Gus Kious, M.D.,
President, Summa Physicians Inc.

As president of Summa Physicians Inc. (SPI), Kious will be responsible for the organization’s strategic management, operations and recruitment. Kious attended Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and is board certified in family medicine. Kious joins SPI from Huron Hospital, a Cleveland Clinic Hospital, in East Cleveland where he served as president for the past seven years. He joined SPI in October 2011.

Kious has received numerous awards throughout his career, most recently the Becker’s List of Most Influential Physician Executives in 2010 and the ACPME-MGMA Physician Executive of the Year in 2007. Kious and the staff of Huron Hospital also received Congressional recognition based on community feedback from U.S. Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones.

Kious observes that a number of things have happened in the past ten years in the healthcare industry that have changed the landscape and how we need to operate as an organization. He is dedicated to forging SPI into a multi-specialty group practice that is unified and strong that achieves great performance consistently. Through didactic teachings, practical projects, operations and coaching, he is confident his team will develop into a high performing team.

“I believe execution is the most important skill to possess. We need to change the way we discuss, debate and decide things to make things speedier than they are currently. Decisions are made presently by consensus and that is not going to be fast enough in the future,” said Kious.

Kious is teaching his team the following critical skills: gaining influence and power in the organization; what is the art and discipline of excellent execution; team dynamics and collaboration; leading change and how to accomplish change; and communicating effectively with feedback using the Enneagram styles to understand personality.

Kious is passionate about transforming care for patients. He is intimately familiar with the type of programming the Center for Health Equity is introducing at Summa Center at New Seasons (see article on page 3). In a previous position, Kious was part of a team that was able to introduce a regional service program for chronic disease that drastically reduced hospital admissions, amputation rates for diabetes care and drove down emergency department utilization. Expectations are high for similar results at Summa.

“My goal is to have 15,000 patients call Summa Center at New Seasons home. Patients will come because their care will be rendered by team-based care with interventions to make the patient successful. Three doctors are unified in this mission, and at the end of the day, these patients will have a very high success rate for chronic disease. The sky is the limit on what we can accomplish,” said Kious.

Summa Foundation has been integral with the opening of Summa Center at New Seasons. “Big successful systems have big foundations,” stated Kious. “People need to work to make the Foundation successful because if we depend totally on operations to finance everything in the health systems it is a very, very difficult task. But if you have philanthropy and other sources of income, then that is the only way we are going to make it.

“My desire is to see the Foundation successful and I am going to personally commit to supporting the Foundation and I hope all SPI doctors will do the same.”
Matthew F. Dilisio, M.D.

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Dilisio’s research is made possible by The Robert F. Kepley, M.D. Orthopaedic Fellowship; Dilisio was its inaugural winner in June 2011. The fellowship began as a $1 million philanthropic gift made by the Rice family in December 2009.

If you are interested in learning more about this research or to offer support, contact the Summa Foundation at (330) 375-3159.

Policy Points at Summa

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) was passed in 2010 with the goal of improving the accessibility, affordability and quality of healthcare. The new law continues to be heatedly debated.

Two years later, the Supreme Court of the United States is on a course to resolve legal challenges associated with the ACA. The Court is reviewing whether the government can require people to purchase health insurance, whether the law can stand without that mandate, and whether the expansion of Medicaid imposes an unfair burden on states. The Court is expected to render its decision concerning the new law in June.

On a local level, Summa Health System continues to implement plans to be compliant with the law and to provide better valued added care and services to patients and payers. Tom Strauss, president and chief executive officer of Summa Health System, recently delivered remarks to Cleveland City Club and the World Healthcare Congress outlining the system’s immediate and long-term care delivery innovation priorities.

The Office of Minority Health

Summa recently opened its new Center for Health Equity to benefit Akron’s minority and underserved communities. Summa’s leadership will pursue partnerships with public entities to best position the Center for short and long-term success. Summa has a historic relationship with the Ohio Office of Minority Health.

For fifteen years, Summa Health System has held a positive relationship with the Ohio Commission on Minority Health (OCMH). OCMH has granted funding support to Summa’s stroke education and screenings efforts to minority populations as well as to raise awareness of prostate cancer among minority male groups.

In 2012, the government relations team will arrange for the Center to interact with the federal Office of Minority Health to explore programming and funding support.

