A Multifaceted Approach to Global Health

Michele Barry’s passion for global health is contagious; it’s energy she will share as the new director of global health for the department. Barry will also serve as senior associate dean of global health in the medical school.

Capacity Building
Recently, Barry, MD, has shifted her focus from sending U.S. physicians overseas to capacity partnering and training people in their actual settings because, she explains, “Twenty-five percent of physicians in the US have been “brain drained” due to globalization and economics. These foreign graduates mostly come from the Philippines, or English speaking sub-Saharan countries like Nigeria, Kenya, or Ghana. I feel like we need to give back.”

That philosophy includes working with the Institute of Medicine on legislation to implement a Global Health Service Corps. A medical arm of the Peace Corps, this program would send U.S. medical experts abroad to help respond to the health problems in developing countries and to provide needed education and training.

In addition, Barry travels to Washington several times a year to advocate for global health research as a Paul Rogers/Research America ambassador and served on President Obama’s global health subcommittee.

To broaden her vision, Barry will include other components of the university as part of her effort to develop an interdisciplinary program. “I realize now that you can’t send a physician overseas without thinking about the human rights aspect, the anthropological aspects, and environmental aspects of health,” says Barry. “I want to add additional components to create meaningful relationships for Stanford with programs overseas.”

Innovations in General Internal Medicine

Under the leadership of Mark Cullen, MD, general internal medicine will take its place as a premier division, notable for research on the social determinants of health and advancements in new forms of primary care.

GIM differs from organ-based divisions in its broad focus on health, not just disease, but also on the social and environmental factors that create vulnerability in patients and populations. Says Cullen, “All that range of social and related practice factors and the organization of medicine are what the research will include.” As he recruits, Cullen hopes to have a continuum of people interested in the different aspects of the relationship among individuals, population, and society.

Faculty Development

GIM faculty consists of a diverse group in research and educational programs with strong ties to the clinical enterprise. Cullen explains, “Our faculty spends more time than others in the practice of medicine. That won’t change; however, we can create a collective view of what people contribute to each other, to make academics a bigger part of what clinicians get out of their careers and practice.” Additionally, Cullen and faculty in the Stanford Medical Group intend to redefine and create a national model practice.

Cullen was a professor of medicine and public health and director of occupational and environmental medicine at Yale. He plans to continue his research at Stanford and looks forward to working with collaborators on campus. “I’ve already got a few and hope to recruit some fabulous younger colleagues.”

Power Couple Move Careers in a New Direction

When Ralph Horwitz MD approached Michele Barry, MD, to lead international activities at Stanford, recruiting her husband Mark Cullen, MD, was a natural part of the equation.

Cullen and Barry got together when he was a resident and she was an intern. They got married, joined the faculty in internal medicine at Yale, and are the parents of two daughters. And although their noted careers morphed in dramatically different directions, they have managed to balance family and career, even collaborating at times. “We have a paper or two together as well,” adds Cullen. “But we keep our distance professionally. It’s just close enough for comfort. We talk all the time and know what each other does. It’s fun.”

Mark Cullen, MD, and Michele Barry, MD.