Department of Psychiatry Chair Letter
Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
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Dear Colleagues:

New Recognition
Pandurangi, VCU Distinguished Service Award Winner

It was with real joy that I attended the VCU Convocation 2015, where Dr. Ananda Pandurangi received the VCU Distinguished Service Award. One such award is given to a VCU faculty member annually. Dr. Pandurangi’s recognition brings honor to him and to our department. Anand has been tireless in his efforts, extraordinary in the quality of his work and truly remarkable in the love and generosity he brings to everyone he encounters. At the end of his acceptance remarks, he thanked his patients, saying “The one group of people to whom I am most grateful are my patients. I have learned so much from them. In the midst of their suffering, they show me perseverance; in their pain, they show me hope; in their distress, they show me perseverance; in their relief, they show me true gratitude. This is why I come to work every day and this is how I go home every day.”

New Vice President

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our new Vice President for Health Sciences at VCU and the CEO for the VCU Health System, Dr. Marsha Rappley, who comes to us from Michigan State University where she was Dean of the College of Human Medicine and Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Human Development. Dr. Rappley’s primary VCU academic appointment is in Pediatrics with a joint appointment in Psychiatry.

Dr. Rappley is a pediatrician with thirty years of experience, first as a nurse and then as a doctor. She is the winner of numerous awards and honors, including Women of Achievement and Courage Award in Health Care Education and Research and she is among the Fifty Most Influential Women in West Michigan, according to the Grand Rapids Business Journal. She has had exemplary education and training from both the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.

New Space
Improving our department space is an important goal. We have new space for teaching, research and patient care at the Hunter Holmes McGuire Veteran’s Administration Medical Center. (See page 3.) We hope to be able to renovate North 3 & 4 Inpatient space. We are working on designing new space for our Ambulatory Psychiatry clinic which will be a significant upgrade and will provide easier accessibility for our patients and much improved teaching, clinical and research facilities. An ambulatory addiction clinic will be a new addition to our activities at this site.

Finally and happily, we have put shovel in the ground to build the new Virginia Treatment Center for Children. Expected opening August, 2017.

New Science
Dr. Ken Kendler’s historical announcement of the discovery of genetic loci for major depression has been another recent outstanding contribution from our department. This remarkable discovery, which has been replicated, is groundbreaking for our field and opens important doors to better understand major depression. I hope by now that most of you have seen our Summer 2015 edition of Mind Matters, as well as international press coverage of these latest exciting findings. This is an important step toward greatly improving our understanding of the underlying biology that predisposes to major depression, which in turn could lead us closer to our Department’s Vision: To Conquer Mental Illness! Congratulations to Ken, the VIPBG Team and their colleagues at Oxford and in China.

New Fellowships and Announcements
We are expecting to have our Addictions Fellowship open for business July 1, 2016. We will also double our fellows in Child and Adolescent Fellowship and our Child Psychology Fellowship.

New Grant
Drs. Jim Bjork and Michael Neale were awarded a $6 Million (direct and indirects) sub-contract for the use of fMRI to study the effects of substance use on adolescent brain development. This multisite work is being done collaboratively with the University of Minnesota, Washington University and the University of Colorado. Congratulations to Mike and Jim.
Focus on Staff—Greg King, L.C.S.W.

I am originally from Louisville, Kentucky and moved to Virginia at a young age. I grew up in Fredericksburg and really consider Virginia to be my home. I received my undergraduate degree from Radford University, majoring in political science and economics. I received my Master of Social Work degree from VCU. While in the Social Work Program, I had an internship with the behavioral health department at Mary Washington Hospital (Snowden) in Fredericksburg which really piqued my interest in behavioral healthcare and the hospital environment. I had originally intended to undertake the macro level track, focusing on policy and advocacy, but ultimately decided that the clinical focus provided both a rewarding and interesting path. While my long term goals were administrative and policy related, I wanted to learn all that I could about the behavioral healthcare process. Following graduation, I began working at Mary Washington Hospital. As a Social Worker with the behavioral health service, I interacted with patients of all ages in the emergency department, inpatient psychiatric units and on most every medical unit of the hospital. I really enjoyed the opportunity to have such diverse practice settings, learning about the behavioral health delivery system, and interacting with clinicians from multiple specialties. I became a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in 2011 and after approximately six years at Mary Washington Hospital, I became interested in finding new challenges and learning opportunities. The position with the Inpatient Psychiatry Division here at VCU offered both of these aspects and was an opportunity to tackle the administrative aspects of behavioral health while working at an academic medical center. I have greatly enjoyed learning about differences between a community hospital and an academic medical center in both the clinical and administrative aspects. It has also been very interesting to find that there are regional nuances in the way that behavioral health services are delivered.

