



The Arnold P. Gold Foundation
*Working to keep the **care** in healthcare*

www.humanism-in-medicine.org

Summer 2013

GHHS PROFILE:

Meghan Wilson MD/PhD

Quadriplegia is no match for her perseverance

While still in high school, Meghan Wilson decided to become a doctor. Not a surprising choice for someone near the top of her class, a member of the math league, and president of a service club. But during her senior year, Meghan's life took an unanticipated turn. As the result of a skiing accident, her spinal cord was crushed. While Meghan eventually recovered the use of her shoulders and an elbow, she still has only very limited use of one arm and no sensation from the neck down.

Adjusting to life with quadriplegia is not easy. Meghan requires personal aides to help her wash, dress, and eat and uses an electric wheelchair to get around.

But undoubtedly, one of the most difficult things for Meghan and other people with disabilities to learn to deal with are the limitations that are the result of other people's attitudes and perceptions. It is those societal attitudes and perceptions that turn a disability into a handicap.

After a year of rehabilitation and psychological adjustment to her quadriplegia, Meghan pursued an undergraduate



degree in neurobiology at the University of Florida. Thinking a medical degree was not achievable, she planned to conduct research. But the encouragement of a professor to pursue a degree in medicine changed her mind. With top MCAT scores and grades and a successful research project under her belt, Meghan applied for an MD/PhD program at 12 medical schools. Despite her stellar qualifications, she was not accepted to any of them. They could not conceive of a person with quadriplegia going to medical school or being a physician.

Clearly not one to give up, Meghan tried again the following year. She reapplied to medical school, this time sending letters explaining how she planned to achieve her goal with the help of trained medical assistants working under her direction during patient examinations. Of the 15 schools she applied to, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine was the only one to admit her. This year, almost a decade of hard work paid off, and Meghan received her MD/PhD from Pitt.



THE GOLD

Humanism Honor Society

is comprised of over 20,000 medical students, residents, faculty and administrators recognized for practicing patient-centered care.

GHHS maintains a networked community which shares ideas, resources and support to sustain and advocate for the human side of medicine.

With chapters at 104 American medical schools and 10 pilot residency chapters in teaching hospitals, GHHS members model the qualities of integrity, excellence, compassion, altruism, respect, empathy and service.



HUMANITAS

notes from the human side of healthcare

After 25 years of working to ensure that the human side of medicine remains a central part of the doctor-patient relationship, we look at our history with a great sense of pride about the accomplishments we have achieved. Incredibly well known and well respected within the academic medical community, [the programs of The Arnold P. Gold Foundation](#) have become a permanent part of the culture of most medical schools in North America.

Our White Coat Ceremony is now performed at 96% of North American medical schools as well as in 13 other countries. Representing a 75% increase over 2012, this year over 140 medical students applied for APGF Student Summer Fellowships, seeking an opportunity to engage in research and community service with underserved populations. The Gold Humanism Honor Society is now 104 medical school chapters strong with an additional 10 residency chapters being piloted in teaching hospitals. With 312 submissions, our Student Essay Contest saw an increase of almost 57% from last year's entries. So exceptional were they that the choice of three new national Gold Professors out of this year's truly exceptional group of 50 applicants proved a Solomonic chore for our stellar selection committee. Clearly, APGF has solidly established the value of deeply investigating and investing in humanizing medicine.

But, like healthcare itself, The Arnold P. Gold Foundation has arrived at a tipping point: after 25 years, the number of our "graduates," physicians now in practice whose lives we have

touched through our undergraduate programs far exceeds those who are currently in medical school. And so we must look to the future as we simultaneously gaze upon our past accomplishments. As the practice of healthcare under reform continues to morph at a rapid pace, we believe that it is of critical importance to ensure that patients remain at the center of healthcare. In the realm of research as well as in the popular press, the value of the patient-centered relationship is important news. This value is expressed through the human connection between not just doctor and patient, but with the entire healthcare team. All interactions that patients have with the healthcare system must reflect the values of humanistic care. We believe that to counterbalance the push to see an increasing number of patients in less and less time, these fundamental values must be actively reinforced in healthcare practice. And we are taking steps to move this belief forward.

As this edition of DOC goes to print, APGF is collaborating with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing to develop partnership programming that will strengthen and elevate The Foundation's ideals throughout the critical world of nursing. This is the beginning of an exciting new direction for APGF. It is the newest of many potential partnerships that will assist us in keeping the care in healthcare.

