Under the leadership of Dr. Marlene Cohen, PhD, our behavioral science faculty, VFMRM received a two-year grant from the Medical Education Research Foundation to develop addiction medicine curriculum. With this support, a team of residents and faculty developed a multi-disciplinary pain management clinic at the Family Medicine Center. Patients can be referred for an in-depth evaluation of chronic pain and comorbidities, including mental illness. Recommendations from the team help guide the residents’ subsequent care with expert back-up and evidence-based approaches. Great job, Drs. Cohen, Morris and Gorman, and many thanks to residents Clavecillas (’14) and T. Chaudhury (’13) for supporting this project on top of other residency duties. No doubt countless patients will benefit!

Here are remarks from residents about the new clinic:

♦ “Overall, consult clinic is a better structure to analyze patients’ needs for ongoing pain meds because it’s good to have psychosocial information.”
♦ “Surprisingly, when we gave reasons (risks) for lowering doses, some patients agreed with us!”

Many thanks to our expert team whose hard work is leading us straight into the future of patient care!

VCME has successfully competed again to garner Teaching Health Center funding through the innovative grant from HRSA funding community-based primary care residencies. This time we acquired two more full-time equivalent positions, bring our total to 19 FTEs paid through the Affordable Care Act.

Growth in community education of primary care specialties has accelerated in anticipation of expanded health care coverage. VCME served as a resource for starting four new family medicine residencies in California since 2010. Our unique community-sponsored graduate medical education consortium has become a national model for others to emulate. We are proud to lead the way for expanding primary care medical education in California.
Margie Apacible, MD (Far Eastern University)  Margie will be starting a practice in Vancouver, WA.

Amparo Campos, MD  (Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara)  Amparo has joined Golden Valley Health Centers and will be practicing in Patterson, CA.

Jacqueline Craig, MD  (UC Davis School of Medicine)  Jacqueline has joined Golden Valley Health Centers and will be practicing in Modesto, CA.

Tuhin Chaudhury, MD  (Albany Medical College)  Tuhin will be joining Valley Emergency Physicians as a hospitalist in Turlock, CA.

Jeremiah Fillo, MD  (Creighton University School of Medicine)  Jeremiah has joined Scenic Faculty Medical Group and will be practicing in Hughson, CA.

Edward Katime, MD  (Temple University School of Medicine)  Edward has joined Orangeburg Medical Group and will be practicing in Modesto, CA.

Richard Minkner, MD  (Ross University School of Medicine)  Richard has joined Scotts Valley Medical Clinic and will be practicing in Santa Cruz, CA.

Sophia Mohammad, MD  (Ross University School of Medicine)  Sophia has joined Scenic Faculty Medical Group and practicing in Modesto, CA. She is hoping to continue her area of concentration in Dermatology as well as full family medicine.

Esmeralda Moran, MD  (UC Irvine School of Medicine)  Esmeralda has joined Golden Valley Health Center and will be practicing in Turlock, CA.

Mohan Sakhrani, MD  (UC Davis School of Medicine)  Mohan will be starting an Emergency Medicine Fellowship in Merced, CA.

Dina Sukharev, MD  (Moscow Medical School)  Dina has joined Palo Alto Medical Foundation and will be practicing in Los Gatos, CA.

Champak Venkitachalam, MD  (Maharashtra Institute of Medical Education Research)  Champak will be joining the Hospitalist Group of Modesto.

Charlie Walker, MD  (Faculty Li-Poznan University of Medical Sciences)  Charlie has joined Kaiser Permanente and will be practicing in Modesto.

