Ariza-Heredia and Evans win 2014 Cyrus Scholar Awards
Michael Cyrus announces intent to increase endowment

For the second straight year, a member of Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health received the James S. and Suzanne Cyrus Award for Excellence in Clinical Research. Ella Ariza-Heredia, M.D., assistant professor, was announced the winner, while Scott Evans, M.D., assistant professor, Pulmonary Medicine, earned his second Cyrus Scholar Award for Basic Research.

The Cyrus Endowment also received a boost with Michael Cyrus’ intent to increase it to $1 million, starting with a $200,000 contribution of his own and wife Mariet. Cyrus also paid tribute to Robert Gagel, M.D., who is stepping down at the end of the fiscal year, as an exceptional physician and leader of the Internal Medicine Division.

Presiding over his final Internal Medicine Research Retreat as division head, Gagel opened the event honoring Mavis Kelsey, M.D., namesake of the Kelsey Lecturer series. John Kelsey, chair of The Kelsey Research Foundation, also spoke about his father’s many contributions to Houston’s medical scene and his interests in the arts, horticulture and genealogy.

2014 Kelsey Lecturer Andrew Schafer, M.D., then addressed the audience about the fading physician-scientist.

Retreat features quality science
Gagel commended researchers involved in both the poster session and retreat saying the research shared was “the best ever. The quality of the presentations this year was higher than in previous years. Both Basic and Clinical Research were outstanding.”

Preceding the Cyrus Scholar Awards, three emerging investigators delivered key points about their research.

“We decided to give the podium to emerging investigators who do promising and impactful research,” says Dimitrios Kontoyiannis, M.D., deputy division head – Research. “Their talks covered a variety of topics and reflected the tremendous diversity of research occurring in our division.

“These ‘new guns’ are the future of research in our division, they are a source of pride and we expect even greater things from them.”

Jichao Chen, Ph.D., Pulmonary Medicine Research, addressed “Development Programs of Lung Epithelial Progenitors,” Vahid Afshar-Kharghan, M.D., Benign Hematology, spoke about “Complement and Tumor,” and Angeles Lopez-Olivo, M.D., Ph.D., General Internal Medicine, shared information on “Comparative Effectiveness: Knowledge Synthesis and Translation.”
Ariza-Heredia’s Cyrus Award-winning research questioned whether there is a better way to determine which hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients would experience reactivation of cytomegalovirus (CMV) during their treatment.

“Currently, prevention strategies are universal,” she says, “however, we know that one size does not fit all. With the aim of individualizing prevention of CMV infection, we carried out a prospective study evaluating cell-mediated immunity using CMV-TSPOT assay as a predictor of the risk for CMV reactivation.”

Ariza-Heredia says researchers found that those patients who had a better CMV immunity had a substantial lower risk for reactivation.

“We determined that we should concentrate our energies on prevention strategies of those patients with low CMV immunity,” she says.

In this year’s Cyrus talk, Evans presented his lab findings that the lung epithelial cells are not just contributors to protecting mice against viral infections, they can actually be stimulated to protect against viral infections in the absence of any white cells. This is favorable, since these cells are the principal target of respiratory viruses. This finding is also important at MD Anderson, since it may provide a means to protect immunosuppressed cancer patients against viral infections, despite problems with white blood cell dependent immunity.

Although Evans has received grants that involved more money for his research, he says the Cyrus Scholar Awards are special because “it represents a tangible indicator that our research program continues to progress.”

“When our lab previously won the competition, we had identified an exciting phenomenon, but had little insight into its mechanisms,” Evans said. “This win suggests that all of the lab team’s work in the intervening years has generated sufficient new data and insights to report an exciting new story that is far removed from where we were five years ago.”

Judges for the 2014 retreat included Ethan Dmitrovsky, M.D., provost and executive vice president; Michelle Barton, Ph.D., dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences; Laurence Cooper, M.D., Ph.D., professor, Pediatrics – Patient Care; Kelly Hunt, M.D., professor, Surgical Oncology; Jeffrey Myers, M.D., Ph.D. professor, Head and Neck Surgery; and Kelsey Lecturer Andrew Schafer, M.D.
Transitions in the Division of Internal Medicine

This issue of the DoIM News will mark the last under my leadership. As we transition to a new Division Head, I want to thank each of you for the support you have given me over the past 13 years.

