

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

THE YALE PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL CHILD HEALTH | NEWS

## Yale Pediatric Global Health Track

# Addressing the health needs of children worldwide



While in Guatemala, Rebecca Taxier, MD, (far right) became involved with a school health project initiative that works with teachers who often identify health concerns with their students.

Nestled among the mountains of Guatemala lies beautiful Lake Atitlan and its colorful surrounding villages – a picturesque postcard scene. In October of 2005, Hurricane Stan ripped through the area causing severe flash floods and mudslides, leaving 1,400 dead and 5,000 homeless. In the years since, many in the region have been living in housing projects with little or no healthcare available to them. This past August, when word spread there was a pediatrician at the hospital in the town of Santiago Atitlan, many families paid to cross the expansive lake so their children could be examined, most for the first time in their young lives.

That visiting pediatrician was Rebecca Taxier, MD, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital's (YNHCH) first resident to travel abroad through the Yale Pediatric Global Health Track (YPGHT). The Yale Pediatric Global Health Track is a comprehensive global health program designed to support residents interested in international health, health inequities and immigrant health.

In the summer of 2008, a group of physicians from YNHCH and Yale School of Medicine began formal talks to create the program that allows residents to focus on the global aspects of public health, community pediatrics, medical education or research.

Instrumental in the process was Kate Yun, MD, Robert Wood Johnson clinical scholar at Yale School of Medicine, who spearheaded the program's development because of

her passionate interest in global health, her previous work overseas and her desire to further her own work in the global health field.

"I chose to do my residency at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, in part because of the existing opportunities to practice global health here, so I was eager to expand those opportunities and knew we could create an educational program that would enhance the residency experience," explained Dr. Yun.

"A formal proposal for the Yale Pediatric Global Health Track was developed in collaboration with Yale School of Medicine and with tremendous support from Drs. Margaret Hostetter, chief of pediatrics for YNHCH, Alan Friedman, associate director of education and pediatric residency director, and Linda Arnold, assistant professor of pediatrics and faculty director for YPGHT, and a committee of pediatric residents," she said. Yale-New Haven Hospital's medical staff fund provided seed money for the program and funding to help defray travel expenses, while Robert Rohrbaugh, MD, director of the Office of International Medical Student Education, provided funds to cover other related expenses.

"Our primary goal is to provide residents with individualized residency experiences that will prepare them for careers that will improve health for underserved children either in the United States or abroad," said Dr. Yun.

To achieve that goal, the YPGHT focuses on education, service, research and collaboration between local and international partners for mutually beneficial relationships. The flexible, two-and-a-half year mentored curriculum offers YNHCH pediatric and medicine-pediatric residents the ability to incorporate global health on a daily basis.

"The YPGHT adds a strong educational component to the Program in International Child Health, which to date has focused primarily on developing research collaborations with international partners," said Michael Cappello, MD, professor of pediatrics, microbial pathogenesis and public health. "This creates the opportunity for pediatric residents to complete at least one clinical or research elective, either internationally or domestically, that will encourage them to cultivate long-term relationships with their elective sites," said Dr. Cappello, who is co-director of the Yale Program in

**PEDIATRIC GLOBAL HEALTH TRACK, *continued from page 1***

International Child Health and director of the Yale World Fellows Program.

Residents are also required to attend didactic lecture series, workshops, global health talks and mentorship meetings. During their internship year, residents in the YPGHT are matched with a faculty member and work with them for the duration of their residency. In addition to providing career guidance, mentors help the residents develop their global health projects. The YPGHT resident committee members responsible for coordinating mentorship and didactic education are Diana Lee, MD and Mareen Thomas, MD, respectively.

“We wanted to craft this program thoughtfully and make sure that when a resident chooses to do an overseas elective, he or she is thoroughly prepared,” said Saria Hassan, MD, medicine-pediatric resident who is the resident director for the YPGHT. Dr. Hassan, a native of the Sudan, worked in Sudanese hospitals during medical school and spent six weeks last year working in a Ugandan hospital as part of the Yale/Stanford Johnson & Johnson Global Health Scholars Program.

“We want our residents to have a valuable learning experience but we also want our international partners to benefit as well,” said Dr. Hassan. In addition to Guatemala, the program’s other potential international sites are Ghana, Eritrea, Grenada and Jamaica. These countries were chosen based on their health care needs, geographic diversity, linguistic considerations, onsite mentorship from attending physicians and pre-existing relationships with YNHCH or Yale School of Medicine faculty members.

