

FACTS & FIGURES

Sliding scale

Forces that foster, and counteract, the obesity epidemic.



34%

Percentage of U.S. adults who were obese in 2007
(with obesity defined as having a body mass index of 30 or more)

24%

Percentage of New Hampshire adults who were obese in 2007

30

Number of states with an obesity rate of 25% or more in 2007

0

Number of states with an obesity rate of 15% or more in 1987

2008

Year that Dartmouth economist David Blanchflower released a study demonstrating the phenomenon of "imitative obesity," whereby people are subconsciously influenced by the weight of those around them

453

Number of bariatric surgeries performed at DHMC from 2003 to 2006

87% / 68%

Percentage of those cases—laparoscopic and open, respectively—in which patients lost at least half their excess body weight within a year

59%

Percentage of U.S. adults who do no vigorous leisure physical activity

3.3

Miles of walking trails maintained on the DHMC campus for the use of patients, their families, visitors, and employees

SOURCES: MEDICAL NEWS TODAY, NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, DARTMOUTH-HITCHCOCK MEDICAL CENTER

Graduates don't escape without being asked a few more questions

To earn their caps and gowns, the 2008 DMS graduates had already taken their fair share of exams (and then some, a few might have asserted). Even so, the speakers at Class Day, on June 7, wouldn't let the graduates go without posing a few final questions.

The quizzing began with Dr. Stephen Atwood, who gave the keynote address. "Why are you so important?" he asked the men and women at the front of Leede Arena. Because, he continued, doctors, scientists, and public-health officials are involved in some of the most significant events in people's lives.

True: That has certainly been true of Atwood himself, a regional advisor for UNICEF in East Asia. Atwood's career, said Dr. William Green, DMS's dean, "epitomizes what we value" in physicians.

A 1970 graduate of DMS, Atwood discussed his experiences in Vietnam, where he worked with government officials to address that nation's health-care problems. "Why am I telling you this?" he asked. Because, he said, again answering his own question, "the elements of the situation in Vietnam—half a world away—are common to almost all countries in the world today, including our own."

Atwood explained some of the consequences of globalization for those in science and medicine. The world is linked

more closely than ever before, he said, so the question now "is no longer whether we should transform social agendas to create social equity, but rather 'What is the best way to do it?'"

Peers: Next came two student speakers, chosen by their peers. M.D. graduate Andrew Saunders recounted his experiences at a hospital in Tanzania, where he'd encountered a young boy with kidney problems. The condition was treatable, but the hospital and the family lacked the necessary resources. As a result, the boy was expected to die within the week. The story prompted Saunders to ask his classmates: "Why did we want to go to medical school in the first place?" Not, he suggested, to find "the eventual comfortable job."

Micah Benson, about to earn a Ph.D. in microbiology and immunology, was the graduate student speaker. He pondered a question he said he's often asked: "What do you do as a scientist?" It's important, he continued, to be able to provide a good response: "We, as scientists, need to explain our discoveries and contributions to the world."

Answers: Class Day brought a few answers as well as all those questions, including the names of the recipients of the Medical School's top awards. João Pedro Teixeira received the Dean's Medal, which goes to the top M.D. graduate; Eric Arehart received the Strohbehn Medal, for the top Ph.D. graduate, for his work in pharmacology and toxicology; and Courtney McIluff earned the Good Physician Award. See the box on page 10