During this period, we have together developed the finest internal medicine group in any cancer center in the world. This growth and development has occurred because of your creativity, energy and enthusiasm. In particular, I want to credit the department chairs and their faculty for the development of a multitude of innovative and important clinical and research programs. I also want to highlight the important contributions of our department administrators, clinic administrative directors and DoIM staff for working together as a team to achieve these goals.

The continued growth and maturation of the division augurs well for the future of internal medicine at MD Anderson. As treatment for malignancy transitions from the current generation of cytotoxic chemotherapy to newer targeted forms of therapy and cancer becomes a chronic disease, management of non-oncologic medical problems will become much more important. It is exactly in this area where the talented members of this division will become important contributors to the overall care of cancer patients.

Transitions can be challenging, but it is my considered opinion that new leadership will bring opportunities for growth and development. A fresh look at where the Division of Internal Medicine is headed and a chance to seek new opportunities is important. An announcement about my successor is expected sometime this summer.

So in closing, let me raise a toast to all of you and send my sincerest thanks for a wonderful 19 years as the leader of Internal Medicine and 13 years as division head.

Internal Medicine enters the global network

The MD Anderson Cancer Center Network has embarked upon a major effort to expand multidisciplinary cancer care to a series of affiliates with the goal of improving the quality of cancer care across the United States and the world.

Three of these affiliates, MD Anderson España, Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center in Phoenix, and MD Anderson Cooper Cancer Center in Camden, New Jersey, have developed internal medicine programs to support the cancer center mission.

MD Anderson España was the first, full-service, multidisciplinary care center in Madrid, Spain. As that institution has grown, so has the need for high-quality medical services, including general internal medicine, infectious diseases, gastroenterology, pulmonary medicine and endocrinology. Members of the Division of Internal Medicine have worked closely with colleagues in Madrid to create a high quality care delivery system.

More recently, the DoIM has worked with Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center in Phoenix to strengthen the internal medicine program. Working with Ed Rivera, M.D., medical director, the Banner MD Anderson Section of Internal Medicine has successfully recruited talented physicians in the areas of gastroenterology, pulmonary medicine, infectious diseases, endocrinology, general internal medicine, hospital medicine, and other subspecialties to enhance the quality of care delivered.

More recently, Ellen Manzullo, M.D., deputy division head for Clinical Affairs; Joel Helmke, executive director; and Dr. Robert Gagel, M.D., division head, visited MD Anderson Cooper University Cancer Center to review the internal medicine program supporting the cancer center.

R. Philip Dellinger, M.D., professor and chair of the Department of Medicine, and Christine Winn, executive director, have assembled an outstanding group of subspecialty internists. Dellinger has pieced together an outstanding group of physicians with both general and subspecialty cancer-medical-related expertise, creating the strongest department of internal medicine within the MD Anderson Cancer Center Global Network.

During the visit, Manzullo, Helmke and Gagel had fruitful discussions with Dellinger’s team. They also met with hospital director, Adrienne Kirby, Ph.D., on how to further improve the internal medicine care among cancer patients. Division Head Gagel had nothing but high praise for Dellinger’s efforts to mesh the goals of his department with that of the cancer center.

“We look forward to continued growth and development of relationships with MD Anderson Houston’s Division of Internal Medicine and internal medicine groups in our affiliates as our network grows,” Gagel says.
The Department of Cardiology claimed three of the five awards during the Second Annual Division of Internal Medicine Employee Excellence Awards ceremony Thursday, May 29. Emcee Joel Helmke described all winners as the “best of the best.” He also presented outgoing Division Head Robert Gagel, M.D., with a special recognition saying, “I think we can all agree there is one individual who has invested more than any others and that leader is mentor and friend, Dr. Robert Gagel.”

The 2014 Employee Excellence Awards consisted of five categories, including Advanced Clinical Practice, General Administration, Management, Patient Services and Research Support. All nominees received a professional photograph and a crystal award. The five winners also received $250. Nominees were selected by their respective departments and centers. A selection committee for each category then determined the winners, says Kelly McDermott, project director and division Culture Committee chair.

