

Changes in the Division of General Surgery

Patch Dellinger: The Division and Department say “Thanks for an Outstanding 23 Years.”



Dellinger

On January 1, 2014, [E. Patchen Dellinger \(Patch\), MD](#), Professor, Department of Surgery, stepped down from his role as Chief of General Surgery. After 23 years as Chief and 37 years with the UW Medicine’s Department of Surgery, Patch wishes to pass the Division Chief baton and focus the remainder of his career on his clinical practice as well as continuing to teach residents and mentor young faculty and participate in other activities within the Department, including

continuing to lead the Department’s A & P Committee. In particular, he will focus his mentoring activities in our newest area of General Surgery practice: the Urgent Care Practice.

During the 23 years as Chief, there has been unprecedented programmatic and faculty growth in General Surgery, currently standing at 23 regular faculty; 3 research faculty and 3 Teaching Associates. Patch has had an extraordinarily distinguished career at the University. He is an excellent teacher and role model for junior faculty, always leading the General Surgery Division with a gentle, steady hand. We are delighted that he will continue in the Division of General Surgery as an attending physician.

Brant Oelschlager, Appointed New Chief of General Surgery

After a recommendation by the Search Committee, headed by [Ron Maier, MD](#), Chief of Trauma Surgery, [Brant Oelschlager, MD](#), Professor, General Surgery, Department of Surgery, has been appointed the Chief of General Surgery, beginning this role on January 1, 2014.



Oelschlager

Brant began his career at UW Medicine as an intern. He completed his residency in general surgery and then a fellowship in foregut minimally invasive surgery. He was asked to join the faculty as an Assistant Professor within the Division of General Surgery at the completion of his training. He rapidly progressed

through the ranks to become a Professor of Surgery. He has developed a very busy clinical practice in endoscopic and laparoscopic treatments for foregut disorders. He has led the Department’s efforts in developing our minimally invasive treatments for foregut disorders and has been the Director of the [Center for Video-Endoscopic Surgery \(CVES\)](#) as well as the CVES Fellowship Director for more than five years. His research has gained national attention and he has mentored many fellows, some who have since become members of our faculty. Dr. Oelschlager has also been active in the administrative aspects of practice, becoming Section Chief of GI surgery when it was clear that the Division of General Surgery needed to be divided into two sections: GI Surgery and Surgical Oncology. In that capacity he learned much of what it takes to be a successful Division Chief: attention to faculty, attention to program growth and attention to the business side of medicine – all the while, keeping a busy clinical practice and remaining academically productive. We are fortunate to have Brant able and willing to step into this position. His imperturbable style and astute mind will make the transition from Patch to Brant seem practically seamless.

David Byrd, Appointed Associate Chief of General Surgery and Section Chief of Surgery Oncology

[David Byrd, MD](#), Professor, Department of Surgery, and one of the perennial “Best Doctors In Seattle” has been appointed Associate Chief of General Surgery and will continue his role as Section Chief of Surgical Oncology. David has a big role within a big Division. The Division has become large enough that a single leader cannot functionally keep up with workload and maintain a clinical and academic practice. The Associate Chief role was developed in order to provide the Chief with a seasoned second in command with whom he can share the load. Another aspect of the Associate Chief role is the ability to assist with strategic and programmatic planning, particularly in the areas where the Chief has less specialty knowledge. In this way, Dr. Byrd enhances and expands Dr. Oelschlager’s abilities to develop and run the Division of General Surgery.



Byrd

Surgical oncology continues to grow programmatically and in importance to the patients in our areas. Dr. Byrd has his finger on the pulse of Surgical Oncology. He has a major role at the [Seattle Cancer Care Alliance \(SCCA\)](#), developing and managing the surgical oncology program at that location. He mentors and advises junior surgical oncology

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faculty and is important in assisting and advocating for the more senior faculty within the Section in their endeavors; several of whom are involved in groundbreaking research and policy development. Given the importance of Surgical Oncology as well as the depth and breadth of knowledge necessary to provide effective leadership, Dr. Byrd is also maintaining the Surgical Oncology Section Chief role for the day-to-day operational leadership of Surgical Oncology. We are fortunate to have David for these roles.

