

Hospital Appointments *as of May 1*

Alabama

University of Alabama - Birmingham

Alan Long (Neurosurgery)

Arizona

Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center - Phoenix

David Larson (Internal Medicine)

California

Kaiser Permanente - Los Angeles

Victoria Wakeley (Family Practice)

UCLA Medical Center-Harbor - Los Angeles

Ada Alcantara (General Surgery)

Catherine Burt (Internal Medicine)

University of Southern California - Los Angeles

James Pierce (Surgery)

UC Davis Medical Center - Sacramento

Ritu Mukerji (Internal Medicine)

San Diego National Naval Medical Center

Christopher Shale (Surgery)

Peter Snyder (Transitional)

Margrethe Weston (Internal Medicine)

Colorado

Univ. of Colorado School of Medicine - Denver

Michael Schaffer (Internal Medicine)

Connecticut

Univ. of Connecticut School of Medicine - Farmington

Jodi Chen (Pediatrics)

Joann Gates-Pfau (Pediatrics)

Delaware

Christiana Care - Newark

Stephen Chranowski (Internal Medicine)

Preeti Dalawari (Emergency Medicine)

Jennifer Hess (Obstetrics-Gynecology)

John Lawrence (Family Practice)

J. Christopher Martucci (Radiology-Diagnostic)

Adam Shiroff (Surgery)

Thomas Sisk (Family Practice)

TJU/duPont Hospital for Children - Wilmington

Patricia Baxter (Pediatrics)

Sarah Berg (Pediatrics)

Kate Fronheiser (Pediatrics)

Sridhar Jatla (Pediatrics)

Kelly Zook (Pediatrics)

District of Columbia

Georgetown University Hospital

Benjamin Judson (General Surgery)

Changching Lin (Internal Medicine)

Howard University

Tamika King (Emergency Medicine)

Malcolm Grow Medical Center-Andrews Air Force Base

Julie Freilino (Family Practice)

Danielle Giddins (Family Practice)

Walter Reed Army Medical Center

Daniel Gallagher (Surgery)

Washington Hospital Center

David Manion (Dermatology)

Glen Vanderver (Internal Medicine)

Florida

University of Miami

Anitha Nimmagadda (Neurosurgery)

Georgia

Emory University School of Medicine - Atlanta

Archana Saxena (Internal Medicine)

Illinois

MacNeal Hospital - Berwyn

Jason Carter (Family Practice)

Advocate Christ Medical Center - Chicago

Terri Saunders (Emergency Medicine)

Univ. of Illinois College of Medicine - Chicago

David Frankel (Surgery)

Mickey Liao (Internal Medicine)

Louisiana

LSU School of Medicine - New Orleans

James Mautner (Orthopaedics)

Maryland

Besthesda National Naval Medical Center

Daniel Nadeau (Surgery)

Leon Nesti (Orthopaedics)

Johns Hopkins Hospital - Baltimore

Allison Better (Internal Medicine)

Marissa Brunetti (Pediatrics)

Lisa Krisak (Emergency Medicine)

Kimberly Levitt (MPH Program)

Richard Roe (Internal Medicine)

Hanita Sawhney (Obstetrics-Gynecology)

Marissa Trichilo (Pediatrics)

Johns Hopkins/Sinai Hospital - Baltimore

Joshua Pearlman (Internal Medicine)

Massachusetts

University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Lillian Rich (Orthopaedics)

Boston University Medical Center

Michael Kain (General Surgery)

New England Medical Center - Boston

T. Michelle Gale (Orthopaedics)

St. Elizabeth Medical Center - Boston

Brian Adams (Internal Medicine)

Baystate Medical Center - Springfield

Richard Goulding (Emergency Medicine)

Massachusetts General Hospital - Worcester

Lois Choi (Psychiatry)

Alexander Sah (Orthopaedics)

Michigan

Univ. of Michigan Hospitals - Ann Arbor

Rachael Caskey (Medicine-Pediatrics)



Minnesota

Mayo Graduate School of Medicine - Minneapolis

Kelly Liang (Internal Medicine)
 Kimberly Liang (Internal Medicine)

