Department of Medicine News Archive

{January – Current 2021}

IN THE NEWS

Anne Blaes, MD, appointed as Interim Division Director

We are delighted to announce that Anne Blaes, MD, has been appointed the Interim Director for the Division of Hematology, Oncology and Transplantation (HOT). Dr. Blaes is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine and Section Head of Medical Oncology in the HOT Division. In addition to these leadership roles, Dr. Blaes serves as Director of Survivorship Services and Translational Research and Co-Leader of the Screening, Prevention, Etiology and Cancer Survivorship Program at the Masonic Cancer Center. Dr. Blaes is nationally recognized for her expertise in breast cancer and cancer survivorship. Among her many accomplishments, she has chaired the American Society of Clinical Oncology Cancer Survivorship Committee and is currently an Associate Editor of JACC CardioOncology. She is a member of the Global Cardio-Oncology Executive Committee and a member of the American Heart Association's Cardio-Oncology Council. Dr. Blaes obtained her MD degree from Loyola University and completed residency, chief residency, and hematology/oncology fellowship at the University of Minnesota before joining the faculty in 2009. She also has a Masters in Clinical Research from the University of Minnesota.

"Becoming a Doctor:" Student Anthology Spurs Reflection

For the first time, stories from the University of Minnesota Medical School's "Becoming a Doctor" course have been compiled and shared. Founding director, Andrew Olson, MD, an associate professor in the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics. Read Story

Laalitha Surapaneni, MD, MPH Quoted in WCCO-TV and Duluth News Tribune

Dr. Surapaneni, an Assistant Profesor in the Division of General Internal Medicine, was quoted in both publications in regards to the health effects of smoke and the intersection of health and climate change.

Susan Kline, MD, MPH, a professor of infectious diseases at the U of M Medical School, is the lead investigator of the Prevent COVID U study. The University of Minnesota Medical School has joined a national study working to understand how well COVID-19 vaccines prevent infection and the spread of SARS-CoV-2 among young adults between the ages of 18 and 29. It is the only trial site in the four-state border region — among 40 sites in the nation — and is currently enrolling interested study participants in the Twin Cities. Read Story

Elimination of Race-based eGFR Adjustments

Kristina Krohn, MD, assistant professor in the Department of Medicine's Division of General Internal Medicine, helped lead the interdisciplinary task force behind the elimination of race-based eGFR adjustments at M Health Fairview. Read Story

New Interim Medical Director for the Lung Transplant Program

The PACCS Division and Solid Organ Transplant Service Line are very pleased to announce that Jagadish Patil, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, is the Interim Medical Director of the Lung Transplant Program as of July 1, 2021. Dr. Patil is an outstanding clinician and has been a stalwart contributor for many years to the Lung Transplant Program, in addition to his activities in Cystic Fibrosis, Pulmonary and Critical Care. Dr. Patil has led and co-led a number of important quality improvement activities in

lung transplant and is recognized by colleagues for his superb care of patients and families. We welcome Dr Patil and sincerely thank him for assuming this interim leadership role.

Two U of M Medical School Studies Provide New Evidence to Battle Drug Price Increases
"Our study shows that dramatic drug price increases lead to much higher outpatient costs and decrease appropriate drug treatment due to access issues and health care professionals switching to a substandard drug," said co-first author of the study, William Stauffer, MD, MSPH, FASTMH, who is a professor of medicine at the U of M Medical School. "More studies need to be done to confirm these findings, but this should increase policymakers attention as they consider solutions to extreme drug pricing." Read Story

Socioeconomic status non-factor in severe COVID-19 for racial, ethnic populations in Twin Cities
A research team, led by the University of Minnesota Medical School, found that regardless of socioeconomic status, Twin Cities residents of underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds endure worse COVID-19 outcomes compared to people who are white.

"For people of color, even in the highest socioeconomic status, our data shows they still have worse COVID-19 outcomes compared to people who are white," said Nicholas Ingraham, MD, a third-year fellow in the division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine who led the study. "We also found that, independent of race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, non-English speaking is

Dr. Sick was selected from a pool of nine University-wide nominees as the Tony Diggs Excellent Student Group Advisor for 2020 for his work with the Phillips Neighborhood Clinic (PNC). This award recognizes outstanding advisors of student groups who has gone above and beyond to help their group accomplish its mission and goals. The clinic also won the 2020 Excellence in Health and Wellness award; it has won a Tony Diggs award every year since 2014.

