surgical problems that we handle at OHSU and the way we handle them will not be found, or if found, at times the resources may not be readily available when needed. The challenge is to tailor what you know you can do given the local environment and resources that are available.”

Dr. Ham and his colleagues have been able to help Tillamook County Hospital stabilize surgical services after the loss of a surgeon in January, by taking weekend call for the remaining surgeon while the search for a replacement was completed. This has been accomplished with the help of local retired surgeon Lyle Mohr, M.D. of Tillamook and OHSU Affiliate Professor Ron Wolf, M.D. of the Oregon Clinic, both of whom have been helping with the weekend coverage. Tillamook County Hospital has recruited a new surgeon and OHSU’s work will be finished at the end of August when he is scheduled to start. Dr. Ham considers this one of many successes.

Dr. Ham’s considerations for the future include using older surgeons who want to work longer but do not want a full time practice. Also, working with University of Washington and the American College of Surgeons to enlarge the program to other regions of the Northwest is under consideration at this time. The development of simulation skills through VirtuOHSU that can be exported to small hospital environments to maintain and broaden proficiencies is also part of future plans. Dr. Ham says, “We endeavor to be leaders in both surgical education and practice resources for our rural surgical friends. Future success depends on the cultivation of local hospital staff, local community commitment, local surgeon leadership and commitment on the part of OHSU Department of Surgery and staff.”

As a final note, Dr. Ham would like to thank all of the hospital administrators and staff, as well as those here at OHSU who have guided, directed and gently pushed forward to make this happen. He would especially like to acknowledge Drs. Hunter, Deveney, Martin Schreiber, M.D., and from Family Practice Lisa Gibson, M.D. and Joe Ichter, M.D. for their encouragement and direction, and to administrators Sherry Garrelts and Kelly Kiraly who keep the process rolling and on track.

Dr. Krishnaswami nominated for faculty award

Sanjay Krishnaswami, M.D. was nominated for a faculty award by an OHSU student who felt he was particularly active in student life and instrumental in guiding both educational and volunteer opportunities. Dr. Krishnaswami was honored at the 7th Annual Student Volunteer Recognition and Awards Ceremony that took place on Thursday, May 17 at the OHSU Student Center. Dr. Krishnaswami is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Pediatric Surgery. He specializes in thoracoscopic repair of congenital diaphragmatic hernia and neonatal minimal access surgery.

Dr. Liem wins Contribution in Clinical Care Quality Award

Timothy Liem, M.D. was nominated by the Professional Staff at OHSU for his outstanding contribution in clinical care. Dr. Liem, with Brett Sheppard, M.D. and Jennifer Murphy, M.D., formed the Quality Management Committee in 2010 as a tool to reach an overall goal. This goal, Dr. Liem explains, is to reduce unnecessary variability in the care of surgery patients, which will ultimately lead to overall improved care. John Hunter, M.D. appointed Dr. Liem as the Vice-Chair for Quality and since then, Dr. Liem and committee members have spent extra hours speaking with professionals, specifically other physicians and hospital administrators, to learn about healthcare quality practices at other highly regarded institutions. He also emphasizes the importance of meeting with surgical residents to learn more about what works for them because they are a critical component of the surgical team.

Initiatives are now in place for all surgical care providers to have access to consistent resources and best practices. Dr. Liem highlights the work of the IT team, Ed Wolf and Sherry Hall, who have been integral in the formation of a “quality intranet.” This new website provides resources for best practices, quality plans and practice guidelines. The practice guidelines, which are still in beginning stages, will provide instructions for surgical procedures for the residents, depending on the attending’s preferences. Instead of guessing how a specific doctor likes to do a procedure, the resident will arrive prepared. Furthermore, the intranet will incorporate the Morbidity & Mortality database, which is being converted from the current paper system. “The goal is not to add more work to everyone’s plate,” says Dr. Liem. “The goal is to improve efficiency and communication and make the data we already use more usable.”

Dr. Liem is confident that the committee’s work and long hours are already paying off. He says, “It does take an investment of time and money from ourselves as well as the administration to reduce variability, but in the end, it will be cost saving and more importantly, better for patients.”