Dr. Wayne Chandler joins the Department as Vice-Chair of Clinical Innovation

The discipline of Pathology is at an important crossroad, with the new health care laws and the advent of molecular medicine,” said Dr. Chandler. “This is an opportune time to expand laboratory automation and leverage our tremendous assets to further develop our molecular diagnostics and outreach programs.”

While at the University of Washington, Dr. Chandler was responsible for automating several clinical service laboratories and developing new hemostasis and thrombosis assays. He was also co-director of their reference laboratory business.

“Wayne has remarkable knowledge and experience. He is an incredible addition to our Department and the hospital system,” said Dr. James Musser, chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. “His leadership in laboratory automation will greatly assist us in our ongoing efforts to bring enhanced diagnostic innovation to the Department and our Methodist patients.”

Dr. Chandler has also made further development of the Department’s research outreach a priority.

“The discipline of Pathology is at an important crossroad, with the new health care laws and the advent of molecular medicine,” said Dr. Chandler. “This is an opportune time to expand laboratory automation and leverage our tremendous assets to further develop our molecular diagnostics and outreach programs.”

While at the University of Washington, Dr. Chandler was responsible for automating several clinical service laboratories and developing new hemostasis and thrombosis assays. He was also co-director of their reference laboratory business.

“Wayne has remarkable knowledge and experience. He is an incredible addition to our Department and the hospital system,” said Dr. James Musser, chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. “His leadership in laboratory automation will greatly assist us in our ongoing efforts to bring enhanced diagnostic innovation to the Department and our Methodist patients.”

Dr. Chandler has also made further development of the Department’s research outreach a priority. “We do a substantial amount of research here, which provides us with another opportunity for considerable growth,” said Dr. Chandler. “We are well-positioned to provide our expertise to investigators in the Texas Medical Center and beyond, whether as a full collaborator or a provider of novel or customized research assays.”

Dr. Chandler is board-certified in clinical pathology, a member of the Academy of Clinical Laboratory Physicians and Scientists, and a fellow of the College of American Pathologists.

For more information on Dr. Chandler, please visit methodisthealth.com/Chandler.

Of Note…

Archives of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine is the most highly read journal/periodical title among U.S. practicing pathologists. The June 2011 issue featured several contributions from our esteemed department faculty! If you haven’t already, please see the important editorial on third-track pathology by our department chair, Dr. James Musser, as well as a special section organized by Dr. Jae Ro, and an original research article by Dr. Gustavo de la Roza. Congratulations to our department faculty members who joined the editorial board in June: Drs. Donna Coffey, Yimin Ge, Ping Wang, Aleksandar Babic, and Andreana Rivera. The June issue can be found at archivesofpathology.org.

Table of Contents

2 Dr. Leveque Receives Prestigious Overstreet Award
Dr. Awalt to Lead Medical Staff at Willowbrook

3 Foster Donation Expands Blood Center Services
Methodist Pathologists Chair HSCP Spring Symposium

4 Hospital Auxiliary Donates New Blood Drive Van
New Diagnostic Test Offerings

5 Methodist Laboratory Science Students Win TACLs Bowl Competition
Trainee Spotlight

6 New Trainees Start on July 1st

7 Dr. Zu Leads Hematopathology Research Effort for Department
Dr. Leveque Receives Prestigious Overstreet Award

Dr. Christopher Leveque, medical director of the Blood Bank and Transfusion Medicine, received the John W. Overstreet, M.D. Award on Wednesday, March 30th during the Doctors’ Day 2011 celebrations in Crain Garden. The Overstreet Award was established in 1997 by The Methodist Hospital to honor and acknowledge a physician on its medical staff who exemplifies the best of the medical profession, demonstrates respect, empathy, and caring in their interactions with patients, family, and staff, and supports the mission of the hospital.

“I am honored and humbled to receive this prestigious award named for such an esteemed doctor,” said Dr. Leveque.

“Methodist is a great place to practice medicine. I am truly proud to be of service to my patients and their families in such a remarkable environment.”

Dr. Leveque joined The Methodist Hospital in 1990 and became medical director of the Blood Bank in 2004. He is also the director of the Blood Banking and Transfusion Medicine Fellowship Program.

“Dr. Leveque is an outstanding physician. The care he provides to our patients in the Blood Donor Center and Apheresis Clinic is second to none,” said Dr. James Musser, chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. “We also appreciate his contributions to the hospital’s teaching mission as a very capable and enthusiastic mentor to our residents and fellows.”