Reflections On The Covid-19 Pivot In Academic Medicine
16 U of M Medical School Leaders Share What's Changed, What's Next? Read Story

The Gold Foundation Honors Champions of Humanistic Care
Brian Muthyala, MD, MPH, assistant professor with the division of General Internal Medicine, was selected as one of the champions of humanistic care for his work during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Dr. Brian Muthyala is an example of humanism in clinical care and medical education," his student nominators said. "In addition to his role as a physician, he went above and beyond to guide medical students navigating changes to rotations, applying to residency programs and preparing for virtual interviews. His efforts have facilitated students' success in navigating the myriad changes to medical education related to the pandemic." Read Story

New clinical trial uses CAR NK cells derived from human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSC) as a renewable cell source for product manufacture and off-the-shelf delivery to patients. Principal Investigator, Veronika Bachanova, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine at the Medical School and Lead of the Lymphoma Interdisciplinary Team. The multi-centered trial is investigating the safety and activity of the

universal, off-the-shelf NK cell product, and builds off of the groundbreaking NK research done by Jeffrey Miller, MD, Deputy Director of the Masonic Cancer Center and Professor of Medicine at the University of Minnesota Medical School. Read Story

'Rescue Study' Analyzes if a Protective Substance in the Blood Vessels Can Impact COVID Infections: Marc Pritzker, MD, FACC, professor in the Department of Medicine's Cardiovascular Division, is a primary investigator for the study. Dr. Pritzker is working in tandem with co-investigators Craig Weinert, MD, MPH, professor, and Hem Desai, MBBS, MPH, assistant professor, both in the Department of Medicine's Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine. Read Story

Clinical Trial: Metformin Treatment For Covid-19: The clinical trial is studying the effectiveness of metformin, a generic medication for type 2 diabetes, in the treatment of COVID-19. It will be the first randomized clinical trial for COVID-19 in the world to include pregnant women. "Observational studies like this cannot be conclusive but do contribute to growing bodies of evidence," said Carolyn Bramante, MD, principal investigator of the study and an assistant professor of general internal medicine at the U of M Medical School. "To complete this study, we are currently enrolling volunteers through six institutions in the U.S., including in Minneapolis." Read Story

Physicians Nephrologist, Paul Drawz, Shines A Spotlight On Chronic Kidney Disease: Paul Drawz, MD, 2003 Alumnus Of The University Of Minnesota Medical School and an Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension at the University of Minnesota Medical School, originally became interested in the kidneys because they are impacted by so many disparate conditions. Read Story

Dr. Brad Benson, professor in the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School and Chief Academic Officer for M Health Fairview, shares three key themes after a year of research during the COVID-19 pandemic that have shaped the future of science between the Medical School and within the M Health Fairview system. Read Story

New Developmental Therapeutics Clinic Opens: The new Developmental Therapeutics Clinic (DTC) is officially open after years of planning. Associate professor of medicine Dr. Manish Patel and professor of medicine Dr. Charles Ryan designed the clinic as a more streamlined way to house phase one clinical cancer trials. Anywhere from six to ten trials can occur simultaneously at the clinic. During this stage in cancer trials, treatments are tested for safety, dosage and efficacy in different forms of cancer. After approval, treatments will continue to be developed elsewhere and will be tailored to target individual cancer types, Dr. Naomi Fujioka said. In recent years, drugs have also been developed to target specific genetic traits and other characteristics of cancer. Read The Minnesota Daily Article

U of MN Scientists Learn Major Discoveries about COVID-19 Treatment: A new study shows the virus likes to infect the cells in our airways, and remdesivir effectively reduced viral replication in those cells. "Not all drugs translate well into the pill form," says Dr. Susan Kline, an infectious disease physician with the University of Minnesota Medical School and M Health Fairview. "So there are a number of different hurdles that have to be overcome." Read Kare11 Story.

IN THE NEWS

Pandemic Could Cause People to Delay Cancer Screenings & Treatment: As the coronavirus pandemic continues to have a grip on the nation, health experts are now worried it could cause patients to delay cancer screenings or treatments. Research suggests even a two-month delay in cancer screenings or treatments could lead to a more progressive diagnosis and increased deaths. The shutdown of cancer screenings at local health facilities during the start of the pandemic and people's fears of visiting hospitals could be contributing factors. Health professionals say the purpose of screenings are to help save lives. "The goal for all of us, who work in cancer, is to make it so no one's quality or quantity of life is effected by this disease. We know in certain cancers like Cervical Cancer, Breast Cancer, Colon Cancer, and Lung Cancer screenings is an important way to meet those goals," said Dr. Douglas Yee, a medical oncologist with the U of M Medical School. Screenings also help to detect diseases like Breast Cancer early, which can have a survival rate of about 95-percent.

