Dr. Philip Cagle is National Pathologist of the Year

Dr. Philip T. Cagle, medical director of Pulmonary Pathology for the Department, will receive the Pathologist of the Year Award from the College of American Pathologists (CAP) at their annual meeting in Orlando on October 13th. He is the first pathologist ever in the Texas Medical Center to receive the prestigious award.

“This is a tremendous milestone for Dr. Cagle, the Department, Houston Methodist, and the Texas Medical Center,” said Dr. James Musser, chair of the Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine for Houston Methodist. “Dr. Cagle continues to represent the best of pathology and medicine, and we are grateful to have him here with us.”

Dr. Cagle will also receive the Distinguished Patient Care Award from CAP at the same meeting. He is receiving that award specifically for his leadership in developing the Lung Cancer Biomarker Guidelines that are now used internationally.

Dr. Cagle is the editor-in-chief of Archives of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and serves on the editorial board of CAP Today and Human Pathology. He has been a member of the Best Doctors of America network since 2000, and designated by Castle Connolly as one of America’s Top Doctors for the last 7 years.

For more information on Dr. Cagle, visit houstonmethodist.org/Cagle.

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Trainee Spotlight
Dr. Mary Schwartz Receives Teaching Award from Cytopathology Society

Dr. Mary R. Schwartz, medical director of anatomic pathology for the Department, will receive the Excellence in Education Award from the American Society of Cytopathology at their 61st Annual Meeting on November 8th in Orlando.

“Dr. Schwartz is an excellent mentor to our trainees and junior faculty,” said Dr. James Musser. “This award is further recognition of her admirable efforts to train the next generation of superior pathologists. The Department thanks her once again for her continuing work in this regard.”

Dr. Schwartz has been named as one of the Best Doctors in America since 1996. In 2009, Dr. Schwartz received the Harlan J. Spjut Award from the Houston Society of Clinical Pathologists for distinguished and sustained scholarly achievements in pathology. In 2009, she also received the College of American Pathologists (CAP) Spotlight Service Award, to recognize pathologists who routinely go above and beyond in serving their community and patients through the practice of pathology. Dr. Schwartz received the CAP Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010.

For more information on Dr. Schwartz, visit houstonmethodist.org/Schwartz.

Dr. Mary Schwartz mentoring a resident.

Dr. Todd Eagar Receives NIH Support for Multiple Sclerosis Research

Todd Eagar, Ph.D., associate medical director of Histocompatibility and Transplant Immunology for the Department, has received a 5-year grant from the National Institutes of Health to investigate the role of immune cells in the pathogenesis of multiple sclerosis (MS).

“Most diseases are a result of a failure in normal cell signaling,” said Dr. Eagar. “Autoimmune diseases are no exception. The information we gain from these studies may provide a basis for the development of therapies that target this faulty cell signaling in MS and other diseases.”

Dr. Eagar’s NIH research will study the role of T cells and B cells in an experimental disease model to be developed during the award period. Specifically, the model will allow Dr. Eagar and colleagues to assess the effects of gamma-secretase production and Notch signaling on disease development.

MS is a debilitating autoimmune disease of the central nervous system that affects more than 400,000 people in the United States, and 2.5 million worldwide. While there are several drug regimens to slow the progression of the disease, there is still no cure.

For more information on Dr. Eagar, visit houstonmethodist.org/Eagar. For more information on MS, visit multiplesclerosis.net.
New Faculty

Tina S. Ipe, M.D.
Associate Medical Director, Transfusion Medicine

Dr. Ipe has joined the Department as the associate medical director of Transfusion Medicine. She received her M.P.H. degree in 2004 from the Dartmouth Medical School in Hanover, New Hampshire, and her M.D. degree in 2009 from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine in Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Ipe then completed her clinical pathology residency and a transfusion medicine fellowship at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. For more information on Dr. Ipe, visit houstonmethodist.org/Ipe.

Erin J. Kaleta, Ph.D.
Associate Medical Director, Clinical Chemistry

Dr. Kaleta is serving the Department as the associate medical director of clinical chemistry in the Core Laboratory. She received her Ph.D. in analytical chemistry in 2011 from the University of Arizona in Tucson, and completed her clinical chemistry postdoctoral fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Dr. Kaleta is board certified in clinical chemistry by the American Board of Clinical Chemistry. Her research interests include laboratory quality improvement and use of mass spectrometry in clinical laboratory testing and proteomic applications. For more information on Dr. Kaleta, visit houstonmethodist.org/Kaleta.

