

BACK TO SCHOOL: During 2007, DHMC's Office of Continuing Education logged 9,374 attendees from all over Northern New England at continuing medical education programs, as well as 6,923 attendees at continuing nursing education programs.



THEN & NOW

A reminder of the pace of change, and of timeless truths, from *The Journal of William Tully*, an account kept during 1808–09 by a Dartmouth medical student:

"This morning, Dr. Smith was to perform the operation for an aneurism, but at 16 or 17 miles distance from Hanover. I felt desirous of seeing it; but to go so far for the purpose would have been . . . skinning a flint for three-pence and spoiling a knife that cost six-pence. Had the patient, however, been within half a mile, I should have felt somewhat sheepish at attending, with such a concourse of students as the good Doctor commonly has with him."



3,000+

Number of miles today's DMS students often travel for clinical rotations—including to California, Alaska, Arizona, and Florida

\$6.8 million gift was inspired by donors' struggle

It's a little-known fact that researchers spend much of their time chasing money instead of actually doing research. "I used to spend six months of the year writing grants, and rewriting grants, and reviewing grants," says Dr. Robert Drake, the Andrew Thomson Professor of Psychiatry at DMS.

Addiction: A major focus for Drake and his team at the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center (PRC) is studying and developing ways to treat people afflicted with both mental illness and addiction. "Of course, if you spend half your year just doing the fund-raising, you get to spend only half your year doing the research and writing it up." That's why, Drake continues, "it's just so much better to work with private foundations."

One foundation has been especially generous in supporting Drake's work. Several years ago, the West Family Foundation donated \$2.5 million to the PRC, and recently Alfred and Lorelee West pledged \$6.8 million more. The couple's struggle to help their own son is what has inspired their philanthropy.

"He is drug- and alcohol-addicted and he has schizophrenia," says Lorelee West of her son. "Until we met Bob Drake seven or eight years ago, we didn't think there was any hope of ever getting treatment" for him.

Addiction is the most common co-occurring health problem among people who have severe mental illness. For example,

nearly 90% of those with schizophrenia smoke cigarettes. Yet finding treatment programs that adequately address the combination of mental illness and addiction is difficult.

"Al and I felt [that] if we could save one person from going through what we had to go through, ping-ponging back and forth to nine different institutions, . . . that that would be worth it," says West. "Fortunately, our son is taking advantage of all the research that Bob and his group have done." She calls that "an added bonus" of their support for the PRC.

Substance: The PRC's approach is unique. Its researchers study co-occurring substance and mental disorders at all levels—from animal studies to medication trials to psychosocial interventions to models for treatment.

The center is also committed to disseminating its work. The Wests' first major gift was combined with monies from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and other sources to develop educational and training "tool kits" to help providers in other states apply what Drake and his colleagues have discovered and developed.

Drake initially welcomed the DHHS involvement because the agency promised to print and disseminate the tool kits for free. "But I didn't realize that the federal review process would put a

five- or six-year time lag into getting things out," says Drake. So he and his team used private funds, including from the Wests, to distribute the tool kits themselves electronically. "We're now publishing things that are two or three versions ahead of what the federal government has still been unable to get out."

The latest gift from the Wests will help the PRC study what interventions work best for people with co-occurring disorders and then incorporate that information into

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what Drake calls "electronic decision support systems."

These software programs will help patients, as well as their families and health-care providers, choose treatment options that best suit each individual's preferences.

Innovative: "It's very hard to work through government to do things that are really creative or innovative or even that need to get done quickly," says Drake. That's why he's so grateful to the Wests. "It's just been wonderful to partner with them," he says.

JENNIFER DURGIN

JON GILBERT FOX



Drake studies co-occurring disorders.