Referring Physician Resources
Liaison Service Will Enhance Consultations

Like many diagnostic radiologists, the physicians of Radiologic Associates of Fredericksburg, Ltd. (RAF) rotate among several outpatient imaging centers and hospitals. Unlike most radiology practices, however, RAF also provides 24/7 local coverage, with some radiologists switching back and forth between night shifts and daytime hours.

It is not easy for referring physicians to locate the right radiology subspecialist to talk to about a particular medical imaging study, in a single call. That is why RAF is introducing a liaison service in the coming months, noted RAF CEO Ed Swager.

“This is a program we are excited to roll out to the physician community,” Swager said. “It is another pathway for our radiologists to provide their consulting services to referring physicians.”

The service will be tested by selected referring physicians’ offices before it is expanded to other physicians.

Referring physicians will be able to call the RAF liaison from 8:30 to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to locate the radiology subspecialist who is covering a particular study that day. The liaison will use RAF’s information technology systems, contact information and schedules to route each referring physician to the correct radiologist, Swager explained. Hours may be expanded, in time, based upon demand.

A RAF physician committee identified the need for a liaison service that would provide another pathway for delivering consulting services. Swager said Neil B. Green, MD, David L. Glasser, MD, and Jeffrey A. Frazier, MD, were instrumental in

New Breast Imaging Specialist Joins RAF

Natalie G. Chan, MD, a board-certified radiologist who is fellowship trained in breast imaging, has joined Radiologic Associates of Fredericksburg (RAF). Dr. Chan is practicing at the Imaging Center for Women in Fredericksburg.

A breast imaging physician specialist, Dr. Chan interprets the images of mammograms, breast ultrasounds and breast magnetic resonance imaging tests for signs of breast cancer, and she also performs breast biopsy studies. She provides patients with compassionate and advanced care and follow-up.

“Breast imaging is an area of radiology that brings a lot of patient interaction, and I value that so much,” Dr. Chan said. “I appreciate the opportunity to give patients the best guidance and care that I can offer in preventing, detecting and treating breast cancer.”

Dr. Chan said she was drawn to working at the Imaging Center for Women because of its dedicated staff and breadth of services. The center is the only program in the
Radiologist Spotlight: Kevin R. Perusse, MD

From his earliest days in the classroom, Dr. Kevin R. Perusse, a board-certified diagnostic radiologist at Radiologic Associates of Fredericksburg (RAF), was captivated by the life sciences. When his father, a career military officer, moved the family to Panama for three years while Dr. Perusse was still in grade school, the lush rainforests, diverse wildlife and other natural wonders of “the Crossroads of the Americas” enhanced his fascination with biology. “Eventually, after many years of looking into the microscope, I decided the best way to focus my interest was in helping people through medicine,” he said.

Before and after his Panama residence, Dr. Perusse grew up in Anne Arundel County, MD, between the cities of Baltimore and Washington, DC. He received his medical degree in 1990 from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, MD. Often described as the “West Point of military medicine,” the university has trained more than 25% of current active duty military physicians.

Dr. Perusse served his surgical internship at Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Fort Gordon, GA, a leading treatment facility for active duty personnel, military retirees and their families. He completed his radiology residency training at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (now the tri-service Walter Reed National Military Medical Center) in Washington, DC, and joined RAF in 2002.

With special interest in gastrointestinal imaging (GI) and emergency radiology, Dr. Perusse was attracted to RAF because of the opportunities the group offered to keep his career “on the growth curve,” as well as its team approach to patient care and the camaraderie of physician colleagues. “Like me, many of the radiologists at RAF have served in the military,” Dr. Perusse noted. “Our shared legacy of service and commitment to the community inspire me every day.”

Through his four-year residency at Walter Reed, serving US military personnel from more than 100 countries, Dr. Perusse gained a wide-ranging knowledge of virtually every medical condition, as well as direct experience with numerous trauma cases. This exposure has proven beneficial in his work with RAF. Mary Washington Hospital, a significant location that he practices out of, is one of four Level II Trauma Centers in the state providing high-level emergency care to critically injured patients.

Dr. Perusse works closely with other physicians in diagnosing patients with a host of illnesses, including GI diseases. He also consults with patients, as RAF offers multiple screening programs for such conditions as colon cancer and abdominal aortic aneurysms. At a time when patients are increasingly engaged in wellness and prevention measures, many screenings are scheduled directly by patients or their physicians.

In his recreational time, Dr. Perusse was attracted to RAF because of the opportunities the group offered to keep his career “on the growth curve,” as well as its team approach to patient care and the camaraderie of physician colleagues. “Our shared legacy of service and commitment to the community inspire me every day.”

VIVA Vascular Technologist’s Medical Article Highlights Importance of Routine Graft Duplex Test

Stephanie J. Nichols, MBA, RVT, a vascular technologist with Virginia Interventional & Vascular Associates, recently had an article published in the Journal for Vascular Ultrasound that underscores the need for two different tests when evaluating patients after arterial bypass graft procedures.

Recent changes in Medicare criteria stated that only one test was needed for routine follow up after an arterial bypass graft – either a graft duplex or a segmental pressures test. Alternatively, the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission states that if a graft duplex (or ultrasound) is performed, then an additional study that measures the segmental pressures, an ankle brachial index (ABI), must also be completed within two weeks at the same facility when there is no change in the patient’s symptoms.

