A Century of Advancing Medicine

The Mount Sinai Hospital has long been a pioneer among medical institutions in the United States. At the turn of the 20th century—when the practice of medical specialization was just emerging—our physician-scientists were developing expertise in novel therapeutic areas and conducting groundbreaking work that resulted in the establishment of four departments at Mount Sinai: Rehabilitation Medicine, Orthopaedics, Dentistry, and Radiation Oncology.

“In organizing around clinical areas, departments such as these established the framework for modern-day academic medicine and translational science—long before those terms were coined,” says Kenneth L. Davis, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Mount Sinai Medical Center.

The development of specialization at Mount Sinai eventually led to advances in a range of fields, explains

Commitment to Excellence in Rehabilitation Medicine

The history of rehabilitation medicine at Mount Sinai could be told as a tale of two departments. “For half a century, physical agents such as cold, heat, water, massages, and ultraviolet rays were the primary means of treatment,” says Kristjan T. Ragnarsson, MD, Lucy G. Moses Professor and Chairman, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine.

“But during the past 50 years, a team-oriented approach to rehabilitate people with physical disability has become the focus of our interventions,” he says. Today, integrated services include physical and occupational therapy, as well as psychological, social service, and vocational counseling.

When Heinrich Wolf, MD, was appointed to lead the newly created Department of Physical Therapy in 1910, medical staff treated conditions such as bone...
Rehabilitation Medicine (continued from page 1)

Kristjan T. Ragnarsson, MD

of the Department, received international recognition for his research, which involved the use of fever therapy, electrotherapy, and therapeutic physical exercise to treat patients with a range of conditions. He also led the successful effort to establish physical medicine as a specialty by the American Medical Association Advisory Council for Medical Specialties.

In 1948, the department name was changed to the Department of Physical Medicine, reflecting the new specialty area, and later changed to the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. In 1968, the name was streamlined to the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, which it remains today.

Under its third chair, Lawrence A. Wisham, MD, Chairman of the Department of Physical Medicine, the department expanded to provide consultation services and physical and occupational therapy for inpatients in the hospital and in outpatient clinics.

With the arrival of Dr. Ragnarsson in 1986, existing services continued to grow and an inpatient rehabilitation medicine service was formally established, now comprising 100 beds.

For many years, the department has been the only federally designated Model System of Care in New York State for both spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury. It also has major programs for patients disabled by stroke, limb amputations, multiple traumas, and recent joint replacement surgery.

A budding field only 100 years ago, “The role of rehabilitation medicine in the delivery of clinical services to people with temporary or permanent disability is now well established,” Dr. Ragnarsson says.

In honor of the centennial celebration, Mount Sinai’s Department of Rehabilitation Medicine has planned an all day scientific session in the Hatch Auditorium on Friday, November 19, 2010.

The Department of Dentistry’s First Hundred Years

At a time when the benefits of taking care of one’s teeth were not widely recognized, Mount Sinai established the Department of Dentistry. The appointments of Milton Simon, DDS, and Samuel M. Getzoff, DDS, as Adjunct Dentists in 1910 marked the official creation of the department, one of the nation’s first dentistry programs in a general hospital setting.

During World War I, the Dental Division of Base Hospital No. 3, Mount Sinai’s affiliated unit stationed in France, served as the American Expeditionary Force’s largest facial trauma center. During World War II, six Mount Sinai oral surgeons brought their expertise to Italy, Africa, and France to care for wounded soldiers.

The department advanced the emerging area of pain management throughout the 20th century. Mount Sinai dentists were among the first in the country to study procaine, a local anesthetic, to control pain associated with dental procedures. By the 1950s they had conducted some of the first clinical trials of lidocaine, another anesthetic.

Offering services in the areas of orthodontics, periodontics, oral surgery, implantology, and dental sleep medicine, Mount Sinai’s Department of Dentistry continues to expand. Patient volume at the dental clinic increased 23 percent between 2008 and 2009 alone.

New initiatives for 2010 include a nasal-facial molding team to help correct cleft lip deformity, and collaboration with the Head and Neck Cancer team. The department also provides adolescent dental services in conjunction with the Adolescent Health Care Center. “Our purpose is to treat all aspects of pain in the head and neck area,” says Martin Bassiur, DDS, Clinical Instructor and Director of Orofacial Pain Management.

The work of our institutional forebears set in motion—and set the highest standard for—everything we do in science and medicine today.

— DENNIS S. CHARNEY, MD
DEAN OF MOUNT SINAI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS
A Century of Advancing Medicine  

(continued from page 1)

Arthur H. Aufses Jr., MD, Professor of Surgery and Health Evidence and Policy, and Chairman Emeritus of the Department of Surgery. He is also co-author, along with Barbara Niss, Archivist at The Mount Sinai Medical Center, of *This House of Noble Deeds: The Mount Sinai Hospital, 1852–2002*.

“The work of our institutional forebears set in motion—and set the highest standard for—everything we do in science and medicine today,” says Dennis S. Charney, MD, the Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean of Mount Sinai School of Medicine and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at The Mount Sinai Medical Center.