Dr. Leveque has subspecialty certification in transfusion medicine. He received his medical degree from the Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans in 1981, and completed a residency in pathology and a fellowship in transfusion medicine at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas. Dr. Leveque’s research is focused on outcomes studies that assess strategies to reduce bleeding and initiate healing after injury or surgery, thereby reducing the demand for blood products. To this end, he is currently investigating the use of various drugs and growth factors, including basic pancreatic trypsin inhibitors (BPTIs) and platelet-rich plasma (PRP), in surgery.

For more information on Dr. Leveque, please visit methodisthealth.com/Leveque.

Dr. Awalt to Lead Medical Staff at Willowbrook

Dr. Hazel Awalt recently became the president-elect of the medical staff at Methodist Willowbrook Hospital and will become president in 2013. She is currently medical director of laboratory services and oversees all laboratory operations and pathology services at Methodist Willowbrook.

“I look forward to working closely with the medical staff, administration, and the board during my term as president-elect and subsequent term as president of the medical staff,” said Dr. Awalt. “It is a very exciting time to be participating in the growth of our hospital and the services we offer the community in North Houston.”

Elected by the active medical staff of the hospital, the president has many leadership responsibilities in the areas of medical staff governance and education, quality assurance activities, safety initiatives, and maintaining accreditation standards such as those from The Joint Commission or Det Norske Veritas. The president also serves as a liaison between the medical staff, the hospital administration, and Board of Trustees. As president, Dr. Awalt will chair the Medical Executive Committee and serve as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Awalt received her MD degree from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas and completed a pathology residency at St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital, where she served as chief resident in her final year. She then completed her surgical pathology fellowship at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. She joined The Methodist Hospital Physician Organization in 2005, and received her faculty appointment at the Weill Cornell Medical College in 2007.

Dr. Awalt is board certified in anatomic and clinical pathology by the American Board of Pathology.

For more information on Dr. Awalt, please visit methodisthealth.com/Awalt.
The LABORATORY REPORT

Donation from Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Foster Expands Blood Center Services

Three new apheresis instruments became operational in the Methodist Blood Donor Center in May as the result of a generous donation from Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Foster. One Trima Accel Automated Blood Collection System and two Fenwal Autopheresis-C Systems were added to the donor apheresis area of the Blood Donor Center and will allow the Center to keep up with the ever-growing demand for blood products at the hospital.

“Mr. and Mrs. Foster have been extremely kind. Their generous gift has allowed us to significantly increase the number of patients that can be served by the Methodist Blood Donor Center,” said Dr. Christopher Leveque, medical director of the Blood Bank and Transfusion Medicine Service. “These machines have had a tremendous impact on patient care at Methodist.”

“I thank Mr. and Mrs. Foster for their extraordinarily kind gift and their leadership in helping us to expand patient services in our Donor Center,” said Dr. James Musser, chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.

Apheresis donation is an automated process in which a donor’s blood is drawn and centrifuged to remove a specific component(s), then the remaining blood is returned to the donor. This allows for the donation of blood components that are needed most, such as double red cells, platelets, or plasma. Collection of stem cells from the peripheral blood can also be performed using these machines.

For more information on the Blood Donor Center at The Methodist Hospital, please visit methodistbloodcenter.com.

Methodist Pathologists Chair HSCP Spring Symposiums

The 51st Annual Spring Symposium of the Houston Society of Clinical Pathologists (HSCP) was held on April 16, 2011 at the Omni Houston Hotel. For the past three years, faculty members from the Methodist Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine have contributed to the academic organization of this important annual event. This year’s symposium was co-chaired by Dr. Mary Schwartz, the medical director of Anatomic Pathology at The Methodist Hospital, and Dr. Adel El-Naggar, Professor of Pathology and Head and Neck Surgery at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

The theme of this year’s lectures and exhibits was current advances in the pathology and management of head and neck neoplasia. Renowned thyroid pathologist from the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Virginia LiVolsi, presented findings from her time served on the pathology panel of the Chernobyl Tumor Bank. Her research revealed a correlation between molecular changes in thyroid tumors and exposure to radioactive iodide in young individuals subjected to the fallout from the Chernobyl disaster.