Nichols reviewed a number of patient histories for cases in which the ABI results were within normal limits, but the graft duplex results revealed an abnormality. In each case, the patient had not reported specific vascular symptoms that would indicate a serious condition like claudication, but had mentioned more general symptoms of weakness or pain.

In her September article on “The Importance of Routine Graft Duplex in the Presence of Normal Ankle Brachial Indexes,” Nichols concluded that it is critical for laboratories to perform both tests. “The ABI is a good indicator of disease in the normal population, but in older patients and those with diabetes, it can yield false-positive results,” Nichols wrote. An abstract of her article is available at http://tinyurl.com/nicholsarticle.
determining what preparations were needed to launch the program.

The liaison service is intended to fill a gap, not replace other ways referring physicians connect with RAF radiologists such as through Picture Archiving and Communications Systems (PACS) and additional channels provided by Mary Washington Healthcare and Medical Imaging of Fredericksburg. Swager said the program should benefit staff at facilities served by RAF because there will be fewer calls from referring physicians trying to track down a specific radiologist.

Hundreds of physicians in the region consult with RAF diagnostic radiologists before ordering imaging tests, and afterward, to discuss results, Swager said. RAF physicians serve patients at Mary Washington Hospital, Stafford Hospital, and the following outpatient facilities: Medical Imaging of Fredericksburg, Imaging Center for Women, Medical Imaging at Lee’s Hill, and Medical Imaging of North Stafford. RAF’s interventional radiologists and vascular surgeons also serve patients at Virginia Interventional & Vascular Associates.

Once the service is available, RAF will send letters to local physicians’ offices providing details about the implementation, schedule and contact information, Swager added.

A state-of-the-art computer tablet check-in system has reduced the time it takes patients to register at Medical Imaging of Fredericksburg centers by more than 50% and generated other improvements recently honored with a top local award.

Medical Imaging received a 1st Place 2013 President’s Award from Mary Washington Healthcare for performance achievements since implementing the Phreesia™ check-in system in August 2012. Medical Imaging centers include Medical Imaging of Fredericksburg on the Mary Washington Hospital campus, Medical Imaging of North Stafford, Medical Imaging at Lee’s Hill and the Imaging Center for Women. Radiologic Associates of Fredericksburg (RAF) and Mary Washington Healthcare are partners in Medical Imaging, with RAF providing professional services to the center.

Instead of clipboards of paperwork, Phreesia provides patients with computer tablets that they can take back to their seats to complete information in a confidential manner. Staff assist any patients who need help with the system, though most patients familiar with computers report that the tablets’ design and electronic prompts make check-in easy. The system also interfaces with electronic medical records, performs insurance verifications, and facilitates selection of co-payments and patient deductibles.

“It has changed the check-in process and workflow, so patients spend less time registering, and staff spend more time welcoming and helping patients,” said Medical Imaging Executive Director Barry Nielsen. “It also allows us to verify a patient’s insurance in real time so patients don’t have to wait 60 to 90 days.”

Nielsen said Ed Swager, CEO of RAF, was instrumental in the system’s success, as were team members Katie Meyers of Medical Imaging of North Stafford, Christopher Wyatt of Medical Imaging at Lee’s Hill, and Phyllis Dorsey of Imaging Access, a department of Medical Imaging.

Earlier in 2012, Phreesia was introduced locally by Virginia Interventional & Vascular Associates (VIVA), the interventional radiology and vascular surgery practice of RAF. Jennifer Dawson, director of VIVA, identified the system after seeing it demonstrated at a professional conference.
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Ed Swager, Chief Executive Officer

Radiologic Associates of Fredericksburg (RAF) is the largest provider of medical imaging services in the Fredericksburg, Stafford and Spotsylvania area. RAF’s interventional radiology and vascular services group, Virginia Interventional & Vascular Associates (VIVA), performs minimally invasive procedures, vascular lab studies and vascular surgery.

RAF publishes Imaging Advances periodically for referring physicians and the greater medical community. For more information, please contact Irene Valentino, RAF Director of Administrative Operations, ivalentino@rafadmin.com, (540) 361-1000.

Imaging Advances is an award-winning publication produced by Health Industry Writers, a division of Susan Carol Associates Public Relations.

A native of Chicago, Dr. Chan received her bachelor of science degree in biomedical engineering from the University of Illinois and her medical degree from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine. She completed her medical internship with the John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas; her medical residency in diagnostic radiology with the University of Kansas School of Medicine; and her fellowship in breast imaging with the George Washington University in Washington, DC. She served also for three years with the Air Force, stationed at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

Dr. Chan is board certified in diagnostic radiology.

RAF is the largest provider of medical imaging services in the Fredericksburg, Virginia, region, including Spotsylvania and Stafford counties.

Free Screenings Coming in September

Local medical professionals including Jennifer Dawson, NP-C, of Virginia Interventional & Vascular Associates (seated) and Tanya Benson, RDMS, of Medical Imaging of North Stafford (standing) volunteered at the most recent Legs for Life to evaluate more than 100 patients for peripheral arterial disease and abdominal aortic aneurysm. Organizers will soon set the date for the next Legs for Life free screenings, which are held in September and advertised through local media.