

Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Thursday, December 6, 2012

USA Hospitals Host Tree Lighting Ceremonies



Starla Chapman visits with Santa Claus during the USA Children's & Women's Lights of Love Tree Lighting Ceremony

The University of South Alabama Medical Center and USA Children's & Women's Hospital recently hosted their annual tree lighting ceremonies.

The "Lights of Love" tree lighting at USA Children's & Women's Hospital was co-sponsored by the Ronald McDonald House and the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute. The event also featured visits from Santa Claus and Ronald McDonald, as well as performances from the USA Chorale, the Spanish Fort Community Kids Choir and the Baker's Dozen from Baker High School.



[Click here](#) to view more photos from the Lights of Love Tree Lighting.

The USA Medical Center's Dedication of Lights Ceremony, sponsored by USA Medical Center Auxiliary, featured performances by Mount Hebron Church

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Ministries Youth Choir. In addition, ornaments were placed on the tree by family and friends of patients and former patients.



[Click here](#) to view more photos from the USA Medical Center's tree lighting.

Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [11:34 AM](#) No comments:

Wednesday, December 5, 2012

Med School Café - Expert Advice for the Community



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Last week, Dr. Karen Fagan, associate professor of internal medicine and pharmacology and chief of the division of pulmonary and critical care medicine, and Dr. Ivan McMurtry, professor of pharmacology and internal medicine at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, presented the November Med School Café lecture.

The lecture, titled "Pulmonary Hypertension: The Other BP," had a total of 39 attendees. During the talk Drs. Fagan and McMurtry focused on the pathway of research to the clinical setting. To illustrate this concept, they highlighted the translational research – or scientific research that involves the translation of science conducted in a lab to bedside clinical practice – that takes place at

USA.

The next Med School Café lecture will feature Dr. Ehab Molokhia, associate professor of family medicine at the USA College of Medicine. The event will take place Dec. 18, 2012, at the USA Faculty Club on USA's main campus.

If you are interested in attending, email kepartridge@usouthal.edu for more details. To learn more about the lectures, [click here](#).

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [10:13 AM](#) No comments:

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

USA Awarded NIH Grant To Address Health Disparities



Dr. Errol Crook (pictured above), Abraham Mitchell professor and chair of internal medicine at the USA College of Medicine, speaks at a press conference announcing the grant on Dec. 4, 2012.



From left to right: Dr. Samuel Strada, Dr. Kenneth Hudson, Dr. William Gerthoffer, Dr. Clara Massey, Dr. Hattie Myles, Dr. Martha Arrieta, Dr. Roma Hanks and Dr. Errol Crook.

The University of South Alabama Center for Healthy Communities has been awarded a five-year \$7.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to help reduce and eliminate health disparities in Mobile and surrounding communities.

This marks the third renewal of the USA Center of Excellence for health disparities grant that began in 2004. The funding will support community programs that address health disparities and research to better understand factors that contribute to health disparities.

"This grant allows us to continue to build on the progress we have made in addressing the health disparities in Mobile and surrounding communities," said Dr. Errol Crook, Abraham Mitchell professor and chair of internal medicine at the USA College of Medicine.

According to Dr. Crook, who leads the project, the USA Center for Healthy Communities will continue to collaborate with community groups, health care leaders, and USA faculty. The project aims to craft effective, culturally sensitive, community-based interventions for minority and underserved groups through three main components- community engagement, medical research, and better understanding of how people engage the health care system.

"The grant is an example of how our medical school improves the health of our community in novel ways outside the traditional model of healthcare," said Dr. Samuel J. Strada, dean of the USA College of Medicine. "This project represents the university's ability to bring NIH grant funding to Mobile and to collaborate with local agencies in developing solutions based on local needs."

The community engagement component of the grant will enhance workforce development by supporting a pipeline for health care professionals and further development of a group of community health advocates. The research component includes studies evaluating novel biomarkers for cardiovascular disease, a leading cause of death across the United States, and examining the relationship between labor markets and health, as well as an assessment of the public's perception of their health and knowledge of health issues.

