



DoIM news

Information Exchange from the Division of Internal Medicine • Spring 2010

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Internal Medicine - Overcoming obstacles to achieve success

How clinical centers thrive in the challenging economic climate

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade ... or so the saying goes. Easier said than done, though; especially during the last year which brought the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression.

But for the four clinical centers in the Division of Internal Medicine, recent months have shown that overcoming challenges is exactly what they're capable of.



Pulmonary Technicians Ninfa Cornejo and Yolanda Gonzalez, along with David Blanco, coordinator for the Pulmonary Diagnostic Lab, use a body-plethysmograph to measure total lung capacity for patients in the Cardiopulmonary Center. "The technicians and nurses are our heroes," says Elie Mouhayar, M.D. "There has been a sharp increase in the number of patients seen in the clinics in addition to high volume of tests and procedures across the board over the past year. In particular, the echo and pulmonary function tests technicians have made tremendous sacrifices during the economic downturn and continue to do so today."



Clinical centers continued on page 2



Clinical centers

Elie Mouhayar, M.D., assistant professor and medical director of the Cardiopulmonary Center, explains how the **Cardiopulmonary Center** rose to the challenges that came with the recession period, including the new institutional requirements to see more patients. “Simply put, it was teamwork. Everybody felt that it was their job to adjust, from the physicians to nurses to technicians and everyone in between,” he says.

To accommodate the sharp increase in number of patients seen, the center worked to dramatically adjust schedules and templates. As a result, clinical activity and patient volume in Cardiology increased by about 47 percent, and procedures in the Cardiopulmonary Center, such as bronchoscopies, transesophageal echos, thoracentesis, pericardiocentesis, Denver catheter insertion, and cardioversion went up by 17 percent.

“With the same number of employees than the year before, or even slightly less, we were able to accomplish much more,” Mouhayar says. “This says a lot about the sacrifices these employees had to go through to be able to achieve that.”

The **Internal Medicine Center Main Building location**, experienced similar sacrifices, all while going through an expansion of the center to build a bigger workroom and two exam rooms.

“One challenge during the center build out was maintaining the patient experience, and specifically, having patients roomed on time,” says Sunil Sahai, M.D., associate professor, General Internal Medicine, Ambulatory Treatment and Emergency Care, and medical director for the Internal Medicine Center Main Building location.

To further improve efficiency, all physicians opened up their templates, and like Mouhayar, Sahai says confronting the new workload was a team effort that included physicians seeing more patients, nurses covering for each other more, patient service coordinators cross training with each other, and the entire staff being proactive in indentifying empty patients rooms in a effort to decrease wait times.

“The thing that I’m especially proud of is that everyone in the center has continued to go out of their way to make the patient experience better,” Sahai says. “For example, I’ll ask for a test on something scheduled next week and not realize the patient is from out of town or on a limited income. The staff will figure out if we can move the appointment to make it more convenient for the patient.”

Sahai doesn’t take credit for his center’s successes, instead he points to other valued leaders in his area, including Mark Tansiongco, nurse manager, Chris Hagerman, clinical business manager, and June

Kelsick, clinical administrative director. “Despite the overwhelming increase in workload and patient flow, the morale of our clinic has actually improved,” Sahai says. “I attribute that to the outstanding leadership of Mark, Chris and June.”

Sahai’s sentiments are mirrored by Dave Balachandran, M.D., assistant professor and medical director of the **Internal Medicine Center Mays Clinic location**, who says that Kelsick, Hagerman and Regina Smith, nurse manager, were the backbone of the center’s success in dealing with the challenges of the economic downturn.

“Despite the uncertainty and stress on our resources during that time, our clinic still operated as a team and that’s how we managed to increase our new patient and consult volume by 38 percent in the past year,” Balachandran notes, whose clinic acquired three new rooms to accommodate the growth.

