Dear Colleagues:

As you travel north/west on I-95 and I-64, it’s hard to miss the tall construction crane just before the ramp to I-64 West. It’s a tangible sign that construction is moving along quickly on the VTCC Facility at the Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU on the Brook Road campus. You can see the outline of the front entrance and to the left the angled roofline of the gym. The second floor is visible now, which will house the Commonwealth Institute for Child and Family Studies, the Administrative offices and the Collaborative Core for faculty and clinical staff. Furniture is being selected and state-of-the-art room scheduling software and other applications are being explored. The construction group just finished the mock-up of the private bedroom, bath and seclusion rooms that will be used on the inpatient units. The most up-to-date safety features have been identified for use in these areas. We are on track for completion in summer 2017!

Please join us for the second Banjo’s, Beers and Butts fundraiser that will take place on Saturday, April 23 at 3:30 p.m. at Historic Tredegar. Music will be provided by Jackass Flats and food from Mission BBQ. Please save the date, if you have not already. We hope to have more than 350 guests to enjoy casual music, good food and learn more about the innovative treatments, research and education in the field of mental health at the VCU Department of Psychiatry and The Virginia Treatment Center for Children. Tickets are $55 and last year’s event sold out! For more information, please contact our Department Director of Development, Mrs. Lynn Meyer at 804-827-6297 or lynn.meyer@vcuhealth.org. We hope to see you there!

With their daughter’s smiling face as the background, David and Grace Gallagher proudly presented their annual pledge payment toward a $250,000 naming opportunity for the Virginia Treatment Center for Children’s new facility in support of the Children’s Mental Health Resource (CMHRC) Center. They were drawn to CMHRC’s work because of the significant need to help parents and family members find the right services for their children and helping to navigate the complexities of the children’s mental health system. The Department of Psychiatry joins the Cameron K. Gallagher Foundation in their efforts to reduce stigma and promote awareness of teenage depression through the SpeakUp 5K and other community presentations.
Rachel McLaughlin recently joined the division of Addiction Psychiatry as a Nurse Practitioner with the Substance Abuse Consult Service. Prior to joining Addiction Psychiatry, Rachel was an NP at VCU Orthopaedic Surgery in Joint Reconstruction. Rachel has been with VCU Health for 18 years. She obtained her MS degree at VCU in the School of Nursing and her BSN at Christopher Newport University. She is married with two adult children. In her spare time she enjoys baking, trying new recipes and engaging friends as taste testers.

Jessica Green has been working in the field of mental health for 26 years. She is a licensed clinical social worker, licensed psychiatric nurse practitioner and licensed primary care nurse practitioner. She recently received an additional ANCC certification in gerontology. “My favorite place to work is in an inpatient psychiatric hospital, where I can pursue all of my interests,” Jessica says. She lives in Beavercamp, Virginia with her husband and two mastiffs. Her other interests include sailing, spinning wool, gardening and aquariums. Jessica works in Adult Inpatient Psychiatry.

Joanna McAbee worked for many years in administration as manager of a medical practice, director of development of a non-profit agency providing substance use and social rehabilitation for the homeless and general manager of a geriatric-focused home medical equipment company before returning to school to realize her life-long dream of becoming a direct care medical provider. She earned her Master’s degree as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Adult Health (board certified), and a post-master’s certification as Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (board certified), with additional certifications in Nursing Education and Substance Abuse. She has experience in academia, outpatient practice and inpatient settings, but her passion is inpatient care - treating vulnerable patients with acute psychiatric conditions and chronic social problems requiring a network of supportive care to achieve recovery. She is the proud mother of one daughter (nurse graduate of VCUSON) and one son (world-traveling photographer based in Los Angeles) and the grandmother of four absolutely fabulous grandchildren. Joanna works in Adult Inpatient Psychiatry also.

Gigi Rosenblatt grew up in Baltimore and received her B.S. in Nursing from Salisbury State University and her Master’s of Science Degree from The University of Maryland in 1994. Gigi is board certified as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in psychiatric and mental health nursing and holds an added certification in chemical dependency. After a stint as a travelling nurse, she spent most of her career in the Johns Hopkins Hospital system, serving as a senior clinical nurse on general, geriatric and eating disorders specialty units, as a case manager and as a nurse manager of multiple substance abuse units. She has been an expert witness, an author and a faculty instructor for the Johns Hopkins Hospital system, serving as a senior clinical nurse on general, geriatric and eating disorders specialty units, as a case manager and as a nurse manager of multiple substance abuse units. She was an NP at VCU Orthopaedic Surgery in Joint Reconstruction. Rachel has been with VCU Health for 18 years. She obtained her MS degree at VCU in the School of Nursing and her BSN at Christopher Newport University. She is married with two adult children. In her spare time she enjoys baking, trying new recipes and engaging friends as taste testers.