Dr. Roma Hanks, community outreach core co-director, oversees the community health advocate program. This program recruits members of the community to promote healthy behavior and awareness of healthy lifestyles. According to Dr. Hanks, who also serves as chair of sociology and anthropology at USA, their efforts are done in partnership with the community and focus on health issues of importance to them such as physical activity, obesity, and healthy eating.

"This outreach is unique because it allows us to reach more people with important messages that typically only occur in a traditional clinical setting," said Dr. Crook. "Our health care advocates are able to effectively reach large numbers of people in the community."

Another important aspect of the grant is its pipeline programs that motivate children and young adults from health-disparate neighborhoods. Led by Dr. Hattie Myles, assistant dean of student affairs and education enrichment, youth from health disparate neighborhoods enter an intense program to strengthen their academic skills, and that encourages them to consider careers in health care and pursue a college degree. According to Dr. Myles, who also serves as community outreach core co-director, teens also have the opportunity to shadow health

professionals in this program.

Additionally, the program supports an intergenerational approach to improve health where senior citizens interact with youth for mutual benefit. "For instance, in one activity the youth will teach seniors technology and how to access health-related information, while the seniors in turn serve as life mentors for them," said Dr. Crook.

The grant also supports novel translational research led by Dr. William Gerthoffer, professor and chair of the USA department of biochemistry, and Dr. Clara Massey, chief of the USA division of cardiology. Their research examines novel proteins that may be early predictors of cardiovascular disease. "Having earlier markers of heart disease, before symptoms occur, is important in reducing the health disparities seen in cardiovascular disease," said Dr. Crook.

The second research project is led by Dr. Kenneth Hudson, associate professor of sociology at USA. Through this grant, Dr. Hudson will examine the relationship between labor, labor markets and health. Detailed job history and health utilization data from households in the poorest neighborhoods of Mobile will be collected. Dr. Hudson is interested in better understanding the correlation between the type of job one has and that person's relationship with the health care community.

Dr. Martha Arrieta, director of research at the USA Center for Healthy Communities is leading the third research project. Her project assesses the public's perception and knowledge of health issues by using a novel survey method. Using members of the communities to be studied in her research team, Dr. Arrieta will identify neighborhood sites where it is best to gather information and will test methods to gather related data. Results from this study will provide novel methods by which the Center and its partners may conduct future assessment of community health and health needs. In addition, the research apprenticeship model used in this study will provide unique skills to the community members that will hopefully enhance their employment opportunities.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [4:59 PM](#) No comments:

This Week's DSS - Dr. David Lefer



The next Distinguished Scientist Seminar at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine will be presented by Dr. David J. Lefer, professor of cardiothoracic surgery and surgery at Emory University School of Medicine.

The lecture, titled "Hydrogen Sulfide and Cardiovascular Disease," will take place Dec. 6, 2012, at 4 p.m. in the Medical Sciences Building auditorium.

Dr. Lefer also serves as director of the Cardiothoracic Research Laboratory, Carlyle Fraser Heart Center at Emory University Hospital Midtown. His research interests include myocardial ischemia-reperfusion injury, congestive heart failure, hepatic ischemic-reperfusion injury, cardiovascular actions of nitrite and nitric oxide, and coronary vascular biology.

Dr. Lefer has a B.S. degree in biology from the University of Richmond, and a Ph.D. degree in physiology-pharmacology from Wake Forest University. He did a postdoctoral fellowship in molecular cardiology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

In 2012, Dr. Lefer received the American Physiological Society Robert M. Berne Award Lecture, and in 2011, he received the ASPET CV Section Benedict R. Lucchesi Award Lecture in Cardiac Pharmacology. He is an editorial board member of Circulation Research and Cardiovascular Drug Review. In addition, he holds memberships in various organizations including the American Physiological Society, the American Heart Association, and the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine.

For more information on Dr. Lefer's research, [click here](#).

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