Marleta Reynolds, MD, was named Surgeon-in-Chief at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago in 2009. During her five-year tenure the department, the hospital, and the landscape of healthcare itself have changed dramatically. In this interview, Dr. Reynolds reflects on her past achievements, current goals, and vision for the future.

Looking back, how has the role of Surgeon-in-Chief evolved since you accepted the position?

The role of Surgeon-in-Chief has changed dramatically since I accepted the position back in 2009. Initially, the position served primarily as a liaison with the hospital and as a representative for full-time and community-based surgeons. Although this continues to be an important aspect of the role, I now represent the Department as a member of a core team of physician and hospital leaders responsible for developing strategic plans that will allow us to navigate changing healthcare delivery systems in the Chicago region and beyond. The role has expanded from primarily leading the Department of Surgery to participating in the implementation of the hospital’s overall strategic vision. As the position has changed scope, I have taken advantage of opportunities to advocate for Departmental priorities and initiatives.

What achievements as Surgeon-in-Chief are you most proud of?

There are several achievements I am proud of, particularly those that involve improving safety and efficiency. Working with representatives from nursing and anesthesia to help design the new operating rooms for increased efficiency and utility was extremely gratifying and is something I can appreciate every time I operate. Also, joining pediatric NSQIP to obtain data that has driven safety and quality improvement projects in the department has been a great source of pride for me and everyone involved. Establishment of the Surgery Safety and Quality Committee, a multidisciplinary team, has changed the culture in the operating room in a positive way; for example, it has led to the adoption and refinement of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Surgical Safety Checklist in order to improve our OR safety. Utilization of the Surgical Compass tool has led to cost savings across the department and has helped us standardize care. I’m also proud of the work we’ve done to improve first-case on-time starts in our first year of data collection and monitoring.

I am also extremely proud to have led the recruitment of three top-notch division heads. Empowering them to develop the divisions of their dreams has been rewarding. It has also been a priority to sponsor ongoing faculty recruitment initiatives that support academic and clinical ex-
pansion. We have grown from 38 full-time faculty in 2009 to the present day complement of 50. We also initiated a surgeon-scientist program that fosters academic career development by guaranteeing protected time for research activities. This program has allowed us to expand our research focus beyond traditional laboratory based protocols to clinical/translational research programs that concentrate on outcomes and quality.

**What has been your biggest challenge?**

The biggest challenge has been to learn to lead outside the operating room. With the assistance of a leadership coach, study of literature on leadership, participation in courses for new academic leaders and business executives, and advice from mentors, I am developing the necessary skill set. But I have much more to learn.

**How has the move to Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago changed things?**

The move to the new hospital created challenges in space, time, and efficiency. The verticality of the design forced significant workflow changes across the organization. For example, supplies for individual services are maintained on one floor for most surgical divisions. This results in under- and over-utilization of some OR suites. Also, communication among colleagues throughout the entire department has become more difficult because there is no common meeting room, locker room or break room. We need to make extra efforts to engage our entire team and increase communication among the department’s members.

On the other hand, the move has provided significant opportunities in the sense that individual operating rooms are much larger and better-equipped than those in the old facility. There is greater flexibility in the use of the ORs and it is easier to adapt the space for multiple services. Inpatient floors were planned thoughtfully and the private patient rooms have been well-received by our families. The public spaces are incredibly inviting and support patient, family, and staff satisfaction.

Our mission has always been to provide state-of-the-art surgical care to our patients. The new hospital mirrors that commitment by providing beautiful, well-designed patient care and public spaces that support a healing environment.

**What has the role taught you about leadership?**

It’s lonely at the top! The position requires making tough and sometimes unpopular decisions. It also requires sometimes having difficult conversations with people you have known and been friends with for a long time. It has also taught me that to have an effective, successful team, one needs to find the right people for that team.

**What lessons have you learned from the experience?**

So many, but the most profound lesson has been realizing that change is very difficult for people and “it takes a village” to accomplish even the simplest goal.

