



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

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Driving along St. Charles Avenue, or Jefferson Highway, or Magazine Street, or even Veterans Boulevard, one continually sees signs that read "We're back." Well, the Ochsner Journal is back also. After a hiatus partly due to a reorganization of the Journal, as well as partly due to Katrina, the Ochsner Journal has returned to print and hopefully is better than ever.

Appropriately, this issue is dedicated to academic activities. As we look at the Ochsner Clinic Foundation in 2006, particularly as we endeavor to be an integral part of the rebuilding of this region, we must ask ourselves where have we come from, who we are, and where we are going.

When Alton Ochsner and his colleagues had a vision for patient care and academics that could not be fulfilled at Tulane University, they took that dream and, with significant risk, founded the Ochsner Clinic. It has always been this legacy that has driven the Clinic forward. Following the merger of the Clinic and the Foundation in September 2001, the new organization has been able to focus both inwardly and outwardly to continue to strengthen its presence. This has enhanced our ability to provide quality health care in addition to growing and strengthening our academic activity.

But why grow? Why is it important for Ochsner to have an increasingly greater impact on the healthcare delivery and the academics in this region? The simple reason is that we have something to offer. We have a model, albeit continually evolving, to provide comprehensive integrated healthcare in an academic atmosphere of education and research.

We are emphasizing a culture of "Yes" that places the patient and the family in the center of what we do. Our approach to healthcare revolves around the patient and the family, not the provider. The academic component is key to who we are, because we could not provide this quality of care if we did not significantly invest in the education of health care providers and the development of knowledge. Each successive generation of physicians, allied health personnel and nurses whom we educate and train, only strengthens our community both from the quality of life as well as the economic perspective. Our basic science research, our clinical research and our outcomes research likewise improve our healthcare delivery by discovering continually improving methods of patient care while offering state of the art care to our community.

Katrina certainly has created a lot of change in our area. It also has created a great deal of opportunity. We have the opportunity to redesign health care delivery and education in the region. We have the opportunity to do it in a non self-serving, community-oriented way. We can take health care into the communities with an electronic medical record. We can share the care of indigent patients and the associated funding with other facilities throughout the community. Medical education can be a collaborative effort among the institutions with the infrastructure to create positive educational environments. Likewise, research can be a collaborative effort that can allow us to do real transitional work that will create a true biomedical research enterprise in New Orleans.

Prior to Katrina, we had 325 full-time housestaff through Graduate Medical Education and about 450 medical student clinical rotations at Ochsner. Since the storm we have worked very hard to assist our university colleagues. We are on a run rate to double the number of medical student rotations at Ochsner, and have increased the GME positions by 25-30. We also have hosted investigators from both Tulane and LSU in our undamaged laboratories to assist them in continuing their research uninterrupted. We are not a university and need not be competitive with them. We are an independent academic medical center with a strong ethos in education and research. We are a good partner for both medical schools.

Our hope for the future is that the academics at Ochsner will continue to improve, and that we will be a key institution in the academic health care of the New Orleans region. The Ochsner Journal remains an excellent vehicle for us to tell you about our progress.