

# NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS



האיגוד הקרדיולוגי בישראל  
ISRAEL HEART SOCIETY



## OF THE ISRAEL HEART SOCIETY

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**Editor's Note:** Welcome to the Winter 2011 FIHS Newsletter. This issue includes the usual sections such as President's Message, a medical breakthrough from Israel, and upcoming meetings. Jeff Goldberger will announce the winners of the Fellow's Case Competition, co-sponsored by FIHS- the presentations will be made at the 11<sup>th</sup> International Dead Sea Symposium in February, 2012. We also include an article by Dr. Guy Rozen covering the national residents'

strike- written before the strike was recently settled. This will shed some insight into the residents' issues working in Israel. In addition, we will highlight program opportunities in America and elsewhere for Israeli physicians.

Remember, this Newsletter and Society belong to you, the membership. We look forward to enhancing this Society and the connections that we hope to foster between Israeli and non-Israeli cardiologists and their institutions. Please feel free to email us with questions, answers, comments, criticisms, or just to tell us to keep working harder!

Our immediate goal is to try to grow our membership and participation to include any and all cardiologists and fellows that would be interested in supporting this bridging relationship. If you know of any cardiologists or cardiology fellows who we can contact, please email me (my address is

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[jackstroh@usa.net](mailto:jackstroh@usa.net)). May we continue to flourish in 2012!

**Also, please remember that our yearly meeting at the ACC meeting in Chicago will take place this year Sunday March 25. Look for a future notice with details!**

\*\*\*\*\*

### Message from the President

Thank you to all our Friends for your support for the Friends of the Israel Heart Society in 2011. I want to thank all who have contributed to our efforts and growth this year. We continue to bring you this newsletter with wonderful information about exciting clinical and research developments in Israel. We appreciate the feedback we get from you regarding the newsletter, so please keep it coming!

We have continued to get feedback about the large number of cardiac care specialists who are (or might be) interested in the activities of the Friends of the Israel Heart Society, but who we have NOT YET reached. We therefore do need your help to reach these individuals. Please consider forwarding this newsletter to colleagues who you feel might be

interested – new members can get on our mailing list either by signing up via our website

<http://www.friendsihs.org/index.html> or by emailing me at:

[j-goldberger@northwestern.edu](mailto:j-goldberger@northwestern.edu).

The 11<sup>th</sup> International Dead Sea Symposium will be taking place in Jerusalem at the end of February 2012. The FIHS participated in this meeting by co-sponsoring the Fellow's Case Competition. We had submissions from across the country that were of extremely high quality. This year's winners are:

#### **JoonHyuk Kim, M.D.**

Peri-infarct ventricular tachycardia associated with right ventricular Purkinje fiber; a case report

Montefiore Medical Center, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

#### **Malini Madhavan, M.D.**

Narrow Complex Tachycardia with VA Block An Exception to the Rule

Mayo Clinic Rochester

#### **Mark Bowers, M.D.**

Direct recording of concealed ventricular extrasystoles producing Pacer Inhibition

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Medical College of Wisconsin

### Juan Viles-Gonzalez, M.D.

Premature Ventricular Contractions  
Arising From Purkinje Cells Located  
In the Postero-Medial Papillary  
Muscle Leading to Ventricular  
Fibrillation In the Post-Infarction  
Period

Mt Sinai School of Medicine

We are excited to facilitate the attendance of these fellows at this meeting. In addition, we worked with several FIHS members to help obtain US based grant support for the 11<sup>th</sup> International Dead Sea Symposium. If you have not yet had the opportunity to attend a cardiology meeting in Israel, consider putting it on your agenda for 2012. The meetings are topical and of very high quality and provide a fantastic opportunity to mix business and pleasure.

Please remember our newest section – **FIHS Heart Beats!** If you have personal and/or academic milestones you would like to share with the FIHS membership, please submit these to Jack Stroh at [jackstroh@usa.net](mailto:jackstroh@usa.net). This is a

wonderful opportunity for our members to share news.

Finally, a few notes of gratitude. I want to thank Jack Stroh for his continued efforts at maintaining the high quality and informativeness of the FIHS newsletter. Many thanks to our Silver, Gold, and Platinum members for 2011 who are listed on page 4. We could not have succeeded without your support.

