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Insight from the CEO



I am exceptionally proud of the accomplishments that our caregivers from the UMass Memorial Eye Center have achieved this past year. It has been a year marked with growth and transformation for the Eye Center. By working as a team to improve access for its patients, the Eye Center has realized remarkable growth – with new physicians, including specialists in oculoplastic and a most recent addition – an optometrist embedded in the Diabetes Clinic to improve eye care to our patients with diabetes.

Under the leadership of Shlomit Schaal, MD, PhD,

access to the Eye Center and service to our patients has dramatically improved, boosting patient satisfaction. They have reduced patient wait times by 80 percent.

How have they achieved this dramatic success?

Dr. Schaal, chair of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, attributes this success to the caregivers, all of whom are actively engaged in improving processes and care. There is clinic-wide participation in lean training where many have achieved Yellow Belt status. Innovation is built into the fabric of their operations – the team is always looking for innovative ways to improve care to their patients. From improving 'no show' rates to open access format to enhancing OR turnovers, or improving eye care to our veterans, the Eye Center team is focused on access, quality and service.

I acknowledge the amazing work carried out by the team and sincerely thank you for everything you do for our patients. I look forward to the year ahead, as the Eye Center continues to raise the bar on excellent patient care and services.

Eric Dickson, MD, FACEP, *President and CEO, UMass Memorial Health Care*



News from the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences



From the Chair



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I am delighted to invite you to read the 2018 winter edition of UMass Insight. At this special time of the year, we are pleased to share with you the tremendous progress that the Eye Center Team have made in 2017, by successfully implementing a series of original ideas brought up by our creative team members. Thanks to their innovative ideas, our access to the Eye Center has increased three fold in the past year, our patient volume has increased by 30%, and our contribution margin to UMass Memorial in 2017 was 125% better than in 2016. Patient satisfaction soared to 94% in 2017. This winter, we proudly celebrate being included in the "Sweet 16" finalists, as one of the best teams to apply the idea board system at UMass Memorial Healthcare. I am incredibly proud of all our faculty and staff who are working hard every day to achieve these dramatic positive changes. I would like to thank all of you for your support of the Eye Center, Happy Holidays and a great New Year!

Shlomit Schaal, MD, PhD

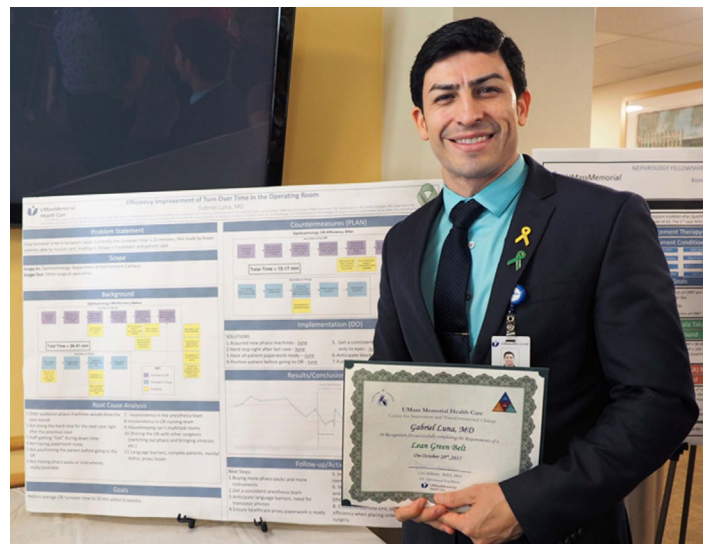
Professor and Department Chair



From the Faculty

Dr. Luna Earns His Green Belt

Gabriel Luna, MD, recently completed his Lean Green Belt training program at UMass Memorial Health Care, Center for Innovation and Transformational Change. His project, titled "Efficiency improvement of turnover time in the operating room," focused on reducing the turnover times at the Hahnemann Ambulatory Surgery Center, leading to more patients being able to receive care and fewer delays in treatment.