My wife Sarah and I recently celebrated the birth of our first child, Graham, on August 30, 2015. She is a Social Worker at a domestic violence agency. We enjoy spending time outdoors hiking, camping and kayaking. We especially enjoy taking our dogs, a Labrador and Weimaraner, hiking in Shenandoah National Park.

As the Coordinator for the Inpatient Psychiatry Division, I work directly with Dr. Pandurangi in various areas including improving the process for transfers to the inpatient psychiatry units, educating and working with medical providers (residents/NPs and Attendings) to meet various quality metrics (for example HBIPS or Hospital-Based Inpatient Psychiatric Services) and providing outreach for the division in the community (CSBs, RBHA, other hospitals). I recently restarted my academic pursuits and began the Master of Science in Healthcare Administration (MSHA) through VCU’s School of Allied Health Professions. This program offers working healthcare professionals the opportunity to study and apply the academic aspects of healthcare administration. My plan is to graduate in May of 2017.

My long term career goals focus on developing and maintaining behavioral health treatment programs that can be adaptive to the emerging changes in the healthcare landscape. I anticipate that there will be many exciting changes and challenges for behavioral healthcare in the next 10-15 years which will lead to innovative ways to provide care. The future for behavioral health will certainly be an exciting journey.

McGuire VAMC Psychiatry Ribbon Cutting

On Monday, August 24, 2015 McGuire VA Medical Center proudly hosted the Mental Health Recovery Enhancement Center grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony. Mr. John Brandecker, Director, McGuire VAMC, welcomed attendees and voiced strong support for mental healthcare. Dr. Cheryl W. Jones, Chief, Mental Health Service, McGuire VAMC introduced the keynote speaker, Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA 3rd District). In her own speech, Dr. Jones articulated the many reasons why the new structure carries significance.

* The Mental Health Recovery Enhancement Center is a structure that will house mental health programs with an overarching focus on inspiring hope and helping Veterans reclaim their lives.
* The Mental Health Recovery Enhancement Center is a needed physical expansion to help keep pace with an increasing number of Veterans presenting for mental health services.
* The design of the new space was informed by Veterans’ input. Elements of light, sound, color and texture are incorporated into the design to infuse recovery principles into the environment of care. The design itself is intended to promote an overall sense of well-being, reduce stigma and to empower Veterans to reach their full potential.
* The new Mental Health Recovery Enhancement Center is a physical structure intending to communicate the principle that mental healthcare is an essential, integral component of overall healthcare.

It was a poignant occasion for those in attendance that culminated in the ribbon cutting ceremony replete with music from the Jack Winn Trio.

Submitted by Dr. Treven Pickett
I was born in Maryland, the third of four siblings. I had a 'twinship' with my younger brother who suffered a head injury at age four and was temporarily blinded. Although I'm sure I did, it felt as if I never left his side after that. When he was able we would spend the days outside and come home only for dinner when our mom rang the big cowbell. My mother taught me to draw and she had a book of human and animal anatomy that we would reference. It was never doubted that I would be an artist and illustrator when I grew up. I went to VCU art school for illustration with the hope of working with Frank Netter.

My first job out of college was to have been an Art Therapist at the South Carolina State Hospital. The first day when I showed up for work, a sign was posted on the door saying funding had been cut for that position and the new person was to report to the Female Forensic Admissions Ward. That day was 'shock therapy day' and my job was to be one of four aides who held the patients down while they were shocked without anesthesia. I rotated through most of the wards and began nursing school.

Before finishing my RN I began to pick up my pre-med credits. As a med tech I started to work in the city hospital and concentrated on surgery - especially burns and trauma. A lot of time was spent in plastics and reconstruction. After being accepted into one of the first classes at the new University of South Carolina School of Medicine in Columbia, I moved to Atlanta and spent a year as a surgical tech at the Crawford Long branch of Emory University Hospital.

My goal going into medical school was to become a reconstructive plastic surgeon specializing in craniofacial reconstruction with Down's Syndrome children. One of my last rotations at school was psychiatry. My first patient had shot all of his chickens because, he said, they had been talking about him. It was magic to me that he got better from psychotic depression. I switched my applications from surgery to psych and wanted only to come to MCV for a residency. It was a match and I came in as an intern with Dr. Silverman, the new Chairman and Dr. John Urbach as the Director of Residency Training.

As a kid I was fascinated with Richmond, Virginia. Who knows where something like that comes from? My parents were not able to convince me to apply to school anywhere else, so luckily I was accepted at VCU. For residency my only choice was MCV.

