Follow Dr. Maria in his leadership for MCGHealth Children's Medical Center at Bernie's Blog - www.berniesblogforkids.com.

facebook.com/mcghealthkids
twitter.com/mcghealthkids
Letter from the Chairman

A Few Precautions = A Fun Summer

Each June, summer stretches before us as bright and colorful as a gigantic beach towel unfurled at the edge of the sea, or the pool, or a lake – or even a backyard sprinkler!

There is no season as welcomed as summer. My family and I embrace it the same way you do – enjoying bike rides, swimming, beach visits, picnics, popsicles and camps for the kids. In other words, sun, sun and more sun!

Like just about everybody, I have a keen memory of a terrible sunburn I got one summer at camp. Ouch! I wince every time I think of it. Often, the problems we face as adults are a result of what we do, or don’t do, as children. Thankfully, my severe case of sunburn didn’t result in skin cancer as an adult, but for many children it may.

Take a few precautions this summer to ensure your kids a healthier future – apply sunscreen (lots of it and often), buckle those bike helmets and lifesaving vests, eat fruits and veggies, practice water safety – and then relax and enjoy.

We’re delighted to offer the joys of summer to many of our young patients through special camps, including Camp Rainbow, a day camp for our pediatric oncology/hematology patients. We are pleased to feature Heather Nicks and Camp Rainbow in this issue of Georgia Kids First.

So as you sit back and enjoy our summer issue, roll out that beach towel and let summer begin!

Sincerely,

Bernard L. Maria, MD/MBA
Pediatrician-in-Chief,
MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center
Ellington Charles Hawes Professor
Chairman, Department of Pediatrics
Medical College of Georgia

CONGRATULATIONS!
Neonatal Program Named a Center of Excellence

The neonatal program at the MCGHealth Children's Medical Center has been designated a member of the OptumHealth Centers of Excellence network.

“This designation means that the many teams that form our neonatal program are providing exceptional care to our youngest patients and their families during critical times, whether a newborn has a heart condition, a lung problem, or has other complex intensive care need,” said Dr. Jatinder Bhatia, division chief of neonatology at the MCGHealth Children's Medical Center and a professor of pediatrics at the Medical College of Georgia.
Forget that Camp Rainbow is for kids with cancer. It’s about being a kid, plain and simple.

So says Heather Nicks, and she ought to know.

Nicks, 26, is a camp counselor at Camp Rainbow, and one who brings a special insider’s perspective. From age six to 11, she was a camper at MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center’s camp for kids with cancer and blood disorders.

“I had a benign brain tumor and underwent surgery at the children’s hospital,” she explains.

“Like other campers, I was tired of people looking at me, checking me, talking about me.

At camp, no one cared what I had or what treatments I was getting — they let me be a kid, not a patient.”

As many as 150 kids, ages four to 16, attend Camp Rainbow each summer at Camp Twin Lakes in Rutledge, Georgia. Funded by donations, the camp is free, and campers are invited to bring one sibling along.

“So many of these campers don’t know anything but the hospital,” says Nicks. “They’re suffering through treatments and don’t know what’s going to come out of it. A lot of times, they’re frail and scared.

Here, they get to see they’re not alone. They get to enjoy just being a kid. They do things that they wouldn’t be able to experience at home — rock-climbing, a ropes course, archery, horseback riding.

We treat them like regular kids, and that’s what they want — normalcy.”

Also important, she says, is time away from parents, who tend to hover and worry. “Parents also get a needed break,” adds Nicks, who is a student at Augusta State University, studying education. “It’s an important resource for the community.”

It’s easy for Nicks to keep it simple: “I don’t know what these kids are leaving behind when they get to camp; I just want to make their stay as special as it can be.

I want them to have the same experience as a camper that I did,” she smiles.

Funding for camps come from generous donations. To support our camps with donations, please call (706) 721-3957.

To learn more about the camps sponsored by MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center, visit mcghealth.org/camps.
From Behind The Desk

June is a time of transition. It brings the beginning of summer and the end of spring. It is the end of a school year and advancement to the next. Parents find this time bittersweet. We see our children advance and grow, not only in school grades or college, but into the men and women we want them to be. As a parent, we experience both sadness and joy in the development and growth of our children, especially when they transition away from us.

MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center family is experiencing this same feeling of transition. We feel sadness and joy during this month as Barbara Meeks, vice president of patient care services for the Children’s Medical Center, transitions to her new role as chief nurse executive with Nemours Children’s Hospital in Florida.