One drawback of current joint replacement surgeries is that cartilage, the tissue that lines joints, doesn’t heal. Current cartilage restoration techniques produce a cartilage scar. This scar tissue is not as durable as native cartilage and often leads to the inevitable development of a painful, osteoarthritic joint and disability. The current “Holy Grail” of orthopaedics is a cartilage tissue implant. Currently, one does not exist.

Matthew F. Dilisio, M.D., a fourth year resident at Summa Health System, is conducting valuable research to hopefully create a new cartilage implant that will serve as a viable solution to arthritic joint pain for years to come. This implant could revolutionize the surgical management of cartilage restoration procedures and has the potential to be the first implant of its kind. This implant could be used in the knee, ankle, shoulder and elbow, if not all joints in the human body.

The process is relatively straightforward—Dilisio takes waste cartilage from knee replacement surgeries into the lab. Here the cells are sharply dissected, isolated, cultured and grown in various environments in incubators in the hopes to produce a cartilage implant that can be used to help patients with irreparable injuries to joints.

His study proposes that embedding human cartilage cells in a polymer derived from rubber will produce mature cartilage tissue. This polymer was developed at the University of Akron by a project co-author, Judit Puskas, Ph.D. and has proven successful in clinical practice as the drug-eluting polymeric coating on coronary stents. In the lab, cells are embedded in the polymer to hopefully create the correct environment so cells can survive, reproduce and grow into tissue.

The next few weeks will soon show preliminary results. “We are continuing to develop and analyze our implant prototype,” said Dilisio.

The working name for this project is Rubber City ArboCartilage because it uses a rubber derived from polymer invented in Akron, a tissue engineering technique invented in Akron, and because the research is being conducted by Akron orthopaedic surgeons.

“It is very exciting to see theories through to determine if we can’t produce a viable implant,” said Dilisio. “We could really add to the current environment of cartilage restoration implants and techniques if we are successful. Years from now, I think we will have a new answer to previously irreparable conditions.”

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In the not-too-distant future, a new breast implant created in Akron could help detect and destroy cancer cells.

Judit Puskas, Ph.D., material scientist and professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at the University of Akron, is getting international attention for her efforts to develop a safer breast implant that can help millions of women recover from breast cancer.

The work by Puskas and her research partners at the university and Summa Health System is among five projects across the globe awarded $100,000 in seed money through the GE healthymagination Cancer Challenge.

For a dozen years, Puskas has been working to develop a breast implant made from an impermeable polymer, rather than the typical silicone material.

Silicone can tear easily and is permeable, meaning the liquid or gel inside the implants can leak, Puskas said. She estimates as many as 50,000 of the 400,000 women who get breast implants annually require additional surgeries to repair, replace or remove the implants. About a quarter of the patients who choose to get breast implants annually are cancer patients.

Puskas developed a soft plastic that’s biocompatible like silicone, but won’t tear or leak. Silicone rubber, like a rubber tire, requires a curing step. Her thermo-plastic material skips that step which allows it to hold therapeutic drugs. In her lab she mixes anti-cancer drugs in with the polymer, which, when implanted, can target cancer cells that surgery may have missed.

“We are trying to integrate these two aspects - the one is the reconstruction and the other is the treatment of cancer.”

Puskas is working with Steven Schmidt, Ph.D., Summa Health System’s vice president of clinical research and innovation, and Summa Foundation’s chief operating officer, in determining how the new implant will deliver the drugs once inside the body. Schmidt says for a woman recovering from breast cancer surgery targeted drugs from an implant would have fewer side-effects than traditional chemotherapy because they’re released where they’re needed.

Schmidt cautions there’s still a lot of testing to be done, but, “If the technology works it would be an approach that would be welcomed by clinicians and patients.”

To learn more, contact Summa Foundation at (330) 375-3159.
After a year’s hiatus and much anticipation, the Summa Foundation’s Sapphire Ball will take place Saturday, September 8, 2012, at the John S. Knight Center in Akron.

This year, proceeds from the Sapphire Ball will once again support Women’s Health Services at Summa. Summa’s Women’s Health is nationally recognized for innovative, patient centered care. Proceeds from the past two events have supported important research and education initiatives and driven progress in bringing women’s health issues to the forefront of care.

2012 promises all the enchantment and surprises you have come to expect from the Sapphire Ball—a black tie gala with gourmet dining, superb décor, dancing, world class treasure chest raffles and the wonderful company of the region’s philanthropic, corporate and civic leaders.

For more information and sponsorship opportunities call Summa Foundation at (330) 375-6979 or email info@sapphireball.org.