

TO MEDIA

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Thomas P. Gessner, MD

John R. Mazer, MD

GESSNER NEW PRESIDENT OF LATROBE AREA HOSPITAL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION; MAZERO MOVES TO EMERITUS STATUS

LATROBE, PA, January 25, 2013 ... When John R. Mazer, MD, retired as medical director at Latrobe Hospital in 1996, his friend and colleague, Thomas P. Gessner, MD, was the choice to succeed him. Once again, Dr. Gessner steps into a position shaped by his mentor, as the new president of the Latrobe Area Hospital Charitable Foundation. (LAHCF). Dr. Mazer moves to emeritus status, and will remain on the foundation's board of directors.

LAHCF was formed in 1995 to shepherd excess funds from a highly successful capital campaign that resulted in the creation of a modern patient services tower at Latrobe Hospital. Dr. Mazer, a highly respected internal medicine specialist with deep roots in the community, was named the foundation's president, with Arnold Palmer and Sandra Mellon, longtime hospital benefactors and board members, chair and vice chair respectively of the foundation's board of directors.

Dr. Gessner, a pediatrician in the Latrobe area and long time faculty member of the hospital's family medicine residency, stepped down as hospital medical director in 2004. In recognition of his 27-plus years of service, a healthcare scholarship administered by the foundation was established in his honor by the hospital medical staff in 2005, and has been awarded several times

over the past seven years to individuals pursuing a medical career in a variety of disciplines. Dr. Gessner joined the foundation's board of directors in 2007.

LAHCF was created as a community-health care partnership. With the coming together of Frick, Westmoreland and Latrobe Hospitals in 2004 to form Excelsa Health, the foundation continues to serve Latrobe Hospital and the health needs of eastern Westmoreland County.

Dr. Gessner sees his new role as that of liaison among the foundation, the Excelsa Health Board of Trustees and the community.

"In health care, there is a gap between what gets paid for and what's needed," he said. "The work of the foundation benefits the hospital and the community by making available vital programs and services to meet health care needs."

Dr. Gessner cited several initiatives as illustrative of this point.

In the area of technology, the foundation supported Excelsa Health's conversion to digital mammography through a matching donor program from the Richard King Mellon Foundation. LAHCF contributions totaling \$500,000 were matched dollar for dollar for a \$1 million gift to the health system. "The investment was substantial, but necessary," stressed Dr. Gessner.

The foundation also recognizes the continuing need for state-of-the-art resources such as the daVinci Robotic Surgical System located at Latrobe Hospital to bolster Excelsa Health's physician recruiting efforts. "Doctors who have used the latest equipment and technology during training are looking to practice where such tools exist. If we want to attract physicians to our community, we must support them."

Outside the hospital setting, LAHCF provides assistance to Laurel Area Faith in Action. "This organization plays an important role in what happens after a patient in need of assistance is discharged from the hospital," he said.

"Unnecessary readmission can be reduced when a discharge plan is followed. But when people live alone, they may not be able to execute that plan and Faith in Action provides the volunteer support to get people to doctor's appointments, or see that they take their medication as prescribed, eat well or have the help necessary to live independently."

Dr. Gessner is looking forward to working alongside Dr. Mazero, as the foundation articulates its vision for the future. “The foundation must always be in conversation with the community so that the health needs and funding priorities are clear. We’ll be working to identify what is most important going forward so that the community’s charitable giving continues to have direction and focus.”

Individuals wishing to support the work of the Latrobe Area Hospital Charitable Foundation may send donations to Excela Latrobe Hospital, One Mellon Way, Latrobe, PA 15650, to the attention of Norma Samide, foundation manager.