 1983) specialized in helping women with high risk-pregnancies, whom she treated as family in a family atmosphere, with her mother, Marguerite Rafuse, working as the office manager. Neil Grover died in 1998, just two years after beginning at UMMS in the Summer Research Fellowship Program. Vice Provost for School Services Deborah Harmon Hines, PhD, reflected, "Neil quickly became somewhat of a nucleus around which the group evolved. Neil shared his passions and compassion, and left his imprint on the program, his fellow participants and me."

Alumni scholarships are made possible by the generosity of alumni, whose careers reflect the exemplary education that UMMS continues to offer. Alumni can donate to the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund online at [w3.UMassmed.edu/OnlineDonation](http://w3.UMassmed.edu/OnlineDonation). ■

## Geriatrics Education... *Continued from page 1*

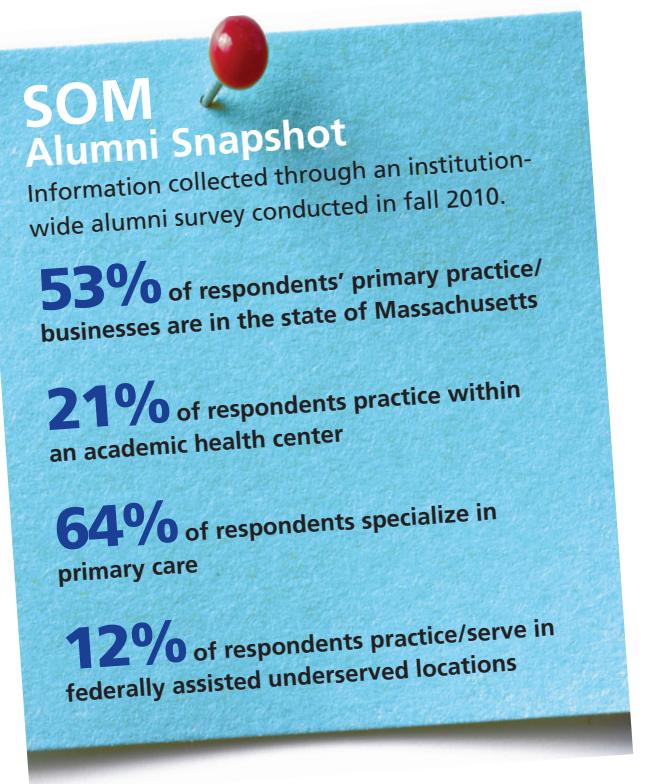
particular medications by virtue of age. End-of-life care, including palliative care, as well as patient concerns related to specialty care visits are also covered.

The session pertaining to end-of-life care was implemented following the deaths of two patients during the program's first year. As the students who were paired with these patients were so profoundly impacted by these outcomes, they recommended the creation of this learning component.

The program's mix of medical and nursing students provides many opportunities for unique information exchanges. "Most of the medical students have limited clinical experience whereas many nurses have a great deal, which means they have a wealth of information to share," said Dr. McGee. "One nursing student, for example, has 20 years of cardiac nursing experience."

Since its inception, the program has doubled to include 28 students. Faculty advisors are working to enhance the interdisciplinary approach by engaging GSN faculty. They are also developing education models where medical students would navigate patients whose primary care provider is a nurse practitioner (NP) and NP students would navigate patients under a physician's care.

"I don't know of another program that would pair students that way, but that's the future of geriatric education," said Dr. Blanchard. "We're teaching medical and nursing students during a formative time of their education and careers, and we're excited about that." ■



## Learning Communities Step Up to Support Worcester Kids

WHEN FOURTH-YEAR medical student Heather Busick was completing her psychiatry rotation, she began wondering about the fate of pediatric patients who were hospitalized without their parents, destined to be discharged into the Department of Children and Families care. Struck by how alone these children must feel, Busick wanted to do something to make them feel better.

A little less than a year and lots of research and planning later, Busick and a group of her fellow students in the Kelley House learning community launched the Kelley Backpacks program in July. Since then, 13 children who have transitioned into state care from UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center and the Pediatric Emergency Department were given a backpack loaded with age- and gender-appropriate items, such as books, stickers, games, hair accessories, toothbrushes, pajamas, blankets and stuffed animals. Kelley House volunteers also pitched in with pager duty to respond to calls alerting organizers that a child was in need of a backpack.

Another student-driven community initiative was launched this year to engage

refugee children from Burma living in the Worcester community in the fun of Halloween. So these children could experience this American holiday firsthand, a group of medical students from Quinsigamond House held a costume drive in October.

Second-year medical student Sarah Tracy came up with the idea as a result of her work with children in the Worcester Refugee Assistance Project (WRAP), which helps refugees from Burma build new lives in this country. "The goal of the costume drive,

in addition to making some kids very happy, was to give Quinsig students another opportunity to volunteer with WRAP and learn from refugees from Burma who are now living in Worcester," said Tracy. Students delivered costumes in plenty of time for Halloween and also discussed trick-or-treat safety and provided information to help parents set guidelines for regulating kids' candy intake. ■



▶ Kelley Backpacks volunteers,

from left to right:

Scott Pascal,

Alison Little,

Heather Busick

and Anne Barnard,

with some

backpacks and a sampling of

items that fill them.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**May 5, 2012**  
Alumni Reunion  
Celebrating years: 1977, 1982,  
1987, 1992, 1997, 2002 & 2007  
UMass Medical School

**June 1, 2012**  
Alumni Graduation Breakfast  
UMass Medical School

**June 3, 2012**  
39th Commencement Ceremony  
Campus Green  
UMass Medical School

Visit [www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical](http://www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical) regularly for additional events.

Celebrating Class Years:  
1977 | 1982  
1987 | 1992  
1997 | 2002 | 2007

**May 5, 2012**

