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NEWS

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***Dr. David Bilheimer named to joint administrative duties with Southwestern Medical School and Parkland

DALLAS--Dr. David W. Bilheimer's new office is just inside Parkland Memorial Hospital next to the ramp connecting with Southwestern Medical School. That's a good location for a person with "a foot in each camp," as he says.

His medical school position as associate dean for Clinical Affairs at Parkland began May 1, and his position as medical director of Parkland began June 1.

With joint administrative duties for the two institutions, Bilheimer will report to Dr. Kern Wildenthal, dean of the medical school, and to Dr. Ron Anderson, chief executive officer of Parkland.

"We wanted somebody who knows Parkland and the medical school -- someone who is committed to Parkland and clinical care and someone who understands the academic function of the school. And also someone who has good administrative skills," says Wildenthal.

"Dr. Bilheimer is a world-renowned author on lipoprotein metabolism and clinical disorders. He is an excellent clinician, clinical investigator and teacher. And over the years he has earned the respect of his colleagues in all departments of the school."

The relationship between Parkland and the medical school is vital, says the dean, "since neither institution can meet its goals without the other." Bilheimer will be able to enhance communication and cooperation between the two by representing the school's point of view at Parkland and the hospital's point of view at the school.

As medical director of Parkland, Bilheimer brings years of clinical experience in that hospital as well as personal qualities needed in that position.

"First and foremost, Dave Bilheimer cares about patients," says Anderson. "He has directed clinical care. He's level-headed, and we need that in communication between doctors, nurses and patients. He commands the respect of all the services -- someone in the Surgery Department first recommended him, even though he's an internist.

"Some people only want to report problems and not get their hands dirty. Dave will get involved and solve problems, not just report them."

The appointment of Bilheimer as medical director is part of an infra-structure of medical professionals "geographically dispersed" throughout Parkland to provide advisory medical input at every level of administration, says Anderson. "I have designed this system to provide a team of professional problem solvers-- physicians, nurses and administrators-- working together to solve system problems. The position of medical director will provide the necessary cohesiveness."

In the same suite with Bilheimer, there will be Dr. Lynne Kirk, assistant dean of Clinical Affairs at Parkland and medical director of Outpatient Clinics; Dr. Gary Reed, assistant dean of Clinical Affairs at Parkland and medical director of the Emergency Room, and Pat Rhodes, assistant administrator of Parkland. Since Rhodes is responsible for administrative matters relating to the house staff, certificate of need planning and capital equipment, he will work closely with the directors of medical services.

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Eager to meet the challenges of his new positions, Bilheimer says key questions he will be asking are: "Are we delivering care to patients in the best way we can? And are the departments working together in the best way that they can?"

Quality control of services and patient education are two areas that he plans to emphasize.

After collecting data, Bilheimer will be involved in evaluating patient services. This function is now performed by individual departments.

"We think we are doing a fine job," says Anderson. "We want to document this." A part of quality assurance will be the collection and evaluation of mortality and morbidity statistics, for which Bilheimer will be responsible. He will set up a peer review process for the hospital as a whole and will work with the administrator responsible for risk management -- consulting with the administrator on patient complaints.

Bilheimer cited the Foot Clinic for patients with diabetes as a model for patient education. In the clinic, started by Dr. Jean Wilson, professor of Internal Medicine, patients are taught how to care for their feet to avoid problems that lead to amputation. This education service has now been extended to patients in the hospital.

"We want to try to employ principles of preventive medicine with our clinic patients as much as possible. For example, we need to identify patients with cardiovascular risk and provide education and incentive to them. Patients with cholesterol and high triglyceride problems need to have more information," says Bilheimer.

He looks forward to working with the residents. "They are a tremendous source of information on how the hospital runs day to day."

He plans to continue his teaching. "That way I know what the students, interns and residents face on the wards, and that's important." He also plans to continue his research in the area of lipoproteins, LDL receptors, atherosclerosis, diabetes and genetics of hyperlipidemic syndromes.

A member of the faculty here since 1973, Bilheimer received his M.D. at University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1967. As a senior medical student he received the Fredrick A. Packard Prize in Internal Medicine and the Henrietta and Jacob Lowenberg Prize in Pediatrics. He was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha. He served his internship and residency in Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. As a surgeon with the U.S. Public Health Service from 1969 till 1973, he worked as staff associate in the Molecular Disease Branch of the National Heart and Lung Institute.

Since 1974 he has served as chief of the Lipid Clinic at Parkland. He is also associate professor of Internal Medicine at the medical school, consultant in Medicine at Veterans Administration Medical Center and a member of the associate attending staff at Children's Medical Center.

From 1974 till 1979 he was an established investigator for the American Heart Association.

Bilheimer is now a member of the Atherosclerosis Council Program Committee of the American Heart Association and has served as a member of the AHA Nutrition Committee and as an ad hoc reviewer for the Metabolism Study Section of NIH. He is widely published in his areas of research and has been elected to membership in the American Society for Clinical Investigation.

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