Fizan Abdullah, MD, PhD, has been appointed Division Head of Pediatric Surgery at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago and Professor of Pediatric Surgery at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, effective August 1, 2015. Dr. Abdullah joins us from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine where he was Associate Professor of Surgery & International Health, Program Director of the Fellowship in Pediatric Surgery, and Assistant Program Director of the Residency in General Surgery. He also served as Associate Professor of International Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Abdullah’s appointment is the culmination of an extensive national search completed in early 2015. Dr. Abdullah succeeds Marleta Reynolds, MD, as division head; Dr. Reynolds will continue to serve in her role as Surgeon-in-Chief.

Dr. Abdullah received his Pre-Medicine degree from Pennsylvania State University and his Doctorates in Philosophy and Medicine, Molecular Pharmacology, from Jefferson Medical College. He completed Residency in General Surgery at Yale University School of Medicine and a Fellowship in Pediatric Surgery at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. After training, he joined the Division of Pediatric Surgery at Johns Hopkins in 2005.

Dr. Abdullah’s clinical interests and expertise include congenital pulmonary malformations, diaphragmatic hernia, gastroschisis, Hirschsprung’s Disease, intestinal atresia, advanced laparoscopic surgery, neonatal surgery, pectus carinatum and pectus excavatum, pediatric oncology surgery, and tracheoesophageal fistula surgery. He has performed extensive clinical research in areas such as Inguinal Hernia Repair; Nissen Fundoplication; Lung Development & Treatment of Pulmonary Hypoplasia; Tissue Engineering; Extracorporeal Life Support; and Developmental Biology of Stem Cell Differentiation. He has also done extensive outcomes research in Health Services and Quality Improvement.

Dr. Abdullah’s priorities for the Division of Pediatric Surgery focus on:

- **Continued Focus on Patient Experience & Improvement of Quality of Care.**
- **Developing new and expanding existing Centers of Excellence, with a particular focus on ingraining innovation, recruitment, and retention.**
- **Continued execution of a regional network strategy for pediatric surgical services to serve the children of the region.**

An outline of Dr. Abdullah’s vision can be found on the following page. We welcome him to the department.
Dr. Fizan Abdullah’s Vision for the Division of Pediatric Surgery: Summary and Highlights

Dr. Abdullah’s vision for the Division of Pediatric Surgery aligns with the overall strategic goals of the hospital by focusing on:

1. Clinical & Service Excellence
   - Begins with all division faculty and staff unified in the mission of providing the highest possible level of care for children.
   - Focus on Faculty & Staff Acknowledgement to engender a culture of performance and pride.
   - Clinical, Research, and Educational Excellence begins at the Faculty Recruitment Stage.
   - Continual focus on Quality Improvement.

2. Clinical Growth
   - Develop a robust, thriving, and efficient clinical enterprise.
   - Further develop regional network strategy.
   - Renewed focus on patient experience and outcomes.
   - Focus on referral-physician experience.
   - Streamline existing and establish new Centers of Excellence (see below)

3. Research, Education, & Advocacy
   - Culture of Innovation and Discovery.
   - Research synergized with clinical programs.
   - Premier training program in the nation.
   - Philanthropy highlighting the importance of supporting innovation.

4. Financial Performance
   - Close coordination of division’s strategic plan with hospital’s financial plan.
   - Operating room efficiency and cost-optimization.
   - Children’s Surgical Foundation (CSF) mission-based practice plan critical to success.
   - Convey targeted message of philanthropic needs.

Proposed Centers of Excellence:
- Center for Health Services Research, with focus on Outcomes & Quality Improvement
- Center for Chest Deformities
- Center for Pediatric Oncologic Surgery
- Center for Complex Hepatobiliary Surgery
- Center for Complex Gastrointestinal and Urogenital Anomalies
- Center for Surgical Education & Simulation
- Center for Global Pediatric Surgical Education

- Enhanced organizational and administrative structure.
- Marketing and identity awareness.
Department News

Departments of Anesthesia and Surgery participate in American College of Surgeons Children’s Surgery Verification Pilot program

In May 2015, the Department of Anesthesia and the Department of Surgery hosted a site visit by surveyors from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Children’s Surgery Verification Pilot as the final step in the hospital’s application for Level 1 Care designation. The hospital was one of six chosen to participate in the pilot.

As described on the program website, “the ACS in collaboration with the Task Force for Children’s Surgical Care have developed standards to improve surgical care for pediatric and children surgical patients. These standards have been supported by the American Pediatric Surgical Association and the Society of Pediatric Anesthesia, and are the nation’s first and only multispecialty standards for children’s surgical care.”

During their two-day visit the ACS surveyors met with hospital leadership, reviewed extensive clinical and quality data, and toured patient-care areas. A committee led by Tom Schubnell, Senior Director of Surgical Services, compiled the data and coordinated the site visit. According to Schubnell, the surveyors will take what they learned from Lurie Children’s and the five other pilot sites to their governance meeting in June, where they will prepare the final ACS Children’s Surgery Verification program standards and site-visit questionnaire for all future surveys.