**What are your current initiatives?**

My current initiatives involve increasing efficiency, primarily in the OR. I am working on ways to improve OR start times throughout the day, lower
costs in the OR by standardizing care, and exploring creative ways to incentivize everyone to be more efficient. In addition, I will continue to focus significant effort on patient-safety and quality-outcomes projects that allow us to measure performance and results.

We are also recruiting for a Division Head of Pediatric Surgery. The Division and Department have grown considerably over the last five years and it’s time to establish distinct positions. In this challenging and volatile market we need motivated, attentive leaders at all levels of the organization. While it has been exciting to lead expansion of the Division from two attending MDs at one facility to nine attending MDs at two facilities and five outreach sites, I wish to focus my full attention on the Surgeon-in-Chief role. This transition also gives us a wonderful opportunity to recruit a leader in the field of pediatric surgery who is ready to take a strong and successful practice into the future.

**What are your future goals for the department?**

First and foremost, I want to recruit the right number of additional surgeons and advanced practice nurses to provide easy access to the finest surgical care in the region with the most advanced and comprehensive programs. I also want to build on the foundation established by the Surgery Safety and Quality Committee to continue to refine our safety culture. Additionally, I want to utilize NSQIP and other data sources to identify areas for improving the quality of the care we provide.

The American College of Surgeons Committee on Children’s Surgery has recently published accreditation guidelines to establish regional Children’s Surgical Centers that qualify for Level 1, 2, or 3 designation. Level 1 sites provide the highest level of care and serve as regional resource centers for neonates, children, and adolescents, regardless of medical and surgical comorbidities. These centers will partner with Level 2 and 3 centers to provide wraparound services, appropriate access, and highest quality acute and ambulatory care.

I sponsored the creation of a 2015 corporate goal to apply for Level 1 designation for Lurie Children’s Hospital in the upcoming year. I believe that this designation will position Lurie Children’s Hospital as the premier provider of surgical services in the region. It will also give us the opportunity to partner with community hospitals to influence their quality, safety, and outcomes programs. The concept of regional care makes clinical and economic sense. Our mission to develop and sustain a highly reliable organization can be widely adopted to optimize care across all partner hospitals.

**Any final thoughts?**

It has been a privilege to serve as your surgeon-in-chief over the last 5 years. Our notable success is a community effort made possible through continuous collaboration, progressive thinking, and creative problem-solving. I look forward to continuing this journey and can’t wait to see what we can accomplish in the next 5 years.
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 66 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. Our NSQIP data is extracted and meticulously reviewed by our Surgical Clinical Reviewer (SCR), Sarah Kennedy, BSN. The program includes patients from General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopedics, Otolaryngology, Urology, Plastics, Thoracic Surgery, and Gynecology.

At the annual NSQIP Conference in New York, I presented Lurie Children’s work on wound classification and deep vein thrombosis prevention. Last year, we identified blood transfusions in our craniofacial population as an area for improvement. Over the past year, a multi-disciplinary group including Plastic Surgery, Hematology, Anesthesia and Neurosurgery worked together on an intraoperative blood transfusion protocol in the effort to target these patients. This initiative remains in its planning phase and will continue this coming year.

Our NSQIP team also continues to participate in voluntary pilot programs, currently participating in the ENT and Spinal Fusion Pilots. The Appendectomy pilot, in which we participated, has completed its enrollment. It was considered a success by the ACS, and starting in January 2015 specific variables for appendectomies will be collected by all hospitals in the NSQIP program.

ACS-NSQIP has given us the ability to compare our outcomes with other large tertiary pediatric centers throughout the country. This data has allowed us to identify areas for improvement, collaborate with others to establish best practices, and ultimately advance the quality of care we give our patients.

This quality collaboration will continue with our involvement in the Illinois Surgical Quality Improvement Collaborative (ISQIC), a group currently composed of 44 Illinois hospitals, three 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 three years with funding provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois.

