



Report to the Texas Pharmacy Congress — May 7-8, 2019

ASP CHAPTER WINS IMMUNIZATIONS AWARD, P4 TAKES 1ST RUNNER-UP IN PATIENT COUNSELING AT NATIONALS

Thanks in part to setting a new chapter record number of immunizations during 2017-18, the UH College of Pharmacy Chapter of the American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) was honored with the National Operation Immunization Award March 23 during the 2019 APhA-ASP Annual Meeting & Exposition in Seattle, Wash.

UHCOP chapter members directly provided more than 2,300 immunizations, including more than 600 seasonal influenza immunizations, during the 2017-18 academic year.

In collaboration with Walgreens, chapter members either directly or indirectly provided



more than 2,600 Tdap, hepatitis A and seasonal influenza immunizations to Hurricane Harvey victims and first responders. Overall, the chapter's immunizations represented an increase of 330 percent over the prior year.

The chapter's Operation Immunization

projects were led by chairs Pharm.D. candidate Diane Dreucean and third-year Pharm.D. student Maryam Ali.

After four years of competing at the local level and on her second consecutive trip to the national competition, Pharm.D. candidate Sara Mirjamali succeeded in claiming the 1st Runner-up finish in the National

Patient Counseling Competition. Mirjamali's impressive performance among the field of 134 competitors at the national level capped her journey to earning her Pharm.D. degree in May.

NEW PREMIER CENTER RECEIVES \$3.34M STATE GRANT TO BOOST SAFE DISPOSAL OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

A new \$3.34 million grant awarded by the state's health commission to UH College of Pharmacy researchers aims to reduce the potential for future prescription drug misuse and accidental poisonings, especially controlled prescription substances such as opioids.

Based at The Prescription Drug Misuse Education and Research (PREMIER) Center, the project is being led by center Co-Director Douglas Thornton, Ph.D., Pharm.D., BCPS, assistant professor. Called the Texas Improved Dissemination and Evaluation of Single-Use Disposal Pouches (TIDES), the project was awarded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The TIDES project will focus on improving the distribution and evaluation of Single-use Disposal Pouches (SUDPs) in Texas using a network of state-affiliated substance abuse prevention programs; assessing current prescription drug misuse prevention practices of prescribers in the Houston area; and identifying prevention opportunities for high-risk inpatients receiving opioid therapy in the Houston area.

In addition to leading research on controlled substance prescription



PREMIER Center Co-Director Douglas Thornton is leading the state-funded Texas Improved Dissemination and Evaluation of Single-Use Disposal Pouches (TIDES) project.

medications, the center's mission includes educating key stakeholders involved in prescribing and dispensing and developing patient-level educational opportunities delivered by prescribers and pharmacists.

UPSILON WINS PHI LAMBDA SIGMA NATIONAL CHAPTER OF YEAR

UH College of Pharmacy's Upsilon Chapter of the Phi Lambda Sigma Pharmacy Leadership Society brought home the National Chapter of the Year Award – its second national title in less than five years – from the PLS Annual Meeting March 24 in Seattle, Wash.

The award was presented for the chapter's activities during the 2017-18 year, which included multiple workshops and presentations focused on such topics as public speaking, financial planning/management, curricula vitae (CV) development and review, mock interviews and officer candidacy

preparation. The chapter also hosted a leaders' retreat for representatives from each of the college's 17 student organizations and other events and activities aimed at students identify and develop their strengths, weaknesses and skills in leadership, communication and team-building.

In addition, outgoing 2018-19 UHCOP Chapter President Briana Reyna was elected National Speaker of the House of PLS. As a member of the Executive Committee, Reyna will preside over and develop the meeting agenda for the PLS House of Delegates.



UH Chapter President Sara Mrijamali accepts the Chapter of the Year Award from PLS President Jaclyn Cole.