Missouri

University Hospital - Columbia

Peter Ackerman (Medicine-Pediatrics)

Barnes-Jewish Hospital - St. Louis

Ariel Goldschmidt (Pathology)

St. Louis University School of Medicine

Scott Engel (Plastic Surgery)

New Hampshire

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center - Hanover

Michael Gilbert (Internal Medicine)
 Marcy Haas (Obstetrics-Gynecology)
 Christine Miller (Obstetrics-Gynecology)

New Jersey

UMDNJ - Robert Wood Johnson - Camden

Cristina Capanescu (Internal Medicine)

Morristown Memorial Hospital

Elizabeth Hanson (Emergency Medicine)

Mountainside Hospital - Montclair

David Chen (Family Practice)

UMDNJ - Robert Wood Johnson - Piscataway

Kathleen Aiello (Pediatrics)
 Matthew Handling (Orthopaedics)
 Monika Khanna (Internal Medicine)
 Irina Rosewater (Internal Medicine)
 Ethan Wasserman (Internal Medicine)

Somerset Medical Center - Somerville

Susanne Lesniak (Family Practice)

New Mexico

Univ. of New Mexico School of Medicine - Albuquerque

Ann Clemens (Family Practice)

New York

Albany Medical Center Hospital

J. Martin Leland (Orthopaedics)
Michael Platt (Otolaryngology)

SUNY Health Science Center - Brooklyn

Justin Kubeck (Orthopaedics)

The Brooklyn Hospital Center

Joseph Chang (Emergency Medicine)
Laura Spano (Emergency Medicine)

St. Vincent's Hospital - Harrison

Emmie Chen (Psychiatry)
Deepika Cheruvu (Psychiatry)
Hungyi Lu (Internal Medicine)
Aradhna Saxena (Internal Medicine)

North Shore University Hospital - Manhasset

Samridhi Narula (Internal Medicine)
Fiona Pasternack (Internal Medicine)

Einstein/Montefiore Hospital

Karen Feisullin (Obstetrics-Gynecology)
Ryan Raffaelli (Pediatrics)

Cabrini Medical Center - New York City

James Abraham (Internal Medicine)

Lenox Hill Hospital - New York City

Benjamin Metzger (Internal Medicine)

Mt. Sinai Hospital - New York City

Dennis Abraham (Internal Medicine)
Robert Siegelbaum (Internal Medicine)

NYP Hospitals-Columbia Presbyterian - New York City

Laura Bamford (Internal Medicine)
Joanna Starrels (Internal Medicine)

Columbia University Affiliated Hospitals - New York City

Susan Rusnack (Urology)

NYP Hospitals-NY Cornell - New York City

Michael Ciminiello (Surgery)
Sharon Jakus (Obstetrics-Gynecology)

New York University School of Medicine - New York City

Thomas Chacko (Internal Medicine)

St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital - New York City

Catherine Kim (Internal Medicine)

Univ. of Rochester/Strong Memorial Hospital

Nichole Harrison (Internal Medicine)

Westchester Medical Center

Leelakrishn Nallamshetty (Internal Medicine)

North Carolina

Duke Univ. Medical Center - Durham

Lara Gadkowski (Internal Medicine)

Ohio

Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Richard McCurdy (Internal Medicine)

University Hospitals - Cleveland

Bret Kean (Orthopaedics)
Kerri Simo (Surgery)

Oklahoma

Image Family Practice/Hillcrest - Tulsa

James Gardner (Family Practice)

Oregon

St. Vincent Hospital - Portland

Jennifer Baron (Internal Medicine)

Oregon Health Sciences University - Portland

Scott Chadderdon (Internal Medicine)
Stephen Spurgeon (Internal Medicine)

Pennsylvania

Abington Memorial Hospital

Brandon Bussler (Family Practice)
Priscilla Latta (Family Practice)
Marguerite McGarvey (Internal Medicine)
Eugene Reilly (Surgery)
Shari Rozen (Family Practice)

Bryn Mawr Hospital

Anthony Patterson (Family Practice)