If you have any questions concerning the pilots, the NSQIP data, or ISQIC, or you would like to become more involved in the NSQIP program, please email Sarah Kennedy, RN, BSN, MN, our NSQIP Surgical Clinical Reviewer, at: SaKennedy@luriechildrens.org.
ECMO Program receives ELSO Award of Excellence

The Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO) has awarded the ECMO Program (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago its Award of Excellence. As a designated Center of Excellence, the program demonstrates extraordinary achievement in the following three categories: excellence in promoting the mission, activities, and vision of ELSO; excellence in patient care by using the highest quality measures, processes, and structures based upon evidence, and; excellence in training, education, collaboration, and communication supporting ELSO guidelines that contributes to a healing environment for families, patients and staff.

The ELSO Award signifies to patients and families a commitment to exceptional patient care. It also demonstrates to the health care community an assurance of high quality standards, specialized equipment and supplies, defined patient protocols, and advanced education of all staff members. The ELSO Award of Excellence is recognized by US News and World Report and Parents magazines as one criterion for top institutions. The award is valid for a three-year period, September 2014 – September 2017. The program also received the designation in 2012. Congratulations to the ECMO team on this outstanding achievement.

John Sarwark, MD, receives 2014 Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award for Practicing Doctors

John Sarwark, MD, FAAP, Head of the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery and Sports Medicine, has been awarded the 2014 Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award for Practicing Doctors, presented by The Arnold P. Gold Foundation in collaboration with the Council of Medical Specialty Societies. The annual award honors a medical school faculty physician who exemplifies the qualities of a caring and compassionate mentor in the teaching and advising of medical students. The nominee must also demonstrate personal ethics, empathy, and service, which are essential to the practice of patient-centered medicine. Dr. Sarwark received the award at the 2014 Annual Conference of the American Academy of Pediatrics, held October 11-14 in San Diego, CA.

The award recipient receives a grant of $5,000, and $1,000 is donated to the nominating institution’s Organization of Student Representatives in support of OSR-related activities.

Congratulations to Dr. Sarwark on this prestigious award.
Edward Gong, MD, receives Hartwell Individual Biomedical Research Award

Edward Gong, MD, of Urology received a 2013 Hartwell Individual Biomedical Research Award from The Hartwell Foundation for his project “Harnessing the Regenerative Capability of Bladder Smooth Muscle Progenitor Stem Cells to Restore Function to the Obstructed Bladder.” The award, announced in April 2014, provides research support for three years. Eleven individuals representing nine institutions were selected as Hartwell Investigators.

The Primary Mission of The Hartwell Foundation is to grant awards to individuals for innovative and cutting-edge biomedical applied research that will potentially benefit children.

Arun Gosain, MD, named VP of Administrative Affairs for Plastic Surgery Foundation

Arun Gosain, MD, Division Head of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, was named Vice President of Administrative Affairs to the Plastic Surgery Foundation (PSF) in April 2014. The PSF is the arm of the American Society of Plastic Surgery/Plastic Surgery Foundation that focuses on promotion of education, research, and scholarship in plastic surgery, and it serves as the major granting body for plastic surgery-initiated research. Dr. Gosain’s appointment will initiate an ascendency to President of the PSF over the next four years.

Catherine Hunter, MD, receives Linscheer Memorial Fund Award from American Gastroenterological Association Research Foundation

Catherine Hunter, MD, of Pediatric Surgery received the Linscheer Memorial Fund Award from the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) Research Foundation. The Linscheer Fund was established in memory of Willem G. Linscheer, MD, PhD, longtime member of the AGA, former Chief of Gastroenterology at the Syracuse VA Hospital and Professor of Medicine at SUNY Upstate Medical University. As a tribute to Dr. Linscheer’s work in gastroenterology, Uma K. Murthy, MD, Professor of Medicine, SUNY Upstate Medical University, established the fund through the AGA Research Foundation in his memory.