Barbara joined MCGHealth on May 1, 1989. She’s been very successful during her 21 years, holding a variety of management positions within the organization. Barbara played a significant role in national and local leadership for children and in establishing our Patient Family Centered Care philosophy. There is no doubt Barbara has been a friend to many and a leader for our children.

I, along with Kim Basso, our pediatric intensive care nurse manager, have agreed to assume Barbara’s responsibilities at the Children’s Medical Center to ensure a smooth transition. Kim and I will continue to build on the strong foundation Barbara built. Barbara’s successes in Georgia will now be shared to positively impact the children of Florida. She is forever a part of our family and the fabric of our children’s hospital.

Barbara - you will be missed, you will continue to be loved, and we, your MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center family, wish you the best in your new endeavor.

Jim Mumford, MHSA, FACHE
Administrative Director of Pediatrics
Ambulatory and Network Services
MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center

Out & About

FROSTY FUND-RAISER
Purchase a Frosty key tag for $1 at participating area Wendy’s restaurants and receive a free Junior Frosty treat during follow-up visits by showing your key tag. The fund-raiser runs through December 1, 2010 and proceeds from the sale of each tag will benefit MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center. It’s a delicious way to support a worthy cause! For more information, including a list of participating Wendy’s restaurants, call (706) 721-3957.

DAIRY QUEEN CAMPAIGN
Stop by any participating Dairy Queen through August 5, 2010 and purchase a Children’s Miracle Network balloon for $1. All funds raised will stay locally to help children and families treated at MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center. Proceeds from this year’s Miracle Treat Day will help fund the renovation of the children’s cancer clinic. For more information, call (706) 721-3957.

KOHLS CARES FOR KIDS
Curious how $5 can help kids? This summer season, Kohl’s will feature three special-edition plush characters, two custom books from Toy Story, a country CD and cookbook. MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center is one of 154 children’s hospitals participating in the Kohl’s Cares for Kids program. Through this program, we will receive 83 percent of the sale price of special Kohl’s children’s books and matching plush toys. In addition to the store at 4227 Washington Road in Evans, the merchandise is also available online at Kohls.com.

For more events, visit www.mcghealth.org
Health First

Healthy Skin Doesn't Have a Tan

Tanning has come in and out of fashion through the centuries but the current desirability of tanning started in the early 1900s with the discovery of vitamin D. It increased in the 1930s, due to the influence of fashion magazines, the invention of the bikini in 1946, the introduction of tanning oils in the 1950s, and the creation of the tanning bed in 1978. We now know that overexposure to the sun is dangerous and has long-lasting effects and complications.

Sunlight is divided into visible light, longer infrared light and shorter ultraviolet light. Ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation are implicated in the development of skin cancer (basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma). Tanning is the skin’s protective response to exposure to UV rays, with formation of new melanin. Tanned skin is damaged skin. Eighty percent of a person’s sun exposure occurs before the age of 18. In addition to skin cancer, sun exposure results in premature aging of the skin and damage to the eyes, including cataract formation.

Here are a few guidelines for safety in the sun:

- Children under the age of six months should not be in direct sunlight.
- Older infants and children should wear sunscreen, with a sun protection factor of at least 15.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going out in the sun and reapply every one to two hours.
- Avoid being in the sun from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants with a tight weave for greater sun protection.
- Wear a hat with a brim to cover the face.
- Remember that sunburns can occur on cloudy or overcast days.
- Wear sunglasses with 100 percent ultraviolet protection.
- Avoid tanning beds altogether.

Editor’s note: In Georgia and South Carolina, a parent must give permission in person for a child under the age of 18 to use a tanning bed. They must also wear protective eyewear.

Alice Little Caldwell, MD
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics

Tanning beds are no safer than getting a tan from direct sunlight and the International Agency for Research in Cancer places tanning devices in the highest cancer risk category.
News from the Child Health Discovery Institute

Even Kids in South Have Low Vitamin D

For decades, medical experts have assumed those of us in sunshine-rich states are naturally getting our needed dose of vitamin D.

Not so, says MCG researcher Dr. Yanbin Dong of the Georgia Prevention Institute, who recently led a study of 559 14- to 18-year-olds living near Augusta to determine how vitamin D levels vary with the seasons in the Southern U.S. Forty-five percent of the teens were black, and 49 percent were female.

