

Yale Surgical Society

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A surgeon takes the Yale Medical Group helm

What do trauma surgery and running a faculty practice have in common? “You’re managing systems,” says Paul Taheri, MD, MBA, who recently signed on as the Yale Medical Group’s first full-time chief executive officer.

Dr. Taheri was most recently CEO of University of Vermont Medical Group. He’s looking to increasingly standardize practice at YMG so that the patient experience is consistent across the practice’s growing list of sites. The main vehicle to achieve that is through governance at YMG by an active board of department chairs. Chair of Surgery Robert Udelsman, MD, MBA was elected by his peers to chair that body.

The key to working with the chairs will be to provide them with excellent data, says Dr. Taheri.

“If we give people the right information, they’ll make the right decisions,” he says.

YMG is a \$600 million business, but its management has hardened to its academic roots, with a great deal of variation among



Dr. Taheri

departments. For example, he says, most departments had their own definition of what a full-time clinical faculty member is.

While the business of health care is changing rapidly and to some extent unpredictably, Dr. Taheri believes the practice can prepare itself for whatever lies ahead. “As long as you’re providing the care, you’ll get paid,” he says. “You need to create the infrastructure and the tools to manage change.”

Currently 33 community practices are seeking to join Yale Medical Group, which means that the rapid pace of growth the practice experienced under his predecessor, Deputy Dean David J. Leffell, MD, will only continue. Chairs will play the pivotal role in evaluating whether applicants meet the practice’s high standards, according to Dr. Taheri.

Dr. Taheri completed his medical degree at New York University and surgical residency at Tulane University Medical Center then joined the University of Michigan, where he also completed his MBA and stepped into an administrative role for the first time. “You can have a lot of impact at a bigger level,” he explains.

But it is important for him to continue practicing as a trauma surgeon so that he has a clear picture of what life is like for a YMG physician and because he enjoys it.

Before he ever walked into an operating room in New Haven, he got some insight. The process of getting credentials to practice in Connecticut has been frustrating. But the repeated faxing of forms showed him an opportunity to improve. “It’s fascinating. Even the way we recruit can be standardized,” he says.

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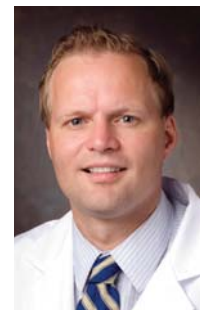
Endocrine Surgery gets new leadership, faculty

Tobias Carling, MD, PHD, has been appointed section chief of endocrine surgery, and two new surgeons have joined the high-volume center known for its use of minimally invasive and other innovative procedures and its strong research portfolio.

Dr. Carling is director of the Yale Endocrine Neoplasia Laboratory, within the laboratory of Richard Lifton, the renowned Yale geneticist. The neoplasia lab is the world leader in whole genome sequencing of endocrine cancers. This provides hope for prevention, early detection and “personalized” treatment of these cancers. Dr. Carling already uses molecular diagnostics with his own patients to avoid unnecessary surgeries.

He was part of a team that discovered two genetic mutations that trigger a severe form of hypertension. Five to ten percent of patients with severe hypertension have tumors of the adrenal gland that produce aldosterone. Removing these tumors can cure this form of hypertension.

Dr. Carling obtained his MD and PHD from Uppsala University, Sweden. He was a postdoctoral fellow in Cancer Genetics at The Burnham Institute, La Jolla, CA. He



Dr. Carling

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Yale cancer care available in Fairfield County

Sajid Khan, MD, was deeply impressed when he first saw Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven and talked with its leadership. “The vision was pretty amazing,” recalls Dr. Khan. But when he joins the Department of



Dr. Khan

Surgery in September, he'll be doing most of his work with cancer patients at Bridgeport Hospital, a campus where the vision and resources of Smilow can be more readily accessed by Fairfield County residents. “All the cancer care in Connecticut doesn't have to take place in the city of New Haven,” explains Dr. Khan. As a surgical oncologist based in Bridgeport, he will be part of a team fulfilling a wish western Connecticut residents often

express for cancer care closer to home.

Dr. Khan earned his medical degree from the State University of New York Health Science Center at Syracuse and did his surgical residencies at Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center and Oregon Health and Science University. He completed a surgical oncology research fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and a surgical oncology clinical fellowship at the University of Chicago Medical Center. His translational research has been based on cell and molecular biology and focuses on finding markers in metastatic cancers to better guide treatment. His clinical focus is on gastrointestinal cancers, which include hepatobiliary, pancreatic, gastric, and colorectal malignancies.

