

## The Vantage Voice...E Newsletter

### Dr. R. Samantha Ritchie will be joining Vantage Physicians this October!

Dr. Samantha Ritchie is a board certified Family Physician who has lived in the Olympia area with her husband and daughter for over 10 years. She also earned her medical degree from the Medical College of Pennsylvania. When Dr. Ritchie became a physician, she knew almost immediately that she wanted to be a country doctor. She spent the next 20 years working between Olympia and McCleary. Dr. Ritchie has been honored by the Washington Rural Health Association, an organization that advocated for better rural health services, as its Outstanding Rural Health Practitioner for 2009. She has chosen to join Vantage Physicians so she can continue to treat patients as whole people, and take the time she needs to address patient wellness. Dr. Ritchie also uses her skills on trips with a nonprofit group called Friends of Haiti, bringing medical care to villages so remote she and her colleagues have to hike to them. She and her husband enjoy sailing, rowing, hiking, and enticing their daughter to enjoy the great outdoors.

### Volume 3, Issue 3



Dr. Samantha Ritchie

### Dr. Kershnik will be out July 27-August 2

Dr. Carl Ott has graciously agreed to cover the practice for July 27th through the August 3rd at 8 am. He is a Board Certified Internal Medicine specialist who is currently working at Capital Medical Center as a hospital physician. Some of you may remember him from Dr. K's days at the Hawk's Prairie office where they were partners. He will be available to you for appointments during our usual office hours and for after hours calls evenings and weekends. For those of you who saw Dr. Ott in his previous practice, we're sure he would love to see you just for old time's sake!

The St. Peter's Hospitalists Inpatient Team will be seeing Dr. Kershnik's patients in the hospital during her absence. They will notify her of who is being seen and treated.



### Some people believe that tanning protects against a sunburn. However, the amount of sun exposure needed to get a tan can by itself cause excessive skin damage and outweigh any possible benefit.



#### How do I protect my skin from UV radiation and skin cancer?

Avoiding skin cancer can be as simple as protecting the skin and taking a good look at it regularly. While sunscreen plays a vital role in protecting the skin from UV radiation, it cannot prevent skin damage if you are exposed to the sun's rays for long periods of time. Experts recommend that you use multiple methods to fully protect your skin.

#### The ABCs of how to protect skin from sunburns:

- Away:** Stay out of the sun during the peak hours of UV radiation, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Block:** Wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, summer and winter, on both cloudy and clear days.
- Cover up:** Wear clothing that covers the skin, with hats on heads and sunglasses with UV protection over eyes.
- Speak out:** Teach others to protect their skin from sun damage.

### Does a little time in the sun seem to make you feel better?

The sun's rays allow our bodies to synthesize and regulate vitamin D.

Recent studies showed an association between low serum levels of vitamin D and higher incidences of four mood disorders: PMS, seasonal affective disorder, nonspecified mood disorder, and major depressive disorder.

Researcher Pamela K. Murphy, PhD, at the Medical University of South Carolina says people can help manage their moods by getting at least 1,000 to 2,000 IU of vitamin D a day.

That's significantly more than the RDA for vitamin D, which is 200 IU for adults under 50, 400 IU for ages 51 to 70, and 600 IU for people over 70.

Symptoms and Signs of Vitamin D deficiencies are muscle aches, bone and muscle weakness, and bone pain. Researchers say a growing body of evidence suggests that vitamin D deficiency is linked to other, well-known heart disease risk factors such as high blood pressure, obesity, congestive heart failure, and chronic blood vessel inflammation (associated with hardening of the arteries). It also alters hormone levels to increase insulin resistance, which raises the risk of diabetes. For example, several studies have shown that people with low vitamin D levels were twice as likely to have a heart attack, stroke, or other heart-related event during follow-up, compared with those with higher vitamin D levels.

Vitamin D assists in calcium absorption, muscle function, reduces infection, improves the immune system and may prevent certain cancers.

Most of the body's vitamin D requirements are met by the skin in response to sun exposure (which is a problem in the Pacific Northwest). Other less potent sources of vitamin D include foods such as salmon, sardines, cod liver oil, cheese, egg yolks and vitamin D-fortified foods like milk, juices and some breads and cereals. Vitamin D can also be obtained through supplements.

Very few foods naturally contain vitamin D. So Dr. Kershnik recommends we get vitamin D from a variety of sources: short periods of sun exposure, vitamin D supplements, and foods.

### Concierge Service, Our Promise to You

Your monthly membership fee entitles you to traditional primary care physicians services such as:

- Same-day or Acute Care Visits as available, immediate/urgent telephone access to physician if office appointment not available.
- 90 minute Comprehensive Annual Physical Examinations (Be sure to have your fasting blood work drawn at least 2 business days prior to your appointment so you can discuss the results with your physician at this appointment).
- Sports Physicals with immediate report
- Hospital Visits at least once a day or as medically necessary
- Nursing Home Visits at least once a month or as medically necessary
- House Calls for patients whom transportation to the office would result in undue stress or hardship

Also included are procedures performed in the office such as:

- EKG & Pulse Oximetry
- Pap Smears & Urinalysis
- Laceration Repair
- Splinting and Casting
- Excision or freezing of abnormal skin lesions
- Administration of immunizations and injections

Other membership benefits include:

- 90 minute appointments for counseling, education, and evaluation of complex concerns
- Direct email, voicemail and after hours access to your physician, 24/7
- Assistance in navigating the complex medical system and working with any sub-specialists involved in your care
- Same day turn around on all routine prescription refills and telephone calls, 24 hour turn around on routine paperwork such as disability requests and records releases.

### FAQ

Q: "I am having shooting pain down my left arm and I'm dizzy, since your office is open, shouldn't I just come to your place?"



A: No. These are classic symptoms of a heart attack. The best thing to do is immediately call 911. After you have called 911, you then can call the office or better yet, have someone else call to talk with Dr. Kershnik. She can print out your med list for the ER and call ahead so they know what to expect. **DO NOT SHOW UP AT THE OFFICE.** We do not have the equipment to respond to a heart attack and this will slow down your treatment time.

Q: "I am out of my meds and I want to talk to Dr. Kershnik. When is the best time to drop in?"


A: It is always best to call ahead. We can have your prescriptions ready and waiting for you as well as set aside dedicated time for Dr. Kershnik to talk to you.

Q: "I left a message on the answering machine this morning about my blood draw yesterday and I haven't heard anything. When should I try to call again?"



A: It usually takes 48 hours for PacLab to return completed labs to us. If your labs are totally normal, Dr. Kershnik will write a note on the result and mail them to you. If they are abnormal or there is something to be concerned about, she will call you. Be sure we have the correct home, work and cell numbers for you. She usually gets a chance to sit down and make calls from 1-1:30 or after 5, Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, the office closes at 12 noon, but Dr. Kershnik often stays to make telephone calls until 2 or 3 pm. Just because the office is closed does not mean Dr. Kershnik will not be trying to call you back, in fact it is more likely you will be called then.

### Welcome Lori Jones, PacLab Phlebotomist

Lori has been drawing blood for over 7 years. She has been here for the past month and has just been assigned permanently by PacLab. Our patients have found her to be gentle and great at finding the sneakiest vein. 

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).

Questions or comments? E-mail us at [zcp@vantagephysicians.net](mailto:zcp@vantagephysicians.net) or call 360.438.1161