Another well-received lecture, given by Dr. William Westra of Johns Hopkins University, presented data on the changing epidemiology of oral cancer. A disease that was once mostly caused by drinking and smoking in older men from lower socio-economic backgrounds is now largely caused by the presence of human papillomavirus in younger men from a higher socio-economic level. Knowledge of this subject is rapidly emerging and new guidelines for testing, treatment, and vaccination will likely follow.

Dr. Philip Cagle, the medical director of Pulmonary Pathology at Methodist, will chair the 52nd Annual Spring Symposium in 2012. It will be held on April 28th and 29th in the main auditorium of The Methodist Hospital Research Institute, and will combine the HSCP Spring Symposium (April 28th) with the Methodist Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine seminar on advances in lung cancer (April 29th).

For more information on the HSCP, please visit houstonpathologists.org.
The Methodist Hospital Auxiliary and Gift Shop has purchased a new van for the Blood Donor Center to be used for mobile blood drives. The very generous gift will allow the Center to perform larger blood drives in the community and, therefore, provide more blood and blood components for patient care at the hospital.

“The van will allow us to transport more staff and equipment to and from the blood drives in community locations all over Houston,” said Dr. Christopher Leveque, medical director of the Blood Bank and Transfusion Medicine at Methodist. “We are so grateful to Ms. Sophie Mize and the auxiliary staff at the Gift Shop for their generosity.”

The Supreme StarTrans Senator Series II van was purchased in May and is currently being retrofitted with an electric lift and special railing system to secure equipment. The van is expected to be in operation for the Center by the end of August.

Steeped in a long history of service excellence, The Methodist Hospital Auxiliary and the Methodist Hospital Service Corps provide many unique volunteer opportunities. The Auxiliary assists the hospital in raising funds to purchase new medical equipment through the Gift Shop, Thrift Shop, and vendor sales. Members of the Service Corps support patients, families, and visitors in a variety of important service areas including the information desks, surgical waiting rooms, doctors’ coffee bar, and book cart.

For more information on the Methodist Blood Donor Center, please visit methodistbloodcenter.com.

New Diagnostic Test Offerings:

**Freelite™ Serum Free Light Chain Assay**

The FreeLite assay from The Binding Site, Ltd. is used for the screening and monitoring of multiple myeloma and other B-cell proliferative disorders. It is a light-based assay that quantifies free kappa and lambda immunoglobulin light chains in serum.

The measurement of light chain concentration in serum has recently been recommended by the International Multiple Myeloma Working Group for the diagnosis, prognosis, and monitoring of patients with multiple myeloma and certain other B-cell proliferative disorders, and by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network Clinical Practice Guidelines for the initial diagnosis of multiple myeloma.

This test, which was previously performed at our reference lab, was brought in-house in May. It will provide Methodist physicians faster access to laboratory results and allow more timely decisions to be made regarding patient treatment.

For more information on the assay at TMHS, please contact Dr. Ping Wang at 713-441-3294 or pwang@tmhs.org. For more information on serum free light chain assays developed by The Binding Site, please visit bindingsite.co.uk.

**InVivoScribe Gene Clonality Assay**

In April, The Methodist Hospital System implemented a new immunoglobulin gene rearrangement assay from InVivoScribe Technologies, Inc. called the Gene Clonality Assay. The assay uses a PCR-based amplification strategy to detect gene rearrangements in both IgH and IgK that account for 99% of all B-cell malignancies. Because of the improved sensitivity and specificity of the BIOMED-2 primers, this test has a much lower false-negative rate compared to previous molecular tests. Validation of a similar upgrade to the T-cell clonality assay is currently underway.

For more information on the assay at TMHS, please contact Dr. Randall Olsen at 713-441-6802 or rjolsen@tmhs.org. For more information on molecular diagnostics assays developed by InVivoScribe Technologies, please visit invivoscribe.com.
The team of four students currently enrolled in The Methodist Hospital Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) Program won first place at the Texas Association for Clinical Laboratory Science (TACLS) Student Bowl competition on April 7th as part of the Sounds of Science TACLS Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas. A Methodist team has won the competition 11 times in the past 23 years.

“It’s a fun competition and a great way to prepare for the certification exam,” said Tatia Feltman, program director for the Methodist MLS Program. “We are so proud of our students for their accomplishment and for representing our program on a statewide level with such acclaim.” The Methodist MLS Program is a twelve-month professional course of study that is fully accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS). Upon successful completion of the program, students will qualify for the examination and certification by the Board of Certification of the American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP). Many of the graduates of the program go on to work at Methodist in one of our many pathology laboratories. The Methodist MLS Program has been in existence since 1947.

