Dermatology at UMMC has come a long way in seven years from the inception of our department. We have provided compassionate care to approximately 180,000 patients, including 51,000 children; performed 5,350 Mohs surgeries; 14,500 narrow band UVB treatments; and 730 patch tests. The department has grown to 10 faculty, five nurse practitioners, 11 residents, two fellows, and 75 support staff. We have done a very good job, but the COVID-19 pandemic quickly tested our resolve and taught us that we have much more to do.

In a few short weeks, we have geared up to take care of as many patients as possible with teledermatology after the elimination of most “in person” visits at UMMC. Telehealth has promise, but we seem to be finding many of its pitfalls! We have continued to see patients with urgent and emergent issues “in person.” I am so very proud of our hard-working, committed, caring, and BRAVE staff. They put the needs of dermatology patients ahead of their own. A salute to them, and providers around the state and the nation who are doing the same! We are #DermStrong, #UMMCStrong, and #HealthcareGiverStrong.

From the Chair

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The UMMC Department of Dermatology is making good progress toward a goal of developing a world-class department. Our mission is clear:

1. to enhance the patient-centered care provided by dermatologists in Mississippi
2. to focus on subspecialty care needs of patients and to support our dermatology colleagues throughout the state
3. to provide high quality educational programming for medical students and residents
4. to provide timely and focused continuing medical education (CME) for dermatologists and other health care providers in the State of Mississippi and throughout the region
5. to develop basic science, translational and clinical research programs that extend the knowledge base of dermatology
Changes at UMMC

Amazing changes have occurred in just two weeks at UMMC. There are now nurses and security guards at the "limited entry points" to the hospital and outpatient clinics. There also are very strict limitations on visitors: anyone entering has their temperatures checked and they are provided a mask and hand sanitizer before they can proceed. Consults are screened utilizing teledermatology before patients with urgent or emergent conditions are referred for "in person" visits that are scheduled on two half days each week. Faculty members with their resident and nurse teams are "seeing" follow-up patients by teledermicine. This is supported by a team of receptionists, schedulers and nurses. Taylor, Jennifer, Mary Ann, Joan, Dr. Brodell, and Dr. Jackson are at their limits to try to make this all work and must make adjustments on an almost daily basis. Nurses from our clinics have journeyed to the fairgrounds to help with the expanded testing that has been initiated. Drive-thru draw stations also have been created at several locations on campus to allow patients needing lab work to have their blood drawn without having to enter a clinic.

Our symposium for dermatology providers has be changed to a virtual forum and is now set for the morning of April 18. It is a credit to all that so many people have come together in the department to try to keep things running and provide care through these trying times.
Residency and Fellowship Program Update

The UMMC Dermatology Residency Program filled five residency slots this past March. Of those five new residents, one will start as a PGY-2 this July and four will begin their PGY-1 year before joining us in July 2021. Our third Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology fellow also will start this July. Our fourth class of graduates finished in June 2019 and passed their boards in July, maintaining the program's 100 percent board pass rate. Our residents have been very active in research and produced dozens of peer reviewed publications and book chapters. They also enthusiastically teach medical students, their faculty, and other departments, and lead the department's quality assessment/quality assurance program. They have risen to the challenges facing them during this difficult time and have continued didactic sessions and seeing patients in innovative ways, as illustrated in several of the following articles.

Education in the Time of COVID-19

By Caroline Doo, MD, PGY-4

COVID-19 may have been an unforeseeable obstacle this spring, but our team was able to come together and implement changes to keep our patients, providers, and students as safe as possible.

As part of Mississippi's only academic medical center, the Department of Dermatology recognized the importance of preserving its education activities. Resident didactics and Grand Rounds transitioned to live interactive video calls, allowing social distancing while continuing dermatology education. The residents also have been provided new opportunities to learn from dermatologists across the nation by taking part in other external virtual courses.

UMMC residents and providers have not been our only focus for education, however. We remain committed to the education of providers in the community and have transitioned our annual dermatology symposium to a teleconference format. In addition, we are in the process of creating an online medical student education curriculum to continue fostering interest in dermatology at UMMC.

While the transition to virtual education comes with some technological difficulties, it also has led to positive outcomes. Project ECHO has allowed us to reach and connect with providers throughout the state whom we may not have been able to collaborate with otherwise. Together, we continue to learn and overcome new challenges.
Patient Care at UMMC Dermatology
By Jordie Ivey, MD, PGY-2

Patient care has been and will continue to be our number one priority in the Department of Dermatology. We are certainly in uncharted waters, but with a little innovation and the help of technology, we have transitioned to seeing patients virtually rather than face-to-face.

Operating under HIPAA’s “good faith provision of telehealth,” we are able to choose from multiple platforms to communicate with our patients via video. The applications currently being used by our department are UMMC2you, Apple FaceTime, Doxy.me, and Zoom. For the first week we have been focusing on streamlining the process with established patient follow ups, but we plan to add new patient appointments in the near future.

There definitely are challenges that come with using telehealth, and we are learning and adapting each day. The biggest hurdle thus far is that not all of our patients are appropriate telehealth candidates due to either the nature of their problem or lack of access to a device with video capabilities.

Overall, the positive aspects have greatly outweighed the challenges. Patients have been very appreciative of the ability to receive access to care without coming to the clinic and risking exposure to the COVID-19 virus. This platform has also proven to be very efficient for routine follow ups for certain conditions like mild acne, psoriasis, and eczema, and may be something that we consider continuing to use in some capacity moving forward.

None of this would be possible by one, two, or even three people. It has required the combined effort of the faculty, nurses, schedulers, residents, receptionists, and administration working as a team to get telederm off the ground and into action. The times ahead are still uncertain, but fortunately telehealth will allow us to do our part to care for patients while keeping them healthy.
In February 2020, just prior to the arrival of COVID-19, faculty members, residents, and a nurse practitioner of the Department of Dermatology presented Dermatologic Tips, Tricks, and Pearls to 33 primary care providers (14 hours of Continuing Medical Education) aboard the NCL Getaway. The Caribbean Sea was calm, the food was great, and everyone enjoyed touring ancient ruins, snorkeling, and deep sea fishing. It is hoped that this type of retreat can be repeated in future years.

UMMC has been preparing for the worst while hoping for the best with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. The supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) is one area where all hospitals are worried about their peak needs during this pandemic. In an effort to preserve the supply of "regular" masks, the Department of Dermatology supplied premium muslin cotton linen to Rick Luke owner of Faye’s Clothing Store from Philadelphia, MS. They produced 150 cotton masks for our staff within 24 hours. Five hundred more free cotton masks were ordered from a Swimming Pool Cover company, GLI in Youngstown, Ohio. This company ceased its regular operations and has begun producing 100,000 masks for University Hospitals of Cleveland and 500 for us. The Rev. Beth Palmer, of Vicksburg, and Jan Cooper, DPN, a former professor of nursing at UMMC, also made masks for the department.

It is believed that these cotton masks may offer only a modicum of protection from COVID-19 for the individual wearing them, but may well produce significant benefits in decreasing the spread from an asymptomatic infected individual to other staff members. Our department has also divided into teams with a provider their nurses and a resident. This is an attempt to maintain social distance and minimizing spread to a larger group in the event that one of us develops COVID-19. Finally, individuals over age 70, those with health problems or immune compromise are working with their teledermatology teams from home.

Department of Dermatology’s First CME “Getaway”

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Masks, Volunteering, and Teledermatology:

Just some of the ways the department is responding to COVID-19
Publications


Presentations