Richard I. Levin, MD, President and CEO

Keep in Touch!

Thanks for reading *DOC* in print. You can also choose to receive an enhanced version of *DOC* electronically. E-mail Kerry at kerry@gold-foundation.org. No need for a note—just put "Go Green" and your name in the subject line and Kerry will do the rest!



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@GoldCareInMed. We tweet links to interesting articles about the doctor-patient relationship, relevant research and news about APGF.



Tune into YouTube

Tune into our YouTube channel for video about the human side of medicine by APGF and others at <http://bit.ly/goldfdtnyoutube>.

5 Reasons to Visit Our Website

humanism-in-medicine.org



1 Meet our 3 new Gold Professors and learn about research they will be conducting. They were chosen from among an impressive national group of over 50 applicants. <http://bit.ly/2013goldprofessors>

2 Read the first, second and third place winning medical student essays from our 2013 Humanism in Medicine Essay Contest. The winners had lots of competition with 316 essays submitted! <http://bit.ly/GoldEssays>

3 Need an easy way to explain to others why APGF is important? Visit our Frequently Asked Questions page. <http://bit.ly/goldfaqs>

4 Learn about the \$500,000 grant awarded to Gold Foundation by the prestigious Picker Institute as it ends 27 successful years of promoting healthcare through the eyes of the patient. <http://bit.ly/pickergrant>

5 Watch the highlights of a recent PBS show, "Humanism in Medicine," featuring a discussion with APGF's President & CEO, Richard I. Levin, three Gold DOCs and a Student Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine awardee. <http://bit.ly/caucusnjhighlights>

Meet Sharrie McIntosh, our new V.P.

Sharrie McIntosh, MHA, has joined The Gold Foundation as our new Vice President, Programs and Strategic Development. Ms. McIntosh will be responsible for managing the Foundation's current portfolio of programs, developing new program initiatives that align with our strategic goals, and working with the Foundation's Research Institute to assess the impact of our most important programs. Additionally, she will work to develop and implement future strategic priorities, achieve resource mobilization goals, and identify and cultivate new partnership opportunities important for continuing our mission.

Ms. McIntosh has over 15 years of experience both as a consultant and in executive level positions in the healthcare field. She served as a Vice President at The Lewin Group, a healthcare and human services consulting company, where she assisted diverse organizations to improve program performance and quality. As a consultant, she advised public and private sector clients (e.g., United States

Department of Health and Human Services, foundations, hospitals, advocacy groups and community-based organizations) in the areas of healthcare and social services delivery, strategic planning, program design and implementation, performance measurement, program evaluation, policy analysis, and partnership development. Ms. McIntosh also served as the Affiliations Administrator at NYU School of Medicine/Langone Medical Center where she managed the affiliation contract between the School of Medicine and its hospitals (e.g., Bellevue Hospital Center). Ms. McIntosh received a Masters in Health Administration from Pennsylvania State University.

We welcome Sharrie, a new creative and dynamic presence, to APGF and are excited to begin this chapter in the Foundation's growth.



THE ARNOLD P. GOLD
FOUNDATION

Announces our first annual event!



Honoring

Patient Advocates and Exemplars of Humanism

Ronald A. Arky, M.D., Harvard Medical School

Mary Fisher, Artist, Author and AIDS activist

When & Where

Tuesday, October 1, 2013 • WGBH Studios, Boston

To participate, post a tribute, or make a contribution, contact Lori Gans, Senior Director of Development for the New England Region at lgans@gold-foundation.org.

WHERE Are They Now?



In the second installment in our “Where Are They Now?” series, meet five practicing doctors who received the APGF Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award as medical students:

1. Dr. Christian Vercler, a Plastic Surgeon at C.S. Motte Children’s Hospital-University of Michigan; 2. Dr. Phillip Saylor, a Medical Oncologist at Massachusetts General Hospital;

3. Dr. Neal Elkin, an Internist in private practice; 4. Dr. Brandon Barton, a Neurologist at Rush University Medical Center; and 5. Dr. Gelaheh Abedi, an Ophthalmologist at U. of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio.

These interview excerpts show the value of the human side of medicine.