STUDENTS EARN HONORS IN P&T COMPETITION, APPOINTMENT AT AMCP

A team of five Pharm.D. students secured an "Honorable Mention" for its submission in the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy's 2019 National Pharmacy & Therapeutics Competition.

The team of **Angie Asadi**, **Kim Dinh**, **Duc Huynh**, **Jennifer Nguyen** and **Grace Pham** was one of only 10 to earn the designation from the more than 50 other teams that exited the competition from the semifinal round.

For a second straight year, UHCOP was one of only a handful of student chapters to present on the Chapter Leadership Academy panel at the March 22-25 meeting in Seattle. Chapter members also presented a poster on the organization's "One Day P&T Competition."

In addition, Chapter President **Alyza King** was appointed to serve on the AMCP national Student Pharmacist Committee.

TSHP SEMINAR BRINGS COMPETITION TITLES, ELECTION AND SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS

UHCOP Pharm.D. students captured several team competition titles as well as individual honors, at the 2019 Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists Annual Seminar April 12-14 in Frisco, Texas.

The team of **Duc Huynh** and **Ricky Huynh-Phan** won the Clinical Skills Competition-P1 Category, and the team of **Amilda Medina**, **Eileell Nguyen** and **Van Nguyen** won the Leadership Challenge. **Jennifer Dela Pena** received an Honorable Mention in the Disease State Management Competition.

In addition, **Niha Zafar** was elected and installed as Chair of the TSHP Student Section and **Aimen Naveed** was awarded the Gulf Coast Society of Health-System Pharmacists Leadership Scholarship from the TSHP Research & Education Foundation.

In the PGY2 Research Poster Competition, **Elizabeth M. Villanueva**, Pharm.D. ('17), won first place for "The Use of Lean, Six Sigma Methodology to Optimize Expiration Dating in the Automated Dispensing Cabinet," and an Honorable Mention for "The Impact of Board-Certified Pharmacists on the Reduction of Hemoglobin A1C in Uncontrolled Diabetic Patients." Villanueva is a PGY2 health-system pharmacy administration resident with Harris Health System and an M.S. Pharmacy Leadership & Administration candidate at UHCOP.

UHCOP's Pharm.D. Class of 2018 achieved a 97.39 first-time pass rate on the North American Pharmacy Licensure Examination (NAPLEX), according to results released by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy.

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Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy Ph.D. students **Soumya Chikermane**, **Jagadeswara Rao Earla**, **Benjamin Lewing**, and **Abhishek Nair** have received Student Travel Awards to attend ISPOR 2019 May 18-22 in New Orleans, La.

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Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy Ph.D. student **EeVien Low**, a Fulbright Program Scholarship recipient, has received a second \$10,000 scholarship from the P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship.

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Pharmaceutics Ph.D. students **Jingwen Liu** and **Li Li** have been selected for summer internships at the FDA and Boehringer Pharmaceuticals, respectively. Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy Ph.D. students **Soumya Chikermane**, **Shweta Bapat** and **Abhishek Nair** have secured internships at Gilead, Amgen and Express Scripts, respectively.

NIH FUNDS McCONNELL'S WORK TO RESTORE CARDIAC FUNCTION BY TAPPING INTO SIGNALOSOME

UHCOP Associate Professor Bradley K. McConnell, Ph.D., FAHA, FCVS, is investigating whether a specific type of protein involved in cardiac cell signaling may provide a novel drug target to restore cardiac contractility in myocardial infarction-induced heart failure.

While β -adrenergic receptor (β AR) signaling is the primary mechanism to increase cardiac contractility, chronic β AR stimulation results in reduced contractility due to desensitization of the receptors.



McConnell

Scaffolding proteins assemble intracellular signaling components of a network cascade into a specific complex within the cell to enhance signaling specificity and efficiency. A-Kinase Anchoring Proteins (AKAPs) is an example of scaffolding proteins that fine-tune cellular responses by forming multi-component protein complexes (signalosome).