“We also looked at our processes to see where we could gain efficiencies and identified scheduling of tests and consults at the time of patient discharge from the clinic lead to less time that the patient service coordinator would need to spend re-scheduling the same service and fewer cancellations and missed appointments,” Balachandran says. “When a patient is scheduled for an appointment and doesn’t show up, it wastes an enormous amount of resources. We’re able to minimize this by handing the patient a schedule at the time of discharge so there is less confusion about when they need to return.”

The **Endocrine Center** also experienced growth, moving from R10 to an expanded space on R9. This allowed the clinic to see more patients, some of whom are now seen in the Thyroid Nodule clinic, which opened March 2009.

Under the direction of Steven Sherman, M.D., chair of Endocrine Neoplasia and HD and medical director for the Endocrine Center, and Naifa Busaidy, M.D., assistant professor, Endocrine Neoplasia and HD, a Thyroid Nodule Task Force was created with representatives from across the institution, including many junior faculty members, who had the opportunity to contribute ideas for the new clinic.

“The objective was to expedite scheduling and processing of patients with thyroid nodules to offer same day service,” Sherman explains. “This worked tremendously well – ultimately, we’ve increased the number of thyroid nodule patients at the institution and are expanding our scope to include research endeavors for new diagnostic procedures.”

While all the centers achieved success through this challenging time, everyone is still working hard to keep up the momentum, remembering the lessons learned over the past year.

“Throughout the process, the main thing I noticed was the tremendous potential we have,” Mouhayar says. “When people in the centers were asked to adjust to accommodate the high increase in patient numbers, they were able to do that, which reflects the fact that the infrastructure is fine and the potential is there. It also showed us that we can respond to stressful situations.” He adds, “Moving forward, we need to look into how to sustain this high work level without placing a burden on our employees. This is challenging, but we’re taking measures to help remedy this issue and find our ‘new normal.’”



A FEW WORDS from Dr. Gagel

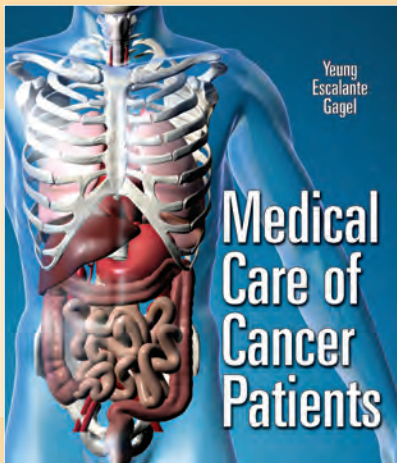
Several years ago the Division of Internal Medicine made the decision to develop a textbook focused on internal medicine

problems in the context of cancer. Over a two period, many faculty within the division worked diligently to create, “Medical Care of Cancer Patients,” the first medical textbook focused on the medical problems of cancer patients. Working with Sai-Ching “Jim” Yeung, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor, General Internal Medicine, Ambulatory Treatment and Emergency Care, who was the guiding force behind the project, and Carmen Escalante, M.D., professor and chair of General Internal Medicine, we developed and created a valuable resource for cancer physicians.

Our goals for this textbook were modest, with the expectation that it would allow us to collate a rapidly growing body of knowledge focused on the unique medical aspects of cancer patients. The book was published in early 2009, and to our surprise and delight, is on its way to becoming a bestseller – the publisher, People’s Medical Publishing House, has informed us it has completely sold out of the first printing, in excess of 1,000 copies in less than a year. They have ordered a second printing. We expect that this text will be translated into other languages and serve as a reference source for oncologist and internists caring for cancer patients throughout the world. We are initiating discussions with the publisher about a second edition.

Drs. Yeung, Escalante and I are very proud of the textbook, put together largely by faculty from within the division and other major cancer centers in the United States. It’s unique because it covers many topics not found in oncology texts or textbooks of general internal medicine.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate each and every one of the members of the Division of Internal Medicine who contributed to this text. While we think it’s a great book, we think we can do even better in a second edition and hope you will join us in our effort to create a “classic.”