Q. How would you define humanism in medicine?

A. Dr. Elkin - One of the defining aspects of humanism in medicine is a willingness on the part of the provider to be truly present while interacting with patients. When the patient and the medical provider interact as people, the interactions are more reciprocal and are more able to address the patient’s needs.

A. Dr. Vercler - Try to respect the dignity inherent in every human being. Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, never merely as a means to an end. In medicine, never treating a person as only a means to an end means that ultimately the patient’s best interests have to be first and foremost.

A. Dr. Barton - [It includes] the ability to equally synthesize the culture, perspective, and background of the patient into the medical context to make the most appropriate assessment and plan, and also to communicate this most effectively to the patient.

Q. What did receiving the TOW award mean to you going forward in your career?

A. Dr. Elkin - It was a great honor and helped me stay focused on ethics during and after residency.

A. Dr. Saylor - I try to care for patients in a thoughtful and personally engaging way because I believe it is the best way to practice medicine. To receive this award was a powerful affirmation of the values I believe to be important.

A. Dr. Vercler - It was quite a pleasant surprise to win this award. I think those types of awards just reflect the approach I try to take with every person I encounter. So, trying to live up to the ideals promoted by the Gold Foundation have served me well.

Q. How do you incorporate humanism in your practice in a system that doesn’t always support it?

A. Dr. Abedi - Just like anything else in life, you’ve got to make time for it and constantly be aware because it doesn’t magically happen. My father once told me that my worse day as a physician is better than my patient’s best day. That’s very true. No matter how bad of a day I have, I always remember that my patients are probably going through worse and that a little bit of a kindness and a smile go a long way. Patients are very understanding and very kind. They forgive mistakes; but they never forget a harsh word or an unkind gesture.

Interview continued on page 5

A Visit with the Doc

A. Dr. Saylor - I think that the day-to-day challenge is to always remember what it is that attracted me to medicine, and what is personally rewarding. There are many small practical decisions that can be successfully navigated if these things are kept in mind.

A. Dr. Vercler - I almost always have residents and medical students with me and I take every opportunity that I can to educate them on what I call "appropriate" behavior and attitudes towards caring for patients. So, I guess I am trying to affect the players within the system and maybe open their eyes as to ways the system dehumanizes patients.

Q. How would you advise the patient population to encourage a more humanistic approach by their doctors?

A. Dr. Elkin - Treat your providers with respect. Be polite, but also be demanding. You have a right to know what's happening to you. Pay attention to what people are doing to you and insist on intelligible answers. Show appreciation when someone takes extra time and effort to explain things to you.

A. Dr. Saylor - It is important that patients affirm the positive things they perceive within their relationships with their medical providers. Positive feedback is powerful.

A. Dr. Barton - Don't be afraid to bring up your personal fears and beliefs for fear of offending the doctor. A good doctor will try to take your opinion and background into account. If you don't feel your doctor understands you, ask to schedule more time so that they can explore all your concerns.

Quality Time?

With all of the time you spend waiting for an annual physical, is the time you actually spend with the doctor used well?

The Waiting Begins

7 Days until next available well-visit appointment in Miami

Days until next available well-visit appointment in Boston **65**



Ready yet?



20 minutes, 15 seconds
Average amount of time a patient spends in the waiting room

20 minutes
Average amount of time a patient will wait patiently before they start to feel their time is being wasted



In the Exam Room

Most offices schedule a 15 or 20 minute block for each appointment. While that's adequate for 52% of patients, 48% of patients need more time than that.

15% need



10 minutes or less

37% need



11-15 minutes

38% need



16-30 minutes

10% need



30-60 minutes or more

Look Who's Talking

Doctor asks **25** questions

Patients are interrupted

18

seconds into an explanation.

Patient asks **5** questions

Prepare For Your Visit

Follow these steps to make the most of your appointment



Prepare and prioritize a list of your symptoms, questions and concerns



If you have reports or test results from other doctors, bring them with you



Write down your doctor's instructions and review them together to make sure you both have the same understanding



Ask questions:
- Followup visit needed?
- Side effects of medication?
- What symptoms warrant a call?
- When will test results be ready?