The winners include:

**Advanced Clinical Practice** – Myrshia Woods, advanced clinical nurse, Cardiology

**General Administration** – Kawana Guillory, senior administrative assistant, Cardiology

**Management** – Tonya Whitlow, supervisor, mid-level providers, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

**Patient Service** – Polly Williams, infection preventionist, Infection Control

**Research Support** – Chenghui Ren, senior research assistant, Cardiology

**Advance Clinical Support**

One nominator said Myrshia Woods’ colleagues “look up to her as a model of excellence. They admire Myrshia for her wealth of knowledge and ability to handle the most difficult of situations.”

Another colleague said, “Ultimately, it is Myrshia’s great humanity and compassion, urging her patients to lean on her that creates the indefinable bond between caregivers and their patients – of courage, perseverance and hope.”

Woods said she was extremely honored to receive the award. “My work is very serious for me. I count it a privilege to care for our extremely ill and complex patients. We encounter them at such a critical time in their lives,” she says. “I feel I owe them nothing less than my very best at all times, and by God’s grace, I continue to strive to make my best even better.”

**General Administration**

Kawana Guillory was nominated for her compassionate nature and professionalism which “has fostered an environment of empathy, compassion, concern and caring which exemplifies our core values.”

One colleague said, Mrs. Guillory has proven to be a great team player and has been well-received by our staff and faculty with her pleasant and uplifting demeanor.

Guillory says, “I truly feel like the Heart of Cardiology. As the recipient of the 2014 Employee Excellence Award, I feel very proud to be appreciated by the Department of Cardiology and the Division of Internal Medicine.

**Management**

One of Tonya Whitlow’s nominators said, “Not only is she an excellent mid-level provider supervisor, she’s an excellent team player. Tonya often goes above and beyond what she expects from those she supervises.”

Another colleague said, “Tonya leads by example. She is in her office very early in the morning before anybody arrives and leaves late at night. She is keenly aware of the daily demands of patient care.”

Whitlow calls winning the award “surreal, because I truly did not expect it! This honor would not be possible without my excellent team – Cathy (Rytting), Helen (Monroe), Joyce (Lehmann), Kelly (Kain), Michelle (Gonzalez) and Rose (Zuazua).”

**Patient Services**

Polly Williams was recognized for her commitment to excellence, which one nominator said, “is endless and is recognized by the Infection Prevention section as well as physicians, staff and patients.”

Another nominator said, “She is extremely gifted in her ability to identify, present and resolve issues on all levels from personal to professional, while maintaining complete confidentiality.”

Of her recognition Williams says, “I feel very fortunate to work with such dedicated professionals in Infection Control, Infectious Diseases and Critical Care. Their commitment to quality care inspires me to always put the patient first in everything I do.”
Management

Norma Dorsey, operations manager, Dermatology
Denise Holcomb, operations manager, Pulmonary Medicine
Lisa Marsh, supervisor, research nurse, Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health
Cathy Nguyen, operations manager, Cardiology
Marsha Richardson, supervisor, data analyst, General Internal Medicine
Shu Ha Oberhelman, nurse manager, Cardiopulmonary Center
Lea Tatar, project director, Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders
Tonya Whitlow, supervisor, mid-level providers, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Jeanie Woodruff, program manager, Symptom Research

Patient Services

Jalen Bartek, outpatient clinical nurse, Internal Medicine Center, Main Building
Cindy Chua, outpatient clinical nurse, Endocrine Center
Marybeth Young, outpatient clinical nurse, Cardiac Catheterization Lab
Carla Durden, patient services coordinator, Internal Medicine Center, Mays Clinic
Wanda Lomax, lead services coordinator, Cardiopulmonary Center
Polly Williams, infection preventionist, Infection Control

Research Support

Keegan Breaux, senior research assistant, Pulmonary Medicine Research
Shashank Ghantoji, senior research assistant, Infectious Diseases, Infection Control Research
Tao Hai, senior research assistant, Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders
Amy Jacob-Merchant, grant program coordinator, Emergency Medicine
Viola Leal, senior research coordinator, General Internal Medicine
Donna Malveaux, coordinator, clinical studies, Symptom Research
Chenghui Ren, senior research assistant, Cardiology
Tamara Tipps, coordinator, clinical studies, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Carol Wilson, senior research nurse, Dermatology

