

Vision

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The Loyola University Health System Philanthropy Update



Patrick Stiff, MD, Coleman Professor of Oncology, Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine and director, Cardinal Bernardin Cancer Center, with Michael Hennessy, president and CEO, The Coleman Foundation

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Richard A. Perritt Charitable Foundation

Helping Physicians to Advance Patient Care

Premature babies often require constant supplemental oxygen because their lungs are seriously under-developed. This saves their lives, but it also endangers their sight. It can cause abnormal blood vessels to develop in the eyes, leading to retinal detachment — which means blindness for life.

A recent grant totaling more than \$400,000 from the Richard A. Perritt Charitable Foundation will help to ensure, however, that Loyola remains at the forefront of the ophthalmology research, physician training and patient care that can treat potentially tragic outcomes like these in patients of all ages.

Critical to making those successful treatments available to patients is continued specialty training of new doctors and the availability of essential technology and equipment.

Currently, Loyola's Ophthalmology Residency Program is one of the most highly sought after in the country by young doctors wanting to specialize in the field. It also attracts first-rate faculty. "We produce residents who are ethical, kind, caring and concerned and trained at the very top of their profession," said James McDonnell, MD, who administers the pediatric ophthalmology program at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine (Stritch).

But few people outside health-care education understand that educating residents for the three years they are training costs their institutions money. "Without independent funding, it's extremely hard to run a robust program, but Perritt has allowed us to do that; every single aspect of the department has been enhanced by this funding assistance," said Charles Bouchard, MD, John P. Mulcahy Professor of Ophthalmology

and chair, Department of Ophthalmology.

Among the equipment that the latest grant will support is a high-resolution pathology system. This computer-based technology functions as a virtual microscope, allowing residents to view high quality scans of pathology slides rather than rely on the fragile glass slides and microscopes of the past.

The grant also will support the purchase of a cataract surgical simulator, which allows residents to master cataract surgery procedures under a variety of conditions. Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide, and cataract surgery is the most common surgical procedure in the United States, affecting patients from infancy to advanced adulthood, so residents must be proficient in the procedure.

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Charles Bouchard, MD



Resident Alison Landes, MD, helps patient Ignace Bielobradek figure out how to use the slit lamp biomicroscope on Charles Bouchard, MD, John P. Mulcahy Professor of

Ophthalmology and chair, Department of Ophthalmology, Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine.

Gifts from The Perritt Foundation have also been critical in supporting faculty and resident research over the years. In 2008-2009 alone, over 60 articles, abstracts and book reviews came out of the department, a legacy of learning that residents carry forward to benefit generations of patients to come.

"We are gratified at the opportunity to see the advances that are made in research and education at Stritch as a result of Dr. Perritt's gift," said Ronald Tyrpin, director of the foundation. "To his dying day, he was doing research, believing that some day we would be able to perform eye transplants, and this is a fitting use of his gift."

The Perritt Foundation is a longtime supporter of Stritch, having made gifts totaling more than \$5 million to the medical school during a 15-year partnership. In addition to ophthalmology research and the Department of Ophthalmology residency training program, the grant will support two medical school scholarships and the Gastrological Oncology Center at Cardinal Bernardin Cancer Center. Richard A. Perritt, MD, was a 1928 graduate of Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine.

For more information about supporting ophthalmology, contact Peggy LaFleur, senior director, major gifts, at mlafleur@lumc.edu or (708) 216-5197. ~