Dr. Taxier, a member of YPGHT’s resident committee who is responsible for international site development, felt she had been well prepared by the residency program for her clinical experience in Guatemala and went with a plan detailing how she could

contribute to Santiago Atitlan’s hospital, although there were unforeseen opportunities for her.

“Visiting medical personnel had brought medicine to the hospital but it was often duplicated or seldom used,” she explained. “I was able to help create a pediatric formulary for the hospital’s pharmacy detailing which medicines were available, which were most often prescribed and how the hospital could direct donors in the future,” she said.

“The formulary is a perfect example of how we want to improve sustainability with our partner sites,” said Dr. Hassan. “We want to make sure the community continues to benefit even after the visiting resident has left.”

Dr. Taxier also became involved with a school health project initiative that establishes well child-care sponsorships and works with teachers who often identify health concerns with their students. Many of Dr. Taxier’s patients were suffering from malnutrition and diarrheal illnesses but she did encounter some “medical mysteries.”

“When unsure of the best treatment plan available, given limited resources, I was able to rely on the email support of attendings and fellows with past international experience,” she said.

In addition to the valuable educational experience in Guatemala, Dr. Taxier improved her Spanish-speaking skills and gained a better understanding of the Central American culture. Many of her patients here in the New Haven area will benefit from both.

“In many ways, we feel global health begins in New Haven,” said Dr. Yun. Residents are encouraged to work with community organizations



*Kate Yun, MD, Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar, (left to right), Rebecca Taxier, MD, and Saria Hassan, MD, have been instrumental in the development of the Yale Pediatric Global Health Track program.*



*Rebecca Taxier, MD, examines a child in a Guatemalan hospital as part of the Yale Pediatric Global Health Track.*

in New Haven that provide services for immigrant families and to work with community pediatricians who have an interest in global health. Overseeing community pediatrics on the YPGHT resident committee is Erika Schumacher, MD. “We’re a country of immigrants and even if you don’t go abroad, you need to be prepared to work with and to treat people from all over the world during your clinical life,” stated Dr. Yun.

Many immigrant patients are seen in YNHCH’s pediatric Primary Care Center and nearly half are of Hispanic or Latino descent. In addition, there is a bi-monthly refugee clinic that started as a partnership with New Haven-based IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services). David Sullivan, MD, committee member in charge of resident recruitment for the YPGHT, and Katherine Weingartner, MD, work in the refugee clinic along-

## The Yale Program in International Child Health

Yale's department of pediatrics formalized its commitment to improving the health of children worldwide with the launching of the Yale Program in International Child Health in September 2002. This program, now co-directed by Michael Cappello, MD and Linda Arnold, MD, coordinates and supports activities in global health research, education and clinical care. Faculty participants in the program sponsor collaborative research projects with international colleagues, coordinate international clinical electives at overseas health care centers, consult with colleagues from around the world on challenging clinical cases and provide clinical care for refugees and international adoptees right here in New Haven.

Research collaborations provide Yale faculty members with the opportunity to share their expertise with colleagues from low- and middle-income countries and to have a direct impact



Through the Yale Program in International Child Health, visiting medical students like Adwoa Twum-Berimah (third from left) from Ghana, have the opportunity to gain valuable clinical and research experience working with members of Yale faculty. Joining Adwoa were (left to right) Elijah Painsil, MD, medical student Stacey Kallem, and Linda Arnold, MD, co-director of the Yale Program in International Child Health.

on the health of children worldwide. Yale faculty are currently engaged in clinical and translational research projects focused on HIV/AIDS, malaria, intestinal helminth infections, diarrheal disease and nutrition.

Educational goals for the program include fostering bidirectional exchanges



Katherine Weingartner, MD, examines a young daughter of Iraqi parents at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital's bi-monthly refugee clinic held at the Pediatric Primary Care Center. Families are accompanied by an interpreter and volunteer from New Haven-based IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services).

with overseas partners and providing pediatric residents with opportunities to experience clinical research and/or health care delivery abroad. Thus far, physicians have traveled to Fiji, Bolivia, Cuba, Peru, Tanzania, Albania, Nicaragua, Brazil, Nigeria, Grenada, Eritea, Haiti, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand and South Africa to advance global child health.

Clinical cornerstones of the program are the bimonthly refugee clinic and the Yale International Adoption Clinic, which provides comprehensive medical and developmental evaluations of children adopted from abroad. Dr. Carol Weitzman, director of the adoption clinic, also provides pre-adoption and medical record reviews to prospective parents.

Through initiatives in research, education and patient care, the Yale Program in International Child Health helps pediatric physicians make ongoing contributions to improving the health of children worldwide and continues the legacy of caring for the world's most vulnerable populations.

side nurse manager Lisa Cunningham, RN, and Maria DeLucia, RN,

"Newly settled refugees arrive with a wide range of health care needs that residents may not typically encounter with other patients. This type of clinic provides excellent learning opportunities and exposure to different cultures right here in New Haven," said Cunningham.