Advanced Clinical Practice

Vickie Murphy, physician assistant, Pulmonary Medicine
Johnny Rollins, advanced practice nurse, Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders
Myrshia Woods, advanced practice nurse, Cardiology

General Administration

Erika Carriere, program coordinator, Pulmonary Medicine
Kawana Guillory, senior administrative assistant, Cardiology
Kenny Lee, accountant III, Division Administration
Victoria Li, senior financial analyst, Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders
Margo Meave, senior administrative assistant, Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health
Chong Pak, senior financial analyst, General Internal Medicine
Valda Page, senior data analyst, Emergency Medicine
Reba Pickens, senior administrative assistant, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Betty Spears, program coordinator, Dermatology
Kristen Van Houten, executive assistant, Symptom Research

2014 Employees of Excellence Awards Nominees

A nominator said Chenghui Ren “is an excellent team player. He is easy going with people in the immediate group and with people from all over the institution. He is consistently supportive with his assistance when colleagues call upon him.”

Ren was also described as a dedicated member of the research team. “He provides excellent technical support to the research projects of the department. Chenghui can be depended on to complete a project and will work long hours to ensure the project is done.”

“I am very happy to receive the award and be recognized for my hard work,” Ren says. “ I find my work very interesting and rewarding in itself.”

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Employee Excellence in Action

An opportunity to “shine a beam of light”

Once Carmen-Luz Vargo and Rosa Balderas check out of their offices on Monday afternoons, they check in with Volunteer Services to begin their duties as trained bilingual patient advocate volunteers. Their assignment is to visit Spanish-speaking inpatients and their caregivers, to provide support and comfort through conversation; and to offer institutional resources.

Vargo, executive assistant to Carmen Escalante, M.D., has donned the signature blue Volunteer Services coat for the past 12 years. She says the experience has helped her appreciate life.

“Because of this, I don’t take anything for granted,” Vargo says. “I now look at life like I never did before I was exposed to our cancer patients.” Vargo explains.

She recalls her first volunteer experience.

“I was so happy,” she says smiling. “I sang all the way home with the sun roof opened. I love using my language and seeing the smile when a patient hears, ‘Good afternoon,’ in their language.”

Volunteer a friend

Vargo enjoyed the experience so much she asked friend and colleague Rosa Balderas to assist her. Balderas, a senior administrative assistant in Dermatology, says she was slow to respond to the invitation, but she is now happy to accompany Vargo to patient rooms.

“There’s not a better place to be a volunteer! Carmen invited me several times to become a volunteer, so I finally decided to find out what she was talking about. It’s a great feeling helping others. It’s like shining a beam of light on someone who needs encouragement,” Balderas says.

“It proves that in every straining, there is training; in every lesson, there is learning; and in every learning, there is an earning.”

Vargo echoes the sentiment.

“Many patients and family members tell us, “God bless you ladies; you are doing a wonderful job. Vargo adds, “That is rewarding enough for me.”

Kenny Lee pursues new volunteer venture

Volunteerism is nothing new to Kenny Lee, accountant III, Division Administration. Lee has spent many weekends at Hospice Houston providing company to patients and their family members.

“I became a hospice volunteer because I feel that there is a need to help others feel comfortable at end of life. I am sometimes asked if it is difficult to be a hospice volunteer, and the short answer is no. There is much to learn about living from those who are dying,” Lee says.

Lee recently joined the MD Anderson Greeter program. Greeters are employees from all departments who volunteer an hour per month, or more if they choose, to welcome patients and family members into our institution. They are stationed at The Aquarium in the Main Building and The Tree Sculpture in Mays Clinic during the high traffic hours of 7:00-8:00 a.m., 8:00-9:00 a.m., and 9:00-10:00 a.m. Lee has chosen to greet patients and visitors in the Main Building.

“I chose the Main Building location, because I’m a little familiar with the layout. During my lunch breaks, I often see a huge volume of patients and visitors passing through that building. So I think there is a greater need for me to be there to help and greet the patients.”