The division of Clinical Health Psychology is pleased to announce that Therese Verkerke Cash will be our 2016-2017 Postdoctoral Fellow. Therese will receive her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University in August following completion of her clinical psychology internship at the Hunter Holmes McGuire Veteran’s Administration Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia. Therese completed an interesting dissertation on the topic of decreased sound tolerance (misphonia and hyperacusis) as related to various physical and mental health conditions. She is an author on five published articles and has been a presenter or contributor to 19 professional presentations at local, national and international conferences. She has previously trained at the VCU medical center in the Departments of Neurology, Rehabilitation Medicine and in Psychiatry with faculty in Clinical Health Psychology.

You can access the Chair Letter online at: http://psych.vcu.edu
I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii at Tripler Army Hospital and moved frequently since my dad was career military. My family settled in Northern Virginia when I began high school and lived in the same house for 29 years until my parents retired to the Northern Neck. My siblings and our families love to visit them there and swim, fish and boat.

Math and science were my interests so I attended the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science and earned a Bachelor’s of Science in Toxicology. I had been fascinated with the human body since I learned the names of the major bones in 7th grade science class and had decided then I would study medicine. I never told my parents until after my sophomore year of college. My mother’s response was: “It’s a phase, you’ll get over it.” Luckily I didn’t. I attended medical school at the Medical College of Virginia, where I graduated with a doctorate in medicine and a husband. We knew we would ultimately settle in Richmond so we decided to travel to another area of the country for our residencies; Birmingham, Alabama.

As a medical student, I had volunteered at VTCC and planned to return for a fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. They offered me a spot and we moved back to Richmond. I felt well-prepared for a career in psychiatry and I have practiced outpatient psychiatry for almost 22 years now. I have worked at Henrico County CSB, Henrico County Jail, Insight Physicians and Commonwealth Counseling Associates. The flexibility of my hours has enabled me to be a very involved mother with my two children, Rivers and Laura, who are now 24 and 19. I was a Girl Scout leader for 12 years, helped govern my son’s Boy Scout Troop and sewed costumes for the productions in which our daughter participated. Now I volunteer at my church by planning a project called Stone Soup. It is a microfundraiser dinner and each participant gets dinner and a stone. Three nonprofits each present a project idea and the stones are used to vote for each person’s favorite. Last month we raised over $2,400 for three groups that help homeless in Richmond.

I enjoy knitting, sewing, exercising, traveling and spending time with my family. My husband and I enjoyed a trip last fall to Italy, Greece and Turkey by ourselves! He is an internist at West End Internal Medicine and planning a big trip is about the only way to get him to take time off! Our daughter Laura is a sophomore at William and Mary and is looking forward to a study abroad program this summer in Capetown, South Africa. Our son Rivers works for Bon Secours in the Movin’ Mania program — a pediatric obesity prevention initiative. He is halfway through a Master’s of Health Administration degree through Seton Hall. He will be getting married this summer so we have lots of exciting changes this year!

When Laura graduated from high school in 2014, we returned to our favorite area of Richmond, the Fan. Three factors led me to return to VTCC — I wanted to be closer to home, I was ready for a change and I am very excited about the new hospital. It is a huge step forward for mental health for kids in Virginia. I hope I can use my experience to train the next generation of child psychiatrists and psychologists and get more professionals out in the field.

My newest area of interest is treating patients with transgender issues. Many families experience shame and confusion when their child isn’t behaving in a traditional manner consistent with their biological sex. They often are criticized by family, friends, the community and the media when they attempt to support their child in their expressed gender. I have seen that empowering parents to accept their child’s self-expression and stand up for them in their communities can help the child feel happier and more secure. Another area where I enjoy working is eating disorders. Families often feel ashamed when their child has an eating disorder and they want to deny and hide it. Supporting them to accept these disorders are brain diseases that affect an individual’s relationship with food can be quite healing. I think it is an exciting time to be a psychiatrist because public awareness of these issues and their biologic bases is increasing. I hope through education and acceptance, we can lessen the burden and the stigma of mental diseases.
In Memory of Dr. Ram Shenoy