Copies of “Medical Care of Cancer Patients” can be purchased from Amazon.com and local booksellers.

Internal Medicine division administrator retires

Rosemary Scarfia, division administrator, Internal Medicine, retires on Friday, April 30. Scarfia is the first administrator of the Division of Internal Medicine. She developed and led the creative team of administrative staff responsible for the innovative programs developed by the division over the past decade.

Scarfia was recruited to M. D. Anderson in 1999 from the University of Florida. She served as clinical administrative director in Neurosurgery until August 2003, when she became division administrator for Internal Medicine.

...
A fond farewell to Rosemary Scarfia

“I’ve enjoyed being a part of the incredible growth in this division over the past several years and working with Dr. Gagel, who had a vision for the future,” Scarfia says. “It has been a wonderful journey with outstanding faculty and administrative support – it’s truly the people that



have made this division special. Working with Dr. Gagel and the department chairs has been, professionally, very fulfilling. It was a recipe for success.”

Scarfia will be missed by her colleagues and friends at the institution. “Rosemary has been an outstanding division administrator. She has set a standard for excellence that her successor will be hard-pressed to exceed,” says Robert Gagel, professor and head, Internal Medicine. “I offer her my sincerest thanks for her unceasing commitment to the Division of Internal Medicine and best wishes for the next part of her life.”



Faculty and staff working in the cath lab, located in the Main Building, Floor 3, near Elevator F. From L-R: Cezar Iliescu, M.D., assistant professor, Lee Bradford, cardiac catheterization technologist, Mary Beth Clayton, clinical nurse, Christina Demoss, senior cardiac catheterization technologist, Gerryross Tomakin, nurse manager, and Jeremy Viles clinical administrative director.

Cardiac catheterization lab focuses on patient safety, satisfaction

The first patient underwent a cardiac catheterization procedure on Nov. 17, 2009. Less than six months later, an average of two to four patients are seen every day in the cath lab, which was a vision of Edward Yeh, M.D., professor and chair, Cardiology, and the result of nearly a decade of effort by faculty members, administrators and senior leadership. “The Cardiology department began looking into developing its own cath lab in 2003 because cardiac catheterization is essential to providing the best cardiac care for our cancer patients,” Yeh says.

One of the biggest setbacks for cancer patients can be side effects of treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation, on the heart function and that’s where cardiology comes in the picture. “Prior to the creation of the on-site cath lab, M. D. Anderson patients requiring invasive cardiovascular evaluations would have to travel to an outside institution and then return to M. D. Anderson,” explains Gerryross Tomakin, nurse manager in the cath lab. “This was oftentimes uncomfortable for patients and required many resources from our staff, including extra time to arrange transfer of medical records back and forth.”

Patient satisfaction data collected via telephone surveys following procedures has shown that a preponderance of patients rate their experience in the cath lab as “excellent.” One of the major drivers for their satisfaction can be attributed to the convenience of having care provided in the cancer center and the increased comfort that the onsite facility allows.

From a professional point of view, “One of the most important benefits for our patients is the continuity of care,” says Cezar Iliescu, M.D., assistant professor and director of the cath lab. “Some patients with weakening of the heart muscle or a change in its structure, known as cardiac myopathy, for example, may be too weak to travel to another

hospital for the procedure. Now, we can eliminate that hassle and anxiety by offering more services in one place, while being cared for by a doctor that they’re already comfortable with.”

Another benefit is earlier identification and prompt treatment of cardiac issues that may delay cancer therapy. “With this diagnostic modality, we’ll be able to more accurately determine the extent and severity of coronary artery disease and to provide the best therapeutic option so that appropriate cancer therapy can be expedited,” Iliescu adds.

