



Dr. Ivan Walks

Black History Month Lectures Target Changes in Health Care Systems

To commemorate Black History Month, the GW Chapter of the Student National Medical Association hosted a lecture series in February. "Remembering the past ... Shaping the Future," brought Ivan Walks, former DC Commissioner of Health; William J. Strudwick, MD, director of the Providence Hospital Emergency Department; and Mohammad Akhter, MD, MPH, executive director of the National Medical Association, to the Medical Center as featured guests.

Speakers were invited to share their thoughts on what they have observed in the health care system throughout their careers. More specifically, the speakers addressed the direction of the current health care system, the possibility of a universal health care system and the potential effects on the minority community.

Karcher Named Pathology Chair

Following a year-long national search, Donald Karcher, MD, was recently appointed chair of GW's Department of Pathology. Dr. Karcher has been a member of GW's faculty for more than 23 years and has served as chief of the Hematopathology and Flow Cytometry Services, director of the Clinical Pathology Division, and, most recently, as overall director of Laboratories. He specializes in Hematopathology, with special emphasis on bone marrow pathology, lymphoproliferative disorders and flow cytometry. His research interests target the effects of HIV infection on the hematopoietic system and HIV-related lymphomas. Among his many research accomplishments, Dr. Karcher was the first to discover a new type of lymphoma referred to as primary effusion lymphoma, which often presents in HIV-infected patients. He currently serves on two NIH research study sections.

In addition to his clinical and research activities, Dr. Karcher says he loves to teach. He has received the

Golden Apple Award multiple times from the Pathology residents at GW, and, in 2007, he was the recipient of the Golden Apple Award from the second-year medical school students. Dr. Karcher says he tries to maximize the use of technology in the classroom—he has published multiple computer-assisted learning and virtual microscopy programs for use by medical students.

Dr. Karcher has served as acting chair of the department for several years, and says he is excited to start some new initiatives within the department. "As chair, I plan to build on the success of our already strong clinical and teaching programs and to make major strides toward developing a world-class research unit in the department."

Dr. Karcher received his MD degree from Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans and is trained and Board-certified in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology and Hematopathology. Dr. Karcher has been a member of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society since his third year of medical school.



Dr. Donald Karcher

New Research Shows That Community Health Centers Meet and Exceed National Performance Standards

Community health centers not only can adopt national performance standards, but also can perform at a level above national quality benchmarks, according to a recent study by researchers from the GW Medical Center, published in the *Journal of Ambulatory Care Management*. The study revealed that health centers have not participated in national reporting systems that are transparent and standardized. This has prevented them from receiving recognition for the high quality of care they furnish to medically underserved patients. The study, funded by the United Health Foundation, focused on three community health centers in New York, Miami and Washington, DC, all of which primarily serve medically underserved populations. Findings revealed that the centers perform at a level that is equal to or above the national average. United Health Foundation also provides grants to these health centers and others in its effort to expand and improve health care access and quality.