

# Division of Nephrology and Hypertension Newsletter

July 2022 – Issue 10

## Let freedom ring...

*Check out some of our fabulous news and important highlights!*



### **Division Announcements**

- Fri, July 1<sup>st</sup>** Beginning of Fiscal Year
- Mon, July 4<sup>th</sup>** Fourth of July (VUMC Official Holiday)
- Mon, July 11<sup>th</sup>** Monthly Faculty Meeting

**Division Announcements:** We have attached the staff wellness monthly calendar with the special events for July. (Some events may change depending on the institutional COVID-19 guidelines.) Look for the reminder emails from Savannah Sumatra for specific details.

### **Kudos:**

Congratulations to **Xinyu Dong, Bethany Birkelo, Sho Saguhara and Eman Gohar** on receiving the 2022 KidneyCure Grants! Almost 1 out of 5 awards were given to Vanderbilt applicants.

**Fellowship News:**

**From the desk of Drs. Burgner/Lewis:**

Please help us in welcoming our new incoming class of Nephrology Fellows as of July 1st!



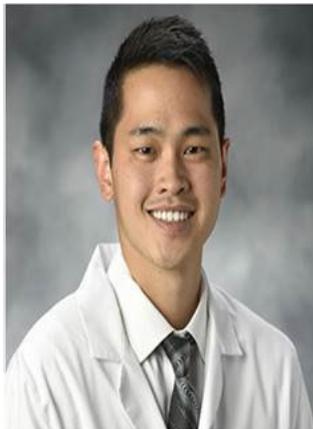
Sarah Abu Kar



Maryn Garnder



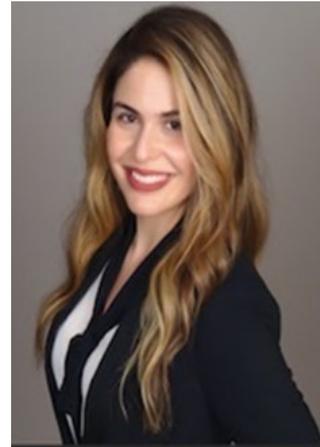
Connor Grantham



Russell Leong



Barbara McMullan



Gilda Portalatin



Nicole Wyatt

## **Diversity News:**

### **From the desk of Dr. Umeukeje:**

**Diversity Events:** Check out some great Diversity events and opportunities for the month of November. Attached is a poster for the most recent happenings at VUMC.

The next DOM Anti-Racism Book club meeting is on Tues, July 12 at 12:00-1:00 pm via Zoom. The goal of this group is to create a community that can come together to learn about, reflect upon, and put into practice anti-racism concepts.

<https://zoom.us/j/98657639197?pwd=NGxHSFVaL3MITHRmbE4zZHFzZlINSZz09>

## **Research News:**

### **Research Publications:**

Obesity is an inflammatory condition. In a recent article titled, “Cyclooxygenase-2 in adipose tissue macrophages limits adipose tissue dysfunction in obese mice” in *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, investigators in the labs of **Drs. Zhang and Harris** reported that prostaglandins produced by adipose tissue macrophages promote anti-inflammatory pathways and reduce insulin resistance as well as obesity. They further found that these beneficial effects were mediated by the PGE2 receptor, EP4. The other authors of this study were Yu Pan, MD, PhD and Shirong Cao, MD, PhD, co-first authors, Jiaqi Tang, PhD, JP Arroyo, MD/PhD Andrew Terker, MD/PhD, Yinqi Wang, PhD, Aolei Niu, PhD, Xiaofeng Fan and Suwan Wang, Yahua Zhang, Ming Jiang, Ph.D and David Wasserman, PhD..

A study by researchers **Drs. Hanako Kobayashi and Volker Haase** was published in PubMed titled, “Inhibition of hypoxia-inducible factor-prolyl hydroxylation protects from cyclophosphamide-induced bladder injury and urinary dysfunction.”

**Dr. Beatrice Concepcion** recently had an article published titled, “Access to hepatitis C direct-acting antiviral therapy in hepatitis C-positive donor to hepatitis C-negative recipient solid-organ transplantation in a real-world setting.” In this study, researchers reported their center’s experience in obtaining access to direct acting antivirals for solid organ transplant recipients who developed donor-derived hepatitis C infection. Using an integrative specialty pharmacy model, they found that all 91 patients included in the study were able to access DAA, although 35% required an insurance appeal. Median time from transplant to first dose was 45 days. Prior authorization denials necessitating insurance appeals led to delays in therapy. Patient cost was minimal after utilization of copay assistance programs. In conclusion, their findings indicate that access to DAAs in donor derived hepatitis C posttransplant is achievable and

affordable, although added administrative efforts may be required to obtain insurance approval and copay assistance.

**Drs. Bethany Birkelo and Edward Siew** recently published an article titled, “Overview of Diagnostic Criteria and Epidemiology of Acute Kidney Injury and Acute Kidney Disease in the Critically Ill Patient” for *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* in which they detail the diagnostic criteria and epidemiology of acute kidney injury in critical illness, and discuss efforts to advance AKI phenotyping and care through the discovery of novel AKI biomarkers as well as the leveraging of artificial intelligence. Their review, which they co-wrote with Dr. Neesh Pannu at the University of Alberta, was published as an invited article for CJASN’s ongoing series on AKI and critical care nephrology.

**Dr. Ebele Umeukeje** and Dr. Derek Griffith recently published an article in JASN titled ‘Navigating to Kidney Health Equity’. This article highlights key practice, policy and research priorities to consider in the quest to achieve kidney health equity.

## Spotlight Newsletter Recipients

### Heidi Schaefer, MD



**Heidi Schaefer MD** is Professor of Medicine in the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She serves as Medical Director of the Transplant Center, Medical Director of the Living Kidney Donor Program and Medical Director of 6MCE Transplant Medical/Surgical Unit. Dr. Schaefer chose a career in transplant nephrology due to her interest in providing highly specialized care to a complex patient population as well as the satisfaction in caring for patients who have a second chance at life through organ transplantation. She has clinical interests in living kidney donation, dual organ

transplantation, and HIV in kidney transplantation. She enjoys teaching and mentoring at all levels and currently is the Schaffner Society Representative for the division.

Dr. Schaefer enjoys spending time with her 2 children, Maddie (16 years) and Mason (14 years) and most often, is at a pool somewhere watching them swim competitively. She also likes to hike, ride the greenways on her bike, and read mindless fiction.

### Grace Zhang



**Grace Zhang** is a Research Assistant III in Dr. Alp Ikizler's lab. She has been at VUMC in the Department of Nephrology for 17 years. Grace oversees the daily activities of the Ikizler lab ranging from processing study samples, training new lab personnel, developing SOPs, and operating and maintaining lab equipment to collaborating with faculty and staff on various research studies and projects. With all the experiences she has gained during the past 17 years, she has become an indispensable asset within the lab. Grace was recently also highlighted in the APOLLO study newsletter for her highly

valued contributions in sample processing and management. She also serves as staff wellness committee member in the Department of Nephrology. Some of her interests include cooking, traveling, taking walks, and helping others.