Dr. Khan said that meeting Chair of Surgery Robert Udelsman, MD, MBA, Thomas Lynch, MD, physician-in-chief at Smilow, and Chief of Surgical Oncology Ronald Salem, MD, persuaded him that Yale would be a great place to practice. He also got a great deal of positive information about Yale from his wife, Tara Sanft, MD, an oncologist and director of Smilow's Adult Survivorship Clinic. “She loves her job,” he says.

Yale Surgery recruits new expertise in cutaneous oncology

Dale Han, MD, recently joined the department with a practice in cutaneous surgical oncology.

Dr. Han was attracted to Yale in part because of the interdisciplinary team approach to cancer, which allows him to offer better options to his patients. “There used to not be good adjuvant therapies in advanced melanoma,” he says. “But since 2011, the field has really revolutionized the treatment of advanced melanoma.”

Dr. Han received his medical degree from the State University of New York and did his surgical residency at the University of Pennsylvania, where he also completed a fellowship in surgical oncology. He went on to clinical and research fellowships at the Moffitt Cancer Center. He plans to continue pursuing his research interests at Yale. “There are a lot of questions that still need to be answered,” says Dr. Han.

He is delighted to be practicing at Smilow. “If I was to plan a cancer center, this is exactly how I would have designed it,” he says.



Dr. Han

Passing the torch at YSS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

MELISSA PERKAL, MD



This year's Spring reunion once again provided the chance for generations of Yale surgeons to reconnect, learn what's new in the program and simply enjoy each other's company. I had the honor of presenting Grand Rounds on women surgeons at Yale. More than 75 of us gathered at the Union League for dinner and good company the evening before.

I described the challenges women pioneers faced in this field – and the challenges that remain. But perhaps the most striking finding about women surgeons is that we are drawn to the specialty for the same reason our male colleagues are: influential role models, intellectual curiosity, technical aspects, and decisive-

ness. My reasons for entering surgery are not unique. I wanted to effect immediate change in individuals who had disease amenable to surgical intervention. During my surgical rotations in medical school, I had an immediate sense of belonging. I had an instant affinity to the surgical qualities that prioritize respect, honesty, efficiency, problem solving, and praise for executing arduous tasks. As we all know, a career in surgery includes a daunting time commitment to clinical work. Despite the longer work days required of surgeons, a study comparing women surgeons with other women who are physicians found that career satisfaction was similar between both groups. In this study, women in surgical careers were not more likely to report feeling that they worked too much, had too much work stress, or less control of their environment. Women in surgical careers were less likely to want to change their specialty if they had the option of reliving their lives.

The Yale Surgical Society reunion is

also a chance to welcome and encourage newcomers to the profession. The Lindskog Travel Awards allow Yale medical students to work with surgeons in an international setting. This year, **Rachel Lentz** won support to work with **Dr. Grant Thomson** in Honduras, **Okunade Oluwarotimi** will travel with **Dr. Michael O'Brien** to Zambia, and **Gloria Sue** will travel with **Dr. Deepak Narayan** to India. The Yale Surgical Society Travel Award went to **Miles Pfaff** to travel to Vietnam with **Dr. Mark Weinstein**. **Dr. Edward McGillicuddy** won the prestigious Sam Harvey Award, a \$1,000 prize established through the generosity of the Yale Surgical Society. It recognizes the Chief Resident who in the eyes of their peers is an excellent doctor, good colleague, interested scientist, and well-rounded-individual. In short, “the ideal Yale surgeon.”

This was my last reunion as YSS president. It's been an honor to serve a group of such committed and talented physicians. **Dr. Walter Longo** will serve as president; **Dr. Tobias Carling** will be vice president; **Dr. Vikram Reddy**, secretary; and **Dr. Jeffrey Indes**, treasurer.

Please join me in congratulating them.

Helping YMG operate better

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

DR. ROBERT UDELSMAN, MD, MBA
WILLIAM H. CARMALT PROFESSOR
AND CHAIR OF SURGERY

The things that matter are delivering the best available care to your patients and advancing science to make even better care possible. Your own skill as a surgeon has never been enough to ensure either. You must work within a system that is strong



enough and progressive enough to foster excellence and innovation. The Yale Medical Group is changing rapidly, as every practice must. I am very pleased that Paul Taheri, MD, MBA, is leading that change as practice CEO and encourage you to read the story about Dr. Taheri we've featured on page one. I'll be working closely with him. The chairs from YMG's 19 departments play a key role in governance. They've elected me to serve as chair of the YMG.

