

NEWS

NIH Grant For General Clinical Research Center Awarded to the School of Medicine

THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE has been awarded a five-year, \$15 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to establish a General Clinical Research Center (GCRC). The GCRC, a joint effort of the School of Medicine and the University of Maryland Medical Center, will provide resources to help faculty members conduct efficient, cost-effective clinical trials in a patient-friendly, state-of-the-art environment.

The GCRC research staff—nurses, dietitians, biostatisticians, technicians and administrators—will help investigators by facilitating the day-to-day research process and by supporting and assisting patients and volunteers. “The GCRC allows faculty researchers to share personnel, expertise and space they would have had to acquire separately in the past,” says GCRC program director, Carol O. Tacket, MD, professor of medicine.

Occupying two wings on the 10th floor of the south hospital, the GCRC provides both inpatient and outpatient rooms. “D-wing” houses four exam rooms, a spacious patient care area, a clinical laboratory, and a body composition facility to measure

bone density and body fat. “C-wing” includes 11 inpatient beds and serves as an isolation ward for the Center for Vaccine Development. The unit can accommodate more than 4,800 outpatient research volunteers annually.

During the first year, more than 40 NIH-funded studies will be conducted with GCRC support, and that total is expected to increase over time. “As we build our staff, we expect to blossom in terms of the services we can offer to faculty researchers,” says Dr. Tacket. An advisory panel will review eligible research projects and determine utilization of GCRC resources.

The University of Maryland School of Medicine is one of the few institutions to receive a full five-year funding commitment from the NIH with its first GCRC grant application. Institutions are usually funded for three years initially. “The collaborative nature of the GCRC will enable us to expand basic science research at the School of Medicine to develop life-saving drugs, devices and therapies,” says Dean Wilson, the principal investigator for the GCRC grant.

University of Maryland Partners with Russia to Fight Cancer

The University of Maryland School of Medicine will receive funds from the federal government for a partnership with Philadelphia’s Fox Chase Cancer Center and a group of Russian hospital and cancer research centers. Through the support of Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD), federal dollars will be shared by the University of Maryland Greenebaum Cancer Center (UMGCC) and Fox Chase to extend research activities and provide education and training to the NN Blokhin Cancer Research Center in Moscow, the Irkutsk Regional Oncology Center in Siberia, and the Moscow City Hospital #7 (an affiliate of the Russian State Medical University).

Fox Chase has actively pursued formal relationships with Russian-based cancer hospitals, the UMGCC, and other research centers since 1999. The partnership between the UMGCC and Fox Chase synergizes and complements the activities of the two cancer centers and augments activities with the Blokhin Cancer Research Center. Fox Chase and the University of Maryland will together use the funds to carryout several conferences in Russia which will focus on providing new strategies in treating cancer including new surgical techniques, improved therapies, and innovative radiation therapy techniques. The conferences will take place with the support of the Russian National Cancer Research Institute and the NN Blokhin Cancer Research Center.

Of particular interest are cancers of the head and neck, lung and esophageal, and prostate, from which a disproportionate

number of Russians suffer. Sanford A. Stass, MD, director of the University of Maryland Greenebaum Cancer Center, will direct the project at Maryland.

For more information, contact Mark Kochevar, administrator, UMGCC, at mkochevar@umm.edu or 8-7516.



Physicians and historians diagnose the illness that killed Herod the Great at the 8th annual clinical pathologic conference held on January 25th at Davidge Hall, sponsored by the School of Medicine and the VA Maryland Health Care System. Left to right: Jan Hirschmann, MD, professor of medicine, University of Washington School of Medicine; Peter Richardson, PhD, professor emeritus for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto (portraying King Herod); Ross Shepard Kraemer, PhD, professor of religious studies, Brown University; and Philip A. Mackowiak, MD, professor of medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine.

A Publication for the
Faculty & Staff of the

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Quick Studies

Mordecai Blaustein, MD, professor and chair, Department of Physiology, was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology at its annual meeting last December in Los Cabos, Mexico. The award is given for lifetime achievement in service to physiology research, teaching and administration.

Daniel Bochicchio, MD, FCCP, assistant professor, Department of Anesthesiology, and a major in the National Guard, recently graduated from the Army Command and General Staff Officers Course. The course prepares selected officers for assignment to command and staff duty positions of higher responsibility.

Myron M. Levine, MD, DTPH, professor, Departments of Medicine, Pediatrics, Microbiology & Immunology, and director, Center for Vaccine Development, was voted a Baltimorean of the Year in *Baltimore Magazine's* January 2002 issue for his decades of hard work in vaccine development.

Charles A. Sansur, MS-IV, had research published in the December 2000 edition of *Stereostatic and Functional Neurosurgery*. The title of his article was "Gamma Knife Radiosurgery for the Treatment of Brain Metastases." The article was classified as a review article on Medline, and is regarded as being one of the largest single institution studies on the outcome of Gamma Knife for the treatment of brain metastases. Charles also took a year off to participate in the NIH Clinical Research Training Program and was one of only 18 students to receive the fellowship.

Margaret M. McCarthy, PhD, associate professor, Department of Physiology, had an article titled "GABA Mediates Steroid-Induced Astrocyte Differentiation in the Neonatal Rat Hypothalamus" published in the January 2002 edition of the *Journal of Neuroendocrinology*. A figure from Dr. McCarthy's article also appeared on the cover of the journal.

Margaret Testa, General Clinical Research Center nurse manager, has been chosen President-Elect of the Association of GCRC Nurse Managers for 2002-2003.

G. David Trisler, PhD, adjunct assistant professor, Department of Neurology, gave a presentation on "Transplantation of Neural and Haematopoietic Stem Cells into Retina, Hippocampus and Striatum," in January in Paris at the meeting of the C.N.R.S. Development & Immunité du Systeme Nerveux Central, Université Paris VI, Faculté de Médecine Broussals Hotel-Dieu. He will give a presentation on the same topic this month at a meeting on Cellular and Molecular Treatments of Neurological Diseases at Harvard University Medical School.

Frank Zufall, PhD, associate professor, Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology, was awarded a five-year \$1,503,565 grant from the NIH National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders to study "Membrane Mechanisms of Olfactory Transduction."

"MED SCHOOL" BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES

The School of Medicine will host a special viewing of Video Press' "Med School." This Discovery Health Network five-hour documentary about our very own medical students will be shown for four consecutive Mondays and a Friday this month in the Freshman Lecture Hall on the first floor of the Bressler Building from noon to 1:00 PM:

- Monday, March 4th
- Monday, March 11th
- Monday, March 18th
- Monday, March 25th
- Friday, March 29th

All are welcome. And bring a brown bag lunch!

MATCH DAY

The annual Match Day ceremony will take place at noon on Thursday, March 21 in Davidge Hall. All are invited to attend! For more information contact Michele at the Medical Alumni Association at 6-7454.

SOMNews is produced by the University of Maryland School of Medicine Office of Public Affairs.

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FUNfact

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