In addition to Lee, Kelly McDermott, project director, and Judy Overton, program manager, are also Greeters. To learn more about the program, contact Delia Schwartz in Patient Advocacy via email.
Cara McCutcheon and her fellow patient service coordinators (PSCs) formed the Discovery Alliance Committee to buoy the spirits of care providers in the Internal Medicine Centers.

“During nurses week we held what we called “Happy Hour” where we offered refreshments, set up a Wii and held a dance competition,” McCutcheon says. “Everyone loved it. It was only for an hour but people left energized and excited.”

The committee’s activities were encouraged by Clinical Administrative Director June Kelsick and Clinical Business Manager Tony Choy-Morga.

“We’re very proud of what they are doing. It really has made everyone feel a little more appreciated for their hard work,” Choy-Morga says.

The committee will also develop a motivational board in which they will feature employees within the center on a monthly basis.

“We also plan fun outings like going to a Rockets game or bowling. Our motivation is to encourage teamwork and trust. These events are not only educational, but fun,” McCutcheon says.

The boosters boost themselves
The PSCs conduct monthly meetings to discuss projections and goals. Each member of the PSC team gets a chance to describe his/her day-to-day schedule.

“We all have the same technical functions,” McCutcheon says, “but each of our providers is different. I like to describe us as working in different countries, because even though we are all in the Internal Medicine Center, Infectious Disease runs differently than Endocrine and so on.”
Williams named 2014 Anderson Idol

Adam Williams, patient services coordinator in the Cardiopulmonary Center, stunned the audience with his operatic selection, “Questo Amor,” by Puccini. Even though he was definitely a crowd pleaser, only a few points separated the top four contestants.

“It is a blessing to be able to simply showcase the talent God has given me. It is beyond amazing to have others appreciate that gift,” Williams says. “I am humbled to be able to represent MD Anderson in such a way. I plan to perfect my gift, and hope for additional opportunities to share it with as many people as I possibly can.”

Williams joined MD Anderson earlier this year. His mother Theda Williams is an executive assistant in Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition. His brother Robert Williams is a patient services coordinator in the Endoscopy Center.

MD Anderson cycling club supports Texas 4000

On Saturday, May 31, a team of cyclists from the MD Anderson Cycling Club, including Roberto Reyes, manager of Systems Analyst Services, showed their support for the Texas 4000 Riders by participating in the annual Atlas Ride, which starts in Cedar Park and ends in Lampasas, TX. The Atlas Ride is the precursor to the Texas 4000 Ride.

Recognized as the longest charity bike ride in the world, the Texas 4000 cyclists pedal their way from Austin, Texas to Anchorage, Alaska. Ride participants raise funds to be used specifically for cancer research, and each rider dedicates his/her journey for family and friends who have been touched by cancer. There are 78 riders and three routes: Sierra, Rockies and Ozarks.

Club members were also present when members of the Ozarks team presented the institution with a check for $135,000, Wednesday, June 4. This is part of a seven-year, $1 million pledge earmarked for cancer research.
Team Brazil dazzles at Diversity Festival

The Division of Internal Medicine Diversity Celebration committee pulled out the stops to feature the South American country of Brazil at the Employee Diversity Celebration Wednesday, May 14. The food, music, dances and culture of 10 countries were featured at the event.

“Team Brazil,” under the direction of Executive Assistant Nadia Mosqueda, selected the South American country because it is the host site for the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics. The members worked closely with the Brazilian consulate to schedule brief comments from Consulate General Mario Saade, and spiced up the festivities with a face painter and performances by Brazilian Carnival and Capoeira dancers.

“This was such a great opportunity to work with employees from each area of our division for a few months. I was so proud of our team as our efforts truly shone at the festival,” Mosqueda says.”

Other committee members included Cathy Nguyen, Cardiology; Tanya Dabney, Bonnie Malone and Theda Williams, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition; Carol Murphy, General Internal Medicine; Wendy McDaniel and Micheline Shannon, Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health; Gloria Torres, Pulmonary Medicine; Mary Samad, Symptom Research; and Kelly McDermott and Renee Rodriguez, Division Administration. Kirk Nealy, Organization for Minority Employees (OME) member, provided guidance and support.