With best wishes for a great 2012,

### Jeff Goldberger

President, Friends of the Israel Heart Society



Biblical Zoo, Jerusalem



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### **Platinum Level 2011**

*Jeffrey Borer  
Eugene Braunwald  
Michael J. Wolk  
Douglas P. Zipes*

We would like to thank our  
Platinum, Gold, and Silver Members  
for their past and future support!

### **Gold Level 2011**

*Ezra Amsterdam  
Peng-Shen Chen  
Lawrence H. Cohn  
Jeffrey Goldberger  
Charles J. Love  
Edo Kaluski  
Amir Lerman  
Ari Lieber  
Barry Maron  
Alan Rabinowitz  
Harry Rakowski  
David Rosenbaum  
Bruce Wilkoff*

### **Silver Level**

**2011**

*Joseph Alpert  
Elliott Antman  
Charles Antzelevitch  
Ben Barzalai  
Robert Bonow  
Camellus Ezeugwu  
Gary Gershony  
Edward Gerstenfeld  
Sam Goldstein  
James Goldstein  
Gil Gross  
Allen Gutovitz  
Alan Kadish  
Morton Lebowitz  
Warren Manning  
Arthur Moss  
Richard Popp  
Melvin M. Scheinman  
Gregory Schwartz  
Norman Silverman  
Jack Stroh  
Gabriel Vorobiof  
Giora Weisz*

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### [A cancer vaccine you can live with](#)

Wednesday, 02 November 2011 11:40

Vaxil's groundbreaking therapeutic vaccine, developed in Israel, could keep about 90 percent of cancers from coming back.

As the world's population lives longer than ever, if we don't succumb to heart disease, strokes or accidents, it is more likely that cancer will get us one way or another. Cancer is tough to fight, as the body learns how to outsmart medical approaches that often kill normal cells while targeting the malignant ones.

The vaccine is being tested against a type of blood cancer called multiple myeloma. If the substance works as hoped -- and it looks like all arrows are pointing that way -- its platform technology VaxHit could be applied to 90 percent of all known cancers, including prostate and breast cancer, solid and non-solid tumors.

"In cancer, the body knows something is not quite right but the immune system doesn't

know how to protect itself against the tumor like it does against an infection or virus. This is because cancer cells are the body's own cells gone wrong," says Julian Levy, the company's CFO. "Coupled with that, a cancer patient has a depressed immune system, caused both by the illness and by the treatment."

The trick is to activate a compromised immune system to mobilize against the threat.



### **A vaccine that works like a drug**

A traditional vaccine helps the body's immune system fend off foreign invaders such as bacteria or viruses, and is administered to people who have not yet had the ailment. Therapeutic vaccines, like the one Vaxil has developed, are

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given to sick people, and work more like a drug.

Vaxil's lead product, ImMucin, activates the immune system by "training" T-cells -- the immune cells that protect the body by searching out and destroying cells that display a specific molecule (or marker) called MUC1. MUC1 is typically found only on cancer cells and not on healthy cells. The T-cells don't attack any cells without MUC1, meaning there are no side effects unlike traditional cancer treatments. More than 90% of different cancers have MUC1 on their cells, which indicates the potential for this vaccine.

"It's a really big thing," says Levy, a biotechnology entrepreneur who was formerly CEO for Biokine Therapeutics. "If you give chemo, apart from the really nasty side effects, what often happens is that cancer becomes immune [to it]. The tumor likes to mutate and develops an ability to hide from the treatment. Our vaccines are also designed to overcome that problem."

For cancers in an advanced stage, treatments like chemo or surgery to remove a large tumor will still be needed, but if the cancer can be brought down to scale, the body is then able to deal with it, Levy explains. ImMucin is foreseen as a long-term strategy -- a shot every few months, with no side effects -- to stop the cancer from reoccurring after initial treatments, by ensuring that the patient's own immune system keeps it under control.

In parallel, the company is also working on a vaccine that treats tuberculosis, a disease that's increasing worldwide, including in the developed world, and for which the current vaccine is often ineffective and treatment is problematic.