Dr. Luna has served as the Operating Room Leader for the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences since January 2017. In addition to improving operating room efficiency, he has also advocated for patient safety by obtaining state of the art technology for cataract surgery, as well as improving the pre-surgical evaluation process to simplify protocols and better risk-stratify patients in order to reduce unnecessary testing before surgery. Now, fewer patients are being cancelled due to inadequate testing prior to surgery. Dr. Luna's efforts have been instrumental in creating a better surgical experience for patients at the Hahnemann Campus Eye Center.



News from the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences



Faculty Insight

Dr. Faustina Establishes a New Oculoplastics Service at UMass



Misha Faustina, MD, FACS has joined the UMass Ophthalmology department as the new Director of Oculoplastic Services. Born and raised in southern California, she has trained across the U.S. in general surgery, ophthalmology and oculoplastics. "I am what happens when you cross an interior designer with a vascular surgeon." Her private practice has been focused on cancers, traumas, and aging issues around the eye, as well as cosmetic rejuvenation.

In recent years, Dr. Faustina has gained notoriety as a medical student educator and a coach for physicians preparing for their board certification examinations. Known to challenge her trainees with integrating their knowledge, she has used newer innovative teaching techniques including "flipped classrooms" and 3-dimensional simulation models. "I knew I could have a bigger impact in academics." She is also spearheading the department's efforts in launching an Ophthalmology Residency Program that will incorporate these techniques in the curriculum and expand ophthalmology care in our underserved region.



Student Insight

UMass Medical Student Leads Innovative Research Project

Using optical coherence tomography angiography (OCTA), researchers found a correlation between retinal vasculature findings and obstructive sleep apnea. The research, led by **Shlomit Schaal, MD, PhD**, chair and professor of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, and **Lauren Lombardi** (pictured right), a first-year medical student at UMMS, was published in the September issue of *Retina Today*.

The UMMS research team, which also included **Omar Helmy, MD**, a postdoc in the Schaal Lab; Lotem Nativ, an undergraduate student from UMass Amherst; and colleagues at Baystate Medical Center, used the advanced imaging system in the eyes of patients with severe obstructive sleep apnea, but with no other known eye pathology, to further investigate the potential link.

The researchers determined that obstructive sleep apnea patients in the study had, on average, a lower vasculature density in the foveal avascular zone. Lombardi, who presented the research at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Conference in May, said researchers continue to work with Mary Jo Farmer, MD, PhD, and Karin Johnson MD, sleep specialists at Baystate Medical Center who care for high-risk obstructive sleep apnea patients.





News from the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences



Clinical Insight

The Eye Center Embraces Epic

The future is looking Epic at UMass Memorial Eye Center. October was an exciting month here at the Eye Clinic as we celebrated our new patient care enhancing software system, "Epic Kaleidoscope". The Eye Team embraced the new state of the art system, that has been in the making for the past two years. There was much planning, role playing, and tweaking to perfect the system and optimize work flow to allow the Eye Team to provide the best patient care.

"We all came together as a team after many months of planning and we have had some of the most successful couple of months the Eye Center has ever had. The patient volume was expected to decrease due to the implementation of the new software but in fact we have had some of the most productive months as our patient volume increased since Epic. The Eye Center collaboratively agrees that it is due to the fact that we all work as a team, helping where needed to get the job done for our patients. I can see how this system will allow us to better serve our patients" says **Darlene Bocash-Winn**, the Manager of the Eye Center. **Tina Bergeron**, Ambulatory Service Representative, says "I can see how the system will be beneficial to patients across multiple UMass hospitals. Physicians from different departments will be able to share in the total care of patients". The Eye Center, is a state of the art facility, which provides superb Eye Care.



A New Era of Advanced Cataract Surgery at UMass Memorial



The UMass Memorial Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences has recently acquired the latest technology for performing advanced cataract surgeries. The new Centurion Vision System for cataract surgery represents the newest generation of cataract machines. The new system is able to maintain more stability within the eye during cataract surgery procedures with fewer pressure fluctuations and less surge (by automatic pressure detecting and compensating technology) and overall more predictable surgical steps compared to the older Infinity system.