“It’s been all about teamwork since our first planning meeting,” Mosqueda says. “Selecting Brazil was the best choice since we had so many areas to focus on from the Amazon, to Carnival, and now World Cup and the Olympics. We couldn’t go wrong with that!”

Mosqueda said she got the group in the mood for planning meetings with fun and vibrant Brazilian music, which caused creativity and enthusiasm to soar.

Shanghai site of SUMO and Ubiquitin conference

The Seventh International Conference, “SUMO, Ubiquitin, UBL Proteins: Implications for Human Diseases,” was held in Shanghai, China, May 10-13. Edward T.H. Yeh, M.D., chair, Cardiology, has organized the biennial meeting since 2002. More than 300 scientists from 20 countries attended the conference, co-sponsored by Shanghai Jiao-Tung University Medical School.

SUMO (small Ubiquitin-like modifier), a major post-translational protein modification pathway that plays important roles in cancer, inflammation, heart and neuro-degenerative diseases, was discovered by Yeh’s laboratory in 1996. This year’s conference featured Aaron Ciechanover, M.D., D.Sc., an Israeli biologist who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and was attended by many distinguished scientists from Asia, North America, South America, Europe, and Australia.

In addition to lectures, there were two poster sessions and many opportunities that allowed the participants to share discoveries and to make new connections. The Eighth International Conference in 2016 will mark the 20th anniversary of the discovery of Sentrin/SUMO protein.
Two Internal Medicine Physicians Among First Recipients of Award

Jichao Chen, Ph.D., and Samuel Shelburne, M.D., Ph.D., were among 16 MD Anderson faculty members to be named the first R. Lee Clark Fellows. The award, named for first MD Anderson President R. Lee Clark, M.D., is “one mechanism for the institution to recognize and support junior faculty whose early excellence indicates they will become future leaders,” according to Provost and Executive Vice President Ethan Dmitrovsky, M.D. Chen was a recipient in the Scientist Panel, while Shelburne was among the Physician-Scientist Panel winners. Each of them received $100,000 to spend over one-to-two years.

Cardiology

Myrshia Woods, physician assistant, was named an Outstanding Physician Assistant Student Elective Preceptor at the Physician Assistant Education Week Award Ceremony, Tuesday, April 22.

Edward T.H. Yeh, M.D., professor and chair, was invited to present, “Anthracycline Cardiotoxicity: From Research to Clinical Practice,” at the Second National Congress of the Italian Association of CardiOncology, Thursday, June 12, in Naples, Italy.

Division Administration

Division Head Robert Gagel, M.D., has been named Board President of the National Osteoporosis Foundation.

Judy Overton, program manager, was named the Heart of MD Anderson for March. Overton also has recently been named to the newly-formed MD Anderson Patient and Family Advisory Council.

Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders

Ramona Dadu, M.D., received a Women in Endocrinology Young Investigator Award in recognition of her research submitted to the 2014 Endocrine Society Annual Meeting. She was among the honorees at the annual dinner, Saturday, June 21, in Chicago.

Mimi Hu, M.D., associate professor, was named the May 2014 Faculty Educator of the Month. In addition to her position as co-director of the Bone Healthcare Program, Hu serves as the director of the Oncologic Endocrinology Fellowship Program, and the Rotation Program Director for the Endocrinology Fellowship Programs at Baylor College of Medicine, the University of Texas Health Science Center Houston and The Methodist Hospital.

Symptom Research

Robert Danzer, Ph.D., D.V.M., professor, gave the keynote lecture on Inflammation and Depression at the first Immunopsychiatry meeting at the Medical School of Sussex in Brighton, England, on Saturday, June 28.

An article of Annemieke Kavelaars, Ph.D., professor, was selected by Provost and Executive Vice President Ethan Dmitrovsky, M.D., to be framed for inclusion in the Publications Gallery displayed in the Provost’s suite. Her work article, “Balancing GK2 and EPAC1 Levels Prevents and Relieves Chronic Pain," was printed in the December edition of the Journal of Clinical Investigation.