Marilyn Mets, MD, named President-elect of American Ophthalmological Society

Marilyn Mets, MD, Division Head of Ophthalmology, has been named President-elect of the American Ophthalmological Society (AOS). The AOS is the oldest, continuously meeting, medical-specialty society in the U.S. The society, which was founded in 1864 during the Civil War, is an honorary society, by invitation only, and requires the submission and acceptance of a thesis for membership. It is limited to just over 300 members and includes physicians in all areas of ophthalmology. Dr. Mets is also a Director Emeritus of the American Ophthalmological Society.
Achievement and Recognition

- The Gosain laboratory received the Crikelair Award from the Plastic Surgery Research Council for the best presentation by a student prior to initiation of training in general surgery or plastic surgery. This national award was given to Tatiana Favelic, an undergraduate student from Boston University who spent the summer in the lab, for her work “Modeling Craniosynostosis in Zebrafish using the Genome Editing Technique CRISPR.”

- The Gosain laboratory also received the First Place Basic Science Award at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Association of Plastic Surgeons, held in April 2014. The award was given to Joanna P. Tomaszewski, a Research Associate in the lab, for the project, "The impact of mutated Fibroblast growth factor receptor 1 (Fgfr1) on calvarial bone and suture development using transgenesis and CRISPR/Cas9 genome editing.”

- Catherine Hunter, MD, of Pediatric Surgery received the 2014 Claude Organ, MD, FACS, Traveling Fellowship from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) in June 2014. The fellowship, established by ACS members and friends of the Organ Family in memory of Dr. Organ, is intended to enhance educational opportunities for ACS fellows who are members of Society of Black Academic Surgeons, the Association of Women Surgeons, or the Surgical Section of the National Medical Association.

- The American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion (ABCP) elected Bradley Kulat, CCP, LP, Coordinator of Perfusion Services, to its Executive Committee as Secretary in March 2014. The ABCP represents 4000 perfusionists nationwide.

- Current Pediatric Surgery fellow Tim Lautz, MD, and former fellow Eric Grossman, MD, received 2013-2014 Department of Surgery Fellow-as-Teacher Awards from Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. The awards recognize instructors who are excellent role models as physicians and learners, make teaching a purposeful activity in their daily efforts, and demonstrate professionalism and their commitment to education by participating in education-related activities.

- Bahram Rahmani, MD, MPH, of Ophthalmology was accepted for admission to the Master of Science degree program in Health Services and Outcomes Research at Northwestern University.


According to the publisher, the American Academy of Pediatrics, “The new 2nd edition of this popular resource delivers targeted guidance on the diagnosis, treatment and management of orthopaedic problems and sports injuries. Covering 74 chapters, the book offers an overview approach and includes differential diagnosis and work-up of patients with orthopaedic injuries and bone and joint conditions.”
Appointments and Promotion

**Joshua M. Adkinson, MD**, joined the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery as Attending Surgeon. Dr. Adkinson attended medical school at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University. He completed residency in General Surgery at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Memorial Hospital, residencies in General Surgery and Plastic Surgery at Lehigh Valley Health Network, and fellowship in Hand and Microsurgery at the University of Michigan. His interests include congenital hand differences, hand trauma, wrist injuries, nerve injuries, reconstruction after brachial plexus injuries, and free-tissue transfer.

**Aimee Brasher, MD**, joined the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery as Attending Physician. Dr. Brasher attended medical school at Rush University Medical College, completed residency at Rush University Medical Center, and completed fellowship in Pediatric Orthopaedics at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Her interests include clubfoot, congenital deformities, developmental hip dysplasia, fracture care, musculoskeletal disease, orthopaedic injuries, pediatric back/neck/spine, pediatric orthopaedic surgery, and scoliosis.

**Emilie K. Johnson, MD, MPH**, joined the Division of Urology as Attending Physician. Dr. Johnson attended medical school at the University of Michigan. She completed internship and residency at University of Michigan Hospital, where she also completed residency in Urology. She completed fellowships in Pediatric Health Services Research and Pediatric Urology at Boston Children’s Hospital. Dr. Johnson’s interests include general pediatric and adolescent urology, health services, and outcomes and clinical research.