Amanda Saratsis, MD, of Neurosurgery receives Dixon Translational Research Grant and The Cure Starts Now Foundation award

Amanda Saratsis, MD, of Neurosurgery received a 2015 Dixon Translational Research Grant Young Investigator Award from Northwestern Memorial Foundation and the Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Science Institute for her project entitled Tenascin-C as a Therapeutic Target in Pediatric Brainstem Glioma. The Dixon Translational Research Grants are awarded to Northwestern University investigators for highly innovative, multidisciplinary clinical and translational research collaborations that accelerate the identification and implementation of new treatments to improve human health.

Dr. Saratsis’ Pediatric Brain Tumor Laboratory at the Feinberg School of Medicine studies the biology of pediatric brain tumors to identify and test novel molecular targets for more effective therapies. Its overarching research goal is to identify biomarkers of disease and develop new therapeutic strategies to improve clinical outcomes for children with brain tumors.

Dr. Saratsis also received a $50,000 grant award from The Cure Starts Now Foundation. Dr. Saratsis won the foundation’s Snap Grant competition at the DIPG Collaborative Symposium, held at Lurie Children’s Hospital in April 2015, for her project “Increased Tenascin-C (TNC) protein expression in tumor tissue and CSF in DIPG patients.”

Dr. Saratsis also won the prize for top poster (basic science category) for The Role of Tenascin-C Expression in Pediatric Glioma at the 2014 AANS/CNS Pediatrics Section meeting held in December. Her oral presentation, Multidimensional Molecular Analysis of Histone 3 Mutations in Pediatric Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma, was a featured talk at the meeting.
Julia Grabowski, MD, joins Division of Pediatric Surgery

Julia Grabowski, MD, joined the Division of Pediatric Surgery as Attending Physician in February 2015. Dr. Grabowski comes to us from Rady Children’s Hospital - San Diego, where she was Attending Physician, and the University of California, San Diego, where she was Assistant Professor of Surgery. Dr. Grabowski attended medical school at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. She completed her residency and a research fellowship at the University of California, San Diego, and a fellowship in Pediatric Surgery at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Grabowski’s special interests include Neonatal and congenital diseases; tumors and developmental anomalies of the neck, chest, abdomen and pelvis; trauma care and surgery, pediatric surgery for hernias, gastroesophageal reflux, adolescent breast disease, Hirschprung’s disease and anorectal malformation; prenatal counseling; and outcomes research. She serves as a reviewer for the journals Annals of Surgical Oncology, Journal of Laparoendoscopic and Advanced Surgical Techniques, and World Journal of Gastroenterology.

Dr. Grabowski is Assistant Professor of Surgery at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. We welcome her to the department.

NSQIP Update

By Sarah Kennedy, RN, BSN, MSN

Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago participates in the American College of Surgeons (ACS) National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP). We joined the program in March 2012 and are one of 77 children’s hospitals participating. ACS NSQIP-Pediatrics is a data-driven, risk-adjusted, outcomes-based program used to measure and improve the quality of surgical care in pediatric patients. This program is unique from other national databases because it is clinical data, not administrative or billing. The program includes patients from General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopedics, Otolaryngology, Urology, Plastics, Thoracic Surgery, and Gynecology.

This year the NSQIP program has progressed to a procedure-targeted CPT code collection of cases. This means that each surgical division has a specific number of cases that are collected per cycle. The number of cases collected for each division was determined by the volume of cases the division performed of certain CPT codes in the 2013-2014 year. Following is a chart that shows the number of cases collected for each division.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Case Collection per Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Surgery</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurosurgery</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopaedics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otolaryngology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our NSQIP team continues to participate in voluntary pilot programs; currently we are participating in the Spinal Fusion Pilot. In the upcoming year other pilots will be rolled out by NSQIP. The exact pilots being rolled out are still in the works but the surgical divisions for these pilots include Neurosurgery, Otolaryngology, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, and Urology.

Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago also participates in the Illinois Surgical Quality Improvement Collaborative (ISQIC), a group currently composed of 54 Illinois hospitals, two being pediatric centers. The goal of the ISQIC is to improve the quality of surgical care in Illinois by reducing postoperative morbidity, ideally while achieving significant corresponding cost savings. This initiative is modeled after a successful project in Michigan. We have
contracted to participate in the ISQIC initiative for the next two years with funding provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois. Through our participation in ISQIC, the hospital was able to host a site visit with the ISQIC Team in May 2015. The goal of the site visit was to learn about potential barriers and facilitators to quality improvement; the culture and work environment at the hospital; staff experience using NSQIP; examples of surgical quality improvement projects; areas that the staff thinks are most important for future quality improvement efforts; and, how ISQIC can best help facilitate surgical quality improvement at Lurie.

Surgical attendings, fellows, nursing staff, and Center of Excellence staff were interviewed. The ISQIC team reported that they obtained a wealth of knowledge that will not only help us continue to strengthen our quality improvement programs, but also helped the ISQIC team to understand how they can provide better support for us in the collaborative.