The cath lab facility has many safeguards in place to ensure quality of care and our cardiologists use new technologies to improve patient safety. For example, though catheterizations traditionally are done through the groin, Iliescu and his team have performed a number of procedures through the arm, which lowers the risk of complications, especially for patients with thrombocytopenia, a blood disease characterized by an abnormally low number of platelets in the bloodstream. The team of experienced cardiologists who perform procedures in the cath lab also includes Jean-Bernard Durand, M.D., associate professor, Elie Mouhayar, M.D., assistant professor, and Guilherme Oliveira, M.D., assistant professor.

In addition to cardiac catheterization, cardiologists also perform pericardiocentesis (draining of fluid from the sac that encloses the heart), biopsy of heart muscles to determine the type and severity of heart muscle damage from cancer therapy, and insertion of pacemakers and defibrillators.

“I see the establishment of the cardiac cath lab as an important step to improve the quality of care for our patient population,” says Robert Gagel, M.D., professor and head, Internal Medicine. “I’m also pleased that our Cardiology team has taken steps to build in safety measures, as we do across the division.”

New Clinical Administrative Director in the Cardiopulmonary Center



Jeremy Viles joined M. D. Anderson as clinical administrative director for the Cardiopulmonary Center in Oct. 2009 and hit the ground running with the opening of Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory in November. His role focuses on managing the center’s day-to-day operations, providing clinical and financial oversight, as well as overall direction. He’s also responsible for strategic planning, including the expansion of services, and communicating between the cardiology and pulmonary services.

Most recently, Viles worked as director of surgical services for two years at Spring Branch Medical Center. Prior to that, he worked as a surgical services manager and surgery staff nurse at Methodist Hospital in the Texas Medical Center and as a staff nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

“The thing I’m most proud of so far is the dedication and the teamwork of all of my employees as well as the faculty,” Viles says. “The patient focus here is truly amazing. People come in early and stay late and volunteer to do extra things. It’s really more like a family than a job in a lot of ways.”

Infectious Diseases offers hepatitis C clinic

Infectious Diseases opened a hepatitis C clinic in August 2009. Harrys Torres, M.D., assistant professor, Infectious Diseases, spearheaded development of the clinic, with the support of Issam Raad, M.D., professor and chair, Infectious Diseases, and Dimitrios Kontoyiannis, professor, deputy chair, Infectious Diseases.

contraindicated, then these patients will be managed by hepatologists.

Patients with hepatitis C require close monitoring because the medications taken for the infection can cause the same side-effects as those caused by many cancer treatments – most notably anemia, neutropenia and thrombocytopenia. This exacerbation

A multidisciplinary program focused on hepatitis is in the nascent stages of development. Members of the group include:

The Infectious Diseases Hepatitis C clinic is staffed by Torres, Victor Mulanovich, M.D., assistant professor, Infectious Diseases and Bruno Granwehr, M.D., assistant professor, Infectious Diseases. Research collaborations will be undertaken with Marta Davila, M.D., associate professor, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition; Jessica Hwang, M.D., General Internal Medicine, Ambulatory Treatment and Emergency Care; Marcos de Lima, M.D., associate professor, Stem Cell Transplantation; Manal Hassan, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor, Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology-Research; Ahmed Kaseb, assistant professor, Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology; Ilan Nevah, M.D., assistant professor, Hepatology, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston; Ben Barnett, M.D., associate professor, Infectious Diseases, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston; and Stanley Lemon, M.D., John Sealy Distinguished University Chair and Director Institute for Human Infections and Immunity at The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

The group received its first grant in March. Jessica Hwang was awarded a K07 grant from the National Cancer Institute for her research on reactivation of hepatitis B infection after chemotherapy.

See back cover for information about Lopa Mishra, new chair for Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition.



Torres and Ruth Roach, clinical nurse, see many of the 200 patients that arrive at M. D. Anderson every year with a known hepatitis C infection. However, Torres says most patients aren't aware of their infection. "Hepatitis C is the most common blood-borne infection in the U.S.," Torres notes, "But the majority of those who are infected are asymptomatic."