Ekene Okoye, M.D.
Staff Pathologist

Dr. Okoye returns to Houston Methodist from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center where she completed a gynecologic pathology fellowship. She received her M.D. degree in 2006 from the Boston University School of Medicine, and completed her anatomic and clinical pathology residency at The University of Texas Health Sciences Center at Houston, where she received the Helen Chu Wagner Award for Excellence in Pathology and held the position of chief resident in her final year. Dr. Okoye then completed a surgical pathology fellowship at Houston Methodist. For more information on Dr. Okoye, visit houstonmethodist.org/Okoye.
Dr. Ping Wang Receives Grant from National Institutes of Health

Dr. Ping Wang, medical director of Clinical Chemistry for the Department, has received a 3-year grant from the National Institutes of Health to develop a point-of-care volumetric bar-chip for drug quantitation. The project is a collaboration with Dr. Lidong Qin in the Department of Nanomedicine at the Houston Methodist Research Institute. Dr. Qin is a CPRIT Scholar and co-principal investigator on the grant.

“The proposed test will provide clinicians with a fast and reliable method to test for the presence and quantity of drugs in patient blood,” said Dr. Wang. “This is especially useful in emergency room settings where every minute counts.”

The project aims to further develop an assay platform, created in Dr. Qin's laboratory, that is the approximate size of a business card and can provide visual, graphical test results in minutes. Current testing methods for drug presence and quantitation can take several hours for results, and often require sophisticated and expensive reading devices.

For more information on Dr. Wang, visit houstonmethodist.org/Wang. For more information on Dr. Qin, visit houstonmethodist.org/LidongQin.

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New Diagnostic Test Offerings:

Respiratory Pathogen Panel

Respiratory pathogens are a cause of severe morbidity and mortality, and pose many challenges to the microbiology laboratory. Most notably, traditional culture-based assays lack sensitivity, take several days to complete, and are limited to a few cultivatable pathogens. To improve patient care at Houston Methodist, the Microbiology Laboratory has validated a multiplex real-time PCR assay to detect 20 respiratory pathogens.

Our respiratory pathogen panel tests for adenovirus, Bordetella pertussis, Chlamydia pneumoniae, coronavirus, human metapneumovirus, influenza A virus, influenza B virus, Mycoplasma pneumoniae, parainfluenza virus 1-4, respiratory syncytial virus, and rhinovirus/enterovirus. This novel multiplex strategy further strengthens our existing expertise in transplant and infectious disease pathology. In addition, all influenza A viruses will be sub-typed by whole-genome sequencing. Subtyping will provide important data for predicting drug resistance, directing infection control activities, and investigating outbreaks.

The respiratory pathogen panel will be introduced in-house in October. It will be performed everyday with an approximate 4-hour turnaround time after receipt in the laboratory.

For more information on this assay or any microbiology test, please contact Ms. Patricia Cernoch at pcer-noch@houstonmethodist.org or Dr. Randall Olsen at rijol-sen@houstonmethodist.org.

The BioFire FilmArray, the instrument used for the new respiratory pathogen panel, represents the next generation of automated detection systems for viruses and bacteria, including emerging infectious diseases.
In Focus: The Molecular Diagnostics Team

Molecular diagnostics is the laboratory section in the Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine that bridges anatomical and clinical pathology. It uses multiple state-of-the-art technologies to capture the genomic information of infectious diseases, cancer, and hereditary disorders. These molecular data are key for making diagnoses and guiding therapy.

The Department has five pathologists with expertise in molecular genetic pathology. These faculty members provide invaluable support to the medical staff at Houston Methodist, and to all hospitals served through Houston Methodist Diagnostic Laboratories.

For more information on the molecular diagnostics service, please contact Ms. Heather Hendrickson at HL.Hendrickson@houstonmethodist.org.

Randall Olsen, M.D., Ph.D.
Medical Director, Molecular Diagnostics
After receiving his M.D. and Ph.D. (pathology and microbiology) degrees from the University of Nebraska, Dr. Olsen completed residency training in clinical pathology at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas and fellowship training in hematopathology at Houston Methodist Hospital.

Dr. Olsen’s research focuses on studying the molecular pathogenesis of invasive group A Streptococcus (GAS) infections, such as necrotizing fasciitis (also termed the “flesh eating infection”).

For more information on Dr. Olsen, visit houstonmethodist.org/Olsen.

Bryce P. Portier, M.D., Ph.D.
Medical Director, Solid Tumor Molecular Diagnostics
Dr. Portier received his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston in 2008. He then completed pathology residency at the Cleveland Clinic and a fellowship in molecular genetic pathology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Dr. Portier’s research centers on the identification and validation of novel molecular biomarkers in breast and gastrointestinal carcinomas.

For more information on Dr. Portier, visit houstonmethodist.org/Portier.

Genome atlas of group A Streptococcus bacteria from a patient.
Dr. Muthiah Kumaraswami Studies Bacterial Virulence with NIH Grant

Dr. Muthiah Kumaraswami, an investigator in the Department’s Center for Molecular and Translational Human Infectious Diseases Research, has received a grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to study the effect of gene regulation on virulence in group A Streptococcus.