Saint Vincent Health Center - Erie

Thomas Laskey (Family Practice)

Geisinger Health System

J. Kyle Betz (Surgery)
S. Kim Schiff (Pediatrics)

Lehigh Valley Hospital

Kathy Lo (Transitional)

Latrobe Area Hospital

M. Elizabeth Pepper (Family Practice)
Jill Sharer (Family Practice)

Albert Einstein Medical Center - Philadelphia

Kelly Burkert (Transitional)
Nancy Chawla (Internal Medicine)
Kiran Chekka (Transitional)
Andrew Chong (Emergency Medicine)
David Dickman (Transitional)
Rachel Niknam (Transitional)
Neeru Rattan (Internal Medicine)
Janelle Shield (Internal Medicine)
Jennifer Smith (Surgery)

Children's Hospital - Philadelphia

Tracie Safier (Pediatrics)
Sarhattama Sen (Pediatrics)
Amy Zalcman (Pediatrics)

Frankford Hospital - Philadelphia

Irene Hsu (Transitional)
Jerry Kim (Transitional)
Vu Pham (Transitional)
David Rubaltelli (Transitional)

Graduate Hospital - Philadelphia

Alex Wong (Surgery)

Hosp. of the Univ. of Pennsylvania - Philadelphia

Robin Canada (Internal Medicine)
Danielle Dehoratius (Internal Medicine)
Alexander Fuld (Internal Medicine)
Allyson Kreshak (Emergency Medicine)
Suzanne Long (Internal Medicine)
Madeleine Spatola (Psychiatry)

MCP/Hahnemann Univ. Hospital - Philadelphia

Lilyana Amezcua (Internal Medicine)
Reid Brackin (Emergency Medicine)
Michael Hopkins (Emergency Medicine)
Jason Kitchen (Emergency Medicine)
Karen Lefrak (Emergency Medicine)



Brenda Liu (Emergency Medicine)
Christopher Smolock (Surgery)

Pennsylvania Hospital - Philadelphia

Stephen Bader (Internal Medicine)
Kevin White (Internal Medicine)
Jayne Wilkinson (Internal Medicine)
Thomas Wixted (General Surgery)
Hanna Zafar (Internal Medicine)

Temple Univ. Hospital - Philadelphia

Anne Getz (Surgery)
Rita Pechulis (Internal Medicine)
Zsofia Szep (Internal Medicine)

Thomas Jefferson Univ. Hospital - Philadelphia

Kevin Brown (Internal Medicine)
Scott Burbank (Orthopaedics)
Jeffrey Dassel (Family Practice)
Frances Furia (Internal Medicine)
Lauren Gustafson (Family Practice)
Basil Harris (Emergency Medicine)
Jean Hoffman-Censits (Internal Medicine)
Bo Kim (Internal Medicine)
Jason Kline (Internal Medicine)
Adrienne Levin (Internal Medicine)
Kelly Malloy (General Surgery)
Gregg Martyak (Orthopaedics)
Victoria Myers (Obstetrics-Gynecology)
Brian Rattigan (Orthopaedics)
Ralph Rynning (Orthopaedics)
Alishia Saunders (Internal Medicine)
Thomas Sinclair (Internal Medicine)
Craig Slotoroff (General Surgery)
Christina Smith (Family Practice)
Erev Tubb (Internal Medicine)
Laura Wright (Family Practice)

Univ. of PA Health System-Presbyterian Hospital - Philadelphia

Phyllisann Dioguardi (Transitional)
Donald Zajick (Transitional)

Mercy Hospital - Pittsburgh

John Robinson (Surgery)

Univ. Health Center of Pittsburgh

Kathleen Coyle (Internal Medicine)
Vera Limcuando (Internal Medicine)
Timothy Neavin (Plastic Surgery)

Lankenau Hospital - Wynnewood

Janet Denny (Internal Medicine)
Charles Girard (Internal Medicine)
Christopher Jordan (Internal Medicine)
Larry Kim (Internal Medicine)
James Ko (Internal Medicine)
Robert Petrucelli (Internal Medicine)

