



Physicians'  
HEALTH  
Program

The Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society

SPRING  
2021

# PHP UPDATE

— NEWS FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA PHYSICIANS' HEALTH PROGRAM —

## Honoring Dr. Abram Hostetter

Dr. Abram Hostetter was an integral part of the formation of what is now the Physicians' Health Program of the Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society. Dr. Hostetter died on January 10, 2021, but his legacy will live on. The Foundation mourns the loss of an incredible physician who had a great impact on many.



Dr. Abram Hostetter ran a successful psychiatry practice in Hershey for more than 30 years. He also served as chair of the Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society Board of Trustees from 1986 to 2002.

"Dr. Abe Hostetter was one of the original founders of the Impaired Physician's Committee (now the Physicians' Health Program) in the 1970s, and as a psychiatrist, was recognized as the man to see for physician addiction problems in the central part of Pennsylvania," said Dr. Raymond Truex Jr., PHP medical director.

Dr. Hostetter was of Mennonite heritage and attended Lancaster Mennonite School. His background and values greatly influenced his approach to medicine.

"When I joined the Board in 1998, at first I was intimidated by Abe, who I perceived as a stern Dutchman," Dr. Truex said. "But I soon came to understand him as a most approachable, wise, kind and thoughtful individual. Later, when I assumed the chair he once occupied, he became a supporter and mentor, and I will be forever grateful for his encouragement."

Dr. Greg Gable, executive director of the healthcare professionals program at Caron Treatment Center, served as director of the PHP for 24 years. He also found Dr. Hostetter's character perfectly suited for his work.

"He was very balanced and low key in his presentation," Dr. Gable said. "Abe had a set of values that came from his family background that really showed through in his professional work. He was someone who wouldn't rush to judgement. He was someone that would be open to listening for information."

Because of his demeanor, he developed a reputation for being a trustworthy source for struggling physicians.

"It was not uncommon for physicians or other health professionals who were having psychiatric or emotional issues to seek out Abram Hostetter for private treatment," Dr. Gable said.

The Impaired Physician's Committee began as a volunteer effort, with monthly meetings to review calls made by the public to an answering machine reporting concerns about particular physicians. Dr. Gable said the committee members would reach out to the individuals. Dr. Hostetter had the assistance of the late Dr. J. Preston Hoyle, the late Dr. Abraham J. Twerski and the late Dr. Jasper Chen See.

Through the navigation of many bumps in the road, Dr. Hostetter ensured the success of what is now the Physicians' Health Program (PHP).

"Abe was a big reason why the PHP was founded, and he was a big reason why it survived in the early years," Dr. Gable said. "As a young man in my mid-30s, it was really reassuring for me to have Dr. Hostetter as someone we could look to for leadership and stability."

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#### PHP UPDATE

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR



## Pandemic positives

When I wrote my first director message in the spring of 2020, titled, "Embracing Change," I did not know that we were about to experience the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and life would drastically change

for all of us on so many levels. Our staff transitioned to working remotely effective March 17, 2020, and tirelessly trained on all the new technology we implemented expeditiously – a digital fax with a new fax number, DocuSign, Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Mitel Connect, and have evolved to all electronic documents including participant files.

Although monitoring requirements have been steadfast, the way those requirements are delivered is very different. Most participants are attending therapy and support group meetings (AA, NA, Caduceus, etc.) virtually. Some evaluations and treatment are conducted via virtual platforms. Drug testing is now available in home via oral fluid specimen for participants who are high risk or are caring for someone who is high risk. At the drug testing labs, many participants wait in their cars for a text message when it is their turn to enter and provide a specimen. Some participants have opted to utilize a Soberlink breathalyzer to minimize the number of times they must go to the lab to drug test. The PHP staff is working to help make adjustments where possible in order to best support participants during this time.

The PHP has heard some very positive outcomes of this new way of operating. Therapy providers are indicating that attendance is up, and participants are enjoying the convenience of the virtual platform, allowing them the freedom to attend their therapy wherever they are. Support group meeting attendance is also improving, and participants are informing us that the ease of using virtual platforms has made meeting attendance easier to accomplish with their busy schedules. Participants utilizing Soberlink and in-home oral fluid testing have expressed a great appreciation for knowing they do not have to go to a lab risking exposure to COVID. I believe virtual platforms are here to stay and are revolutionizing the way monitoring requirements are delivered to participants.

