



A History Lesson – Part 4

Medical Education

By Janice E. Huff, MD, President

Our journey continues. In previous letters, I looked at the growth of medicine as a whole in Charlotte, as well as the growth of the hospital systems. This article will give a brief history of medical education in the Queen City.

With only a brief interruption, students and physicians have been training in Charlotte for 130 years. I will begin with Carolinas Medical Center, the one teaching institution that a great many of us have interacted with, as residents or as faculty members. Remember that St. Peter's Hospital was succeeded by a new facility in Dilworth called Charlotte Memorial Hospital (CMH) in 1940. At that time, Paul Sanger, MD, had organized the 38th Evacuation Hospital for WWII — the first such unit not associated with a medical school. While this unit distinguished itself in Europe, at home, CMH struggled with governance and financial problems. Hospital board member Rush S. Dickson solicited financial support and lobbied government officials for reimbursement for emergency and indigent patients, while starting a campaign to strengthen the hospital's commitment to education. Dickson and Judge Fred Helms helped organize the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Hospital Authority in 1943 to prevent political influence in hospital operations and provide a better framework to treat patients who could not afford to pay.

Charlotte Memorial Hospital opened in 1940 with eight residents and two attending physicians. Through the 1940s and 1950s there was very little money for education, and the quality of the residents and teaching was variable. In the mid-1950s, a Professional Education Committee was established to improve the program. By January 1955, CMH had 21 applications — but all had CMH as their second choice. The only thing

that kept the education program going was "the Montreal Connection" through James Alexander, MD, and the McGill University School of Medicine. Montreal General Hospital agreed to rotate six interns through CMH every 60 days and pay their travel expenses. The first class started in 1956 and continued through 1960. But CMH's training program began faltering again, and by 1961, there were only two interns and the Liaison Committee for Graduate Medical Education had rescinded its accreditation. Bryant Galusha, MD, a local pediatrician, was hired in September 1962 to head the education program. The Duke Endowment gave \$250,000 over five years to pay Dr. Galusha (\$22,000/year), a secretary and the residents. Dr. Galusha went to Chicago and received a one-year grace period for accreditation. He recruited 10 interns to start in June 1963 — all in the top half of their class. In 1966, the Duke Endowment gave another \$450,000 over five years, and Marvin McCall, MD, was hired as the first full-time faculty member in internal medicine. J.C. Parke, Jr., MD, was hired the next year in the department of pediatrics.

By 1969, there were 14 interns and 40 residents — in orthopedic and thoracic/CV surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine, general practice, pediatrics and pathology — the largest number of any community hospital not affiliated with a medical school east of the Mississippi River. In July 1972, CMH became one of nine Area Health Education Centers (AHEC). Dr. Galusha was appointed AHEC Director, as well as Director of Medical Education. The full-time faculty expanded in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology and internal medicine; family medicine was added in 1973. Ophelia Garmon-Brown, MD, past president of the Mecklenburg County Medical Society, was the first female African-American resident at Charlotte Memorial Hospital, matching in family

medicine in 1980. When Dr. Galusha left in 1984 to become the executive vice president of the Federation of State Medical Boards, there were 108 residents in 10 specialties, a full-time faculty of 35 doctors and 250 volunteer teaching private physicians.

The medical school in Charlotte has been in the news the past few years, but it actually is our second medical school. The North Carolina Medical College, the first chartered medical school in the state, operated from 1883 to 1913 and graduated 340 doctors of medicine. It was started when the women of the First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte outfitted an infirmary for the students at Davidson College and hired Paul Barringer, MD, as the college physician and manager. In his spare time, he taught anatomy and physiology and started precepting interested students. In 1907, the medical college moved to Charlotte at Church and Sixth streets.

In the late 1800s, the requirements for entering medical school were a high school diploma and a letter of character reference. In 1909, the Carnegie Foundation, under the direction of Abraham Flexner, investigated all the medical schools in the country. Our medical college received a class "C" rating with the recommendation of school closure. The requirements for a class "A" rating were a large, endowed hospital under college control, at least two years of college work prior to entering medical school and a full-time teaching faculty. Some felt Flexner had visited during a vacation time, when all the facilities were locked. The Forsythe Medical Society, however, accepted the Flexner report and proposed to the State Board of Medical Examiners that graduates of the North Carolina Medical College not be admitted for the state-wide exam. Officials at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill refused to have any part of the University of North Carolina outside of Chapel Hill, and the student body was

specialized in surgery, and a year later was renamed the Charlotte Private Hospital. Like the other hospitals, it did not admit patients with contagious diseases. In 1903, 10 physicians from the North Carolina Medical College bought the Charlotte Private Hospital for



Presbyterian Hospital got its start in 1903.

\$2,000 and donated it to the city's Presbyterian churches. This became the teaching hospital for the Medical College and was renamed Presbyterian Hospital in 1903. In 1918, the hospital moved to its current location in the Elizabeth College building with 100 beds.

Management and financial support for

charity care by the Presbyterian churches was not ideal, and in 1925 reached its nadir when the hospital was sued by hospital supply houses. Student nurses went on strike, the dietitian and superintendent of nurses resigned, the administrator was pursued by lawyers demanding payment for their clients, and the buildings and grounds were advertised for sale to satisfy their mortgages. At that point in time, Presbyterian handled 90 percent of the indigent care in the county. Financial support from the Presbyterian churches and collaboration among physicians, nurses, volunteers and management turned things around.

In July 1940, a new Presbyterian Hospital opened with 160 beds and 27 bassinets at a cost of \$560,000. By 1972, there were 502 beds. In 1997, Forsyth Medical Center in Winston-

Salem and Presbyterian Hospital merged to form Novant Health. In 2013, the hospital's name was changed to Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center and now has 622 beds.

In 1906, Mercy Hospital was started by the Sisters of Mercy



Mercy Hospital was the first Catholic hospital in North Carolina in 1906.

in Belmont behind the present St. Peter's Catholic Church on South Tryon Street. It was the first Catholic hospital built in North Carolina. It moved to its present site in 1916. In 1995, it was purchased by Carolinas HealthCare System, renamed CMC-Mercy, and now has 185 beds.

After the creation of five hospitals in a span of just 30 years, the next three decades saw growth of the established Charlotte hospitals. However, in the middle of the 20th century, the hospital landscape changed again, this time bringing with it a place for education, as well as improved medical care.

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