

Time in the sun: new department ready for the spotlight



Heffernan and his colleagues have taken the program to the next level, earning full accreditation and opening several satellite offices.

Dermatologists often warn against excessive exposure to sunlight, but sometimes a little more exposure is just what the doctor ordered.

Michael Heffernan, M.D., chair of the Department of Dermatology, is eager

to shine a spotlight on the work of his colleagues and gain

some positive exposure for their many accomplishments.

“We have a lot to be proud of as a department,” Heffernan said. “We’ve been in existence for 30 years. We have graduates practicing all over the country.

“We believe that we have a faculty that can measure up to any program in Ohio or the Midwest and would rival most of the top programs in the country. Our nine full-time and five part-time faculty are leaders in adult, pediatric, surgical, and cosmetic dermatology and dermatopathology.”

Heffernan can make these claims with some authority, as a frequent presenter at national meetings and a principal investigator for many multi-center studies. He joined the medical school faculty in late 2005, bringing an outsider’s appreciation for the program based on his experiences at Washington University in St. Louis, the University of Michigan Medical School, and Stanford University Medical Center.

“I came here with the goal of converting our division into a standalone department,” Heffernan said. “What I saw in this program was a diamond in the rough, that by and large wasn’t getting credit for what it was already doing, and that had opportunities to do more things than it realized.”

With a little more than two years of focused effort, Heffernan and his colleagues were able to take the program to the next level.

“We expanded the size of the teaching faculty,” he said. “We obtained full accreditation from the residency research council, a branch of the ACGME (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education). We expanded our academic activities... In the last three years, publications and presentations have increased by 600 percent... We have expanded our clinical activities... We opened satellite offices” in multiple cities to complement our offices in Dayton.

The division of dermatology officially became a department in February 2008, but the faculty hasn’t slowed down since realizing its initial goal.

“We provide all of the in-patient consultations at the Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Children’s Medical Center of Dayton, Good Samaritan Hospital, and Miami Valley Hospital,” Heffernan said. “We provide lectures and hands-on experience to our medical students and to all the primary care residents across the Greater Miami Valley Region. Dermatologists throughout the region send us some of their most difficult dermatology patients.” By staying the course and continuing to innovate and expand, Heffernan feels the department’s potential is nearly limitless.