If you have any questions or concerning reading the pilots, the NSQIP data, ISQIC, or you would like to become more involved in the NSQIP program, please email Sarah Kennedy, at sakennedy@luriechildrens.org.

Achievement and Recognition

Brian Blackwood, MD, research fellow in the laboratory of Catherine Hunter, MD, of Pediatric Surgery, received an Excellence in Research award from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Scientific Forum Committee for his abstract Cyclic AMP and Protein Kinase A Mediated Signaling Plays a Crucial Role in CS-induced Intestinal Epithelial Apoptosis, Exposing a New Potential Therapy for NEC. Dr. Blackwood’s abstract will be presented at the ACS Clinical Congress meeting in October.

Earl Cheng, MD, Division Head of Urology, was featured in a nationwide Associated Press article on intersex children in April 2015. Dr. Cheng is co-director of the Gender & Sex Development Program at Lurie Children’s Hospital. Dr. Cheng and the program were also featured in a five-part series on disorders of sexual development airing on WBBM-AM radio in early 2015.

Cynthia LaBella, MD, of Orthopaedics, Medical Director of the Institute for Sports Medicine, has been elected Chair of the Executive Committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness, beginning July 2015.

The Division of Ophthalmology, led by Division Head Marilyn Mets, MD, matched for two fellowships for academic year 2015-2016.

The Division of Otolaryngology was rated in the top 10% of all training programs at Northwestern University by the Graduate Medical Education leadership of McGaw Medical Center in April 2015. James Schroeder, Jr., MD, is the Director of Medical Education for the Division of Pediatric Otolaryngology and Program Director for the Pediatric Otolaryngology Fellowship program at Feinberg School of Medicine.

Erin Rowell, MD, of Pediatric Surgery, Medical Director of the Institute for Fetal Health, appeared in a WGN-TV feature story on Lurie Children’s and Northwestern Medicine’s Fertility Preservation Program. Dr. Rowell is part of the program’s multidisciplinary team that was featured along with program patients.

Elizabeth Yerkes, MD, of Urology received a commendation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) in December 2014 for her work on establishing measurable outcomes for Graduate Medical Education.

Department Events

Bruce Lindgren, MD, demonstrates daVinci robotic surgical system® for visitors

In May, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago participated in the 2015 Chicago Forum on Global Cities by hosting an interactive tour highlighting the hospital’s advanced design and cutting-edge technology. The tour featured the opportunity for hands-on experience with the daVinci robotic surgical system®, led by Bruce Lindgren, MD, Director of Minimally Invasive Urological Surgery. The robotic system was set up in the 11th floor Conference Center, where visitors also viewed video of Dr. Lindgren performing surgery with the daVinci robot.


Special presentations at Surgical Grand Rounds

The guest speaker at the March 16th Surgical Grand Rounds conference was Susan Millner, M.Ed., MSW, LCSW (pictured below), the mother of a Lurie Children’s patient with chronic illness and multiple hospital admissions. Ms. Milner’s presentation, “Child with Multiple Medical Issues: A Parent’s Perspective” detailed her experiences with the hospital and its staff and provided insight to parents’ experiences when dealing with a child’s chronic illness.

On June 1st and 15th, fellows, residents, and research assistants from several surgical divisions discussed their research projects. Presenting on June 1st were Edward Diaz, Urology; Rupa Mirmira, Plastic Surgery; and Joanna Tomaszewski, Plastic Surgery. On June 15th, presenters were Brian Blackwood, Pediatric Surgery; Diana Bowen, Urology; Siddarth Jain, Pediatric Surgery; Chad Purnell, Plastic Surgery; and Radha Rahm, Ophthalmology.

Upcoming SGR presentations of note:

- August 3rd: Fizan Abdullah, MD, PhD, newly appointed Head of Pediatric Surgery. Topic TBA.
- September 15th: Anesthesia guest speaker Vincent Chan, MD, of the University of Toronto, will present “Point of Care Ultrasound for Perioperative Services.”
Locations:

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago
225 E. Chicago Ave.
Chicago, IL 60611

Outpatient Center in Lincoln Park
2515 N. Clark Street/467 W. Deming Place
Chicago, IL 60614-3393

Outpatient Center in Arlington Heights
Northwest Community Hospital
Busse Center for Specialty Medicine
880 W. Central Rd., Ste. 6400
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Outpatient Center in Glenview
Glenbrook Hospital
2150 Pfingsten Road
Glenview, IL 60026

Outpatient Center in Lake Forest
Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital campus
900 N. Westmoreland, Suite 209 (Bays Medical Office Building)
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Outpatient Center in New Lenox
1870 N. Silver Cross Blvd.
Suite 100
New Lenox, IL 60451

Outpatient Center in Westchester
2301 Enterprise Drive
Westchester, IL 60154

Lurie Children’s at Cadence Health
25 N. Winfield Road
Winfield, IL 60190

Call 1.800.543.7362 (1.800.KIDS DOC) to make an appointment at any of our locations.

The Department of Surgery Newsletter is published biannually. For information, contact:
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