"Traditionally, patients with hepatitis B and hepatitis C have been cared for by hepatologists in Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition," Torres says. "However, our hepatologists have been overwhelmed with patient management. We approached them in early 2009 to offer to create a hepatitis C clinic within Infectious Diseases, and they were thrilled with the idea."

This new division of cases enables hepatologists to focus their efforts on patients with hepatitis B and allows infectious disease practitioners to begin research to improve outcomes in patients with hepatitis C. Now, hepatitis C-infected patients are initially evaluated by Infectious Diseases. If antiviral treatment is not recommended or

of side-effects has meant that most studies examining hepatitis C infection have excluded patients with cancer. The result is that little data exist on how to treat hepatitis C in this patient population.

"Because hepatitis C is a chronic disease, the cancer understandably becomes the focus and the infection is allowed to go on," Torres explains. "So the issue of hepatitis C is frequently not addressed, and there's no clear understanding of the effects of hepatitis C on cancer patients. This separate clinic enables us to more closely scrutinize this subset of patients to provide more specialized care and to conduct better research."

Referral of patients with hepatitis

- **Hepatitis B:** Liver (Hepatology) Clinic - Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, Main Building, Floor 7, near Elevator A; call 713-794-5073 to schedule an appointment with Marta Davila, M.D.
- **Hepatitis C:** Hepatitis C Clinic - Infectious Diseases, Internal Medicine Center, Main Building, Floor 6, near Elevator A; call 713-563-3930 to schedule an appointment with Harrys Torres, M.D.
- **Unsure:** Contact the Hepatitis C Clinic - Infectious Diseases; call 713-563-3930 to schedule an appointment with Harrys Torres, M.D.

Upcoming events

► **Division of Internal Medicine Research Retreat:**

Friday, May 14, noon-5:15 p.m., in Anderson Conference Hall, R11.1100, Rooms 1-8. Don't miss the chance to see more than 90 abstracts from our Internal Medicine faculty, including the top six, which will participate in the annual Cyrus Award Competition. In addition, hear from this year's Kelsey Lecturer, J. Gregory Fitz, M.D., dean, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at U.T. Southwestern Medical School at Dallas. Online registration is highly recommended by Monday, May 10.

For details or to register, visit M. D. Anderson's conferences site.

► **Skin Cancer Screening** hosted by our Dermatology department and the Houston Dermatological Society: **Saturday, May 15, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**, in the Cancer Prevention Building. The city-wide event is open to M. D. Anderson employees and the general public.

► **Discovery Fair: Friday, May 21, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.**, in the Rotary House, Floor 1. All division employees are encouraged to participate in this employee recognition event, which is the major effort to help the division meet its Anderson Award goal of encouraging improvement to employees' analytical and innovative thinking skills, as well as receptivity to change. Stop by for fun, food, prizes and much more!

Past events a success

► **Interventional Pulmonology Conference**

On Feb. 4-6, Pulmonary Medicine hosted its third annual Interventional Pulmonology in Cancer Patients Conference, an intensive hands-on, three-day course that reviewed the current concepts and recent advances in interventional pulmonology as it pertains to the cancer patient, and introduced new technologic advances poised to revolutionize the diagnosis, staging and management of lung cancer.



In addition to didactic lectures, the sold-out Interventional Pulmonology Course provided a unique opportunity for 40 participants from across the nation to learn and perform procedures on in vivo models with instruction from world-renowned physicians.

► **Heart Health Fair**

The Cardiology department hosted a booth at the institution's Heart Health Fair on Feb. 18 in Mays Clinic. The team, lead by Veronica Paniagua, administrative assistant, provided heart health information to attendees as well as a heart-healthy snack, dark chocolate. Anecita Fadol, Ph.D., Sheryl Murphy and Edgar Salire provided free blood pressure readings. Other volunteers included Kawana Guillory, Amy Heaton and Rose Janacek.



Sheryl Murphy discusses ways to reduce the risk of heart disease with health fair attendees.