Based in Ness Ziona, Vaxil was founded in 2006 by Dr. Lior Carmon, a biotechnology entrepreneur with a doctorate in immunology from the Weizmann Institute of Science ([www.weizmann.ac.il](http://www.weizmann.ac.il)) in Rehovot. In June, Vaxil signed a memorandum of understanding to merge its activities into

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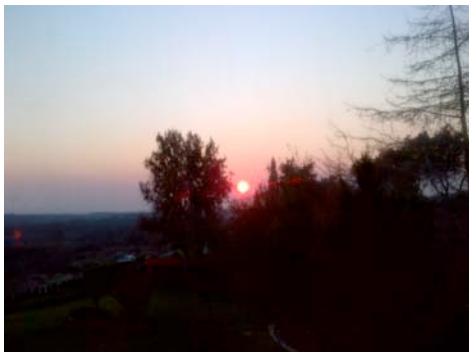
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Sheldonco, a company traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange.

In a breakthrough development, the Israeli company Vaxil BioTherapeutics (<http://www.vaxilbio.com>) has formulated a therapeutic cancer vaccine, now in clinical trials at Hadassah University Medical Center in Jerusalem. If all goes well, the vaccine could be available about six years down the road, to administer on a regular basis not only to help treat cancer but in order to keep the disease from recurring.



### Upcoming Meetings in Israel

The 11th International Dead Sea Symposium (IDSS) on

### Cardiac Arrhythmias and Device Therapy

February 26-29, 2012

International Convention Center, Jerusalem, Israel

It is a real pleasure for me to invite you once again to the 11th International Dead Sea Symposium (IDSS) on Cardiac Arrhythmias and Device Therapy and its 20th Anniversary which will be held Jerusalem, February 26-29, 2012 at the International Convention Center.

20 years ago we started this quest called IDSS with the aim of creating a biannual meeting, point for all involved in the cardiac arrhythmias field worldwide... [Read more](#)

#### Main Topics

Clinical & Basic EP	CHF
Arrhythmia Prevention	Cardiac Pacing
Sudden Cardiac Death	ICD

[www.idss-ep.com](http://www.idss-ep.com)



The 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Israel Heart Society in Association with the Israel Society of Cardiothoracic Surgery

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April 16-17, David  
Intercontinental Hotel, Tel Aviv

The conference will include plenary joint sessions of the Israel Heart Society with the **European Society of Cardiology** and the **American College of Cardiology**. These will include state-of-the-art lectures on the latest advances in cardiology including heart failure challenges in Europe, the implementation of the "Heart Team", novel valvular therapies, heart diseases in women, and novel anti-thrombotic therapies in acute coronary syndromes. We will also continue the tradition of a joint session with **AFICARDIO**, the French-Israeli Association of Cardiology.

These three major sessions, as well as the Keynote Neufeld Memorial lecture at the opening ceremony, will be conducted in **English**.

A detailed program including both invited and local speakers will be announced soon. We welcome you to submit your abstracts and to join us at this very special Conference. We hope very much that you will take the opportunity to participate in this very high level scientific meeting and look forward to welcoming you on a wonderful visit to Israel in April 2012.

### Invited guest lecturers

**Samuel J. Asirvatham, MD, MBBS**  
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, USA

**C. Noel Bairey Merz, MD, F.A.C.C**  
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA,  
USA

**Blasé A. Carabello, MD, FACC**  
St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, Houston, TX,  
USA

**Shaun G. Goodman, MD, MSc, FRCPC,**  
**FACC, FAHA, FESC**  
St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, ON, Canada

**Michel Komajda, MD, FESC**  
President of the European Society of Cardiology  
(ESC)  
Pitié Salpêtrière Hospital, Paris, France

**Michael J. Mack, MD, FACC,**  
President of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
Cardiovascular Research and Cardiovascular  
Medicine  
The Heart Hospital, Dallas, TX, USA

**Fausto J Pinto, MD, PhD, FESC, FACC,**  
**FSCAI, FASE**  
Vice-President, National Cardiac Societies &  
Affiliates, ESC  
Lisbon Cardiovascular Institute, Lisbon, Portugal

