The 14th Annual David Tapper Endowed Lecture, presented by Seattle Children’s Hospital Division of General & Thoracic Surgery, was held on Thursday, May 7, 2015. This year’s guest lecturer was Dr. Kevin P. Lally, A.G. McNeese Chair in Pediatric Surgery, Richard Andrassy Distinguished Professor, and Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pediatric Surgery at University of Texas.

Dr. Lally’s practice area is congenital heart disease and his honors and awards include the Lawrence Crowley, MD, Endowed Professorship in Child Health, Stanford (2004); Excellence in Teaching Award in the Department of Surgery, University of California, San Francisco (1992–94); and Outstanding Surgical Chief Resident Award, University of California, San Francisco (1986).

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There are many factors, both job-related and personal, that can make the practice of medicine, and specifically a surgery practice, a stressful endeavor. Clinical and medico-legal issues can obviously be distressing, but personal relationship and home life expectations may also make it difficult to put patients’ welfare first. In a large, diverse Department like our own, it is important to provide surgeons with all types of support, including emotional support, so that patients can obtain the best care possible, and surgeons can lead balanced lives.

Under the direction of Dr. Claudia Finkelstein, the Department of Medicine at University of Washington began to commit resources to peer support efforts here in Seattle, and, based on her work, the Department of Surgery (DOS) has now followed suit. Under the leadership of Drs. Eileen Bulger, Professor in the Division of Trauma, Burn, and Critical Care Surgery, and Jeff Friedrich, Associate Professor in the Division of Plastic Surgery, the DOS program is the first in the School of Medicine to use an in-house network of volunteers who are available to meet with surgeons of any specialty and discuss concerns about practice or personal issues in a confidential setting. All volunteers have undergone a two-hour training with Dr. Finkelstein, and because they are in-house, they understand the pressures associated with a surgical practice and can provide critical perspective and support.

To access the DOS Peer Support Program, please call 206–685–0675. This line is answered during the day with voicemail available after hours. All interactions with the Peer Support Program are confidential and no written records are maintained. It is simply there to help.