**Amanda M. Saratsis, MD**, joined the Division of Neurosurgery as Attending Surgeon. Dr. Saratsis attended medical school at University of Illinois at Chicago and completed residency in Otolaryngology at University of California, Irvine School of Medicine, and residency in Neurosurgery at Georgetown University Hospital. Dr. Saratsis completed a fellowship in Neurosurgery at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. Her interests include congenital disorders of the brain and spine, chiari malformation, hydrocephalus, craniosynostosis, molecular biology and clinical management of pediatric brain tumors.

Department Events

The Division of Pediatric Surgery presented the **2014 Orvar Swenson Lectureship** on December 1, 2014. This year’s Guest Speaker was Daniel von Allmen, MD, Director of the Division of General and Thoracic Surgery at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. Dr. von Allmen is currently the Program Committee chair of the American Pediatric Surgical Association. He also serves on the Program Committee for the American Academy of Pediatrics Surgical Section and is a member of the Steering Committee for the Surgical Section of the Children’s Oncology Group. Dr. von Allmen presented “Surgical Treatment of Pediatric IBD: Children Are Not Small Adults."

The Swenson Lectureship was established in 2008 in honor of Dr. Orvar Swenson (right), who was the Head of the Department of Surgery and Surgeon-in-Chief at Children’s Memorial Hospital from 1960-1973 and a pioneer in the treatment of Hirschsprung’s Disease.
Department Events (cont.)

On October 17, 2014, Marilyn Mets, MD, Division Head of Ophthalmology, hosted the Ophthalmic Genetics Study Club, an international meeting of Ophthalmologists who are experts in Ophthalmic Genetics, for the 2nd time at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. The previous meeting was two years ago when the American Academy of Ophthalmology was located in Chicago.

The morning session included case reports, and the afternoon session was a forum on Gene Therapy, which included the following topics: “A Historical Overview of Gene Therapy and Current Trials in Ophthalmic Diseases” by Timothy Stout, MD; “The Importance of Genetic Testing in Gene Therapy Trials” by Edwin Stone, MD; “Technical Considerations in Subretinal Gene Therapy” by Stephen Russell, MD; “Assessing the Functional Outcomes of Gene Therapy” by Daniel Chung, MD; and “Which Genetic Ocular Disorders May Not Be Good Candidates for Gene Therapy—and What We Have to Offer Instead” by Arlene Drack, MD. The attendees were very pleased to have this meeting at Lurie Children’s Hospital and were very impressed with the new facility.

ECMO Reunion Held in June

On June 22, 2014, the Annual ECMO Reunion brought together ECMO “graduates,” their families, and members of the ECMO team. Over 100 people attended the celebration.

Dr. Reynolds with Grace Maguire, an ECMO graduate from 2011, and her family.

Above: ECMO Core Team members (l to r) Kylie Howard RRT; Ashley Tucker RRT; Marleta Reynolds, MD, Director; Dan Byron RRT, ECMO Coordinator; Katherine Sheridan RN; and Tricia Sheridan RN.

At right: Dr. Reynolds and Erin Gorman, RN, Resource Team nurse and ECMO graduate.
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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.

Surgical Grand Rounds Information
Surgical Grand Rounds are held each Monday from 7:30—8:30 a.m. in room 11-152 of Lurie Children's Hospital. Surgical Grand Rounds comprises the following conferences:

- Grand Rounds: 1st, 3rd, and any 5th Monday of each month.
- Trauma Conference: 2nd Monday of each month.
- Clinical Case Review (M&M): 4th Monday of each month.

Also, the Lurie Fetal Assessment Conference is held the 3rd Wednesday of each month in Lurie 11-150.

Schedule is subject to change. Conferences are not held on hospital holidays. E-mail Brian Hayes, SGR coordinator, for more information.

The Department of Surgery Newsletter is published biannually. For information, contact: Brian Hayes, MA
Program Coordinator—Dept. of Surgery