Pulmonary Medicine

Loy Deloney retired from MD Anderson May 31 after 13 years with the institution. Deloney was honored with a retirement celebration on Thursday, May 29.

General Internal Medicine

Tiffanie Washington, advanced practice nurse, has earned the Certified Anticoagulation Care Provider (CACP) credential.
Spotlight on Research

Cleeland earns Distinguished Paper Award
Charles Cleeland, Ph.D., professor and chair in Symptom Research, received the most recent Division of Internal Medicine Distinguished Paper Award before the Friday, May 16 Grand Rounds. The article, “Ablation of Acetate Plus Prednisone versus Prednisone Alone in Chemotherapy-naive Men with Metastatic Castration-resistant Prostate Cancer: Patient-reported Outcome Results of a Randomized Phase 3 Trial,” was published in the December 2013 *Lancet Oncology*.

Trainee Research Day
One Internal Medicine trainee won first place and another received second place honors at the Trainee Research Day, Wednesday, June 18. Three other trainees were finalists in the competition that initially included 190 posters.

- **Xerxes Pundole**, graduate research assistant in General Internal Medicine, received first place honors for his research, “High Incidence of Osteoporotic Fractures following Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation.” Pundole’s mentor is Huifang Lu, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor in General Internal Medicine.

- **Parag Mahale**, mentored by Harrys Torres, M.D., assistant professor in Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health, won second place in the Population Science category for the Graduate and Undergraduate Student Poster Competition.

- **Vida Chitsazzadeh** was a finalist in the Translational Research category for the Graduate and Undergraduate Student Oral Competition. Her mentor is Kenneth Tsai, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in Dermatology.

- **Noha Hassan, M.D.,** mentored by Maria Suarez-Almazor, M.D., Ph.D., professor in General Internal Medicine, was a finalist in the Clinical Research category of the Postdoctoral and Clinical Fellow Poster Competition.

- **Joan Ritho** was a finalist in the Basic Science category for the Graduate and Undergraduate Student Poster Competition. Her mentor is Edward T.H. Yeh, M.D., professor and chair in Cardiology.

Dermatology
The trustees of the Spatz Foundation awarded Madeleine Duvic, M.D., $199,925 to support her proposal, “Molecular Targets in Cutaneous T-cell Lymphoma.”

Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Key work of Gottumukkala Raju, M.D., professor, was selected to be highlighted during the Best of Digestive Disease Week (DDW),” by American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Secretary Kenneth R. McQuaid, M.D. Raju’s presentation, “Natural Language Processing as an Alternative to Manual Reporting of Colonoscopy Quality Metrics,” was recognized as among the five best submissions to DDW for 2014.

General Internal Medicine
Huifang (Linda) Lu, M.D., Ph.D., is the recipient of one of three Cancer Survivorship Research Seed Money Grants for the 2014 cycle. Her application titled, “Evaluation of Risk Factors in Predicting Fractures following Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation in Patients with Underlying Hematologic Malignancies,” will be funded $50,000 over a two-year period.

She has also received a 2014 Conquer Cancer Foundation of ASCO Merit Award for her abstract, “Factors Associated with Bone Fractures following Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation.”

Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health
Dimitrios Farmakiotis received second place in Clinical Research at the Baylor College of Medicine Housestaff Research Symposium, Friday, April 4. Farmakiotis was recognized for his work, “Candida Glabrata Fungemia in Patients with Cancer: Infectious Disease Consultation is Associated with Timely Initiation of Appropriate Treatment and Decreased Mortality.” His mentor is Dimitrios Kontoyiannis, M.D., who was the senior author.

Nephrology
Farhad Danesh, M.D., professor and section chief of Nephrology, and a standing member of the NIH Pathobiology of Kidney Disease (PBKD) study section, chaired a special emphasis study group on Monday, June 30, that focused on the Molecular Pathways in Kidney Disease.

Symptom Research
Robert Dantzer, Ph.D., D.V.M., professor, received a $50,000 Cancer Survivorship Research Seed Money Grant for his research, “Improving the Quality of Life of Cancer Survivors through the Indentification of Treatment Targets for Cancer-related Fatigue.”