York Hospital

Gregory Anderson (Surgery)
John Balaicuis (Transitional)
Jose Ramos (Transitional)

Rhode Island

Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island - Pawtucket

Julieann Crewalk (Family Practice)

Brown Univ. Hospital - Providence

Beth Fisher (Internal Medicine)
Soniya Gandhi (Internal Medicine)
Ellen Hartmann (Internal Medicine)
Tarun Mathur (Internal Medicine)
Anuj Parikh (Emergency Medicine)

South Carolina

Medical University of South Carolina - Charleston

Roger Componovo (Orthopaedics)

Texas

William Beaumont Army Medical Center - El Paso

Clyde Clybourn (Internal Medicine)

Univ. of Texas Branch - Galveston

Seema Shah (Obstetrics-Gynecology)

Brooke Army Medical Center - San Antonio

Benjamin George (Internal Medicine)

SAUSHEC-Lackland Air Force Base - San Antonio

Matthew Lippstone (Emergency Medicine)
David Zonies (Surgery)

Utah

Univ. of Utah-Moray Eye Center-Ophth. Fellowship - Salt Lake City

Brandon Davis (Research)

University of Utah Affiliated Hosps. - Salt Lake City

Christopher Rich (Internal Medicine)

Vermont

Univ. of Vermont-Fletcher Allen Health Care - Burlington

Peter Kelleher (Orthopaedics)

Virginia

INOVA Fairfax Hospital - Falls Church

Elizabeth Bauer (Pediatrics)

Portsmouth Naval Medical Center

David Cook (Transitional)
John Powell (Surgery)

Medical College of Virginia - Richmond

Tara Kiger (Emergency Medicine)

Wisconsin

Medical College of Wisconsin Affiliated Hospitals - Milwaukee

Edward Haas (Psychiatry)

Residency Deferred

Scott Berta (Research)
Donald Bitto (Research)
Charles Coward
Edward Jackson
Julie Kay
Heidi Kozić

Residency Pending

Jennifer Erdos

Urologic Surgery's "Real Deal"

By Nicole Vines, Washington University Record

Colleagues of **Gerald Andriole (Jefferson '78)**, Professor of Urologic Surgery at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, pay him one of the highest compliments that one physician can bestow on another – they call him a "doctor's doctor."

"Gerald Andriole is a pro on all fronts," said David G. Mutch MD, the Ira C. and Judy Gall Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Washington University, whose father and father-in-law both were patients of Andriole's. "His combination of masterful technique and a warm, witty demeanor puts both patients and students at ease."

Andriole prides himself on giving the best care possible to his patients.

"There's nothing more satisfying than identifying what's wrong with your patient, performing an operation well to fix the problem and seeing your patient get better," Andriole said. "Taking care of my patients is the first and foremost reason I became a physician."

But Andriole also relishes immersing himself in academic medicine. He appreciates how fortunate he is to work in an environment surrounded by top-notch scientists, residents and medical students.

"You tend to ask more of yourself," he said. And as Chief of the Division of Urology, he has asked for more – from his fellow surgeons, his residents and especially himself.

Andriole grew up with three brothers and one sister in Hazelton, Pennsylvania, a small coal-mining town in the Pocono Mountains. The grandson of Italian immigrants and the son of a urologist, Andriole was taught the value of an education from an early age.

"I grew up watching my father practice medicine and hearing my grandparents' opinions about the benefits of a good education,"

he said. "Pursuing medicine seemed very natural."

His siblings followed suit; today three are physicians and one, an attorney. We still let him come to family gatherings though," Andriole joked.

As a junior at Scranton Preparatory School, Andriole decided to pursue an accelerated medical program at Pennsylvania State University and Jefferson Medical College, where he would go to college in one year and medical school in four.

"Some people spend their whole life trying to get to the next thing, whether it's law school or medical school," he said. "With

the accelerated program, you already know you're in medical school, and you can actually concentrate on enjoying your courses and learning."

Andriole also knew that he wanted to be a urologist. "I always joke that there's probably no kid who, if you ask him, what he wants to be will say, 'Gee, I want to be a prostate

doctor,'" he said. "The reality is it's absolutely fascinating. The improvements in the care of patients with prostatic diseases just in the last decade or two are unprecedented."