The refugee clinic is just one more way the Yale Pediatric Global Health Track provides residents with educational and clinical experiences, both domestically and internationally, to become well-equipped, active participants in the global health community.

## Welcome new faculty

**NILI ELANA MAJOR, MD,** has



Nili Elana Major, MD

joined the section of general pediatrics as an instructor in developmental/behavioral pediatrics. Dr. Major received her B.A. in the biological basis of behavior from the University of Pennsylvania

(HUP) and worked as a research coordinator at HUP's Ralston Penn Center for Memory Disorders prior to receiving her medical degree from Stony Brook School of Medicine. She completed her residency in pediatrics at New York Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center and completed her fellowship in developmental/behavioral pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Children's Hospital at Montefiore in the Bronx, New York.



[www.ynhch.org](http://www.ynhch.org)

E-mail [YNHHPublicRelations@ynhh.org](mailto:YNHHPublicRelations@ynhh.org)

20 York Street | New Haven, CT 06510-3202



YALE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

[www.yalepediatrics.org](http://www.yalepediatrics.org)

YALE PEDIATRIC UPDATE is published three times a year by Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital and the Department of Pediatrics at Yale School of Medicine for physicians and other healthcare professionals caring for children.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit  
US Postage  
PAID  
New Haven, CT  
Permit No. 773

**Medical Editor**

LINDA ARNOLD, MD

**Managing Editor**

LYNNE KRUPA

**Editorial Board**

MICHAEL APKON, MD

CHERYL HOEY, RN

MARGARET K. HOSTETTER, MD

KATIE MURPHY

**Photography**

????

© 2010, YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL, REPRINT WITH PERMISSION.

## CONTACTING THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AND YALE PEDIATRICS

CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY **203.688.3333**

TRAUMA REFERRAL **800.285.7775**

EMERGENCY TRANSPORTS

▶ NEWBORNS (NBSCU) **203.688.2318**

▶ INFANTS & CHILDREN (PICU) **203.688.2323**

PATIENT REFERRAL ASSISTANCE

▶ TOLL-FREE

**877.611.KIDS**

(5437)

PEDIATRIC

CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

**203.785.4638**

REFERRAL ASSISTANCE  
FOR PHYSICIANS

**203.785.KIDS**

(5437)

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL INFO

▶ TOLL-FREE

**888.700.6543**

▶ LOCAL

**203.688.2000**

## News

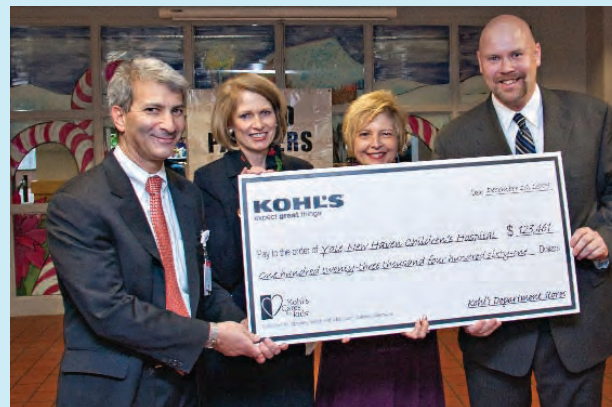
### For Yale pediatric subspecialty referrals, one call to 203-785-4081 does it all!

The newly opened pediatric specialty center at One Long Wharf in New Haven offers multidisciplinary care, from one-time consultations to treatments for acute, chronic or terminal medical/surgical conditions. The new Long Wharf Pediatric Specialty Center offers most of the same outpatient services available in the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospi-

tal location, in addition to new programs such as orthopedics and urology. The center includes specialty office practices, pediatric diagnostic imaging with a full-time pediatric radiologist and a pediatric phlebotomist, as well as pediatric rehabilitation services.

*Appointments at Long Wharf can be made via the one call system: 203-785-4081.*

## Kohl's keeps caring for kids



Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital recently celebrated "Kohl's Cares for Kids Day" in recognition of Kohl's commitment to YNHCH. Their programmatic funding now exceeds \$1 million. (Left to right) Michael Apkon, MD, PhD, vice president and executive director, YNHCH; Marna Borgstrom, president and CEO, Yale-New Haven Hospital; and Paula Crombie, director of social work, Yale-New Haven Hospital, accept Kohl's check for \$123,461 from the store's district manager, Kenny Exler.