Ultimately, more stable eyes lead to more predictable surgery, which results in overall safer procedures. **Dr. Gabriel Luna**, OR leader of the department said: "This new equipment puts the UMass Memorial Eye Team in the frontline of cataract technology". Dr. Luna is building an Eye Team that is focused around providing the best and most efficient care for cataract patients. The Eye Team members are ophthalmologists, nurses, eye technicians, CRNAs, and anesthesia doctors who all work together to deliver best value to patients and their families.



Staff Insight

Jackie Volke's Insight – a Summary of 20+ Years at the Eye Center



While getting ready to graduate from the Salter Secretarial School in 1968, I was interviewed by an Ophthalmologist. I got the position and I have worked nonstop in this field ever since. I had the opportunity to work from home while raising my three boys. And when I started to work outside of the home again, my wonderful parents were there to help. Twenty-one years ago, I was given the opportunity to interview here at UMass as a medical secretary for Dr. Diane Karalekas. When Dr. Karalekas left the Eye Center, I was told by Dr. George Asdourian that I would be working for him. I am happy to say that I worked with Dr. Asdourian until he retired a few months ago. I have had wonderful opportunities to work with brilliant doctors here at the UMass Memorial Eye Center over all these years including our new Chair, Dr. Shlomit Schaal.

There have been so many changes at the Eye Center. The computer systems have changed. The surgical techniques, equipment, and medications for excellent eye care have changed. At present, I am working on my Green Belt. We will be making available to our Armed Forces Veterans, the opportunity to be seen here at the UMass Eye Center. My philosophy in life has always been the same. Observe the Golden Rule. Treat others as you would like to be treated. It's so simple but so important.

Katlyn Tells the Story about the Transformation of the Eye Center



Katlyn Champagne is an Ophthalmic Angiographer/Photographer at the UMass Eye Center. She obtained her Bachelor's of Science in Photography at The New England Institute of Art in 2011. Katlyn also runs a wedding and portrait photography business under her maiden name- Katlyn Reilly Photography- based out of Worcester, MA. She has a studio located down the street from the Hahnemann Campus. Katlyn joined the eye team in December of 2014 after working for several years at The New England Eye Center at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, MA. Katlyn is hoping to attain her CRA and OCT-C certifications upon her return from maternity leave in 2018. In Katlyn's free time she enjoys reading, practicing yoga, spending time with her husband, their Siberian husky, and soon to be first born- a son due in January of 2018.

The UMass Eye Center has gone through so many amazing changes in the past year. Katlyn's talents are highlighted in a video titled "Transformation of the Eye Center" - Here is the link to Katlyn's video: https://youtu.be/lr-ch_aOKBQ. With the collaborative help from the entire UMass Eye Center Team, Katlyn was able to create a fun and informative video about the progress, updates, and overcome challenges in the department. The video tells the story of the Eye Team, and how the idea board system and LEAN tools, helped the team improve patient flow and upgrade the quality of patient service. The Eye Team was recently named as one of the "Sweet 16" – one of the top teams at UMass Memorial Health Care to make a difference through the idea board system. The Eye Team hopes to win the Champions of Excellence Award, which recognizes contributions toward innovation through a successful idea system.



News from the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences



Educational Insight

Vision Seminar Series Hosts World Renowned Experts

The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Medical School was awarded an educational grant of \$10,000 by Regeneron. The grant will be supporting the annual educational program of the Vision Seminar Series, including covering costs of visiting national and international ophthalmology leaders.

The Vision Seminar Series was established in August 2016, and has drawn much attention. Seminars are held every 3rd Thursday of the month, at 5:30 PM in the Albert Sherman Center in the 6th floor conference room.

Vision Seminar Series guest speakers in 2017 have included:

Dr. Emily Chew, MD, a world-renowned medical retina expert, deputy director of the Division of Epidemiology and Clinical Applications and the deputy clinical director at the National Eye Institute (NEI), National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Chew discussed important clinical and research applications of the ACCORD and ACCORDION studies, which defined the risk of progression of diabetic retinopathy in patients.

Demetrios Vavvas, MD, PhD, a world-renowned retina surgeon and a clinician-scientist, from Mass Eye and Ear Infirmary, shared the novel study of the molecular mechanism in the development and progression of age related macular degeneration by his team. He discussed the role of lysosomal dysfunction in the formation of the deposits below the retina seen in AMD.