In closing, I want to thank our health care professionals who continue to fight this pandemic on the frontlines. We see you and are here to support you! Thank you for all that you do!

Tiffany M. Booher, MA, LPC, CAADC, CIP, CCSM | Director

#### OUR MISSION

The Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society provides programs and services for individual physicians and others that improve the well-being of Pennsylvanians and sustain the future of medicine.

## New beginnings



Seneca is quoted as saying, "Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." So it is with the Foundation as we leave our current location at 777 East Park Drive in Harrisburg and take occupancy of our new building located at 400 Winding Creek

Boulevard, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050.

The journey to this new building was arduous. But often, you find that when you persevere through challenge you find great reward. Despite multiple delays, including the unanticipated COVID-19 pandemic, we have finally arrived at the moment when we are able to provide LifeGuard, Physicians' Health Program (PHP) and Student Financial Services. It is important that you, our supporters and consumers, know the great thought and care that went into the design of our new space.

When arriving at the entrance of our new facility you will find doors to both the PHP and LifeGuard programs. These program spaces, located on the first floor as you enter the front doors, ensure the privacy and confidentiality of those who may require services. In our former facility, PHP participants and LifeGuard clients had to navigate spaces where they could potentially encounter other colleagues.

Advanced technology ensures that our guests and staff are plugged-in to Wi-Fi and our

meeting rooms are designed with large flat screens to ensure all meeting attendees can see presentations and participate in conference calls. Sound masking helps to afford each staff member privacy even when working in a cubicle. Most of our work will be paperless as we strive to go green.

The new facility maximizes the ability to enjoy natural light and promotes health and wellness. All offices and cubicles have the benefit of receiving sunlight and a walking path provides a place of solace and fresh air for staff and guests. Our neighbors are pretty cool too. You may see bald eagles, deer, wild turkeys, cranes and turtles who inhabit the Conodoguinet Creek and wooded area at the rear of the building. Of note is that Conodoguinet means "a long way with many bends," an appropriate description of the journey for many of our folks who are in recovery.



*The new PAMED and Foundation headquarters at 400 Winding Creek Boulevard in Mechanicsburg.*

I would be remiss if I did not thank Pyramid Construction Services Inc. and Crabtree Rohrbaugh & Associates for their incredible dedication and attention to our project. As they designed

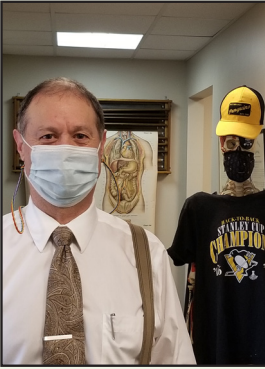
and constructed the building, they kept our consumers, key constituencies, donors and dedicated staff front of mind.

As the pandemic ends and work in the office resumes, the Foundation extends to you a warm open invitation to visit us. We look forward to greeting you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Wilson".

Heather Wilson, MSW, CFRE, CAE  
Executive Director

## Pandemic check-in: Q&A with Edward W. Jew III, MD



### ***How are you feeling as we reach one year since the pandemic changed our way of life?***

It is very difficult to say how I am feeling as I have been very fortunate to have traversed the last year unscathed by the physical and economic hardships many have so sadly endured. My life is slower now but more complicated, which leaves me aggravated at times.

### ***What has helped you stay strong during this time?***

I have stayed strong by focusing on helping others. Our practice has stayed open during this turbulence to provide a safe environment and to be there for those who seek and need our help.

### ***How have you stayed connected to others during the COVID-19 pandemic?***

Although I have used the internet and video technology, mostly I have stayed connected via the telephone, especially with our patients.

### ***What positive changes have come from this?***

The positive aspects are the extraordinary gestures of kindness that have been shown to us, especially with supplies when they were needed the most.

