providing him with an opportunity to constantly test himself and refine his skills. Since 1994, Kilgore has competed in national and world tournaments, winning in several categories.

His immediate goal is to advance to seventh-degree black belt and pursue senior mastership. To earn that title, he must undergo another six years of intense training. Currently, there are 97 senior masters in the world. Kilgore hopes to eventually become an eighth-degree black belt and chief master, a title held by only 45 people.

Kilgore, who plans to retire from Regions Hospital in St. Paul this spring, sees parallels between his specialty and his sport. “Emergency medicine has been my style. I like improvising and adjusting to situations as they occur—kind of like tae kwondo,” he says. “Basically, I’m sparring with disease.”

Kilgore’s co-workers have supported his endeavor, often swapping shifts or filling in for him when he competed on the ATA tournament circuit. At one point, his travels took him across the country 25 times a year to compete in sparring (using offensive and defensive moves to beat your opponent), forms (demonstrating a series of movements, kicks and punches) and weapons (performing moves with weapons such as a long staff [jahng bong] and cane [jee palng ee]. In 2004, he captured state titles in all three disciplines and a national championship title in weapons. That success led to Kilgore being ranked among the top 10 competitors in the world multiple times in weapons, sparring and forms, and eventually going to the ATA World Championships. He became a world champion in weapons in 2006.

Although he no longer competes, Kilgore continues to pursue a higher ranking through study, practice, sparring and testing at the annual World Championships. He also teaches the sport at Fusion Martial Arts in Eagan.

Kilgore, who works out five times a week doing taekwondo, CrossFit and weightlifting, credits the sport with keeping him fit, strong and flexible, and providing relief from the stress of work. (He also co-directs an emergency medicine rotation for medical students at Regions.) “I’m still learning,” he says of tae kwondo. “You never are as good as you want to be in this particular sport. There is always something to be learned or worked on, and the friendships I have made through participating are amazing.”

– SUZY FRISCH

Med students honor choices

University of Minnesota medical students are learning how to talk with their patients about end-of-life wishes.

Starting in June, representatives from Honoring Choices Minnesota (HCM) began speaking to fourth-year students about advance care planning. Karen Peterson, executive director of HCM, says discussions with medical school faculty had been going on for a while. “Every year, they would tell us, this is really great, it’s what med students should be learning, but we don’t have a place for it in the curriculum,” she says. This year, “someone saw a fit” in a palliative care component that was added to the ICU rotation.

Peterson, who often co-presentes with HCM’s medical director, Kenneth Kephart, MD, says the sessions provide students with an overview of advance care planning: what a health directive is and why it’s important, where to find it in the electronic health record, what to do if a patient doesn’t have one, and why they as future physicians should take the time to read their patients’ directives. They also discuss how to fill out a POLST (Provider Order Set for Life-Sustaining Treatment) form, a doctor’s order to emergency medical personnel and other health care providers indicating a patient’s end-of-life wishes in the case of a medical emergency.

The students then engage in role playing. “They really value this,” Peterson says, adding that today’s medical students truly understand the concept of end of life. “If you listen to Atul Gawande or other big names tell stories about when they were in medical school 20 years ago, they never talked about advance care planning or end of life. It never entered their minds as physicians to help with them. To get involved or schedule a talk, contact Karen Peterson at kpeterson@metrodoctors.com.

Cross-cultural talks

Honoring Choices Minnesota is offering three new videos aimed at encouraging members of the Latino/Hispanic, Somali and Hmong communities to complete health care directives and share them with their physicians and other health care providers. The scripts, which were developed by health care workers from those communities, aim to communicate the message in a culturally appropriate way. The videos are available digitally or on DVD at honoringchoices.org.

Honoring Choices Minnesota wants to bring its presentations to residency sites and is looking for physicians to help with them. To get involved or schedule a talk, contact Karen Peterson at kpeterson@metrodoctors.com.