

HEARTBEATS

DEDICATED TO REDUCING CARDIOVASCULAR MORTALITY

SUMMER 2003

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**COSEHC's Cardiovascular
Centers of Excellence**

The Lowcountry Medical Group
 Huntington Internal Medicine
 Medical University of South Carolina
 Jacksonville Heart Center
 Wake Forest University School of Medicine
 Cardiovascular Center of South Florida
 Clearwater Cardiovascular & Interventional Consultants
 The Hypertension Institute
 Holston Medical Group
 CamCare Health Education & Research Institute
 Dan River Region Cardiovascular Health Initiative Program (Dr. Chip)
 Morehouse School of Medicine
 University of Miami
 Hattiesburg Clinic
 University of Maryland
 Carilion Health System
 Wright State University School of Medicine
 University of Kentucky
 Presbyterian Center for Preventative Cardiology
 University of Tennessee, Memphis
 Tulane Hypertension & Renal Center of Excellence

To learn more about our centers visit:
www.coshec.org

Our newsletter has a new face reflecting an expanding role of the organization in becoming a major voice in achieving increased awareness of the burden of cardiovascular disease in the Southeastern USA. My thanks to Ms Eva Johns and Debra Wirth, who were responsible for the new design, layout, and content for the newsletter.

In fulfilling our desire to increase communication among members, a newly designed web page will be unveiled in the next few months. The completely redesigned web site will provide up to date information on educational activities, the incorporation of additional Cardiovascular Centers of Excellence™, and a friendlier system for accessing the electronic medical chart which the COSEHC-designated Cardiovascular Centers of Excellence™ employ for data entry. The Board of Directors has made a major financial commitment to upgrade the electronic medical chart to reduce manual entry of patient's information through the use of electronic interfaces which can download the data from physicians systems.

We will be conducting the 2nd retreat of the COSEHC-designated Cardiovascular Centers of Excellence™ in Charlotte, North Carolina on July 18-19, 2003. Principal Investigators will meet to address progress made since our last retreat, as well as charting new efforts in their quest to improve practice-patterns. We thank Novartis Pharmaceuticals for providing an unrestricted grant to support this meeting.

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FERRARIO RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD

Carlos M Ferrario, MD, President/CEO of COSEHC and the Director of the Hypertension and Vascular Disease Center was honored by the Inter American Society of Hypertension with the 2003 "Life Time Achievement Award" for his scientific contributions to the field of cardiovascular medicine and the treatment of high blood pressure.

The award was established by the Inter American Society of Hypertension, an affiliate of the National American Heart Association in 1984 to recognize those scientists and clinicians contributing the most to advancing knowledge of hypertension-related cardiovascular disease across the Americas.

Dr. Ferrario's contributions in discovering the role of hormones affecting blood pressure and the development of high blood pressure and his educational efforts in raising awareness and new treatment modalities to prevent heart attacks and strokes were cited as the basis for this prestigious international award.

The award was presented at the biennial meeting of the Inter American Society of Hypertension in May 1, 2003 in San Antonio, Texas. The award included a plaque and an honorarium.

**CV CENTER SPOTLIGHT:
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

Health Systems Management (HSM) - "An educational organization serving learning organizations"

Located in Dayton, Ohio, HSM was created in January 2000, after the School of Medicine identified community and educational needs in health services organizations. A \$2.5 million gift by Mr. Oscar Boonshoft endowed the Chair in Health Systems Management and Richard Schuster, MD, MMM was selected to lead the development of the division.

The mission of HSM is to promote the development of management, health economics, leadership, and population-based skills for physicians, hospitals and health systems, as well as other health care providers and facilitate dialogue in health care public policy. HSM provides a Health Care Management Certificate Program, which started its first cohort in March 2003. This year long course offers an executive level educational experience within a health care context. The program was developed to attract physicians, managers, nurses, pharmacists and other health care providers seeking the ability to apply a more practical business and management approach to the ever-changing health care world. Upon successful completion of the Certificate program, participants are able to transfer credits into the MBA program at Wright State University (WSU). A dual MD/MBA degree program is scheduled to start in 2004 as a combined effort of the Wright State School of Medicine and College of Business

HSM has targeted cardiovascular disease (CVD) as a means to help educate our community on disease prevention and risk factor reduction and to improve physician outcomes. In 2002, WSU HSM was awarded a contract from NHLBI as one of 12 EDUC's (Enhanced Dissemination Utilization Center) in the country. HSM has developed 3 separate but interrelated projects in our community promoting CVD prevention and risk factor reduction. One major project has been working with the largest group of primary care physicians (120) in Dayton to promote better outcomes by performing baseline and follow-up audits, and discussing best practices.