► **SUMO, Ubiquitin, UBL Proteins: Implications for Human Diseases**

It was another resounding success for the fifth international conference SUMO, Ubiquitin, UBL Proteins: Implications for Human Diseases held Feb. 10-13 at M. D. Anderson. Raymond DuBois, M.D., Ph.D., provost and executive vice president, welcomed participants to the four-day conference that included state-of-the-art lectures and abstract presentations on late-breaking research.

Ubiquitin conference attendee from Germany, Martin Christmann, discusses his research with conference organizer Edward T.H. Yeh, M.D., professor and chair, Cardiology, and other attendees. Christmann was one of 260 scientists and physicians who traveled from 18 countries and 24 states to participate in the annual event.

Milestones and achievements

Loy Deloney, medicine department administrator, Pulmonary Medicine, and Jillian Webb, organization development associate, Human Resources, co-founded a new Employee Network, PeopleFirst, which educates employees about disabilities and promotes an inclusive work environment.

Robert Volk, M.D., professor, General Internal Medicine, Ambulatory Treatment and Emergency Care, was listed as an author of The American Cancer Society's new guidelines on early detection of prostate cancer, released in March.



Rashid Rashid, fellow in Dermatology, received the 2010 American Medical Association Foundation Leadership Award, Rashid was presented the award at the Excellence in Medicine Awards Dinner at the AMA National Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C.

Liza Sanchez, supervisor, Cardiovascular Lab, Cardiology, was designated a Fellow of the American Society of Echocardiography. The fellow designation recognizes extraordinary commitment to the field of Echocardiography and fulfillment of training and performance requirements in cardiac sonography.

Patricia Degen, supervisor, research nurse, Endocrine Neoplasia and HD, is serving at the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. The United States Army requested that Major Degen serve Emergency Military Leave for the day-to-day care of patients/soldiers and also to provide medical care for soldiers returning from overseas.



Gottumukkala Subba Raju, M.D., professor, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, won the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy's AV Award Honorable Mention for submission of his video, "Endoscopic Closure of Gastrointestinal Leaks." The ASGE will use his video to create a DVD that will become part of its Learning Library and will be for sale.

Division of Internal Medicine's diversity efforts were published in the International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations in an article by **Lisa Welsh-Skiffington**, project director, Internal Medicine; Courtney Holladay, Ph.D., manager of Organization Development in HR Organization Development; Jillian Day, organizational development associate, HR Organization Development; and Diana Anderson, manager of diversity programs, HR Employee Development.



Josiah Halm, M.D., assistant professor, General Internal Medicine, helped form the Society of Hospital medicine, Houston Chapter. He serves as chapter president and represents counties in southeastern Texas. Halm organized the first chapter meeting as a Continuing Medical Education event in conjunction with M. D. Anderson's CME office. He also organized a Texas Medical Center Hospitalist Networking Group.



Research and grants

Kenneth Tsai, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in Dermatology, won an American Skin Association Research Scholar Award in Melanoma/Non-Melanoma Skin Cancer for \$60,000, which will be used in support of his project, "Genetic and Cellular Determinants of Immunosurveillance and Evasion in Skin Cancer."

There will be a presentation on the ZD6474 study showing substantial improvement of progression-free survival in metastatic medullum thyroid cancer at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting in May. Clinicians working on this protocol from the Endocrine department include **Robert Gagel, M.D.**, **Mimi Hu, M.D.**, **Cheryl Mize**, and **Mary Jean Klein**.

Aarif Khakoo, M.D., assistant professor, Cardiology, and corresponding author, and other M. D. Anderson researchers, reported a major discovery in the Journal of Clinical Investigation. The study found that a growth factor that's a common target of cancer drugs also plays an important role in heart muscle function. Blockade of this growth factor receptor by a targeted form of cancer therapy causes heart failure. The Journal of the American Medical Association also cited Khakoo's research in an article, "Cancer Therapy Can Be Hard on the Heart, Researchers Aim to Explain—and Avoid—Cardiotoxicity."