**Maurice E Sarano MD**  
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, US

**Lars Wallentin, MD, PhD**  
Uppsala Clinical Research Center University  
Hospital, Uppsala, Sweden

**William Wijns, MD, PhD, FESC, FAHA**  
Cardiovascular Center Aalst (OLV Hospital),  
Aalst, Belgium

<http://www.israelheart.com/en>



### Featured Cardiology Program:

#### Ziv Medical Center, Safed

Nestled in the hills above the Sea of Galilee and overlooking some of the most beautiful vistas in northern



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Israel, sits the *Ziv Medical Center of Safed*. Having just celebrated its centennial year, the *Ziv Medical Center* serves the entire population of the Upper Galilee and the northern Golan Heights. The multi-cultural population consists of over 200,000 residents generally from lower socio-economic levels. *Ziv Medical Center* is situated only a few kilometers from Israel's borders with Lebanon and Syria. Therefore, the 310-bed facility government-funded, public general hospital has the special mandate to serve as a regional trauma center in the event of accidents, natural disaster, terror attacks and war.



Ziv Medical Center in Safed holds a unique position in the north of Israel as the only hospital serving the upper Galilee and northern Golan Heights.

Under the direction of Prof. Alon Marmor, the cardiology department has grown from a 6-bed division in 1981 to the well-equipped department it is today. Consisting of

a 6-bed intensive coronary care unit and a 12-bed intermediate coronary care unit, the cardiology department handles all emergencies occurring in the region. There are specialists in cardiac catheterization and various devices, non-invasive cardiology, echocardiology service, nuclear cardiology and cardiac CT.

The Heart Institute is also actively involved in over 13 multinational multicenter clinical trials as well as several translational projects.



The 6-bed facility of the Intensive Coronary Care Unit

In the invasive cardiology unit, close to 900 interventional procedures are performed a year including about 400 PCIs. Additionally, about 120 cardiac rhythm management devices are implanted including ICDs and CRTs.

The vast majority (80%) of PCIs are performed by transradial route. This

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highly skilled method improves safety, effectively eliminates vascular complications and improves patient comfort and satisfaction.

There is also an electrophysiology service performing EPS and ablation procedures.



In the non-invasive cardiology unit, over 1000 echocardiograms and exercise tests are performed per year.



The soft appearance and friendly staff of the Heart Institute reassure the patient of the best care possible.

This year the launch of the Faculty of Medicine in Safed was made a

national priority in response to the nationwide shortage of physicians. Bar-Ilan University's medical program in Safed was approved by the Council for Higher Education, making it the fifth faculty of medicine to open and the first medical school opening in the country in 37 years.

It was determined that the main campus would be in Safed and the future campus would be constructed between Safed and Rosh Pina. The building of the temporary site in Safed was done at amazing speed: within 8 months the buildings were raised! Ziv Medical Center, which became a university hospital, is the core of the new Faculty and the cardiology department, which is well known in the area and has an excellent reputation, is in charge of the teaching of cardiology, where Prof. Marmor is the chair of the department.

Two tracks were established for the students at the Bar-Ilan Medical School. The first track comprised of those Israeli students that have completed 3 years of medical studies in Europe and will continue their medical education in Safed, which is a 3-year program. The second track is for students that have graduated with a Bachelors degree in the biological sciences and their program is 4 years. All together there

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are 120 students learning in the new medical facility. The university will enhance the medical service and medical research activities in the Galilee. Many research labs have already been built and numerous scientists from all over the world were recruited to the new Faculty.

The Faculty will consist of a number of research centers in the fields of cancer, heart disease, aging, infectious disease, trauma and childhood development. In cardiology, we are envisioning the development of several new scientific projects. The new Faculty of Medicine will give a major impetus to the entire area of northern Israel.