### ***What advice do you have for others struggling?***

My advice for others is to do all the things they used to, but in a different way. Look for the good and be thankful for the small gifts each day brings.

### ***Is there anything else you'd like to add?***

This situation has caused many to feel overwhelmed. It has caused feelings of great anger, sadness, despair, escalating worry that the worst will occur and astonishment that others don't see the gravity of the situation. All that being said, in the last year, I have seen beautiful national and state parks, the comet NEOWISE, numerous waterfalls, the great comfort of home and the joy of a challenge in finding a new way.

I have the deepest appreciation for gifts received, and the love I have been given has helped to endure all the hardships.

## Honoring Dr. Abram Hostetter

*continued from page 1*

Because of declining medical society membership and, in turn, declining revenue, support for physician health programs has waned over the years. If programs have survived, in many cases, it's because they've cut ties with medical societies and reestablished in other administrative settings with other funding streams.

"Pennsylvania is one of the few exceptions to this trend," Dr. Gable said. "That we were able to remain an integral part of the medical society is in large part due to Abe's efforts, as well as J. Preston Hoyle."

The Physicians' Health Program's connection to the Pennsylvania Medical Society is important for physicians seeking help.

"When a program like the PHP reaches out to a physician, the fact that you're calling from the medical society is a huge factor in establishing credibility," Dr. Gable said. "That person can have trust in the program, and their institution or hospital system can have trust in the whole intervention and monitoring process. The direct connection to the medical society was a huge advantage in developing those relationships."

The success of the Physicians' Health Program today – a program which is looked upon as an example for others across the country – is in large part due to the work of Dr. Abram Hostetter.

"The Physician's Health Program would not be the efficient and successful organization it is today, were it not for the historical efforts of Dr. Hostetter," Dr. Truex said. "We mourn his passing but recognize his immense contribution in the lives of thousands of recovering Pennsylvania physicians."

# Resilience in the COVID-19 pandemic

By Edwin Kim, MD, MRO



The global community is meeting milestones in the fight against COVID-19. I feel cautiously optimistic reading about new and updated national guidelines and encouraged by the steadily increasing number of vaccinations. Nevertheless, I remain cognizant of the effort that must continue to promote downward trends

in the number of COVID-related hospitalizations and deaths. Here, at the Foundation, staff recently passed the one-year mark of initiating work-from-home, and plan to continue providing PHP services virtually. We're not yet in the clear, but this an important moment in our collective struggle for retrospection and reflection.

Retrospection is looking back or reviewing past events or situations especially in one's own life<sup>1</sup>. This action is conducted at a particular point in time to survey what has happened. For instance, when taking inventory of this past year, take note of the events that occurred at home and in the workplace. Do you remember any trials and tribulations? Conversely, did you find new strengths? Lastly, were you blessed with pleasant or unexpected gifts along the way? You may be surprised to remember just how much you were required to adapt – as a parent, child, spouse, friend, neighbor, employee, employer, consumer, patient and provider.

By surveying this past, you might begin to remember the magnitude of change that has occurred, and the adaptations that occurred along the way, after those initial moments of trepidation and uncertainty. In the process of describing the past 12 months, some individuals naturally shift their dialogue to exemplify how they adjusted and coped with personal challenges. One common theme was the use of technology to address the consequences of physical distancing: loneliness and isolation.

These solutions epitomize one's resilience: the ability to psychologically cope with a crisis in a way that might

mitigate potentially negative consequences. People are highlighting key components of resilience: connection, mental agility, optimism, strength of character, self-awareness and self-regulation. The University of Pennsylvania Resilience Program defines these components or competencies succinctly.

Connection is the ability to build and maintain strong, trusting relationships. Mental agility is the ability to look at situations from multiple perspectives and to think creatively and flexibly. Optimism is the ability to notice and expect the positive, to focus on what you can control, and to take purposeful action. Strength of character is the ability to use one's top strengths to engage authentically, overcome challenges and create a life aligned with one's values. Self-awareness is the ability to pay attention to your thoughts, emotions, behaviors and psychological reactions. Self-regulation is the ability to change one's thoughts, emotions, behaviors and physiology in the service of a desired outcome<sup>2</sup>.

