I hope you had a healthy summer! Things have been very busy in the department, as we start construction for the children’s hospital. Summer brought several new faculty to the department. Drs. Gloria Kennedy (hematology-oncology), Larry Kurlandsky (pulmonology and allergy/immunology), and Greg Liptak (child development) are new subspecialists now in place. Drs. Mary Green, Toby Kressel, and Ellen Schurman are academic generalists in our suburban CareBest practice in Baldwinsville.

As you have probably heard, Upstate Medical University now has a new president. Former chancellor of Texas Tech University, Dr. David Smith has also joined the department. He is a pediatrician by training, and expects to undertake some clinical work in our general division. Dr. Smith’s wife, Dr. Donna Bacci-Smith, is also a pediatrician. She is trained in public health, and was a very visible advocate for youth tobacco prevention while in Texas. She will be working with us, as well as with the Onondaga County Health Department.

Thomas R. Welch, MD, Professor and Chair
Department of Pediatrics

This summer, the Department of Pediatrics introduced Golisano Children’s Hospital’s “ePed Direct” service for referring physicians and other health care providers. This is a secure, web-based system by which you can send non-emergency questions or comments to pediatric medical and surgical specialists. All that is needed to use the system is an internet connection and email access. When one logs onto the system for the first time, a brief registration procedure takes place, after which a sign-in name and password are established. After that, the system can be accessed at any time from any place.

Obviously, this system is not designed to address emergencies. But for the types of questions about diagnosis, management, or preventive care which often require a phone call to one of our specialists, ePed Direct will be a great alternative resource.

Questions? Comments? Contact Thomas Welch MD, Department of Pediatrics, 315-464-5451 or welcht@upstate.edu
Update on Today: Treating Type 2 Diabetes in Kids

We are continuing to enroll youth in Treatment Options for Type 2 Diabetes in Adolescents and Youth (TODAY), which is a multi-center clinical research study funded by the National Institutes of Health. It is examining the safety and efficacy of three treatments for type 2 diabetes in the pediatric population. TODAY was initiated due to the increase in type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents, which itself is linked to the rise in obesity and sedentary behaviors in American youth. TODAY will enroll 750 children, age 10-17, at 13 sites across the United States, and will follow them for two to five years. Enrollment began in May 2004 and continues through April 2007. As of May 2006, 270 children and adolescents with type 2 diabetes have been randomized. All diabetes care, medications and supplies, as well as transportation costs, are provided without cost to subjects and their families.

Dr. Roberto Izquierdo and a team of diabetes educators provide medical care. As a health care provider, you may have children in your practice with Type 2 diabetes who may be eligible for the TODAY study. If you do, or if you have any questions, please call Ms. Kelly Duncan (Study Coordinator) at 315-464-3878.

Lifestyle modification through the primary care office and/or the Healthy Lifestyles Program remains the most appropriate management for the more common pattern (mild elevation of total cholesterol, LDL, triglycerides, and HDL) that accompanies overweight, and the attendant risk for the metabolic syndrome.

Referrals to the Lipid Clinic may be initiated by calling 315-464-6064; preliminary laboratory profiles will be requested prior to scheduling the first appointment.

Newborn Screening and the Inherited Metabolic Diseases (IMD) Specialty Center

Each year, 254,000 babies are born in New York State, 130,000 of them in Upstate New York. These infants undergo newborn screening for biochemical and endocrinologic disorders, as well as cystic fibrosis, HIV and hemoglobinopathies. New York expanded its screening program from 11 diseases to 44 diseases in the spring of 2005. There will be one additional test added by the fall of 2006. Of these 44 diseases, 39 are considered inborn errors of metabolism. This includes 5 amino acid disorders, 13 disorders of fatty acid oxidation, 15 organic acidoses, 4 urea cycle disorders, one disorder of carbohydrate metabolism and biotinidase deficiency. Up until now, these infants were referred to either Albany or Rochester for follow-up evaluation and testing.

Presenting “Abby” with MSUD

Abby was a 6-day-old African American female, who had an elevated leucine level on her newborn screen. She had been feeding poorly, with some frequent stools and vomiting. There were other sick family members with similar symptoms, and Abby was anfebrile and gaining weight well after a change to soy formula. Her birth history was unremarkable.

On evaluation for follow-up testing of her newborn screen, she was noted to have a glucose level of 51, with mild acidosis and ketonuria. The blood count was normal but the ammonia was elevated at 177. It was suspected that she was a true positive for maple syrup urine disease and she was hospitalized for evaluation and management. Plasma amino acid quantification confirmed the diagnosis and Abby was started on a special branched chain free formula. Over the course of her hospitalization she became more alert and began to feed well with good weight gain. She was discharged home on a combination of branched chain free formula and regular infant formula.

We will continue to provide chronic care for those individuals with a confirmed metabolic disorder through our IMD center where they can be seen by our nutritionist and social worker. Unfortunately, even with good medical care, there is a high risk of serious morbidity and mortality.

Our team provides follow-up evaluation and testing on infants with a positive newborn screen for any of the 39 tested metabolic disorders. If an infant screens positive, the Newborn Screen Follow-up program in Albany will notify our center and the primary care physician.

We are happy to evaluate the infant and arrange for confirmatory testing. Our IMD program is based in the Center for Neurodevelopmental Pediatrics at 550 Harrison Street in Syracuse. It will soon be moving to the Physician’s Office Building on Irving Ave. We can be reached by calling 315-464-6995. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 1-866-543-KIDS.

We will continue to provide chronic care for those individuals with a confirmed metabolic disorder through our IMD center where they can be seen by our nutritionist and social worker. These children and adults often require special medical care, medical food products, and other amino acid supplements. In addition, we have collaborated with maternal fetal medicine in order to service the women with metabolic disorders during pregnancy.

We are continuing to enroll youth in the TODAY study. If you do, or if you have any questions, please call Ms. Kelly Duncan (Study Coordinator) at 315-464-3878.

IMD Center named by NYS DOH

The New York State Department of Health has now accredited University Hospital as the newest Inherited Metabolic Disease Specialty Center. This comprehensive center includes a clinical director, clinical nurse coordinator, metabolic nutritionist, social worker, and genetic counselor.

As a health care provider, you may have children in your practice with Type 2 diabetes who may be eligible for the TODAY study. If you do, or if you have any questions, please call Ms. Kelly Duncan (Study Coordinator) at 315-464-3878.

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