A second project is with the largest hospital system in our community, Premier Health Partners, targeting hypertension management in inner city health centers and clinics. Our approach is to work with the physicians and staff promoting the use of JNC VII guidelines for managing hypertension in this high risk, population, and benchmarking their performance against these guidelines. Emphasis has also been placed on the proper process/procedure for performing accurate blood pressure measurement in the ambulatory setting.

The third project involves a mass media campaign titled, "**Know Your Numbers.**" A coalition of local health care companies, insurers, employers, physicians and other business leaders have come together to support a community effort targeting middle aged women, to "know their numbers": cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, and waist measurement.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER CONTINUED (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

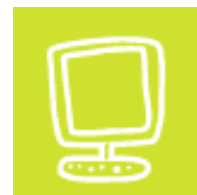
Medical education continues to be a critical component of COSEHC's mission. Several CME-approved programs are in the planning stages. The Board is highly appreciative of the efforts that Leopoldo Raji, MD is doing in the planning of our 10th National Scientific Sessions to be held at the Biltmore Hotel in Miami, FL, October 17 - 20, 2003. Look forward to see you there. Also, we will be meeting in New Orleans, LA for the 11th National Meeting. Drs. Edward Frohlich and Gabriel Navar are Co-chairs.

In closing, we wish you a happy summer and look forward to see you in Miami.

Carlos M Ferrario, MD
President and CEO



*For the latest updated annual meeting program check cosehc's website:
www.cosehc.org*



www.cosehc.org
COSEHC hopes to unveil its new website this Summer

CONTROVERSIES IN CLINICAL TRIALS

We are now practicing medicine and doing research in the era of “evidence-based medicine”, which has become quite a fashionable term. It represents a worthwhile concept and one that must be paid attention to but clinical judgment, criticism, and the art of medicine still have their places. Clinical studies have become the *sine qua non* of the pharmaceutical and medical device industries. Unfortunately, there are times when research findings must be questioned for over-interpretation and with all the financial stakes involved, even possible data manipulation. Therefore, every study that is supposed to offer evidence-based support for clinical management must be interpreted carefully and put into context.

The ALLHAT Study (JAMA 2002; 288:2981-2997) is an important and well-done study that must be applied with care to each individual patient. The end interpretation was that chlorthalidone use in hypertension is superior in the prevention of one or more significant forms of cardiovascular disease as well as being less expensive. Right away the popular and lay interpretation is that thiazides are the drugs of choice for hypertension management. However, the experienced clinician knows that significant hypertension will not be controlled by a thiazide diuretic and that frequently a combination of one or more potent medications of different classes such as ACE inhibitors, beta blockers, calcium blockers or AT-1 receptor blockers will be necessary. Also, numerous diabetic patients benefit from ACE inhibitors and AT-1 receptor blockers which help preserve renal function. Immediately, the lay press will flamboyantly report the findings of a study, especially the reported economics, and make the implication that the medical profession is ignoring a cheaper as well as better management approach. Obviously, thiazides need to be used more in hypertension management but exactly when must take the individual patient problem into consideration.

The large United Kingdom Heart Protection Study (HPS) (The Lancet 2002; 360:7-22) with widespread simvastatin use is another example of potential controversy. Simvastatin is an excellent and proven statin class medication with much cardiovascular (CV) benefit. However, the HPS reported only an annual excess myopathy attributable to simvastatin of about 0.01% (the equivalent of 1 in 10,000 patients). These are simply not the results observed by experienced clinicians using aggressive statin CV risk modification. Almost every week, a busy practice will see a patient with suspicious myopathic symptoms and/or CPK rise involving one of the five available statins. Such observations require attention and medication change. This careful approach can avoid serious problems in a clinical practice. There is no reason to suspect false data in the HPS but there must have been a problem with how the numerous clinicians involved with the care of the 20,536 high-risk individuals looked for the problem. It points out that there is still an important role for experienced-based medicine as well as evidence-based medicine.

