**UCNS Newsletter • Spring 2009**

**UCNS Accredits New Programs**

Congratulations to the following programs that have received accreditation from the UCNS beginning July 1, 2009.

Newly accredited programs and fellowship directors are:

- **Neurocritical Care**
  - Fellowship Director: Duke University - David L. McDonough, MD
  - Washington University - Michael N. Diringer, MD
  - Emory University - Owen B. Samuels, MD
  - Henry Ford Hospital - Panayiotis Varelas, MD, PhD
  - University of Colorado - Robert T. Neumann, MD, PhD

- **Neuro-Oncology**
  - Fellowship Director: St. Joseph Hospital - William Shapiro, MD
  - UCLA - Timothy Cloughesy, MD
  - University of Michigan - Larry Juncz, MD

**Accreditation News**

**Common Program Requirements.** While each Subspecialty Member works with the Accreditation Council (AC) to develop training requirements tailored to its unique area of science and practice, the UCNS has baseline standards across subspecialties to further ensure excellence in training. Over the past year, the AC has developed Common Program Requirements to clearly distinguish the baseline standards and the subspecialty specific requirements. Subspecialty representatives were consulted for feedback. The UCNS Board approved and ratified the UCNS Common Program Requirements at its fall meeting and the requirements are being incorporated into training requirements presently in development. The AC will integrate the Common Program Requirements into training requirements presently in development.

- **New Subspecialty Training Requirements.** The Accreditation Council is developing training requirements for Autonomic Disorders, Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology, and Geriatric Neurology. If you would like advance notification when the accreditation applications are available for these subspecialties, contact Tracy King, Accreditation Manager, at tking@ucns.org.

**Certification Examinations.** Applications, licensure, certification examinations and new fellowship programs will be available in the fall of 2009. For more information about the UCNS, visit the UCNS website at www.ucns.org.

**SUBMIT STORY IDEAS**

Any news or story ideas for UCNS readers? We would like to hear from you. Submit feedback regarding this issue and/or story ideas for future issues to the UCNS Executive Office.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the United Council for Neurologic Subspecialties is to provide for accreditation and certification with the goal of enhancing the quality of training for physicians in neurological subspecialties and the quality of patient care.

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**UCNS Celebrates Five Years of Major Milestones**

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Today, the UCNS celebrates milestone achievements with eight subspecialty members, more than 600 diplomates, and nearly 50 accredited fellowship programs across the country. The UCNS will celebrate these milestone achievements at the AAN Annual Meeting in Seattle. Visit the UCNS booth in the Exhibit Hall at the AAN Annual Meeting and Trade Center to join the celebration.

UCNS Chair Leslie A. Morrison, MD, said, “Our dedicated physician volunteers lead all of this growth and advance our mission to enhance the quality of training and patient care. The certification and accreditation processes strengthen each subspecialty, but they also strengthen the field of neurology overall, and create opportunities for emerging subspecialties.”

“It’s been encouraging to watch as the UCNS has grown and matured over the last several years,” said outgoing AAN President Stephen M. Sergay, MB BS, FAAN, who led the AAN Commission on Subspecialty Certification and served as UCNS’s first chair. “The UCNS is providing opportunities for neurologic subspecialists collectively to solidify their training requirements and for those trained in these to have their expertise recognized by certification.”

**ABOUT UCNS**

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**Autonomic Disorders and Geriatric Neurology Certification Examination Update**

**Examination Dates:**

- Autonomic Disorders: December 7-11, 2009
- Geriatric Neurology: December 7-11, 2009

**Application Deadline:** July 15, 2009

The Autonomic Disorders and Geriatric Neurology examination committees have been working diligently on their respective certification examinations. The examination development is now in its final stages. Applications for both certification examinations will be available the first week of April on the UCNS website at www.ucns.org. Applications, licensure, supporting documentation and $1,500 payment must be submitted to the UCNS Executive Office by the July 15, 2009 application deadline.