Fifty-six percent of the teens had insufficient vitamin D levels, and nearly 30 percent had vitamin D deficiency. In all four seasons, the levels were lower for blacks than whites. In fact, Dr. Dong and his team found that most of the black teens had insufficient amounts of vitamin D in their blood.

About a third of white teens also had insufficient vitamin D levels, reports the study, published in the May issue of Pediatrics.

Teenagers who don’t get enough vitamin D are at risk of developing bone disease, but it’s much broader than that, says Dr. Dong.

“Vitamin D regulates cardiovascular function, the heart, kidneys, arteries, and even the brain to some extent,” he explains.

Most of us don’t go outside often enough to get the necessary amount of vitamin D, says Dr. Dong, who encourages kids to go outside and play.

He says the study shows that no matter where you live, you probably suffer from a vitamin D deficiency or insufficiency.

“The amount of sun exposure needed for adequate vitamin D levels is debatable, but a basic rule is 10 to 15 minutes at least twice a week, without sunscreen because it blocks absorption,” he advises. “African Americans will probably need twice as long, because pigmented skin takes longer to produce healthy levels.”

Dr. Dong’s study also found that overweight teens are more likely to suffer from low levels, since fat tissues reduce the availability of vitamin D. “Therefore, overweight kids should also stay in the sun longer.”

Teens and adults alike should stay in the sun just long enough for the skin to turn pink, which indicates adequate exposure and prevents burning, he says.

Dr. Yanbin Dong, MD, PhD
Professor, Georgia Prevention Institute, Department of Pediatrics
Centennial Chiefs’ Corner

Lessons Learned

It’s amazing that the year is already winding down. It seems like we took over for Kathryn McCusker as chief residents just a few months ago. It’s been a privilege to have had the opportunity to serve in this role for such a fantastic group of residents and faculty under the leadership of Drs. Maria, Hudson and Stallworth. Some observations we’ve made over the past few months include:

• No matter how many eyes look at the schedule, something is bound to get missed.

• No matter how many e-mails you send out, you will be asked questions that you’ve already answered multiple times.

• No matter how “simple” changes may seem, there is always a ripple effect requiring double-digit e-mails and adjustments.

• No matter who gets sick, they always do it on their continuity clinic day.

• No matter the difficult circumstance, the people in this residency and department will take care of one another.

• No matter how perfect the audio-visual setup appears, it can always be improved.

Josh Smith and Nancy Wood will take over as chief residents next year and we know they will do a fantastic job. They’ll be able to navigate the inevitabilities listed above with flying colors during their tenure. Thanks for allowing us to be your chief residents. It has been a privilege.

MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center Presents

MOVIES UNDER THE STARS

When: Fridays in June

Where: Columbia County Amphitheater
7022 Evans Town Center Blvd., Evans

Movies: FRIDAY, JUNE 11
Tooth Fairy

FRIDAY, JUNE 18
Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs

FRIDAY, JUNE 25
Monsters vs. Aliens

Cost: $2 adults and $1 children ages 13 and younger. Payable at the gate. Cash or check only.

Time: Gates open at 7 p.m. Movie starts at dusk. Coolers are allowed. No alcoholic beverages permitted.

Proceeds benefit MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center

Co-sponsored by: KNOLOGY® News Channel 6 Augusta Family Magazine

mcghealth.org/movies
Historical Reflections: Celebrating 100 Years of Caring for Kids
Caring for Patients and Their Families

In the 1900s there were few pediatric hospitals in the nation, making it difficult to overstate what the Wilhenford Hospital meant to local families.

Mrs. Bryan Cumming, a founding member of the Children’s Hospital Association, noted that Augusta was a city “in which a large portion of mothers and fathers were obliged to be absent from home to earn their bread laboring in mills and other places.” As a result, their children often needed care. The Wilhenford Hospital delivered that care with compassion and concern for the entire family.

Here’s how a mother of an early patient expressed her gratitude: “We have again with us our darling boy, and we feel that we will ever owe something that we can never repay to each and everyone who has taken a part in this great and noble institution.”

MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center continues to lead the way in Patient Family Centered Care, a philosophy that makes parents a part of the treatment team.

BE A 100-YEAR-OLD KID!

In celebration of 100 years of pediatric care in Augusta, MCGHealth Children’s Medical Center is inviting everyone in the community to become a 100-year-old kid.

Learn more at mcghealth.org/kids100