Dr. Ramakrishna Shenoy, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry in our department, died on February 20, 2016 at the age of 74. He was a caring physician and a strong advocate for patients and the profession. A graduate of Calicut Medical College, India (MBBS), he did his psychiatry residency at the Medical College of Virginia (1975). He served for 21 years as staff psychiatrist at the McGuire VAMC, 10 years at the Southern Virginia Training Center, 3 years at Central State Hospital and maintained a private practice for over 20-years. Dr. Shenoy specialized in dual diagnoses of intellectual disability and mental disorders. For his sustained work on this topic, he received the Menolascino Award from the American Psychiatric Association. Dr. Shenoy passionately argued for his opinions and got results. He regularly wrote letters to the editor and marched on White Coat Day. He was principally responsible for what came to be known as Jeff’s Law in Virginia which requires that the patient’s doctor be consulted prior to decisions about involuntary hospitalization. He also felt strongly that not enough is done to de-stigmatize suicide, and raised funds for a successful media campaign on suicide prevention. Dr. Shenoy was a knowledgeable, passionate and persuasive person. His contributions to the profession will be long remembered.

Dr. Pandurangi Honored

This past January, Dr. Ananda Pandurangi, Vice Chair of the Department and Division Chair of Inpatient Psychiatry, was honored by the Indo American Psychiatry Association with the Indian Global Psychiatric Initiative 2016 Award for his significant contributions to Psychiatry in the United States and India. The award was presented at the annual IAPA conference in India.

Dr. Pandurangi was also recently awarded a Global Visiting Scholar grant through VCU’s Quest Global Impact Awards. The grant will provide assistance in bringing Dr. Mohan Agashe, a psychiatrist and renowned actor, to VCU as a global visiting scholar next year. A screening of his film Astu (So be it) will follow the fictional life of Dr. Chakrapani Shastri, a retired professor suffering from dementia who goes missing while traveling with his family. Dr. Agashe performs in the primary role and co-produced the film.

Welcome

We welcome the following Interns into our Residency Program. They will arrive at the end of June.

PGY1 Interns will be: Sha Ali, M.D., VCU School of Medicine; Marian Coleman, D.O., WV School of Osteopathic Medicine; Greg Correia, M.D., University of Miami School of Medicine, Jamie Fields, D.O., Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine; Ashley Harvin, M.D., VCU School of Medicine; Melorah Jacque, D.O., Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine; Kayia Jones, M.D., UNC Chapel Hill School of Medicine; Amar Mukhtar, D.O., Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine; Lauren Parr, M.D., University of Minnesota Medical School; Roxanne Sholevar, M.D., Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University; and Katie Williams, M.D., VCU School of Medicine.

We are pleased to announce that two of our PGY4s matched and are staying with the department as next year’s Psychosomatic Medicine Fellows. Dr. Inna Garber, New York College of Osteopathic Medicine and Dr. Troy Hoff, Edward Via School of Osteopathic Medicine has been selected.

We also welcome incoming Child & Adolescent Fellows for the coming year. Dr. Shrina Desai, American University of the Caribbean and residency at VCU; Dr. Daina Ngugi, A.T. Still University College of Osteopathic Medicine and residency at VCU and Dr. Aslihan Sogutlu, Osmangazi University and Jamaica Hospital Medical Center, New York.

We also welcome all three of this year’s Psychosomatic Medicine Fellows who will be joining our faculty at the completion of their Fellowships: Dr. Bushra Shah will be at Outpatient Psychiatry at the Jackson Center and RBHA, Dr. Shivan Desai will be at McGuire Veteran’s Administration Medical Center and Dr. Sherin Moideon will be at District 19 and Outpatient Psychiatry at the Jackson Center.

Congratulations

* Dr. Joe Bledowski has been appointed by VCU School of Medicine to serve as Course Director for the M2 "Mind, Brain and Behavior" course. We are also very excited to have a visiting resident Nishikant Parikh, PGY-4 from UVA. Dr. Parikh will be completing a 6-month rotation in public psychiatry.

* Congratulations to Dr. Cheryl Al-Mateen on the recent publication (electronic and print format) of her new book Handbook of Mental Health in African American Youth.

* Congratulations to Dr. Jim Brown on the recent publication of his book, The Endocrine Disruption Theory of Schizophrenia.

* Congratulations to Tess Searls as the new Nurse Manager of VTCC.

You can access the Chair Letter online at: http://psych.vcu.edu
Hi, my name is Delores Richards-Madikiza. I am the Community Relations Coordinator for VTCC; I work under the leadership of Dr. Alexandria “Sandy” Lewis, Executive Director of VTCC, to do community outreach for our department. My duties include representing the department at community events, reaching out to our referral sources to provide updates and receive feedback, assisting with the Annual Children’s Mental Health Symposium and providing support to the VTCC Advisory Council. You may have seen me around and about chasing down “camera shy” staff members for a picture.

