PULMONARY MEDICINE/RESPIRATORY CRITICAL CARE

Course Number:  MEDI D672
Course Director:  Leigh Watson, M.D.
Institution:  Greenville Hospital System
Location:  Greenville, South Carolina
Length of Rotation:  4 weeks
Periods Offered:  2-11
Number of Students:  1 per rotation

Clinical Objectives - Skills to be Mastered

1. Manage critically ill patients in the Intensive Care Unit
2. Prescribe respiratory therapy for hospitalized and ambulatory patients
3. Interpret tests of ventilation and gas exchange
4. Examine and interpret stained sputum for bacteriology
5. Examine and interpret unstained sputum for nonmalignant cytology
6. Perform diagnostic procedures including thoracentesis and pleural biopsy
7. Assist in exercise testing procedures in the pulmonary laboratory

This four-week acting internship provides students with additional experience in the concepts and diagnostic procedures used in pulmonary and critical care medicine. Students are assigned to a pulmonary medicine inpatient team, where they provide primary management and consultative care for patients with pulmonary problems. Students also care for ambulatory patients in the Pulmonary Diagnostic Clinic.

Students care for patients as their primary caregivers, under the direct supervision of upper level residents or faculty. Together with their teams, students take in-house overnight call every fourth night, usually admitting 2 to 3 new patients each call night, with a maximum census of 6 to 8 patients for ongoing care. Patient load may be adjusted as needed based on student comfort and patient complexity. Students evaluate all assigned patients, completing and recording the medical interview, physical examination, diagnostic assessment, and management plan. Students reevaluate their patients daily, reassessing their diagnoses and therapeutic plans. Students present their patients and discuss
their impressions on daily rounds and in teaching conferences with the Pulmonary/Critical Care faculty.

Students learn to interpret sputum samples, chest x-rays, arterial blood gases, and tests of ventilation and gas exchange. Students learn to perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, which include thoracentesis and pleural biopsy. Students will assist in exercise testing procedures in the pulmonary laboratory. Through the use of a teaching attachment or video camera, students will be able to observe during fiberoptic bronchoscopies.

Clinical learning is supplemented by self-directed reading and required conferences. Slide and tape presentations covering respiratory physiology are available for student use. Conferences include Internal Medicine lectures, Pulmonary Care conferences, Pulmonary/Thoracic Surgery X-Ray conferences, and Medicine Grand Rounds.

Students take in-house overnight call every fourth night and receive one day free of patient care duties per week.