Iyad Daher, M.D., assistant professor, Cardiology, was elected as a fellow to the American College of Cardiology. He also was selected by the Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography as a Toshiba Young Investigator Finalist, and achieved Board Certification in Cardiovascular Computed Tomography.

Edward T.H. Yeh, M.D., earned the designation of Diplomat of the Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology.

Burton Dickey, M.D., chair, Pulmonary Medicine, was invited to give two talks in Tel Aviv, Israel, the week of March 22-26. One of the lectures, "Airway epithelial plasticity in inflammation: Implications for asthma, infection and cancer," was presented to the Israeli Society of Pulmonary Medicine at M. D. Anderson's new sister institution, The Chaim Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer. Dickey also presented "Promotion of lung carcinogenesis by inflammation" at the Weizmann Institute of Science



Rodolfo Morice, M.D., professor, Pulmonary Medicine, gave a lecture at the American College of Chest Physicians Central America CME in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine in San Salvador, El Salvador, "Interventional pulmonology-recent advances" and "Lung cancer-role of bronchoscopy in diagnosis, staging and treatment." He also presented a bronchoscopy course, "Anatomic and CT correlations." Morice then traveled to the Costa Rican Institute of Clinical Research meeting and presented two lectures.

Gilbert Cote, M.D., was honored with M. D. Anderson's Faculty Educator of the Month award for April.

Anecita Fadol, Ph.D., advanced practice nurse, Cardiology, was accepted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

FIVE YEARS:

Serina Bellard, clinical nurse, outpatient, Pulmonary Laboratory

Carol Cox, senior administrative assistant, Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition

Marta Davila, M.D., associate professor, Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition

Debbie Gibbons, senior financial analyst, Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition

Gloria Torres, senior administrative assistant, Pulmonary Medicine

Linda Foot, clinical protocol manager, Pulmonary Medicine

Lara Bashoura, M.D., assistant professor, Pulmonary Medicine; director, quality improvement and associate medical director, Cardiopulmonary Center

TEN YEARS

Yolanda Gonzalez, pulmonary technician, Pulmonary Laboratory

Regina Sherrod, program coordinator, Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Rodolfo Morice, M.D., professor and deputy chair, Pulmonary Medicine; section chief, interventional pulmonology and director, clinical programs

Service awards

Lori Williams, Ph.D., instructor, Symptom Research, gave a presentation, "A New Measure of Symptom Burden in Chronic Graft-versus-Host Disease," at the Blood and Marrow Transplant Tandem Meetings in Orlando, Fla., Feb. 24-28. Williams also received a \$334,400 grant from pharmaceutical company, Novartis, to study the symptom burden of patients with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia.

General Internal Medicine's **Maria Suarez-Almazor, M.D.**, professor, and **Carmen Escalante, M.D.**, chair, received a Comparative Effectiveness Research Grant from the Institute for Cancer Care Excellence. The overall goal of this study is to develop and pilot test a novel method of health care delivery, collaborative group clinics, in women with chronic fatigue who have survived cancer.

The Study Section Review Committee for Comparative Effectiveness Research Grants awarded **David Ost, M.D.**, associate professor, Pulmonary Medicine, \$25,000 over a two-year period for his study, "Comparative effectiveness of indwelling pleural catheters versus thoroscopic pleurodesis for treatment of malignant pleural effusions."

Vahid Afshar-Kharghan, M.D., associate professor, Benign Hematology, received a planning award for \$15,000 from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institution of Texas (CPRIT) Oversight Committee.



Division of Internal Medicine Newsletter

Editor: Sarah Petrie, program manager, Internal Medicine

Newsletter Committee: Robert Gagel, M.D., professor and head, Internal Medicine; Rosemary Scarfia, division administrator, Internal Medicine

Contributors: Carol Cox, Norma Dorsey, Rosi Gonzalez, Amy Heaton, Denise Holcomb, Lorraine Medina, Chuck Stava, Mitali Paul, Cathy Pugh, Regina Smith, Mark Tansiongco, Lisa Thomas and Jeanie Woodruff

News contributions may be sent
to Sarah Petrie, sdpetrie@mdanderson.org.