Like many members of our department, I am a transplant. I was raised in New York State and spent much of my childhood in Saratoga Springs, NY, where my father had a business. I spent my teen and young adult years in Brooklyn. At one point in my life I wanted to be an Educational Psychologist. I received my Bachelor’s degree in Education, with a minor in Educational Psychology, from the State University of New York at Oneonta and later in my journey a Master’s degree in Education from VCU. I initially moved to Richmond so I could be actively involved in my (then) young nieces’ lives.

My father first exposed my brother and me to marketing. Several times a year we would help him mail calendars, cards and other promotional items to his customers to encourage them to return. The efforts worked! My exposure to mental health treatment happened during my first job. Fresh and green right out of college I took a position as a GED Instructor for a residential drug treatment program in Manhattan. I knew nothing about heroin, addiction, prison, trauma, “hanging paper” or mental health treatment. You might say I had a “crash course wakeup call”. All of my young adult students were former inmates from either Riker’s Island or Manhattan Prison. Most were incarcerated as teenagers with the average length of incarceration being five years. The psychologists and counselors worked with the courts to get these young adults released to the program so they could have a chance at rehabilitation. I admired the work of the program.

Because of the therapeutic supports, many of the residents completed the program, got their GED, received job training and went on to build a better life. My first job made me realize that education can occur anywhere and that I was better suited for non-traditional education venues. After relocating to Richmond I transitioned to health promotion and marketing, first to promote cancer education and prevention to minorities and then to coordinate a program for pregnant and parenting teens. Ironically it was through my teen mothers that I learned about VTCC. They loved the treatment they received, especially occupational therapy.

As for children, I am the mother of one grown son who complains that I bother him. I know he loves it! In my spare time I enjoy reading novels by Debbie Macomber who writes through the lens of 1960’s small town America. Somehow, I remember that period. I’m a history and genealogy buff with a passion for researching my mother’s extensive family. She and her siblings migrated to New York from Danville, Virginia. Thanks to genealogy resources and the Library of Virginia I’ve been able to find records on distant relatives who once lived in Lynchburg, Roanoke and other parts of Southwest Virginia. I’m still involved in my nieces’ lives and they love it! I have other family members who followed me here to live from New York and Connecticut. We all volunteer with my oldest niece’s foundation, The JP Jumpers, to help create an awareness of the special needs community. Last but not least, I like spending time with my DBD (Dog by Default), “Mack Attack the Destroyer Defender of Human and Beast”. One day I hope to successfully train him not to invite strangers in the house.
Thanks to the generosity of Chef Paolo Randazzo, owner of Portico Restaurant, and the dedication of top volunteers Martha Grover and Grace and David Gallagher, the fifth annual Chef’s Dinner raised nearly $20,000 to support the Healthy Minds Campaign. Held on January 31, the event welcomed nearly 100 guests and featured a custom-created four-course dinner prepared by Chef Paolo. Notable items at the live auction included a weekend escape to the exclusive Primland Resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains and a stay at The Georges, a new boutique hotel in Lexington, Virginia that is owned by top supporters Teddy and Ann Parker Gottwald. Special guests of the evening included Dr. and Mrs. Jerome Strauss and Deborah Davis, COO, MCV Hospitals.

This has been a busy year for the INOVA- VCU division of Psychiatry. Dr. Cathy Crone completed her presidency of the Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine (APM) which had a very successful meeting in New Orleans. Dr. Tom Wise presided over the biannual meeting of the International College of Psychosomatic Medicine. Dr. Wise also taught a course on Consultation & Liaison in Berlin this past November at the KEH hospital which is linked to the University of Berlin.

At the APM, there was much interest in the ongoing refinement of models to better integrate Psychiatry into Primary Care. The framework for many such models is the collaborative care model developed at the University of Washington by Wayne Katon who sadly died in 2015. At INOVA we are using a hybrid of this framework. Our primary care practices screen patients with the Patient Health Questionnaire which alerts their physician to the possibility of a mood disorder. The questions determine the severity of the problems and care is provided by either the non-psychiatric physician or in cases of non response or serious symptoms such as self harm potential, the patient is sent directly to psychiatry.

We are now co-locating a psychiatrist weekly in practices that are geographically distributed around Fairfax County. As the model becomes more refined we hope to study outcomes. Finally we are utilizing tele-psychiatry for evaluating patients in the Emergency Departments in our five hospitals. This has been well accepted by both patients and Emergency Room personnel. At the Inova Fairfax campus Psychiatry is moving to two floors with units dedicated to adults, adolescents and those individuals with substance abuse. The new units will be more attractive to patients, staff and our VCU students.