After graduating from Jefferson in 1978, Andriole headed to the University of Rochester to study as a surgical intern. It was a busy program, requiring house staff to be on call every other night. Andriole recalls one of his first rotations in the surgical intensive care unit as being especially hectic.

"I was so busy that I didn't go to my car for most of a month," he said. "When I finally did go check on it, I discovered it had been stolen."

In 1980, Andriole went to Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School as a surgical resident. While there,



Andriole became convinced that he wanted to pursue a career in academic urology. He decided to spend two years researching at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland.

He and his colleagues studied kidney cancer and immunotherapy, specifically use of interleukin-2, a protein produced by immune cells that helps protect against dangerous cells, including tumors. Their preliminary work in mice served as the foundation to begin human trials in melanoma patients just a few years later, and eventually patients with renal cell carcinoma.

And while Andriole says it was very gratifying to be part of this kind of ground-floor research, he cites his most important discovery at the NCI as his wife, Dorothy. She was in the middle of her general surgery residency at New York University when she also took two years off to do research in the NCI surgery branch. One year happened to overlap with Andriole; the two met and hit it off.

The newlyweds were faced with selecting an institution where Dorothy Andriole MD could finish the final two years of her general surgery residency and where Gerald Andriole could find a faculty position in urology. Washington University School of Medicine fit the bill, and the couple headed west in 1985.

"It was a little bit of a leap of faith to move to the Midwest, and there were more than a few friends whose jaws dropped when we told them about St. Louis," Andriole said. While he admits the first St. Louis July was a real eye-opener, he feels quite strongly that it was the best move they could have made.

Today the couple has three "absolutely magnificent boys" – Gerald III, Nicholas and Philip. The threesome keep him and his wife, now an Assistant Professor of Surgery, running from soccer to baseball to school activities.

Andriole's research has focused largely on prostatic diseases. After the prostate-specific antigen test was first developed, Andriole realized there were many questions about the test's accuracy in predicting prostate cancer early in a curable time.

He proposed a national prostate cancer-screening project to the NCI. They agreed it was an important question but feared it would be too costly to screen for just one cancer.

After months of negotiating, the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian Cancer Screen Trial was started in 1993. Today, 150,000 Americans are participating nationwide, and the trial is expected to continue for 10 more years.

Andriole is excited about the surgery field's rapid movement toward using minimally invasive surgical techniques. His team is on the verge of perfecting laparoscopic radical prostatectomy – a procedure allowing the removal of the prostate with instruments placed through tiny incisions. The traditional operation requires a large incision and an intensive amount of recuperation time.

"For a successful program in minimally invasive surgery, you need surgical expertise both in traditional and laparoscopic techniques," Andriole said. "With a collaborative team of faculty talented in both areas, our center is poised to be a national leader in this field."

Andriole gets even more excited about the future possibilities of eliminating cancers without even making an incision. He describes theoretical techniques where an X-ray would locate the exact coordinates of a tumor in the right kidney, for example, and, in simplest terms, a special device would transmit heat to that exact point, heat the tumor and kill it.

What happened to the surgeon with the scalpel? Andriole says it's even more tantalizing to think about destroying cancer tissue sans the knife. "If the skills you learned 15 years ago are no longer applicable, you better move on," he said. "Education is a lifelong proposition, and you have an obligation to do what's right for your patient."


Andriole never has forgotten the physicians and teachers who served as mentors throughout his education and training. Today, he works to pay back the time and attention given to him by doing the same for the residents and medical students he trains.

"Every resident I work with may potentially be impacted – either positively or negatively," he said. "Hopefully, it's positively."

Fourth-year medical student Alan Shindel said Andriole's example strongly influenced his decision to enter the field of urology.

"He spent a great deal of time with me going over what a career in urology is like, as well as which programs I should consider in order to get the best training," Shindel said. "It has been a pleasure to learn from him."

Gregorio A. Sicard MD, Professor and Head of the Division of General Surgery at Washington University, summarized Andriole best.