Senior Staff Members of the  
Cardiology Department at Ziv  
Medical Center (partial list)

Prof. Alon T. Marmor, Director of the  
Heart Institute  
[alonmarmormd@yahoo.com](mailto:alonmarmormd@yahoo.com)

Dr. Alexander Goldberg, Director,  
Interventional Cardiology Unit  
[rgoldberg@myway.com](mailto:rgoldberg@myway.com)

Dr. Robert Klein, Cardiac  
Catheterization  
[robi\\_su3@netvision.net.il](mailto:robi_su3@netvision.net.il)

Dr. Salim Dabakh, Echocardiography

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[Saleem.d@ziv.health.gov.il](mailto:Saleem.d@ziv.health.gov.il)

Dr. Alexander Pekar, Electrophysiology  
and Pacemaker Clinic  
[aophome@yahoo.com](mailto:aophome@yahoo.com)

Dr. Irena Nordkin, Outpatient Clinic  
[nordkinirina@yahoo.com](mailto:nordkinirina@yahoo.com)

Dr. Irena Levin, Head Subinvestigator  
for Clinical Trials  
[levinirena@gmail.com](mailto:levinirena@gmail.com)



Replica of the Holy Ark in Mamilla Mall, Jerusalem



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### **The “residents’ struggle” to improve Israel’s public health system**

*Guy Rozen MD, MHA*

*(Editor’s Note: This strike was recently settled and the residents are thankfully back to work. However, we thought it was important to include this article in our Newsletter to help explain the issues surrounding this event.)*

In mid November, over 200 senior physicians, including heads of departments and units, submitted their resignation during the past days in the apparent escalation of what is called “the residents’ struggle” to improve the public health system and physician’s employment conditions in Israel. To understand the basics of the current crisis in Israel’s health system one should look back at the history.

More than 30 years of massive population growth, including over a million new immigrants from the former USSR, was not met by an adequate increase of hospital beds or physician positions. Eleven years after signing the 2000 agreement, almost half of the promised hospital positions haven’t been manned; residents in many departments do 8-10 26-hour “on-call” shifts every month (instead of 6, promised). It took 8 years for the arbitration committee founded in 2000 to decide about an additional raise in physicians’ salary,

which would barely catch up with the rising consumer price index during the past decade. In the meanwhile over half of an average physician’s salary still comes from overtime work, hence the explanation why in many cases residents (making many on-call shifts) earn more money than senior physicians at the same department.

At the end of 2010, negotiation started between the Ministry of Treasury and The Israel Medical Association (IMA) over a new collective agreement regarding physician employment. On April 4, 2011 the longest doctors’ strike in the history of Israel was launched under the slogan “Save Public Medicine”. After numerous rounds of the negotiation, understandings were reached and an agreement looked near. For the first time in history, IMA agreed to the introduction of attendance recording clock for physicians and obliging young attending physicians to do on-call shifts. The mistrust towards the ministry of finance, regarding the promised additional physicians’ positions, reduction of “on-calls” etc., together with the feeling that the current condition is unbearable lead to strong resistance to the coming agreement which spread like a wildfire among residents and senior physicians alike. The residents published their “red lines” document, which included limitation of the agreement’s length to 4 years at most, immediate addition of at least

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1000 physician positions, reduction to 6 on-call shifts per month, about \$13/hour minimal initial salary for a resident (standing at \$7 today) and cancellation of the intention to oblige young attending physicians to do on-call shifts. The protest culminated with the submission of over 1000 resignation letters by residents, stating that they refuse to work in the current conditions, which according to them endanger patients.

On August 25, 2011, despite the protest, agreement was signed including addition of 1000 doctor positions in hospitals over the coming years, limitation of residents' on-call shifts to 6 per month and gradual increase in the salary over the coming 8 years (about 3.5% per year in average) with higher raise and special bonuses for doctors who will decide to work in peripheral hospitals or in specialties suffering from acute shortage of physicians (like anesthesia, neonatology etc.). IMA accepted the introduction of attendance clock for physicians and attendings' on-calls shifts, and gave up the right to strike for 9 years. The agreement was described as an historic achievement especially for the peripheral hospitals.

The residents, fed up with the promises from the past, which remained on paper, were not impressed and continued with their resignation plan. One week later, a petition was filed to the labour court by the State and the Ministry of Health to

dismiss the resignation letters as non-genuine, illegal collective pressure tool. The petition was accepted and the residents returned to work. During the following two weeks, over 800 of them submitted new "personal resignation letters", entering into force within 30 days. At the end of the month, the state filed another petition against those resignation letters, claiming they are not valid being a different guise of the same collective action. Once again the labour court accepted the petition, forcing the residents to return to work.

While frustration from the new agreement grew stronger, residents addressed the Supreme Court with a claim to accept their resignation letters on the basis of freedom of occupation law. During the preliminary hearings, judge Meltzer mentioned that any doctor, truly willing to stop working without any claims or conditions and without the intention to return in the near future, should be able to do so. Based on that, before the conclusion of the Supreme Court hearings, almost 350 residents resigned immediately in mid November. In addition more than 200 senior physicians submitted their resignation letters, coming in force in 28 days. At the time of this writing one can not tell how this will end but one thing is evident; the younger generation of Israeli doctors are very confident in the justice of their position, aware of their

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value and are not willing to play by the old rules.

*The author is a specialist in internal medicine and fellow in cardiology at the Sheba Medical Center, Israel*



**See you at ACC for our annual event Sunday March 25! More details to follow!**

### Membership

This is also a reminder regarding membership dues for the Friends of the Israel Heart Society. The basic dues are **\$50**. You can register through our website <http://friendsihs.org/Register.html> or send a check directly to:

**Friends of the Israel Heart Society  
c/o Debbie Burg  
8626 Central Park  
Skokie, IL 60076**

Please include your email address to assure you do not miss an issue!

We are particularly grateful to those who can be sponsors at any one of the levels indicated below:

**\$250 Silver member**

**\$500 Gold member**

**\$1,000 Platinum member**

**\$5,000 President's club**

Your support enables us to continue growing our programs, including the ACC meeting, support for Israeli fellows to attend the AHA/ACC meetings, and to grow other programs.

For those who are interested in directed donations, we have the following opportunities:

\$500 Sponsor an issue of the FIHS newsletter

\$1000 Partial sponsorship of an Israeli fellow to attend the AHA meeting

\$1000 Partial sponsorship of an Israeli fellow to attend the ACC meeting

\$2500 Sponsorship of an Israeli fellow to attend the AHA meeting

\$2500 Sponsorship of an Israeli fellow to attend the ACC meeting.

We would like to thank our Platinum, Gold, and Silver Members for their past and future support!

See Page 4 for our sponsors! Thanks!



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### Highlighting Joint Programs

This is a new section where we will highlight ongoing Interchange Programs taking place at American sites. Thanks to Board member Richard Popp for directing this program and allowing us to publicize it:

#### **Feldman Family Foundation Visiting Professors Program**

#### **Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, California, USA**

Program Director: Richard L. Popp,  
M.D.

Purpose: The aim of the professorship is to allow senior Israeli physicians, in the mid-portion of their careers, to have sufficient time away from clinical duties to update their general skills and/or to acquire specialized knowledge that they will transmit to their colleagues and students on their return to Israel. Physicians from any field may apply. Each visiting professor will have a program tailored to his or her needs by the Program Director and a collaborating Stanford Faculty sponsor, who will ensure the quality of the visiting professor's day-to-day activities. The experience of living in the United States for 6

months is an additional aspect of the program.

\*\*\*\*\*

I would also encourage Israeli programs to let our membership know about happenings and offers for training in Israel:

#### Opportunity – Meir Hospital

The opportunity to do a 3-year fellowship in Cardiology is available at an Israeli Hospital.

Program includes active CCU, Interventional Cardiology, Echocardiography, Nuclear Cardiology and an active program in Preventive Cardiology.

Suitable for Trainees with Internal Medicine background.

If interested e-mail:  
morris.mosseri@clalit.org.il

That's it for this issue of the newsletter of the Friends of Israel Heart Society. Special thanks as always to Mort Lebowitz MD and Batia Ziv for being our "eyes and ears on the ground" in Israel. Special thanks in America to Debbie Burg, our entire FIHS Staff!

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Have any ideas to make this a better tool for our Society? Share them with us!

Tell your friends that we want them to join our mission to be a bridge between Israeli Cardiology and the world. If you have any questions, comment, criticisms (my favorites!) please email me at [jackstroh@usa.net](mailto:jackstroh@usa.net). We at FIHS wish you all a Happy and Healthy New 2012!



Don't forget to donate blood when you visit  
Israel!