As a final reflection, take this time to acknowledge that you are resilient. Then, identify the helpful responses to events in your own life that demonstrate the abilities of resilience mentioned above. If you're like most, you've likely identified a few abilities that come easily and readily. You've also established the others that can be strengthened. Fortunately, the skills necessary to foster these competencies further can be achieved with intention and guidance – whether it's through self-direction, engaging mutual help, or finding individual psychotherapy or counseling. This is one way to strengthen your ability to cope with uncertainties and potentially negative consequences as the pandemic continues.

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<sup>1</sup>Retrospection Lexico Powered by Oxford Dictionary Accessed 2/17/21 <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/retrospection>

<sup>2</sup>Penn Positive Psychology Center: Resilience Skill Set Accessed 2/17/21 <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/resilience-programs/resilience-skill-set>

## Working for you



**Name:** Raymond C. Truex Jr., MD, FAANS, FACS

**Title:** Medical Director, Pennsylvania Physicians' Health Program

**When did you join the PHP?**  
July 2017

**What kind of work did you do before arriving at the PHP?**

I was a practicing neurosurgeon. My neurosurgical career began at Temple University in Philadelphia in 1975. I became the section chief of pediatric neurosurgery at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. In 1990, I relocated to Reading Hospital and Medical Center (now Tower Health) where I practiced adult and pediatric neurosurgery for 27 years prior to retiring from surgical practice in 2017.

**What do you do at the PHP?**

My duties at the PHP are varied. I am responsible for checking the medications for safety that each of our participants are using and keep track of the prescriptions that the participants submit for documentation of their medication use. I also check the daily toxicology lab reports and take action where necessary to investigate a positive lab test for a controlled substance. I participate in our biweekly case conferences to remain current on all of our participant issues. I facilitate in the agreement signing process for each new participant, explaining in detail the various requirements of the PHP. I conduct an exit

interview for participants who are completing their five-year agreements with the PHP. I give lectures on addiction and physician burnout to medical and physician assistant schools and training programs, and to hospitals and county medical societies. I conduct medical director interviews for physicians who are entering the evaluation process for the LifeGuard program. I participate in administrative committees for the Federation of State Physician's Health Programs and attend the organization's yearly educational forum. I provide medical director reports to the Board of Trustees of the Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society, and to the PHP Advisory Committee.

**Why do you think the work being done at the PHP is so important?**

The PHP is responsible for saving the health and careers of thousands of Pennsylvania physicians who otherwise would have been sanctioned and discarded through disciplinary action, while at the same time protecting the citizens of Pennsylvania from injury by physicians who are practicing while impaired. These physicians are a resource to their communities, and through the recovery process, become better able to serve their patients with understanding, empathy and humility.

**Please share a personal "fun fact".**

I am well on the way to funding the Truex Family Scholarship with the Foundation, to be given to a financially distressed minority medical student at Temple University School of Medicine. It is an excellent way for me to "give back" for all that Temple has done for me.

## Be kind to your mind.

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## Thank you, outgoing PHP Committee members

At the end of 2021, Laura Dellaquadri, PAC and Gregory Famiglio, MD concluded their six-year terms as members of the Physicians' Health Program Advisory Committee. The staff members of the PHP are incredibly grateful to both for their dedicated service to their peers.



**Laura Dellaquadri, PAC**

"It helped me restore my professional image as well as my self-esteem. I've learned so much and come to a greater appreciation of the PHP and the life altering work they do. The confidence that my time on the committee has given me – it's a different level of

sobriety. I'm glad to have been here all these years and look forward to the years to come."



**Gregory Famiglio, MD**

"Contributing to the mission of the PHP has been one of the highlights of my addiction medicine career. The opportunity to serve other health care providers using a proactive approach to assist troubled physicians suffering

from substance use disorders or other mental health problems has been exceptionally rewarding. We advance the health of the medical community and the patients they serve. It sets a standard of care and promotes a high level of success for treatment of substance use disorders. Additionally, I have made a few good lifetime friends."



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