Hi Everyone

An annual Spring tradition that I most look forward to is a dinner between myself and the Executive of the Community-Based Pediatricians group affiliated with the Department. Thus this week’s Departmental Acknowledgement goes to Diane Munz, Rick Haber, Shirley Blaichman, Carl Cummings, Betty Zylbergold, Naomi Stein and Emmett Francoeur. Unfortunately Ed Shahin was unable to join us.

The dinner gives me a chance to connect with a vital and essential element of our Departmental community. These physicians all share an obvious passion for what they do and a commitment to child health that is family-centred. They truly are “unsung heroes” whose value in our care network is unfortunately vastly under-estimated. The dinner offers an agenda free opportunity to exchange how we can improve things for the children and families that come under our collective care. The community-based physicians are obviously very dedicated to the Department and the MCH as an institution. It’s clear that they are seeking opportunities to contribute to our mission by providing increased pedagogic opportunities for students and trainees in their practices and by providing shared care for children with complex conditions or those that have been admitted to our hospital.

If there was a recurrent theme in our discussion it was around the issue of communication. Clearly those among us who are hospital-based frequently overlook that our time with the children in hospital is but brief and that it is the community-based provider who is the family’s first point of care and ongoing source of support. It surprised (and dismayed) me how rarely the community based providers are actually directly informed of one of their patient’s admission to hospital and how infrequently they receive a copy of a completed discharge summary. It seems that while we like to do the “talk” of shared care, we are not really doing the “walk” as we should. Communication when it comes to patient care is a vital aspect of both patient safety and optimizing outcomes. Clearly this is an area in which we can all work together to make things better by remembering that there is someone on the outside of our physical walls with whom we need to partner with and engage in for comprehensive health care delivery.

An interesting initiative of the group is an annual scholarship of $1000 to a McGill medical student who demonstrates excellence in academics and who shows outstanding promise for a career in pediatrics. This year’s recipient is Johnny Efranov who received his award fresh from a presentation at the PAS meeting in Washington, DC. An especially nice touch by the group was linking this year’s award to honouring Fred Weiner who retired after a remarkable six decades of community pediatrics practice.

Before concluding I just want to add a short addendum to last week’s superb Acknowledgement penned by Saleem Razack. Saleem was unaware that Celia Rodd was this year’s recipient of the Paige and Bernard Kaplan Award given by the pediatric residents annually to a staff member for teaching excellence.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael