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**Jefferson Partners with Lantern Theater Company and  
Launches Theater Program for Healthcare Students**  
*Designed to Foster Empathy and Tolerance for Ambiguity*

PHILADELPHIA, PA – A group of medical students and faculty will have their original plays performed by local Philadelphia actors on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> as part of Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University's Readers Theater event "Funny, Sad, True and Mad: A Theatrical Exploration of the Medical Life."

This event is the culmination of a 15-week introduction to drama, acting and playwriting for medical and health professions students, residents and Jefferson faculty. This program was carried out in collaboration with Lantern Theater Company of Philadelphia and made possible by a generous grant on 'Professionalism' from The Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation and Institute on Medicine as a Profession (IMAP).

"Theater is not entertainment," said Salvatore Mangione, M.D., pulmonologist and Director of Physical Diagnosis-Clinical Skills at Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University. "The Greeks created drama to be catharsis by proxy. It is a tool to understand the human condition."

Dr. Mangione's goal is for the students to develop skills, like empathy and tolerance for ambiguity, which will assist them in their future careers and help prevent burnout. "Short of experiencing pain and suffering, it's watching it – and even more acting it – that can provide us with a first-row seat to the theater of life. This in turn can foster empathy and tolerance for ambiguity," said Dr. Mangione.

"In order to develop the next generation of empathetic, communicative and creative physicians, we need to teach our students how to observe, not just see," said Stephen K. Klasko, M.D., MBA,

President and CEO of Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health System. “By introducing art, theater and music into our curriculum, Jefferson-trained physicians will be leading a team-enabled healthcare future.”

The drama programs allowed approximately 30 students and faculty to spend 15 weeks exploring a variety of acting and playwriting techniques, culminating in the end-of-the-year, staged reading of short plays. The staged readings will be directed by M. Craig Getting (Lantern’s Artistic and Administrative Associate) and Kittson O’Neill (local actress and Artistic Associate at Interact Theatre Company), both of whom are teaching artists in the Lantern’s education department.

Lantern Artistic Director Charles McMahon says “Our company has long held the belief that theater should enrich the life of its community by providing people with unique experiences and uncommon perspectives that help us to create greater context and meaning in our lives. We are naturally very intrigued by the possibility of engaging in practical application of these principals, and feel that this collaboration with Thomas Jefferson University has the potential to open up new ways our respective fields can enrich each other.”

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### **About [Jefferson](#) — Health is all we do.**

Thomas Jefferson University, Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals and Jefferson University Physicians are partners in providing the highest-quality, compassionate clinical care for patients, educating the health professionals of tomorrow, and discovering new treatments and therapies that will define the future of healthcare. Thomas Jefferson University enrolls more than 3,600 future physicians, scientists and healthcare professionals in the Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC); Jefferson Schools of Health Professions, Nursing, Pharmacy, Population Health; and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, and is home of the National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center. Jefferson University Physicians is a multi-specialty physician practice consisting of over 650 SKMC full-time faculty. Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals is the largest freestanding academic medical center in Philadelphia. Services are provided at five locations — Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and Jefferson Hospital for Neuroscience in Center City Philadelphia; Methodist Hospital in South Philadelphia; Jefferson at the Navy Yard; and Jefferson at Voorhees in South Jersey.

### **About Lantern Theater Company**

Founded in 1994, Lantern Theater Company is committed to an authentic and intimate exploration of the human spirit in its choice of classics, modern, and original works. The Lantern seeks to be a vibrant, contributing member of its community, exposing audiences to great theater, inviting participation in dialogue and discussion, educating audience members about artistic and social issues, and employing theatrical language and techniques to enrich learning in the classroom. The Lantern has received 82 Barrymore Award nominations, winning 19 times including the 2009 Barrymore Award for Excellence in Theatre Education and Community Service for its innovative education program, Illumination. Lantern Theater Company has been in residence at St. Stephen's Theater at 10th & Ludlow Streets in Center City Philadelphia since 1996, managing the performance space and developing it into an affordable multi-purpose performing arts venue. For more information, please visit [www.lanterntheater.org](http://www.lanterntheater.org).