Careful clinical trials are essential to modern medicine. However, physicians must use their past practical experience and observations when analyzing and implementing the findings of clinical trials.

Tom Whyne, MD, PhD, Chair: Council of COSEHC's-designated Cardiovascular Centers

CV CENTER SPOTLIGHT: (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

HSM is responsible for leading the coalition, as well as providing the research analysis to measure the effect in our community. After one year, our data shows that over 10,000 women have had their blood pressure and /or cholesterol checked as a direct result of the campaign, and 48,000 people have had their numbers checked. The campaign is currently being expanded into another major Ohio city as a result of funding through the Ohio Department of Health and CDC.

HSM is proud to be a Center of Excellence of the COSEHC organization and looks forward to continued sharing of research and programs that make a difference in the management of CVD.

Richard Schuster, MD, MMM

**“Careful
clinical trials
are essential
to modern
medicine.”**

COSEHC UPDATE

More progress has been made on the COSEHC web-site and database. A brand new look to the web-site has transpired, with an expected launch date within the next 30 days. Once on the home web-site, users will be able to maneuver through various pages to learn more about COSHEC, to become a CV Center of Excellence, learn about COSEHC CME sponsored educational programs, and read about news and the newsletter.

Additionally, behind the "public" web-site in a private secure section, a new version of the data abstraction form has been developed, along with a clinical trials section which can be customized for various studies that COSEHC or any of the CV Centers may want to design. Guidelines are referenced and linkages useful to the clinician are provided to numerous sites. Various reporting capabilities will provide clinicians user-friendly reports for benchmarking within individuals practices or against COSEHC in aggregate.

The final phase of the updated database project is the development of interfaces or automated export capabilities from each of the CV Centers of Excellence. Two sites, Lowcountry Medical Group in Beaufort, SC, and The Hypertension Institute in Nashville, TN have agreed to be the pilot test sites. The database programmers will be working with these sites to "test" the various methods in which electronic transfer of clinical data can be achieved from existing clinical information systems at these sites to the COSEHC database. Once successfully tested, the plan is to implement the methodology at all CV Centers of Excellence.

COSEHC PATRON BOARD

COSEHC recognizes the following pharmaceutical companies who have joined the National Board of Patrons by providing an annual unrestricted grant for this purpose.

Bristol-Myers Squibb, Inc.

Merck and Company, Inc

Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

The National Patron Board provides an exciting and significant opportunity for COSEHC to partner with key industrial leaders and work together to reduce the high level of cardiovascular mortality in our communities. This Board will work closely and regularly with COSEHC to assist in establishing and implementing strategies in which we can partner to achieve our mission and goals.

Breaking News: 2004 Annual Meeting in New Orleans!!! Drs. Edward Frohlich and Gabriel Navar will serve as program chairs. Stay tuned for further details: www.cosehc.org



COSEHC CALENDAR

July

19: Cardiovascular Centers of Excellence Meeting (Closed Meeting)
Ballantyne Resort, Charlotte, NC

26: New Frontiers in Cardiovascular Disease Management
Norfolk, VA
(CME Meeting)

October

16-18: 10th National Scientific Sessions, Cardiovascular Update 2003
Coral Gables, FL (CME Meeting)

November

17: Centennial Anniversary of WFU School of Medicine, **Special Guest Speaker, Claude Lenfant, MD, Director, NIH**, Winston-Salem, NC (CME Meeting)

August 23

23: New Treatment Strategies from Recent Clinical Trials, The Brent House, New Orleans, LA (CME Meeting)

To participate in any of these CME Meetings please call 800-COSEHC-1 or visit: www.cosehc.org



Check website for updated calendar
www.cosehc.org