Brian Sick, MD, has been elected as a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academies of Practice (NAP): The NAP is a non-profit organization that advises governmental bodies on the U.S. healthcare system. Dr. Sick will be a member of the Allopathic and Osteopathic Medicine Academy, which, like the membership of each of the 13 Academies, is capped at 250 people. Brian Sick, MD, is an associate professor in the Department of Medicine's Division of General Internal Medicine. Read Story

Dr. Shahnaz Sultan will become our first Vice Chair for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the Department of Medicine. Dr. Sultan is an accomplished clinician, researcher, and educator in the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition (GI) and currently serves as the Program Director of the GI Fellowship Program. She brings to this role a breadth of leadership experience, accomplishment in health disparities research, an established record of increasing learner diversity, and a passion and vision for DEI work. I'm excited she will be joining the Department's senior leadership team. Dr. Sultan will assume her responsibilities on May 1, 2021.

Dr. Susan Everson-Rose leads the HELM program which supports and promotes a diverse faculty workforce at the University of Minnesota by enhancing the academic excellence and leadership capacity of junior faculty and postdoctoral trainees from backgrounds underrepresented in academia and/or those doing health disparities or health equity-related research. Read Story

Dr. Ben Trappey, assistant professor in the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics, is one of three faculty members in the Medical School to lead the new Center for the Art of Medicine (CFAM) — a network woven together by individual threads of passion for art and medicine that date back several years. Read Story

ASN Members Elect Newest At-Large Councilor, Patrick H. Nachman: Dr. Nachman, Professor of Medicine and Division Director, Nephrology and Hypertension, will begin his term on Friday, January 1, 2021, and will serve through Tuesday, December 31, 2024.

The Minneapolis VA Health Care System becomes one of two hubs to receive the $4.5 million grant from the Veterans Health Administration: Professor Chris Wendt, MD, and Associate Professor Mark Klein, MD, both in the Department of Medicine who practice at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System, will lead

the grant along with a third researcher from the Omaha VA Medical Center. They will join the Omaha VA Medical Center to lead the Upper Midwest VA Lung Cancer Screening and Research Network as part of a nationwide VA-funded Lung Precision Oncology Program (LPOP). The $4.5 million grant supports an expansion in lung cancer screenings and research among veterans. Read Story

American College of Physicians Recognizes Dr. Andrew Olson: Dr. Olson, from the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics, has been awarded The Herbert S. Waxman Award for Outstanding Medical Student Educator for his dedication to the advancement of education. Read Story

2021 Outstanding Service Award - Gastroenterology and Hepatology: Shahnaz Sultan, MD, MHSc, AGAF, program director, Gastroenterology Fellowship Training Program and associate professor of medicine, Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition received the Outstanding Service Award from the American Gastroenterological Association.

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IN THE NEWS

Department of Medicine: 2021 TOP DOCTORS : RISING STARS · Minneapolis St. Paul Magazine · Read Story

Jonathan Alpern, MD	Mary Fredrickson, MD	Dan Pease, MD
William Amundson, MD	Anne Frosch, MD, MPH	Kathryn Pendleton, MD
Nabeel Azeem, MD	Yuka Furuya, MD	Cuong Pham, MD
Jason Bartos, MD, PhD	Nate Gaeckle, MD	Radha Rajasingham, MD
Joan Beckman, MD, PhD	Umesh Goswami, MD	Arpit Rao, MD, MBBS
Jessica Boettcher, MD	Brian Grahan, MD, PhD	Steven Richmond, DO
Sarah Bou Malham, MD	Brian Hanson, MD	Eugenia Shmidt, MD
Jill Bowman Peterson, MD	Danielle Haselby, DO	Surbhi Shah, MD, MBBS
Andrew Caraganis, MD	Katherine Janssen, MD	Tyson Sievers, MD
Michelle Carlson, MD, FACC	JoAn Laes, MD	Christopher Steevens, MD
Roy Cho, MD, MHA	Anne-Marie Leuck, MD	Laurel Stephenson, MD
Kate Diaz Vickery, MD, MSc	Thomas Leventhal, MD	David Wacker, MD, PhD
Joshua Dorn, MD	Mary Logeais, MD	Ben Webber, MD
Tyler Drake, MD	Samar Malaeb, MD	Tyler Winkelman, MD, MSc
Sarah Elfering, MD	Robert Mittet, MD	Katti Woerner, MD
Heidi Erickson, MD	Brian Muthyala, MD, MPH	Jennifer Wu, DO
Khalil Farah, MD	Anupama Nookala, MD	Zaki Abou Zahr, MD, RhMSUS

AGA Outstanding Service Award! Dr. Sultan is an Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition; Program Director for Gastroenterology Fellowship Training Program and Core Investigator, Center for Chronic Disease Outcomes Research. 2021 AGA Outstanding Service Award.