We all want excellent care for our

patients. So on the most basic level, we are all on the same page. To build a workable system that will weather the changes ahead in health care, we must develop much more of a group practice mentality.

Yale Medical Group is about 1,000 physicians strong, and growing. We're expanding geographically. In nearly every issue of this newsletter, I introduce you to a new recruit who is providing YMG care outside our New Haven base.

Whether you practice in New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport, New London, or points in between — you should feel part of one practice that insists on the highest standards and also offers exceptional tools and supports that help you meet those standards. That's what every physician — and every patient — deserves.

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Departing chiefs go on to top programs

As usual, our graduating chief residents are going on to fellowships at outstanding institutions and in some cases top practices. For the first time, chiefs who did most of their work at the St. Raphael Campus and those from the Yale-New Haven Campus were honored at a single event at Anthony's Ocean View, one more visible sign of the expanded program that is creating new opportunities for our developing surgeons.

We congratulate the chiefs on their accomplishments and wish them luck in the next stage of their careers. A list of these residents and their upcoming appointments follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Usman Ahmad, MD | Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY
<i>Thoracic Surgery Fellowship</i> |
| Jorunn Atladottir, MD | UMDNJ/Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Colon and Rectal Surgery, Edison, NJ
<i>Colon and Rectal Fellowship</i> |
| Sarah Colwick, MD | University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
<i>Breast Surgery Fellowship</i> |
| Amanda Feigel, MD | Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, Twentynine Palms, CA |
| Ted McGillicuddy, MD | Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA
<i>Vascular Surgery Fellowship</i> |
| Tolutope Oyasiji, MD | Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY
<i>Surgical Oncology Fellowship</i> |
| Paul Pace, MD | General Surgery Hospital Practice Gateway Regional Medical Center, Granite City, IL (St. Louis Metro Area)
<i>Private Practice</i> |
| Bernard Salameh, MD | Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee
<i>Plastic Surgery Fellowship</i> |
| Louis Stein, MD, PHD | NYU Medical Center New York, NY
<i>Cardiothoracic Surgery Fellowship</i> |

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Yale Surgical Society

Save the dates: 2014 reunion

The June 2014 reunion will focus on the the history of vascular surgery at Yale.

Annual reunion dinner
June 3, 2014
6 p.m.

Surgery Grand Rounds
for YSS Reunion
June 4, 2014
7 a.m.



Dr. William Glenn (1914-2003) wrote the standard text for vascular surgeons.

ENDOCRINE GETS NEW LEADERSHIP AND FACULTY CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

completed his training in both General Surgery and Endocrine Surgery at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Courtney Quinn, MD, joins the section with a keen interest in continuing her work in intraoperative laryngeal nerve monitoring, Dr. Quinn is a proponent of doing this monitoring in every case of thyroid surgery so that patients can be assured that voice impairments from intubation are temporary.

“Everyone knows about Yale’s strong endocrine surgery program,” says Dr. Quinn. “I’m excited about what the future holds.”

She obtained her MD from Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, Richmond, VA. She was a postdoctoral research fellow in In Utero Stem Cell Transplantation at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. She completed her training in General Surgery at Saint Barnabas Medical Center, Livingston, NJ, and Endocrine Surgery at Scott and White Memorial Hospital, Temple, TX.



Dr. Quinn

Glenda Callender, MD, joined the staff with a strong interest in outcomes research and clinical trials. She was delighted to join one of the top endocrine surgery programs in the country. “Part of why it’s so good, of course, is because of Rob Udelsman,” she says, noting both Dr. Udelsman’s stature as an endocrine surgeon and his support of the program as chair of surgery.

Dr. Callender was raised in Ecuador by missionary parents. Their example taught her to reach out to underserved patients, work she hopes to continue at Yale. “Everybody deserves access to great care,” she says.

She earned her medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 2000 and completed her residency at the University of Chicago Medical Center in 2007. Dr. Callender is fellowship-trained in Surgical Oncology and Surgical Endocrinology, completing both fellowships in 2010 at MD Anderson Cancer Center.



Dr. Callender