McConnell is focusing his study on a specific AKAP (gravin or AKAP12) that is involved in the desensitization/resensitization cycling of the receptor. In the project, McConnell will explore whether inhibition of gravin scaffolding to β 2-AR will increase cardiac contractility during heart failure, and conversely, overexpression of gravin will decrease cardiac contractility during heart failure.

The latest phase of McConnell's project is being supported by a newly awarded three-year, \$459,000 grant from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

MED SAFETY SYMPOSIUM PUTS DEPRESCRIBING, MONITORING INTO FOCUS OF PRACTITIONERS

Three UHCOP students were among the top presenters recognized at the 2019 Houston Medication Safety Symposium, which drew a multidisciplinary audience from pharmacy, medicine, nursing and dentistry to learn about developments in deprescribing and drug monitoring programs.

The Best Poster Presentation recipients were UHCOP Pharm.D. student Kelvin Lu for "Medication Adherence of Oral Endocrine Therapy in Breast Cancer Patients in a Large Academic Medical Center" and UHCOP Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) Ph.D. candidate Jagadesh Earla, Pharm.D., MBA, for "Factors Associated With Prescribing of Oral Disease Modifying Agents in Multiple Sclerosis."

The Best Podium Presentation recipients were University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston graduate student Effie Polychronopolou, who presented "Comparison of Data Mining Methods for Detection of Adverse Events Associated with Use of Herceptin," and PHOP Ph.D. alumna Satabdi Chatterjee, who presented "Anticholinergic Exposure and Cognitive Decline Among Older Nursing Home Residents With Depression."

The event was co-hosted by UHCOP's Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy and the UTHealth McGovern Medical School, and sponsored by the Phyllis Gough Huffington Endowed Lectureship, UTHealth Consortium on Aging and The PREMIER Center at UHCOP.

Kevin W. Garey, Pharm.D., M.S., FASHP, professor, has received a \$278,829 award from Acurx Pharmaceuticals for "Phase I Microbiome Studies of ACX-362E, a DNA polymerase inhibitor with a novel mechanism of action for oral treatment of Clostridium difficile infections.

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Academic Pharmacy Fellows **Parna Haghparast**, Pharm.D., BCPS, and **Tyler M. Kiles**, Pharm.D., BC-ADM, have been named as recipients of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Walmart Scholars Program, which provides support for the fellows and their mentors to attend the AACP Annual Meeting and the AACP Teachers Seminar in July in Chicago. In addition, research posters authored by Haghparast, Kiles and Fellow **Joshua Wollen**, Pharm.D., have been accepted for presentation at the AACP meeting.

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Sai S. Koka, Ph.D., R.Ph., research assistant professor, received the Sudhir Gupta Young Scientist Award for her presentation, "High Mobility Group Box1 Mediates Trimethylamine-N-Oxide Induced Endothelial Dysfunction," at the Association of Scientists of Indian Origin in America (ASIOA) 8th National Meeting April 10 in Orlando, Fla.

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Sanket Patel, Ph.D., postdoctoral research associate, earned the Biotech Laboratories Junior Scientist Award in Immunology for his presentation, "Prevention of Lipopolysaccharide-Induced CD11b+ Leukocytes Infiltration in the Kidney: Role of AT2 Receptors," at the Association of Scientists of Indian Origin in America (ASIOA) 8th National Meeting April 10 in Orlando, Fla.

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Douglas Thornton, Ph.D., Pharm.D., BCPS, assistant professor, served as a panelist in the session, "Establishing the Community Pharmacist's Role in Prescription Opioid Misuse Prevention," during the 2019 Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit April 22-25 in Atlanta, Ga.

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Ruiwen Zhang, Ph.D., M.D., was one of four keynote speakers at the World DNA and Genome Day 2019 April 25-27 in Nanjing, China. In addition to his keynote address titled "DNA- and RNA-Based Therapy: A 40-Year Learning Curve," Zhang also presented "One Stone Two Birds: Targeting Inflammation and Oncogene for Cancer Prevention and Therapy" during the meeting.

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