Welcome to Lopa Mishra, Chair of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

Internal Medicine welcomes new professor and chair of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, Lopa Mishra, M.D., who joined the division in December 2009. For the past 17 years, Mishra served

on the faculty at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., most recently as vice chair and distinguished professor of Medicine and Surgery. She earned her medical degree in 1982 from the University of London and completed her residency at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine before completing a gastroenterology fellowship at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

“Dr. Mishra is one of the world’s experts on TGF-beta signaling and she will focus on her research activities, in addition to her administrative responsibilities” says Robert Gagel, professor and head, Internal Medicine. “She is a terrific addition to the Division of Internal Medicine and will function interactively within the GI cancer group. She’s excited about the challenge and I believe she will be very successful.”

Mishra has ambitious plans for her time at M. D. Anderson, “My goals are to drive novel therapies targeting gastrointestinal cancers that will alter the course of, if not eliminate, these lethal cancers, provide patients and their families with the best care and support system, and to clearly define M. D. Anderson as the international leader for patient care, research and prevention in gastroenterology,” she says. Mishra also has plans to develop research and clinical studies focused on hepatic diseases. (See page 5)

Mishra replaces Professor John Stroehlein, M.D., who served as chair ad interim for the department and now serves as deputy chair.

THE DIVISION WELCOMES

Cardiology

Monika Leja, M.D., assistant professor
Rose Janacek, administrative assistant
Sheryl Murphy, advanced practice nurse

Cardiopulmonary Center

Tywon Anderson, patient service coordinator
Sharonda Taylor, clinical nurse
Luisa Norada, clinical nurse
Gloria Granda, EKG technologist,
Cardiology Laboratory
John Barbee, cardiac ultrasound technologist,
Cardiology Laboratory
Jeremy Viles, clinical administrative director

Division Office

Sarah Petrie, program manager,
Internal Medicine

Endocrine Neoplasia & HD

Silvia Rivera, coordinator, clinical studies
Maria Cabanillas, M.D., assistant professor
Rozita Bagheri-Yarmand, Ph.D.,
assistant professor
Cheryl Potter, physician assistant
Kathleen Rossi, senior administrative assistant
Debra Nichols, research nurse
Maria Cabanillas, M.D., assistant professor
Rozita Yarmand, Ph.D., assistant professor

Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition

Lopa Mishra, M.D., professor and chair
Vivek Shukla, Ph.D., research scientist
Anabel Martinez, senior administrative assistant
Adelina “Keats” Fuentes, executive assistant
Madhavi Raju, physician assistant

General Internal Medicine

Vincent Richards, research data coordinator
Viola Benavidez, senior research
data coordinator
Zubin Segal, senior research data coordinator
Suzanne Linder, postdoctoral fellow
Smita Saraykar, senior research data
coordinator

Infectious Diseases, Infection Control & Employee Health

Judith Ellett, grant program coordinator
Christine Cobb, senior administrative assistant
Micheline Holmes, senior administrative
assistant

Internal Medicine Center

Elizabeth Simmons, medical assistant

Pulmonary Medicine

Sachin Thakkur, research assistant I
Melissa McElwee, research assistant I
Madhis Rahmani, research assistant II

PROMOTIONS

Endocrine Neoplasia & HD

Charles Stava, program manager, Internal Medicine

Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition

Jeffrey Lee, M.D., professor
Patrick Lynch, M.D., professor

Infectious Diseases, Infection Control & Employee Health

Rosi Gonzalez, medicine department administrator

Symptom Research

Katherine Ramsey, coordinator, clinical studies

NEW TITLES

Cardiology

Cezar Iliescu, M.D., assistant professor
and director, Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory
Elie Mouhayar, M.D., assistant professor
and medical director, Cardiopulmonary Center

Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition

Marta Davila, M.D., associate professor and
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