**Important Dates**

- **May 18-20, 2009:** Accreditation Council meeting to review programs and new fellowship applications
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Letter from the Chair

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Since last fall, we have been working hard on a number of initiatives. Volunteer committees for our two newest subspecialties, Geriatric Neurology and Autonomic Disorders, have been developing examinations to be given in December of this year. Developing state-of-the-art subspecialty certification examinations requires a significant time commitment by expert volunteers, to whom we are deeply grateful. In October, the UCNS board adopted common program requirements that we believe will help strengthen program requirements and standardize the accreditation review process. Early this year, we conducted a survey of the nation’s neurology department chairs. Their responses will help us as we plan for the next stage of our development.

The UCNS enjoyed a period of growth in 2008. The year ahead will be challenging for us as well as other nonprofit organizations. However, with the strong support of our five parent organizations, I believe that the UCNS is positioned for success in the years ahead.

Leslie A. Morrison, MD
UCNS Board Chair

Certification News

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UCNS leadership and staff will be on hand at the AAN Annual Meeting in Seattle. Join us at the UCNS booth in the Washington State Convention and Trade Center Exhibit Hall to have your questions answered and receive information on the accreditation and certification processes, certification and program accreditation applications, and updates on the subspecialties.

UCNS booth hours:
- Monday, April 27: 5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.
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Board Member Highlight

Lawrence R. Wechsler, MD, FAAN, joined the UCNS Board of Directors in 2008. He is professor and interim chair of the department of neurology at the University of Pittsburgh and director of the UPMC Stroke Institute.

Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of neurology?

My father was a physician and my role model. I followed him on hospital rounds starting at a very young age and accompanied him on house calls many weekends and evenings. A college course on neuroscience by an inspiring neurologist, Norman Geschwind, started me on a path to neurology. The brain was then an unknown frontier of medicine. Everything about neurology and neuroscience was new and exciting. Many years later, this has not really changed.

Where did you train and where do you currently practice?

I trained in neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital and completed a stroke fellowship at MGH as well. I am currently interim chair of the department of neurology at the University of Pittsburgh and director of the UPMC Stroke Institute.

What was your first reaction to the concept of neurologic subspecialty accreditation and certification?

I considered this an important advance for neurology to establish subspecialties and give them credibility. It was clear that neurology was moving in the direction of subspecialization and a process for accreditation and certification was clearly necessary.

When did you become involved in the discussions regarding neurologic subspecialty accreditation and certification?

I was a member of the original commission on subspecialization chaired by Steve Segray that resulted in the creation of the UCNS.

Why did you become involved with the UCNS?

I have a long involvement with neuroradiology and currently serve as the president of the American Society of Neuroradiology. I was a strong proponent of the transfer of neuroradiology certification from the ASN to the UCNS. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to this important organization.

What has been the impact of the UCNS since it was established in 2003?

Subspecialty certification for neurologists is now a reality. The UCNS has created a credible process for neurologists to become identified with special expertise in specific areas of neurology. Residents and neurologists early in their careers are now more likely to pursue specialty training because of the established training curriculum that assures they will achieve an adequate knowledge base in their chosen field.

What impact do you feel the UCNS will have on the future of neurology?

The UCNS certification process will result in a stronger identity for neurologists and greater uniformity of training and knowledge among neurologists. It will help attract more of the best and the brightest in medicine to our specialty.

How will the UCNS process be beneficial to both the generalist and the subspecialist?

Both the generalist and specialist benefit from establishing the expertise of neurologists in traditional areas of practice. There is and will always remain an important role for the general neurologist. The importance will only grow with additional subspecialization.

What would you like individuals in neurology and the public to know about the UCNS?

The driving force behind the creation of the UCNS is greater recognition of specialized skills within neurology that will benefit both patients and physicians.

How do you envision that UCNS accreditation and certification will assist the growth of neuroradiology as a recognized area of science and practice?

UCNS accreditation will encourage neuroradiologists to pursue this important area of neurology and assure that neuroradiologist imagers are adequately trained. Certification in neuroradiology by the UCNS should qualify neurologists to obtain privileges at any institution they choose. Neuroradiology is an integral part of neurology and the cognitive skills that are unique to the neuroradiologist are essential to the future clinical and research growth of neuroradiology.
**Certification News**

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