Years ago, our program trained two siblings at once, the Xiong sisters from Merced. VFMFM is back in the family business again, welcoming Dr. Leena Chaudhury as a first year resident. She joins her brother Tuhin, currently a third year resident. Born and raised in the Bay Area by their two engineer parents, Tuhin and Leena both followed their heart to family medicine. Tuhin initially trained in surgery for two years. Feeling a call to address the patient from a more holistic standpoint, Tuhin switched his specialty to family medicine in 2011. Leena also did not find her passion for family medicine until she tried an alternative. After starting an internal medicine residency in the LA area, family medicine and family ties brought her back close to home. Best of luck working together to care for patients. No rivalry, please!
Dr Ben Colton (’10), faculty mentor for the Global Health Area of Concentration, recently left for a 10-month sabbatical in Jordan. Having travelled to Afghanistan, Jordan, and the Ukraine all in the past year or so, Ben now ventures back to Jordan, alongside his wife, to pursue a language and culture internship. He will spend time learning Arabic and enhancing cultural competency, while volunteering as a physician. When asked why he feels passionate about Global Health, Ben replies: “I have been blessed, and want to use my efforts to help those in need. And I see a lot of needs here, but these pale in comparison to the needs I have seen in other countries.” Prior to his departure, Ben helped guide several residents along their path to explore resource-limited environments as well: Dr. Sakhrani (’13) visiting India, Dr. Chang (’14) working in Niger (with Dr. Jay Kraus ’04), and currently Dr. Godhwani (’14) and interim global health faculty mentor Dr. Villanueva (’96) planning to help out in Haiti. The VFMRM is proud of our adventurous worldly physicians and commits to fostering the passion of residents and faculty in global health.

Innovative New Clinic Role: Peer Facilitator

In an effort to incorporate more quality training into the resident practice at PMO, core faculty have developed the “Patient Care Facilitator” role. Rather than seeing his or her own patients in clinic, this resident spends a half day reviewing colleague’s charts in a number of ways. Charts for the day’s clinic are reviewed and critiqued based on AAFP and USPSTF guidelines for the treatment of hypertension as well as health care maintenance. The resident being critiqued gets immediate feedback on how they are doing with regards to the guidelines. In addition, the PCF resident spends time with patients completing a satisfaction survey and a direct observation of their fellow residents’ communication style. For instance, residents count how many seconds of silence occur before the physician interrupts the patient at the opening of the visits. Residents savor this new role, which allows them to take time to focus on quality and standard of clinic without the usual pressure of tight patient scheduling.

Fall Retreat Gets Residents Flying Through the Air

Treating patients with septic shock or post-partum hemorrhage can be challenging enough, but walking a tight rope 30 feet in the air with no safety net? All 36 residents gathered in Sonora during Fall Retreat to test the limits of their self-confidence. After a morning of meetings and didactics, we moved outside to the pine forest and cheered each other on as we walked from tree to tree on a rope, suspended in harnesses. Those who braved this ropes course were treated with an adrenaline rush at the end, jumping off to a zip line plunge through the forest. Everyone survived! One resident noted, “the ropes course helped us push through our fears, with our colleagues cheering us on—great for morale!” (Many thanks to faculty who took care of our patients in the hospital during this hair-raising experience!)

“Normally I don’t have time to be thorough with healthcare maintenance during a busy clinic. I learned a lot while supporting my colleagues, and patients got more face-time with a physician as I took the time to explain the recommendations.”

Anika Godhwani, DO PGY3
The Valley Family Medicine Residency of Modesto was founded in 2010. Our community has a thirty-five year history of training family physicians for this region. Partnership with Doctors Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center, and Stanislaus County Health Services. Our mission is to train physicians through service to those in need. Our residents build on a four-decade legacy of comprehensive care for the underserved, ethnically diverse population of Stanislaus County.

The Beauty of Family Medicine:
Wisdom from Graduating Residents

The honor of being trusted to give advice, and the opportunity of helping someone through difficult illness.—Dr. Apacible

-Making a positive change in your patients’ lives.—Dr. Campos

-Medicine is constantly evolving and each patient requires individualized care and compassion.—Dr. Chaudhury

-I really enjoy it because I can see patients of all ages. —Dr. Craig

-Getting a heartfelt thanks from a patient you helped feel better. —Dr. Fillo

-It feels good to heal people.—Dr. Katime, MD

-Helping people to achieve goals and building relationships.—Dr. Minkner

-A sick old man, pregnant woman, and a limping child walk into a clinic; I say: “I can help all of you.”—Dr. Mohammad

-In family medicine you don’t just impact a life, you impact a whole community.—Dr. Moran

-Helping patients in their times of need.—Dr. Sakhhani

-Making a positive difference in people's lives.—Dr. Sukharev

-To explore, educate and empower.—Dr. Venkitachalam