For sources, see http://bit.ly/Gold_infographics

Interview continued from page 1

Meghan was also chosen by her peers to be inducted into their chapter of the Gold Humanism Honor Society. “It meant so much to me! I feel like my ability to relate to people is one of my clinical strengths, so it was incredibly validating to be recognized as a humanistic student. It is the academic and professional honor that I am most proud of,” Meghan said. She was surprised that she was nominated because after finishing her PhD, she had to rejoin a new class of medical students for her third and fourth year of clerkship and so she got a late start getting to know them. Meghan feels that being a member of GHHS has given her the opportunity to connect with other students and faculty who place a high priority on humanism.

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According to Dr. Jason Rosenstock, a 2012 Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine awardee, Director of Medical Student Education, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and a member of Pitt’s GHHS Chapter, “At the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, it truly is an honor to be selected to the Gold Humanism Honor Society. Students take the voting very seriously, it’s very selective, and the inductees are widely recognized. They play an important role in encouraging humanism throughout the medical school, including activities like the White Coat Ceremony and orientation to 3rd year, as well as wellness and burnout prevention interventions. I think both faculty and fellow students were thrilled that Meghan was selected because we know that she represents all that we aspire to as medical providers.”

When asked about the importance of being a compassionate doctor, Meghan said, “I think that mental and psychological health play a large role in people’s ability to heal and stay

healthy, and that when we are compassionate, we validate patients’ feelings, help them to maintain their sense of identity while in the vulnerable patient role, and help empower them to cope effectively and adopt healthy attitudes and actions. I also think that having genuine and personal interactions with our patients can help us to maintain our own sense of humanity and interconnectedness, and to derive more satisfaction and fulfillment from our work.” Through her experiences as a patient, Meghan had first-hand experience how great an impact

even simple humanistic gestures can have on a patient’s healthcare experience and overall well-being. Dr. Rosenstock, who has worked with Meghan in clinical settings, is very impressed with her ability to connect with patients. He feels that she quickly establishes rapport and is always interested in people’s lives, not just their symptoms. This ability, coupled with her great knowledge base and facility with therapeutics

allows her to efficiently direct care in appropriate ways.

As a practitioner of rehabilitation medicine, Meghan hopes to create a rehab environment that will support patients’ physical, emotional and psychosocial recovery through humanistic interactions and practices. To reach her goal, Meghan will next complete a one year internship at Northside Medical Center in Youngstown, Ohio and then a three year residency at the University of California, Irvine.

We welcome Meghan into the Gold Humanism Honor Society. We are sure that she will continue to be exactly the kind of doctor that we’re proud to say is a member as well as a great role model for her patients and colleagues alike. We look forward to following her career!



DID YOU KNOW?

Recently, 57% of cancer patients in a Duke Cancer Institute survey said they wanted to talk about treatment costs with their doctors, but only 19% actually did.

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On behalf of patients, their families and dedicated caregivers,
we thank you for your generosity.

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Staff Picks

In his 3rd book, ***And in Health: A Guide for Couples Facing Cancer Together***, Dr. Dan Shapiro has created a manual for couples dealing with a cancer diagnosis. He draws on his own experiences as a psychologist, as a cancer patient and as the spouse of a cancer patient to offer advice and insight on maintaining a strong relationship while facing cancer.

Dr. Shapiro uses humor, compassion, and pragmatism to address the challenges of managing illness, including dealing with physicians and getting the best care possible; strategies for coping with a wide range of emotions, both individually and as a couple; and accepting the new forms of intimacy and dependence that come with facing serious illness together.

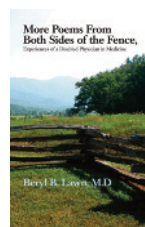
Dan Shapiro, PhD, is The Arnold P. Gold Foundation Professor of Medical Humanism and the Chair of the Department of Humanities at Penn State College of Medicine.



More Poems from Both Sides of the Fence: Experiences of a Disabled Physician in Medicine, the 2nd book of poetry by Dr. Beryl Lawn, illustrates her experiences as a practicing physician who is also a paraplegic.

The poems capture the essence of what it is to be a humanistic physician, while also sharing the deeply personal and poignant reality of connecting with patients with the perspective of having also lived on the patient "side of the fence." Dr. Lawn weaves humor, anger, and sadness throughout this touching collection that should be required reading for medical students and residents as well as a staple in medical humanities courses across the country.

Beryl Lawn, MD, is an internist and psychiatrist from Temple, TX. She sustained a spinal cord injury in a crime-related incident shortly before beginning medical school in 1968.



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