

# Division of Nephrology and Hypertension Newsletter

May 2022 – Issue 8

## April showers bring May flowers...

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



### **Division Announcements**

- Tues, May 3<sup>rd</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>** Employee Staff Survey
- Thurs, May 5<sup>th</sup>** Cinco de Mayo (not official VUMC Holiday)
- Thurs, May 5<sup>th</sup>** Renal Grand Rounds – Dr. Robert S. Hoover, Professor of Medicine & Physiology from Tulane University School of Medicine
- Sun, May 8<sup>th</sup>** Mother's Day
- Mon-Fri, May 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>** National Nurses Week
- Thurs, May 12<sup>th</sup>** Friend of Nursing Award Presentation - 2:00 PM-2:30 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada), (TVC 3812 Conference Room/ZOOM)
- Sat-Wed, May 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>** 2<sup>nd</sup> Acute Kidney Injury Conference: From Bench to Bedside
- Thurs, May 19<sup>th</sup>** NEPHRON Award – 2:00 PM (MRB III, 4<sup>th</sup> floor atrium)
- Wed, May 25<sup>th</sup>** ASN abstract deadline (1 pm CST)
- Mon, May 30<sup>th</sup>** Memorial Day (official VUMC Holiday)

**Division Announcements:**

**Division of Nephrology & Hypertension Annual Staff Picnic is BACK!**

Please join us on Saturday June 11, 2022

RSVP to Crystal Spencer by May 23<sup>rd</sup> by clicking this link:

<https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=MTRLN97DHKEER83W>

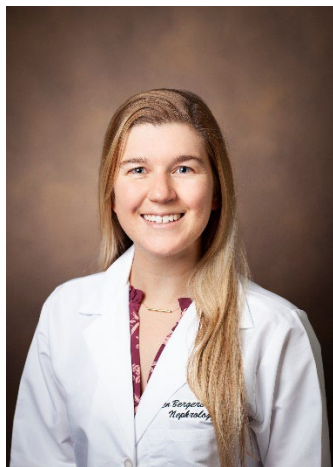
**Kudos:**

Congratulations to **Dr. Thomas Golper** on receiving the 2022 VUMC W. Anderson Spickard Jr., Award for Extraordinary Performance of Clinical Service!

**Fellowship News:**

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

Please join me in congratulating our chief fellows for the 2022-2023 academic year: **Drs. Jennifer Bergeron and Jefferson Triozzi!** Please also join me in congratulating **Dr. Max Nutt** as our Professionalism Award winner. And last but certainly not least, please join me in congratulating **Dr. Julie Lewis** for winning the Faculty Teaching Award. Congratulations all on your very well-deserved honors!



Dr. Jennifer Bergeron



Dr. Jefferson Triozzi



Dr. Max Nutt



Dr. Julie Lewis

**Diversity News:**

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

**Diversity Events:** The May diversity poster will be sent separately as soon as it becomes available.

**VOKC News:**

**From the desk of Dr. Cavanaugh:**

**VOKC Patient, Family, and Community Health Advisory Board:** The next virtual meeting is May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Research News:**

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

**Dr. Ebele Umeukeje** provided a commentary on Social Determinants of Health – ‘the biggest elephant in the room’ for the AJKD NephMadness. Here’s a link to the blog: <https://ajkdblog.org/2022/04/07/nephmadness-2022-social-determinants-of-health-the-biggest-elephant-in-the-room/>

**Dr. Ebele** was a panel speaker at the recent ASN AKI now AI webinar on ‘Reducing *Unconscious Bias* in AKI Artificial Intelligence Algorithm.’

**Research Publications:**

**Dr. Jian-chun Chen & Dr. Ray Harris** recently had an article titled, “TAZ is important for maintenance of the integrity of podocytes” in PubMed. In this article, researchers investigated the potential role of the YAP (Yes- associated protein) paralog TAZ in podocytes.

# Spotlight Newsletter Recipients

## Ebele Umeukeje, MD



**Ebele Umeukeje** is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and a Faculty Scholar at the Vanderbilt Center for Health Services Research. In addition to her inpatient (VUMC) and outpatient (CKD clinic) clinical duties, Dr. Umeukeje also serves as the Diversity Liaison for the Nephrology Division. She is a member of the Diversity Committee of the American Society of Nephrology, and a member of the Editorial Boards of the American Journal of Kidney Diseases (AJKD) and ASN Kidney 360 journal.

Dr. Umeukeje moved to Nashville from Los Angeles in 2007 and came to VUMC as a Nephrology Fellow in 2011 following a year as Chief Medical Resident at Meharry Medical College and the VA hospital in Murfreesboro. During her Nephrology fellowship, Dr. Umeukeje received an NIDDK F32 award and successfully conducted a randomized clinical trial (RCT) testing the feasibility of using motivational interviewing to improve medication adherence in dialysis patients. She has established an excellent track-record of funding as an early investigator, having received a BIRCWH K12 award, an NIDDK K23 career development award, and an NIDDK R03 award to fund her research.

Dr. Umeukeje's interest in Nephrology was driven by the disproportionate burden of end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) and disparities in care and outcomes among racial/ethnic minorities.

Dr. Umeukeje loves to cook (spicy food!), thinks of herself as a good dancer (her kids may beg to differ!) and dreams of finding time for regular 'zumba' dancing in future. She thrives on family time and genuinely enjoys traveling and interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. She is very passionate about motivating people especially patients living with kidney disease.

## Keiko Takahashi



**Keiko Takahashi** is a Research Assistant III in Takamune Takahashi's lab. She has been at VUMC in the Division of Nephrology for 25 years (since 1997). She has worked on a variety of projects that explore novel mechanisms or models of kidney disease and angiogenesis. She found a ligand for CD148 tyrosine phosphatase. She has also been participating in the projects that develop new *in vivo* kidney imaging techniques (MRI, SPECT, and microCT) to better assess kidney disease. Recently, she is working on the Bayer/VUMC collaborative project that develops new therapeutic antibodies for kidney disease. She contributed to over thirty publications including

seven first author papers. She received three poster awards at VICC retreat. Keiko is a highly established and outstanding staff member in Nephrology. She enjoys traveling, swimming, cooking, and chatting with her friends