Pooja Singhmar won a Thematic Best Poster Award at the Experimental Biology Conference in San Diego in early May. Her abstract was titled, “Phosphorylation of Epac1 by GRK2 Inhibits Epac1-Rap1 Signaling and Prevents Chronic Pain.”

Elisabeth Vichaya, Ph.D., was selected to present an oral presentation on Thursday, May 29, at the 2014 Psychoneuroimmunology Research Society (PNIRS) meeting in Philadelphia.

Leadership

**Steven Sherman, M.D.,** has been named Associate Provost for Clinical Research, in addition to his continued service as chair of Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders, a post he has fulfilled since the department’s creation in 2000.

Sherman is an internationally-respected endocrinologist and clinical trial expert who is sought out to care for patients with advanced thyroid cancer. In addition to his MD Anderson responsibilities, Sherman is the chairman of the International Thyroid Oncology Group (ITOG) since 2011. He recently celebrated his 25th year with the institution.

**Division Administrator Joel Helmke** has accepted a position as vice president, Oncology Service Line, for WellStar Health System, based in Marietta, Georgia. Helmke is leaving MD Anderson July 16 after 14 years with the institution.

Division Head Robert Gagel, M.D., said, “Joel has been a dynamic leader during his three years as administrator. We will miss his dedicated attention to administrative details, his generous spirit and boundless energy. He is poised to take the next leap in his career development.”
Promotions

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<th>Department</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiopulmonary Center</td>
<td>Courtney Barnes</td>
<td>Clinical business manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Medicine</td>
<td>Marie Gonzalez</td>
<td>Senior administrative assistant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lisa McLemore</td>
<td>Office manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders</td>
<td>Melinda Gordon</td>
<td>Senior coordinator, research data</td>
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<td>Michal Houston</td>
<td>Coordinator, clinical studies, Endocrine Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endocrine Center</td>
<td>Carla Durden</td>
<td>Patient access specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gastroenterology Research</td>
<td>Shamim Ejaz</td>
<td>Senior coordinator, research data</td>
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<td>General Internal Medicine</td>
<td>Jessica Fiske</td>
<td>Operations manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulmonary Laboratory</td>
<td>Lee Taylor, Jr.</td>
<td>Coordinator, Pulmonary Laboratory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulmonary Medicine Research</td>
<td>Amber Cumpian</td>
<td>Research assistant II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Symptom Research</td>
<td>Raza Bokhari</td>
<td>Senior coordinator, clinical studies</td>
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Five DoIM faculty earn Institutional Research Grants

The Office of Research Administration recently announced that five members of the Division of Internal Medicine earned Institutional Research Grants for the April 2014 cycle, one in the Basic Science Study Section and four in the Clinical Translational Study Section.

Division Head Robert Gagel, M.D., indicated, “I am pleased with the performance of our faculty. Their success validates the DoIM’s goal to develop research-driven internal medicine care that interdigitates with the oncologic research and clinical goals of the Institution.”

Jichao Chen, Ph.D., assistant professor in Pulmonary Medicine Research, was granted $50,000 for development programs of lung epithelial progenitors in the Basic Science category.

Recipients in the Clinical Translational tract include:

- Marina George, M.D., assistant professor in General Internal Medicine, who will receive $49,873 for the development of a decision and prototype for end-of-life conversations in hospitalized patients with advanced cancer;

- Anne Marie Chaftari, M.D., assistant professor in Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health, who will receive $50,000 for a pilot study to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of novel non-antibiotic, non-heparin based catheter lock solution used for prevention of intraluminal central venous catheter infections in cancer patients;

- David Ost, M.D., associate professor in Pulmonary Medicine, for his study on the development of a drug-eluting airway stent for malignant airway obstruction. Ost will receive $50,000;

- Harrys Torres, M.D., assistant professor in Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health, who will receive $49,520 for his proposal on reactivation of chronic hepatitis C infection in patients receiving chemotherapy.

The Basic Science committee received 23 applications from 17 departments, while members of the Clinical Translational committee reviewed 30 applications from 21 departments.

“High success of our junior faculty investigators in this competitive internal funding mechanism and the spectrum of their projects, makes us very proud and optimistic about the future of research in the DoIM,” Deputy Division Head – Research Dimitrios Kontoyiannis, M.D., says.