"Jerry is a professional and a gentleman," he said. "He's a true academic urologist. His leadership qualities are superb, and he's making his mark as a great educator. He's the real deal." 

When Terror Hit the Pentagon, Stephen Frost's Reaction Was: Tend to the Injured

From The Philadelphia Inquirer, September 26, 2001
By Steve Goldstein

When American Airlines Flight 77 exploded into the Pentagon, thousands bolted for the exits and safety.

Stephen Frost (Jefferson '71), a Navy captain on the scene, ran straight for the billowing clouds of acrid black smoke.

Frost was among the first on a chaotic scene of traumatized, badly burned victims.

When security officials screamed warnings of "another plane," Frost didn't raise his head from his work. Other rescuers took their cues from this calm, composed white-haired figure standing at mayhem's doorstep. No one left a patient.

"It was a scene from Dante's 'Inferno,'" said Capt. John Feerick, another Navy doctor at the scene, "and Steve Frost was a rock."

Frost, 56, a Kensington native and former staff gastroenterologist at Presbyterian-University of Pennsylvania Medical Center, had just returned to active duty to help train reservists. He had gone to Washington in late August for a stint in the Navy Surgeon General's Office, and on Sept. 11, he arrived early for a meeting at the Pentagon.

He and Feerick, unaware of the tragedy that had already

struck New York, were walking in the outer ring on the south side of the building at 9:45 a.m., and Feerick felt "a rumble."

"I'm from New York originally," he said, "so I thought: subway."

Frost and Feerick soon found themselves walking into an onrushing wall of people going the other way. No one was speaking. The doctors joined them and were swept along out into the parking lot, where security guards were waving people away from the building.

Frost saw heavy black smoke billowing. "I'm a doctor," he told a guard. "What's going on?"

The guard spoke into his walkie-talkie and directed Frost around the side of the building.

Frost called to Feerick and took off. "I followed him, but he was running full bore," Feerick said. "I thought, 'This is crazy. What if there is gas, or a secondary explosion?' But I just followed Steve."

Several times, police tried to stop Frost, but he just yelled, "I'm a doctor," and sprinted past. He was 200 yards ahead of Feerick when he reached the concrete helipad adjoining the maimed building. What they could see through the dense smoke was sobering.



Brian Badura

Some of the burned or injured were staggering across the helipad; others were already lying on the lawn 50 yards from the building. Ambulances began pulling up and Pentagon staff dropped off medical kits.

Perhaps a dozen injured were on the lawn, most suffering from blistering, second-degree burns on the face, hands and arms. Some had inhalation injuries; almost all were in shock.

Frost and Feerick appeared to be the first doctors on the scene. They began using the medical kits, putting in intravenous lines with saline and dextrose drips.

Someone with a badge began yelling that there was a threat of incoming aircraft. An FBI agent ordered the doctors to move. Frost just kept working.

"I didn't know what they meant when they said 'attack,'" Frost said. "The

whole thing was a little surreal - like being on a movie set. I was really focused and so I shut out everything else."

Moving the injured was not an option. Handling someone with seared flesh was impossible. The area was still covered in a dense, acrid cloud.

For about 45 minutes, Frost worked to stabilize the dozen to 15 patients on the lawn. "The only time he showed emotion was when he was calming me down," Feerick said.

Feerick left to establish triage areas in the tunnels leading to the parking lots. Frost moved to treat those with inhalation injuries and those who had been hurt by debris. The stream of incoming patients began drying up.

continued at right

Searching for the Cause of the Rash That's Itching Pupils

From The Philadelphia Inquirer, February 22, 2002
By Peter Sigal

Desiree Mitchell doesn't want to be in a dermatologist's office on a weekday morning, listening to talk of scratch tests, skin samples and throat washes.

The 11-year-old with green sparkles in her hair would rather be with her fifth grade class at Richland Elementary School in

Frost, continued from left


"This began to bother us - were we in the right place?" Frost said. He began hearing stories about the World Trade Center. "I then understood this was a far greater tragedy than we'd hoped."

For the next several hours, Frost treated firefighters and other rescue personnel.