“These bacteria cause a wide range of infections, and some can be very serious,” said Dr. Kumaraswami. “Understanding why some Streptococcus infections are more severe than others is important, and will help us develop more effective treatments.”

Group A Streptococcus causes a broad range of clinical manifestations, from mild pharyngitis and impetigo to life-threatening flesh-eating disease and toxic shock syndrome. In the proposed studies, Dr. Kumaraswami will use genetic, biochemical, biophysical, and crystallographic methods to elucidate the role of growth-phase-specific secreted small peptides as potential intercellular signals in the gene regulation of Streptococcus virulence.

For more information on Dr. Kumaraswami, visit houstonmethodist.org/Kumaraswami.

Lab Star Award Winners

The Lab Star Award recognizes the efforts of laboratory staff, including supervisors and managers, who go “above and beyond” their assigned responsibilities to ensure excellent patient care, and support the academic initiatives of the Department and Houston Methodist.

The recipients for the third quarter of 2013 received their awards on September 4th.

“Audrey and Beth represent what we strive for in our numerous system laboratories,” said Dr. James Musser, chair of the Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine for Houston Methodist. “Their commitment to quality service and our patients is unrelenting; they are true Lab Stars.”

The Lab Star Award is given quarterly to individuals nominated by peers, faculty, and management. Award decisions are made by a committee with system-wide representation.

Audrey Ponce De Leon, MT, ASCP
Chief Medical Technologist, Flow Cytometry Laboratory
Ms. De Leon received the award for consistently exceeding expectations to ensure rapid turn-around and accuracy of test results, to facilitate development of new assays, and to mentor Department trainees. She frequently stays late on Fridays to receive and process specimens received from the outlying Houston Methodist hospitals, and hospitals served through Houston Methodist Diagnostic Laboratories.

Mary “Beth” Beck, MLT, ASCP
Laboratory Coordinator, Houston Methodist Willowbrook Laboratory
Ms. Beck received the award for consistently surpassing expectations to ensure uninterrupted laboratory workflow and maintenance of quality standards, provide leadership with laboratory inspection readiness, and to consistently practice patient-centered decision making. She always makes the effort to include patient needs in all workflow discussions and decisions.

From left, Laboratory Medicine Director Manuel Hinojosa, Audrey Ponce De Leon, and Dr. David Bernard.

From left, Willowbrook Laboratory Medical Director Dr. Hazel Awalt, Beth Beck, and Laboratory Director Anita Farr.
Faculty Teaching Awards

Five faculty members in the Department received teaching awards from the Graduate Medical Education (GME) Department of the Houston Methodist Institute for Academic Medicine. Dr. Ashok Balsaver received the award for outstanding service and commitment in teaching surgical pathology, and Drs. April Erton, Christopher Leveque, Dina Mody, and Mary Schwartz received the award for exemplary service and commitment in teaching Hematopathology, Blood Banking and Transfusion Medicine, Cytopathology, and Surgical Pathology, respectively.

“Teaching the next generation of physicians and physician scientists is an important mission of our department and Houston Methodist,” said Dr. Suzanne Powell, vice-chair of Education for the Department and director of the AP/CP Residency Program. “We applaud these faculty members for their ongoing service and commitment to our residents and fellows.”

The apple awards are given annually by the GME Department and are voted on by the residents and fellows in their respective programs.

For more information on Department training programs, visit [houstonmethodist.org/pathologytraining](http://houstonmethodist.org/pathologytraining).

Cytopathology Laboratory Receives Community Service Award

The Cytopathology Laboratory has received the 2013 Community Healthcare Partner Award from Dia de la Mujer Latina y Su Familia, a community-based organization that aims to empower Latinos to live healthier lives. The award was presented to the laboratory for their participation in the annual See, Test, and Treat Program, a collaboration of Dia de la Mujer Latina y Su Familia and the College of American Pathologists, that provides free examinations, testing, and treatment to uninsured and underinsured women in medically underserved communities in Houston and other cities around the country.

For more information on Dia de la Mujer Latina y Su Familia, visit [diadelamujerlatina.org](http://diadelamujerlatina.org).

Trainee Spotlight:

Suzanne Crumley, M.D.
PGY3 Resident, Chief Resident

Dr. Suzanne Crumley, PGY3 pathology resident and chief resident, has published her original research study that investigated whether interstitial cystitis is another IgG4-related inflammatory disease. The study, conducted under the mentorship of Department faculty member Dr. Jae Ro, was published in the *Annals of Diagnostic Pathology*. In addition to her regular responsibilities as a resident, Dr. Crumley is also one of the chief residents this year. She has excelled in this leadership position by providing guidance to junior residents and coordinating lectures and other educational opportunities.

Dr. Crumley received her medical degree in 2011 from the Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa. She began the AP/CP pathology residency program at Houston Methodist in July of that year.
RECENT PUBLICATIONS


RECENT PUBLICATIONS continued