I still love Richmond and still love MCV, even if it is spelled VCU. I was not aware at the time that it was going to be so radical that I was a female psychiatrist in solo practice in Richmond. I had been looking forward to an academic career, but following a car accident during my second year of training I knew I would not do well with too many variables. So, I opened a small private practice and specialized in the long-term outpatient treatment of PTSD. I had the luxury of time to work quite intensively with people. The work has been difficult but extremely rewarding. I seem to have a pretty nice boss. My education from VCU/MCV all the way through was excellent.

My advice to young people is "Go for it, most definitely! Don't let any fear or doubt or worry get in your way of trying to go to school and choose the field you are best suited for." I was told that as a model and an artist I would NEVER get into medical school. I think that propelled me to do well in the pre-med course work and to keep trying against quite a few obstacles.

Although I am not thinking about retirement yet, I am beginning to shift my focus. Working with such a wonderful team in Nelson Clinic to train the residents has been deeply rewarding. Certainly it reminds me of my early career goals and it's nice to have a chance to do at least a fraction of that.

I also have been doing some expert work on PTSD cases in court - specifically ferreting out claimants who do not have PTSD. After working with people who are suffering so terribly, somebody has to stand up for them with the people who try to fake the disorder for their own personal or financial gain.
Welcome New Staff

Introducing Susan Cheyne, M.S.W. (Nelson Clinic)

I was born to an Australian mother and Scottish father. Although I was an “Army Brat”, I have lived the majority of my life in the Richmond area. I love the culture, beauty and history of Richmond, but enjoy the peace and quiet of rural living in New Kent County, where I reside with my husband and two standard poodles. I have two grown children and a step-daughter. We are a VCU family, with my husband and my son having two degrees each from VCU, my daughter currently in her senior year (in psychology) at VCU, and I have a BFA from VCU. I became an LPC via a circuitous route, which started with a graduate degree in Art Therapy at EVMS, and have been licensed for 22 years. I have worked with a variety of populations, primarily adolescents and adults, both in-patient and out-patient. I’m happy to be a part of VCU again, where I plan to stay until retirement. In my free time, I enjoy travelling to sunny, warm places, gardening, floating in my swimming pond, walking my dogs, exercising, dancing, entertaining, reading, photography and occasionally drawing. I can be reached at: 827-3943.

Introducing Jean Miles

Assistant to Dr. Anand Pandurangi

I have worked for VCU Health System for a total of five years, initially in the Nursing Director’s suite, then moving to MCVP supporting the Hospitalist Medicine Service. I previously worked with the Department of Juvenile Justice in Hanover for eight years and was part of the Behavioral Services Unit. This is where I learned that I enjoyed working with Psychiatry providers.

My husband and I are in our 35th year of marriage. We have a son, Bobby, who attends college and a daughter, Melissa, who will be graduating from Glen Allen High School in June of 2016. We love animals and currently have one leased horse, four Dachshunds, two Cockatiels, one Ring Neck Parrot, one Quaker Parrot and a turtle named Herbert. Since my daughter is in the Vet Tech Program at Glen Allen High School, we occasionally become a foster home to the program animals (i.e. snakes, mice, gerbils, rabbits, etc.); whoever needs a home during school closure. Very important members of our household are my parents. Having three generations under one roof can be a very challenging dynamic.

I enjoy reading, theater productions and traveling. My bucket list includes visiting Italy and Greece. I love cruising with my family. Some of my best memories are of vacationing on the Disney Magic and Royal Caribbean’s Oasis of the Seas. I enjoy being challenged by current software technologies. I am in the process of converting our VHS family films to DVD.

I was hired as Dr. Ananda Pandurangi’s Administrative Assistant. My ultimate goal is to make his administrative life easier. I have much to learn, but feel blessed that the existing administrative staff members are so generous with their knowledge. I can be reached at 628-8526.

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I hope everyone had a fantastic summer! We are excited to begin the 2016 school year with a fantastic crop of new PGY-1 residents. This group is extremely engaged and excited to be a part of VCU psychiatry. If you have not yet had the opportunity to meet them, please make a point to say hello and introduce yourself as you see them around campus. I am also looking forward to great leadership this year from our new Chief Residents Inna Garber, David Lekberg and Peter Breslin and our Junior Chiefs Kara K Beatty, Dana Soper and Andrew Matz.

We will be celebrating the 53rd Annual Children’s Mental Health Symposium this year on October 16th at the Hilton Richmond Hotel and Spa at Short Pump. We have a fabulous lineup of speakers who are each dedicated to advancing our mission. I am so grateful to each of the sponsors that help make this event so worthwhile every year. Please visit go.vcu.edu/buildingblocks to register and plan to join us this year.