In late afternoon, Frost remembered to call his wife, Zan. She was frantic, having learned that morning that he had gone to a Pentagon meeting.

When darkness fell, Frost and Feerick bunked down with blankets on the concrete. In the wee hours, the Red Cross set up tents with cots. At 10 a.m., he and Feerick left the scene.

"I've always considered myself a very lucky person, who's led a very fortunate life," he said. "I just consider this part of being lucky. I had the benefit of having the feeling that makes you want to be a doctor."

Feerick shook his head at Frost's comments. "I come from a family of cops and firemen," he said. "Steve Frost is my personal hero." 

Quakertown. But the itchy, burning rash she has had since January 31 will not go away.

So she submits, grudgingly, to the tests that **Norman Sykes (Jefferson '92)** has arranged in his quest to explain the mysterious rashes that have afflicted hundreds of schoolchildren in the Philadelphia area – and similar numbers nationwide.

After initial environmental tests at the schools came up empty, hospital officials called in Sykes, who has been searching for a viral cause.

Locally, the rash was first seen in Quakertown on January 31 when 52 students at Richland Elementary were rushed to the emergency room at St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital. Since then, it has hit the Bensalem and Pottsgrove districts.

From dozens of new cases a day at the height of the outbreak, reports have slowed to a trickle, officials say. Overall, at least 400 suburban students have been affected.

The rashes – symptoms include red patches on cheeks, necks, arms and legs often accompanied by burning and itching – have also appeared in schools in Queens, New York; Prince William County, Virginia; and Medford, Oregon in the last few months. Sykes said he believes, after talking with officials in those places, that the outbreaks have a common cause.

"This situation is unprecedented, in that it seems to be an epidemic," Sykes said in his Elkins Park office. "We see the same thing, over and over again, in different parts of the country."

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has begun contacting state officials, dermatologists and pediatricians to try to determine whether the rashes are related, an agency spokesman said.

Officials in Bucks and Montgomery counties initially suspected an environmental culprit. A range of factors – mold, mites, carpet cleaner, even cafeteria pizza – were tested. All were rejected as causes.

On February 5, St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital called in Sykes, 44, an attending physician there and a member of the Jefferson faculty. The next day, he examined about 30 children there – and the hunt for a virus was on.

Though health effects have been mild, Sykes acknowledged that the rash's spread raises the question of what would happen if a dangerous virus were deliberately unleashed.

In his search for a cause of the rash, he has focused on a fifth disease, also known as erythema infectiosum, a contagious childhood illness with symptoms like those the affected students have. Although he hasn't established a conclusive link to this fifth disease, he said he suspected that a mutant or unknown strain of the virus that causes it may be responsible.

"We have to do everything in our power to figure out what this is, not only to know what it is, but also to learn more about how to deal with viruses," Sykes said.

Sykes gives Desiree a cup of liquid to gargle. He will send the sample to a colleague at Jefferson to see whether any known

viruses can be cultured.

"Yuck," Desiree says, making a face that echoes the point after swishing stoically for a few seconds. But the next test – collecting a skin sample – breaks down her resistance. "Stitches!" she wails. "Just one," Sykes promises.

In five minutes, the procedure is over. The tiny skin patch will go to George F. Murphy MD, Director of Jefferson's Center for Dermatopathology, which studies skin diseases. He will scan micron-thin slices of it with an electron microscope magnifying them up to 100,000 times for evidence of viruses.

"I think [Sykes's] ideas that this could be some type of unrecognized disease ... is an excellent one," said Murphy, who has worked with Sykes before on diagnosing skin disease.

Sykes chose to pursue dermatology, which he calls a "quiet specialty," after a personal tragedy. As an eight-year-old in Roxborough, he wanted to be a doctor, but that desire gave way to other dreams. Sykes, a graduate of Penn Charter School, took a liking to science at the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned a degree in population biology.

In his mid-20s, he was working as an immunology researcher when his mother contacted a virulent form of melanoma. Within four months, the skin cancer had killed her, and Sykes, impressed by the doctors who treated her, had found a new career focus. At age 27, he entered Jefferson. 