Alessandro Fichera Appointed Section Chief of GI Surgery



Fichera

[Alessandro Fichera, MD](#), Professor, Department of Surgery has been appointed to fill the Section Chief role in GI Surgery left vacant by Dr. Brant Oelschlager's appointment to the Chief role. Dr. Fichera is a nationally-renowned, board-certified colorectal surgeon specializing in the latest surgical techniques. Dr. Fichera's research interests focus on inflammatory bowel disease, minimally invasive and robotic surgery, prevention and treatment of colorectal cancers, and the

management of a wide variety of digestive disease. He is leading the UW Medicine initiative to further develop and expand the Colorectal Surgery Program.

Dr. Fichera received his Doctorate with academic honors from the Catholic University of Rome, Italy and completed his internship and residency in general surgery at the 2nd University of Rome and at the University of Chicago, followed by fellowship training in colorectal surgery at Mt. Sinai in New York.

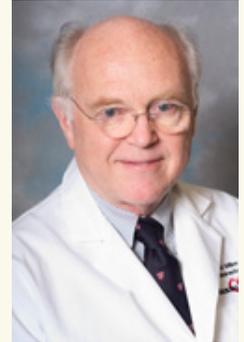
Before moving to the University of Washington's Department of Surgery in 2012, Dr. Fichera spent the last 10 years at University of Chicago Medical Center.

His enthusiasm, his energy, his willingness to listen and his ability to bring fresh perspectives will serve the Division well as he undertakes the role of Section Chief of all of GI Surgery.

These changes in General Surgery will provide stable and excellent leadership for a long time to come. Our congratulations and thanks to all of these individuals.

Donald Miller, MD Retirement

We wish to salute [Donald Miller, MD](#), Professor Emeritus, on the occasion of his retirement in October 2013 and thank him for his years of service in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Department of Surgery and as the Director of Cardio-thoracic Surgery at the [Veteran's Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System \(VAPHCS\)](#). Dr. Miller has done a superb job leading this program, with a long and interesting career in medicine and enhanced by his many other interests and passions.



Miller

Dr. Miller was born in Hawaii, where his father was a Navy Surgeon. He attended Dartmouth College and received his M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School in 1965. In 1970, after completing a five-year general surgery residency in New York, he joined the Navy on active duty as a Lt. Cmdr. USNR for two years at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He then did a two-year fellowship in cardiothoracic surgery at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center and Harlem Hospital. He moved to Seattle in 1974.

He started practice at Swedish Medical Center but soon joined the faculty at the University of Washington School of Medicine as an Assistant Professor (1975-1978), and then Associate Professor and Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery (1978-1980). He returned to Swedish in 1980 and practiced adult cardiac surgery there for 23 years, serving as Medical Director of the Swedish Heart Institute from 1994 to 1997. In 2003 he was asked to rejoin the full-time faculty at the UW School of Medicine, as a Professor of Surgery, and to direct the cardiothoracic surgery program at the VAPHCS, performing and teaching cardiac surgery there and at the University of Washington Medical Center.

He has pursued many interests in his life beyond medicine. In college, he studied philosophy of religion and played the alto and baritone saxophone in a jazz quintet named "The Modern Men." Inspired by Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, in 1961, he spent the summer before medical school hitchhiking around Europe with his alto saxophone. He played with jazz groups in clubs on the Left Bank of Paris and Schwabingm, the bohemian quarter of Munich, Germany. In 1965-1970, during his general surgery residency at the Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan, he served as the Lincoln Center "house doctor," a position that allowed him to attend performances at the New York State Theater (New York City Opera and Ballet), Avery Fisher Hall (New York

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