UMass Medical School lauded for primary care

UMass Medical School has earned not just one, but three notable external validations of its success in fulfilling its founding mission and commitment to primary care education. The School of Medicine has once again been ranked in the top 10 for primary care education among the nation’s 131 accredited medical schools and 25 schools of osteopathic medicine by U.S. News & World Report in its annual ranking of “America’s Best Graduate Schools.” Listed near the top of the category since 1994, when the magazine began publishing the much-anticipated rankings, UMMS also ranked 20th in the recently added family medicine specialty category.

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) also cites UMass Medical School as one of the few in the nation with a firm, longstanding commitment to raising interest in primary care. In a feature article in the March issue of the magazine AAMC Reporter, “Primary Care in Medical Education: The Problems, The Solutions,” extensive quotes from School of Medicine Dean Terence R. Flotte, MD, highlight specific strategies. “It starts with me and the chancellor embracing the primary care mission, and pointing out how central it is,” said Dr. Flotte, who further pointed out that UMMS makes deliberate efforts to provide primary care clinical training sites equipped with cutting-edge technologies, including real-time videoconferencing and electronic medical records. The article also mentions the school’s Learning Contract, which provides tuition remission for medical school graduates who practice primary care in Massachusetts, as a major financial incentive.

And, in a new study examining how well medical schools across the country serve their social mission and produce primary care doctors, the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services ranked UMMS 17th in the nation. The first-of-its-kind study, published in the June 15 Annals of Internal Medicine, surveyed more than 60,000 physicians who graduated medical school between 1999 and 2001 and measured schools’ success in producing doctors who practice primary care, work in underserved areas and are minorities. UMMS was the only school in the Northeast to make the top 20.

Shoulder surgeon takes program to next level

FOR COMPLEX SHOULDER problems, patients want an orthopedic surgeon who brings a depth of knowledge in science as well as clinical care—one like Mark Price, MD, PhD.

Dr. Price joined UMass Memorial Medical Center in September 2009 following an orthopedics sports medicine fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital, where he also completed his residency in orthopedic surgery. In addition to an MD from Harvard Medical School, he earned a PhD in medical physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in biomedical imaging research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

“The UMass Memorial Musculoskeletal Center of Excellence offers me a fantastic opportunity to do good work around great people,” said Price, who is also assistant professor of orthopedics & physical rehabilitation at UMass Medical School. “Together, we are advancing to the forefront of treatment for shoulder and sports injuries.”

Perhaps surprisingly, Price entered medical school wanting to be a cardiac surgeon. “But when I took an orthopedics elective I was blown away by how patients went from being wheelchair-bound to walking 18 holes of golf,” he recalled. “It was awe inspiring how patients got their quality of life back and were so appreciative. I fell in love with the specialty.”

His commitment translates into well-honed surgical expertise. “While there was a well-established shoulder program before I arrived, I am taking on some next-level procedures,” he explained. “These include advanced techniques to stabilize shoulders that continue to pop out after multiple arthroscopic procedures, as well as procedures to resolve massive rotator cuff tears not helped by arthroscopic surgery. I am also performing newer surgical techniques for dealing with severe shoulder arthritis with rotator cuff tears.”

To learn more, call 508-793-5327.

O’Brien honored by American Hospital Association

The American Hospital Association (AHA) presented John O’Brien, president and CEO of UMass Memorial Health Care, with its 2010 Board of Trustees Award for his substantial and noteworthy contributions to the work of the AHA.

“As an AHA board member, Mr. O’Brien has served as a passionate leader for ensuring access to care for all,” said AHA President and CEO Rich Umbdenstock. “His dedication to collaboration among community organizations and improved health care delivery has helped ensure access to care for those who need it most. This award recognizes the impact his advocacy efforts have made on strengthening health and health care in America.”