During the century that followed the inception of medical specialization, the rate of clinical and scientific discovery at Mount Sinai continued to increase. In 2009, *U.S. News & World Report* designated the Medical Center among the nation’s top 20 hospitals, recognizing it with “Honor Roll” status for the first time in the institution’s history.

“Even as Mount Sinai’s national reputation grows, we remain aligned with our original mission—to advance clinical excellence through medical science,” says Wayne E. Keathley, President and Chief Operating Officer of the Mount Sinai Hospital.

Celebrating 100 Years of Orthopaedics at Mount Sinai

In June 1855, physicians at The Mount Sinai Hospital treated their first patient with a broken bone, a child suffering from a fractured femur. Over the next five decades, Mount Sinai doctors continued to treat a range of orthopedic illnesses and trauma, and in 1910, the hospital established a formal Department of Orthopaedics—becoming one of the first institutions in the nation to do so.

The department acquired and leveraged new technologies like the x-ray machine to expand its work in clinical research and treatment. X-rays enabled deeper understanding of bone and joint diseases, as well as fractures.

Also in 1910, Philip W. Nathan, MD, first Chief-of-Service, renowned for his work on arthritis, established the hospital’s first Orthopaedic Clinic, and an inpatient service was established the following year. During his tenure, Dr. Nathan performed landmark research on poliomyelitis, a viral disease of the hip that can lead to full or partial paralysis. In 1932, according to the book *This House of Noble Deeds: A History of the Mount Sinai Hospital, 1852–2002*, Dr. Nathan published a landmark work on acute infections of the hip joint.

Scientific innovation continued between 1920 and 1940, expanding greatly by mid-century. In 1960, Robert Siffert, MD, a former flight surgeon in India and China during World War II, was appointed Director and Orthopaedic Surgeon-in-Chief. Having published more than 100 papers during his residency alone, Dr. Siffert’s research produced advances in many areas, such as helping elucidate the basic mechanisms of bone formation.

“Dr. Siffert’s research built the foundation for scientific discovery and medical breakthroughs that continued to expand throughout the 20th century,” says Evan L. Flatow, MD, Bernard J. Lasker Professor and Chair, and Chief of Shoulder Surgery, at the Leni and Peter W. May Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. In 1986, the Department was renamed the Leni and Peter W. May Department of Orthopaedics. Under the chairmanships of Michael Lewis, MD, and Dempsey S. Springfield, MD, the research laboratory was expanded.

Currently, there are four federally funded researchers studying the genetic markers of bone fragility, tendon wear and degeneration, novel methods for imaging peripheral nerve injuries, mechanisms of spine degeneration, and spine treatment methods.

Today, the department’s world-class physicians are instrumental in developing novel minimally invasive surgical methods, cartilage restoration techniques, partial knee replacement surgeries, and hip arthroscopies. In an effort to elevate patient care and education, just last month the department opened a state-of-the-art joint replacement center.
### Events

#### Inaugural Mount Sinai School of Medicine Postdoctoral Symposium

Keynote speaker Dr. Harold E. Varmus is a Nobel Prize-winning scientist currently serving as co-chair of the Council of Advisors on Science and Technology in President Obama’s administration. The symposium will include poster and speaker presentations from MSSM Postdoctoral Fellows, a career panel and networking reception.

Friday, March 19
10:30 am – 6 pm
Stern Auditorium

#### Grand Rounds Anesthesiology

Ira S. Nash, MD, Chief Medical Officer of The Mount Sinai Medical Center, presents “Excellence in Patient Care.”

Wednesday, March 3
6:45 – 8 am
Annenberg
13th Floor, Room 13-01

### Education

#### Training and Education

**Coaching Skills for Team Leaders & Supervisors**

Through coaching, a team leader or supervisor can help their staff improve performance, change negative patterns of behavior, and learn new skills and approaches. In the first part of the program, you will learn and practice an overall model of coaching. Then a month later you will be able to sign up for a private 45-minute coaching session with the instructor to review your experiences applying the coaching skills, and further develop your ability as a coach.

Thursday, March 4
2 – 4 pm

#### Levy Library Education Classes

Register online for classes at: http://fusion.mssm.edu/levy/classes.cfm. Read more about Library classes at: http://www.mssm.edu/library/services/classes.shtml. For more information, e-mail Levy Library Reference at refdesk@mssm.edu or call 212-241-7204.

### Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. An active lifestyle, healthy diet, abstaining from smoking, and screening at age 50 and above, all help to reduce colorectal cancer risk.

### Classifieds

**For Rent**

Two bedroom, ground-floor apartment for rent in the Bronx, near Bruckner Expressway/White Plains Road. Rent is $1,000 per month and does not include utilities, gas, and electricity. Smoking and pets are not allowed. For more information, call Ms. Durante at 718-829-6012.

**Gift Shop Notice**

Visit the Mount Sinai Gift Shop. The shop is located on the 7th floor of Guggenheim Pavilion.