Sayon Roy, PhD, a world-renowned scientist in the field of diabetic retinopathy, from Boston University School of Medicine, shared his research on early changes in the basement membrane of diabetic patients that precede the more advanced pathology that leads to neovascularization.

For further information select the following link:
[Vision Seminar Information](#)

Eye to Eye Conference Brings Together Academic Ophthalmologists and Optometrists

The second Eye to Eye Conference took place in the Albert Sherman Research Building, at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and brought together ophthalmologists from The UMass Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences and optometrists from Mass College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS), in Worcester, who engaged in academic discussions for the purpose of enhancing eye care in the Worcester Area.

Larry Baitch, OD, PhD, FAAO, Professor and Associate Dean for Research at MCPHS, summarized his extensive research, which is focused on finding a commercial surgical solution to the problem of presbyopia (farsightedness caused by loss of elasticity of the lens of the eye, occurring typically in middle and old age). Misha Faustina, MD, a new faculty member at UMass, discussed her medical and surgical expertise in oculoplastics surgery. Dr. Faustina shared her experience in treating chronic and acute diseases of the eyelids and orbit.

Morris Berman, OD, MS, Dean of the School of Optometry at MCPHS, said: "I am excited about the many ways in which UMass and MCPHS faculty could collaborate around eye care". Shlomit Schaal, MD, PhD, Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences said: "The Eye to Eye initiative is unique in the area, and represents a new mindset, where optometrists and ophthalmologists in academic centers collaborate and share knowledge. We intend to work together around Education, Vision Research, and most importantly, around providing excellent coordinated care to our patients in central Massachusetts." The Eye to Eye Conference was sponsored by the Ophthalmology Research and Education Fund, at the UMass Medical School.



News from the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences



International Insight

UMMS Showcases Women's Leadership in Academic Medicine at International Conference

Luanne Thorndyke and Shlomit Schaal speak at Conference of Women Healthcare Professionals in Argentina



Luanne Thorndyke, MD, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor of Medicine, and **Shlomit Schaal, MD, PhD**, Chair and Professor of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, served as keynote speakers at the Conference of Women Healthcare Professionals in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

This inaugural women's leadership conference, sponsored by the Society of Women Physicians of the Argentina Medical Association (AMA), brought together more than 150 professionals to hear speakers describe barriers that prevent women physicians from achieving leadership positions and strategies to break down and overcome these barriers.

About 70 percent of medical school students in Argentina are women, but, like their colleagues in the United States, women have yet to achieve parity in representation among the medical/surgical specialties and senior leadership. At UMass Medical School, women have made gains in leadership representation: 23 percent of chair positions and 61 percent of UMMS administrative leadership positions are held by women, and a variety of mechanisms are in place to increase these numbers, including leadership development of aspiring women leaders.



Community Insight

The Eye Center Celebrates Dr. Asdourian's Retirement and Establishes the Dr. George K. Asdourian Lectureship

Dozens of physicians, care givers, UMass Memorial employees, and friends gathered at the Eye Center after hours to acknowledge Dr. Asdourian's superb service and prominent contribution to Ophthalmology at UMass. Dean Flotte said: "We appreciate your dedication to the institution for over 40 years". Dr. Dickson commended Dr. Asdourian for "stepping up during tough times"



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News from the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences



Community Insight

(Asdourian Retirement continued)

and for "always being available to take care of patients". Dr. Schaal announced the establishment of The Dr. George K. Asdourian Lectureship.

Colleagues, family members, and friends generously contributed to a fund that will support an annual lecture honoring Dr. Asdourian's legacy. Dr. Asdourian is a well known retina specialist, who served as Interim Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, several times. He will continue to teach medical students, residents, and fellows as Professor Emeritus.

*Thank you Dr. Asdourian for your dedication
to the institution for over 40 Years.*



If you would like to add your name to our contributors list please make check payable to
The Dr. George K. Asdourian Lectureship
and mail to: Ms. Sharon Furbish, Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences
Eye Center, UMass Memorial Health Care, 281 Lincoln Street, Worcester MA 01605

Happy Holidays



UMass Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences

*Warmest Wishes for
Happy Holidays
and a
Great New Year*

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