

## Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery

*Douglas Wood, M.D., Chief*

The Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery continues to evolve as one of the elite clinical and academic cardiothoracic programs in the United States. This year marked 20 years of leadership by **Dr. Edward Verrier**, who has progressively transformed the CT Division from a clinical program to one that is nationally renowned for research, education, and leadership in cardiothoracic surgery. Dr. Verrier has long been considered a national leader in cardiothoracic education and this commitment was further validated this year by his selection as the Surgical Director of Education for the newly incorporated Joint Council for Thoracic Surgery Education. Still clinically active in his cardiac surgery practice, Dr. Verrier will now lead this national effort to redefine and revolutionize graduate and postgraduate cardiothoracic education in the United States. Due to this significant national responsibility, Dr. Verrier has stepped down as the Division Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery, and the role was assumed this year by **Dr. Douglas Wood**.



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The Cardiothoracic Division has long had a major emphasis in resident education and continues to lead in both the quality of training programs as well as the commitment of faculty to surgical education. The traditional 2-year residency following general surgery training has now been expanded to include an innovative “4/3 program” that allows a collaboration between general surgery and cardiothoracic surgery to provide combined training in both specialties at the University of Washington, with dual Board eligibility. The CT residency has also applied to be one of the first programs in the country to initiate a 6-year integrated CT residency, accepting first year residents from medical school for a comprehensive curriculum leading to Board eligibility in Thoracic Surgery alone. This has been part of a far-reaching plan to modernize surgical resident education in the Department of Surgery, with synergistic changes and improvements integrated amongst general, thoracic, vascular, plastics, and acute care surgery.

Several faculty have ongoing and new responsibilities in resident education. **Drs. Tom Varghese and Nahush Mokadam** have been involved in developing simulation for resident training and have both made education a major focus of their academic careers. This year, both have assumed new leadership roles in the Division as Associate Program Directors for the CT residency program. **Dr. Don Miller** provides a tremendous and invaluable training experience for the residents at the VA Hospital, and has now been joined by one of our newest faculty members, **Dr. Leah Backhus**, recruited from an excellent program at UCLA and now in charge of general thoracic surgery at the VA Puget Sound Healthcare System.

The Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Program, led by **Dr. Gordon Cohen** at Seattle Children’s Hospital, has continued to see dramatic growth in clinical volumes and superb outcomes in the complex world of congenital cardiac surgery. Dr. Cohen and his colleagues have developed a robust multi-disciplinary team that has strong outreach into the community with telemedicine capabilities and collaboration with other regional hospitals and cardiology practices. They have become an invaluable asset to the Seattle community and to the whole Pacific Northwest, and have one of the larger congenital cardiac surgery programs in the US. **Dr. Mike McMullan** leads the **Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO)** program at Seattle Children’s Hospital, and has substantially expanded extracorporeal life support for critically ill children from Puget Sound and beyond. **Dr. Lester Permut** initiated and is Program Director for the Congenital Cardiac Surgery Fellowship, a new national effort to certify pediatric cardiac surgeons where UW has one of the first such training programs.

The Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery maintains a wide scope of clinical and basic science research ranging from outcomes research in cardiac and thoracic surgery to ischemia reperfusion injury in pulmonary and myocardial models. **Dr. Mike Mulligan** has been both a clinical leader in end-stage lung disease and lung transplantation as well as an accomplished basic scientist with a track record of mentoring a number of residents and fellows in scientific investigation. This year Dr. Mulligan solidified his ongoing research effort when he was awarded an R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health. Our most recent faculty member, **Dr. Dave Rabkin**, also has significant experience in basic research, and will partner with Dr. Mokadam in continuing the scientific contributions in cardiac surgery from UW.

**Dr. Gabriel Aldea** leads the Section of Adult Cardiac Surgery and has assumed new and important leadership at UWMC as the Co-Director of the UW Regional Heart Center. Dr. Aldea is helping to develop the Thoracic Aortic Disease program, along with **Drs. Verrier and Mokadam** in CT surgery, and **Drs. Starnes and Meissner** in Vascular Surgery.

The faculty in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery offer the full breadth and depth of high quality, patient-centered care in cardiothoracic surgery, while providing leadership and innovation in graduate medical education and cardiothoracic research. We have a tremendous, experienced group of surgeons who work together to provide the best possible clinical care for patients with cardiothoracic disease throughout the Pacific Northwest, and strive to advance the missions of research and education within the UW School of Medicine.

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