For more information on the Methodist MLS Program, please visit methodisthealth.com/mlsprogram.

Trainee Spotlight:

Kyle Eskue, M.D.
Surgical Pathology Fellow

Dr. Kyle Eskue was the recipient of the fourth Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Trainee Leadership and Innovation Award. He received this award for his overall initiative, leadership, and commitment to excellence in patient care.

Dr. Eskue was recently invited to chair the College of American Pathologists (CAP) NewsPath Editorial Board. NewsPath is an educational resource for pathologists in training and practice. Dr. Eskue has been very active with CAP for many years. He is currently a junior member of the CAP Member and Public Communications Committee, the CAP Spokespersons Network, and the CAP Advocacy Network. He has previously held several leadership positions in the CAP Residents Forum.

Dr. Eskue received his M.D. degree from The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston, Texas in 2006. He completed his AP/CP residency at UTMB in 2010, and then completed a fellowship in surgical pathology at Methodist in June of this year.

For more information on Dr. Eskue’s work, visit methodisthealth.com/mlsprogram.
New Trainees Start on July 1st

The Department welcomed 6 new residents and 8 new fellows on July 1st during a half-day trainee orientation session led by Dr. Suzanne Powell, vice-chair of education for the Department. The session followed a four-day orientation provided by the hospital’s GME office. Dr. Powell and the education manager and coordinators greeted the incoming trainees and apprised them of the various support services in the Department, including Graphics Services and the Office of Academic Development. The Department will also welcome its first Clinical Chemistry Fellow on August 1st.

“We have a large department that services a multi-site hospital system, and we want to make sure our new residents and fellows transition into their new roles quickly and relatively seamlessly,” said Dr. Powell. “We are preparing the next generation of practicing pathologists and want to ensure they have an outstanding training experience.”

The Department currently has 37 existing trainees, with 19 of them completing their residency or fellowship program and graduated as of June 30th. With the addition of the 22 new trainees, the Department will have a total of 41 residents and fellows for the academic year 2011-12. The Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine has a residency program, a resident research program, and 11 fellowship programs – the most training programs of any department at Methodist.

In Our Next Issue…

⇒ Department Acquires Transmission Electron Microscope
⇒ Digital Pathology at Methodist
⇒ Laboratory Outreach Program Expands
⇒ First Trainee in Resident Research Program
⇒ New Clinical Chemistry Fellowship
⇒… and more!
Dr. Zu Leads Hematopathology Research Effort for Department

With funding from the National Institutes of Health and other sources, Dr. Youli Zu is developing novel diagnostic and therapeutic methods specific for lymphomas. His research laboratory was the first to demonstrate the use of oligonucleotide aptamer probes for both in vitro diagnosis and in vivo imaging of lymphoma tumors.

Dr. Zu is the principal investigator on a five-year grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) that is validating a new bifunctional nanomedicine to selectively target anaplastic large cell lymphoma (ALCL) tumors for in vivo imaging and specifically silence the lymphoma oncogene to induce tumor cell death. In addition, Dr. Zu is co-principal investigator (with Dr. Xiaobo Zhou, also at Methodist) on a grant from the National Library of Medicine that aims to develop a systems biology software package capable of identifying signal pathways and pathway signatures in myelodysplastic syndromes and other diseases with complex phenotypes.

Dr. Zu also leads the pathology tissue core of an NCI-funded lymphoma SPORE program.

Dr. Jianguo Wen, an instructor in Dr. Zu’s TMHRI laboratory, also has funding from NCI. His 2-year grant aims to use cytotoxic T-cells to develop an effective immunotherapy that targets myeloma stem cells. Dr. Wen joined the laboratory in 2005 as a postdoctoral fellow under the mentorship of then laboratory director, Dr. Chung-Che “Jeff” Chang.

Dr. Zu serves as the co-director of hematopathology for The Methodist Hospital.

For more information about Dr. Zu, please visit methodisthealth.com/Zu.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


Continued page 8
RECENT PUBLICATIONS continued


Kim DY, Hong GU, Ro JY. Signal pathways in astrocytes activated by cross-talk between of astrocytes and mast cells through CD40-CD40L. J Neuroinflammation. 2011 Mar 16;8:25.


Recent Publications continued


