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the Call



Keyvan Ravakhah, M.D., internal medicine, is the new chairman of the department of medicine at Huron Hospital.

He was the last person to apply for the position of chairman of the department of medicine at Huron Hospital, but in the eyes of his peers and the hospital president, he was the first choice for the job.

Keyvan Ravakhah, M.D., an internal medicine physician at Huron Hospital, is the new chairman of that department, the largest medical division at the hospital. "I was happy and thrilled to receive the appointment," Dr. Ravakhah says. "And whatever respect this indicates that my fellow physicians have for me, then I can tell you that it's very mutual."

That respect is considerable from the hospital's medical staff, says John M. Erkins, M.D., MBA, chief of staff and the medical director of women and children's services. "Dr. Ravakhah understands the culture of the hospital and our patient population because of his work here. He completed the residency program at Huron Hospital and continued his career here. He is highly trained, intelligent and proactive. He was the best possible choice for the chairmanship."

The appointment became official in September and was made by the hospital's president, A. Gus Kiouss, M.D. A selection committee of hospital physicians recommended Dr. Ravakhah for the post, after he and other applicants underwent a

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New Huron Hospital chairman helped cement status of residency program

By Meta McMillian



Dr. Ravakhah, who completed his residency at Huron Hospital, discusses functions of hospital equipment with residents.

rigorous interview process that included receiving recommendations from other physicians.

Leadership Abilities Noted

Dr. Ravakhah brings to the chairmanship enviable credentials as a practicing physician, researcher, instructor and motivator, which will benefit his department and Huron Hospital. And, as part of his application, it didn't hurt that as director of the hospital's medicine residency program, he was instrumental in maintaining the extraordinary success the program has had with its residents over the last several years.

Currently, 100 percent of the residents admitted to the medicine residency program pass the board exam. Few similar residency programs in the state have matched that enviable record. And, only once in the last six years has the Huron Hospital program dipped a few percentage points below that 100 percent success rate. Also, the number of residents enrolled in the other highly successful programs in the state has been far fewer than the 54 residents admitted to the program at Huron Hospital.

"That's a tribute to our teaching faculty and support crew," explains Dr. Ravakhah, who is on the faculty of the residency program. "We have a very intensive curriculum. The residents work more than

residents in the average program, but then they get so much more out of our program."

During his tenure as director, the residency program also received four full years of accreditation from the national Accreditation Council for Graduate Medicine Education. "Our program was recognized in seven different areas for providing medical care beyond what was supposed to be provided."

Agenda for Enhancing Care

As chairman of the department of medicine, which comprises a total of 70 physicians, residents and interns, Dr. Ravakhah is responsible for identifying best practices in medical treatments and protocols used to provide the most advanced care possible to patients. He advocates for new technology to more effectively diagnose and treat patients. He also ensures that all physicians have appropriate and up-to-date accreditation for their practices.

His other duties include approving the type of presentations featured during weekly medical seminars the physicians receive, and giving the guest lecturers feedback on the effectiveness of their presentations. His position will afford him even more authority over the medicine residency program, to help ensure that it maintains its high standards.

Superior Residency Programs Lead to Superior Patient Care

Huron Hospital's Medicine and Surgery Residency Programs:

- ◆ Both the medical and surgery residency programs have received five-year accreditations through the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.
- ◆ The medicine residency program has the leading American Board of Internal Medicine pass rate in the state of Ohio.
- ◆ Both medicine and surgery had 100 percent board exam pass rates in 2006.
- ◆ 40 percent of the residents obtained fellowship status in post-residency programs around the country.

His own initiatives for the department involve getting input from physicians on how they want to improve medical services at Huron Hospital. "I plan to learn from the individual physicians practicing here how they think Huron Hospital can position itself to provide the best care for our patients, and make it easier for the physicians to do their job," Dr. Ravakhah adds.

He would like to see more advanced training offered to physicians in a range of specialties,

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such as nephrology, endocrinology and trauma, and more fellowships awarded to the medical staff. Such an ambitious agenda is being put into motion by a physician and medical staff leader who, like other staff, wants to propel Huron Hospital to the forefront of outstanding medical facilities.

En Route to Honors, Chairmanship

His own road and commitment to Huron Hospital began a continent away. Dr. Ravakhah earned his medical degree in Turkey and practiced

residency program during the 1993-94 program year. He became chief resident during the 1996-97 program year, and in 2002 was named program director.

“I love this hospital. It’s a teaching hospital,” says Dr. Ravakhah, who also has a master’s degree in business administration from Case Western Reserve University and a master’s degree in public administration (healthcare) from Cleveland State University. “We serve a diverse population, with challenging medical problems. This

encourages us to be proactive in seeking out new treatment strategies, and securing the latest diagnostic and other technology in the industry to care for our patients. And our patients are thankful for the care they receive. Their gratitude makes us feel like we’re doing our job.”

Even though Huron Hospital is a community hospital, Dr. Ravakhah says it operates like larger hospitals in many ways, especially regarding research. “This is important because we get referrals from beyond the region.”

Research, for instance, is being conducted on the effectiveness of inhaled insulin for treating patients with diabetes. The hospital already has received international recognition for its diabetes comprehensive self-management program in its Lennon Diabetes Center. And prenatal and perinatal services have been instrumental

in the hospital maintaining one of the lowest morbidity and mortality rates for infants in the nation.

Dr. Ravakhah also has been honored for his own research efforts. He received the 2006 American College of Physicians, Clinical Research Award, and earned the 2005 American Medical Association, Clinical Research Award. Being in an urban environment exposes physicians and residents to some of the most critical trauma cases, which inspire new and successful treatment strategies, he explains.

Scaling Back, Gearing Up

Given his new responsibilities and agenda, Dr. Ravakhah will be obliged to cut back on his typical busy physician’s schedule, which includes writing medical papers. However, he will continue some activities, such as maintaining a patient caseload, being active with some medical committees and serving as assistant clinical professor of medicine at CWRU.

More energy will be directed toward enhancing services provided by his internal medicine staff and work with other staff to enhance the hospital’s visibility. “I want to get more physicians to bring more patients to Huron Hospital,” Dr. Ravakhah says. “We’re proud of the staff and the type of medical care we provide here. We want to let people know about the quality of care that’s found here.” ■



Dr. Ravakhah takes time to confer with residents.

there for a time, before making his way to the University of Alabama, Mobile, in 1992. He was a visiting physician in general surgery and plastic surgery there.

A year later, Dr. Ravakhah joined Huron Hospital when he was admitted into its internal medicine