



Report to the Texas Pharmacy Congress — Feb. 26, 2021

## Students, Faculty and Alumni Join COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics in Houston, Rio Grande Valley

UH College of Pharmacy Pharm.D. students, faculty members and alumni are eagerly responding to the call for immunizers as COVID-19 vaccination efforts get underway across Texas.

In the first effort, UHCOP team members assisted with the vaccination clinics organized by the college's Rio Grande Valley Pharm.D. Satellite Program partner, Edinburg-based DHRHealth.

Most recently, UHCOP immunizers assisted in with the Memorial Hermann Health System's drive-through clinic at Houston's NRG Park, which saw over 14,000 immunized over four days. Volunteer students and faculty delivered immunizations, manned pre-immunization screening and post-immunization observation stations, and transported doses between staging and immunization areas.



## SNPhA Chapter, Members Earn Outreach and Skills Competition Awards at Nationals

The UHCOP Chapter of the Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) brought home national awards for its local outreach efforts as well as winner or finalist rankings in team-based competitions at the 2020 SNPhA Virtual National Convention Nov. 4-6.

Among the national health education campaigns completed during the 2019-20 academic year, the UHCOP chapter secured awards for the Fighting Diabetes, The Power to End Stroke/Smoking Cessation, Mental Health, and Project Keepsake initiatives.

Chapter members Will Chollett and Lauren Lee won the P2 division of the



*SNPhA members discuss stress and mental health with children at a health fair.*

SNPhA Kroger Clinical Skills Competition, and Ndi Chiedu and Faith Awoniyi were members of the first runner-up team in the 2nd Annual SNPhA L.E.A.P. at Lilly Business Plan Competition.

Student Emily (Emy) Cooper, who served as 2019-20 National Recording Secretary, received a national Kroger/National Pharmaceutical Association (NPhA) Foundation scholarship and was among the finalists for the National J.B. Hills Chapter President of the Year Award.

The chapter also was among the Top 3 Chapters in overall scoring for the Chauncey I. Cooper Chapter of the Year Award.

## Zhang Tapped to Lead New Drug Discovery Institute at UH

Ruiwen Zhang, M.D., Ph.D., DABT, UHCOP Robert L. Boblitt Endowed Professor of Drug Discovery, has been appointed as the inaugural director of the new multidisciplinary UH Drug Discovery Institute.

The institute – UH's eighth University-wide research center – is a partnership between the UH colleges of Pharmacy, Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Cullen College of Engineering, in equal measure, with faculty affiliations from several other colleges.

The ultimate goal of the DDI research program is to bring scientific discoveries and technological advances to the marketplace. UH has expertise across many aspects of the drug discovery process, such as high-throughput screening technologies, organ-on-chip models, biosensing and biofeedback, and molecular modeling.

## Student News

In the Virtual TX SNPhACON 2020 Clinical Skills Competition in November, UHCOP Pharm.D. students **Ricky Huynh-Phan** and **Duc Huynh** won first place and **Julie Nguyen** and **Wendy Nguyen** won second place, respectively, in the P3 Division; **Lauren Lee** and **Noemie Senawong** won second place in the P2 Division; and **Aniqa Virani** and **Sarah Thomas** won first place in the P1 Division.

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UHCOP Pharm.D. students presented a state-high 30 research posters during the American Society of Health System Pharmacists 2020 Virtual Midyear Clinical Meeting and Expo Dec. 6-10.

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UH's Delta Delta Chapter of the Kappa Psi Pharmaceutical Fraternity has been awarded a \$1,000 grant from the International Kappa Psi Philanthropy Committee to purchase, collect and assemble care packages for Houston's homeless community. The chapter's care packages will consist of health products, such as masks, soap and toothbrushes, as well as water bottles and clean socks, and will be distributed by Mission Centers of Houston's Gano Mission Center, a nonprofit arm of the Union Baptist Association of Texas.

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Two new student organizations within UHCOP have gained official recognition from UH Pharmacy Council and the University of Houston: the African Pharmacy Students Association and the Society for Sexual and Gender Disparities in Pharmacy.

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## Kappa Psi's Delta Delta Wins 5th SW Province Chapter of Year Award

UHCOP's Delta Delta Chapter of the Kappa Psi Pharmaceutical Fraternity has secured its fifth consecutive Chapter of the Year Award in the national organization's Southwest Province.

Among the chapter's activities during the 2019-20 academic year were coordinating eight wellness fairs; collecting 80 books, creating dozens of bookmarks, and volunteering to read to children at local pediatric clinics; and raising money for Hurricane Dorian relief fund.

In addition, Chapter Regent Julie Lu and Webmaster Rustin Pevehouse were elected to the Kappa Psi Southwest Province Executive Board as Historian and Webmaster, respectively.

## Faculty @ Research News

### NIH Backs Study of Metformin to Prevent Weight Gain in Pediatric Mental Health Patients

UHCOP Professor Hua Chen, M.D., Ph.D., has been awarded a \$455,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the effectiveness of antidiabetic drug Metformin in preventing weight gain among pediatric patients upon initiation of antipsychotic medications for mental health pharmacotherapy.

In up to 80% of cases, the use of atypical/second-generation antipsychotic drugs causes antipsychotic-induced weight gain (AIWG) with children gaining up to 120 pounds in a single year.

"Our prior work found that most of the AIWG in children and adolescents happened during the first three months of SGA treatment, and SGA discontinuation only reversed a quarter of the weight the patient gained during the treatment within one year of SGA cessation," Chen said.



Not only can childhood onset obesity carry a greater risk for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases than adult onset, that much weight gain typically causes children and teens to stop taking their medicine.

"We have seen many cases where the discontinuation of the needed medicine leads to a patient becoming hospitalized due to a suicidal attempt or other mental health crisis," Chen said.

Using a large national electronic medical record database, Chen will identify children and adolescents aged 6 to 19 years who were treated with Metformin during the first 24 months of SGA treatment. Chen will also identify patient subgroups following certain weight development trajectories, who are most likely to benefit from the use of Metformin, and from its early intervention.

### Garey Named Fellow of Infectious Diseases Society of America

Kevin W. Garey, Pharm.D., M.S., FASHP, professor and chair of the college's Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research, was recently honored as a 2020 Fellow of the prestigious Infectious Diseases Society of America.

Garey is recognized internationally as an infectious diseases (ID) pharmacotherapy expert, especially in innovative diagnostics and novel therapeutic approaches to *Clostridioides difficile* infection (CDI). An award-winning

researcher and educator, Garey has published more than 200 research papers in peer-reviewed journals and several book chapters.

Garey also co-founded a two-year ID fellowship program in collaboration with CHI St. Luke's Health-Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center. He has led or collaborated on research grant projects and pre-clinical/clinical trials funded by such entities as the CDC and the National Institutes of Health as well as both small and large organizations in

the pharmaceutical industry, such as Abbott, AstraZeneca and Merck.

Within the IDSA, Garey has served as a member and author of its Clinical Practice Guidelines for CDI and member of its Standards and Practice Guidelines Committee that have produced numerous practice guideline updates in collaboration with the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) and other professional health care organizations.

## College Welcomes Sanket Patel, Natalie Rosario to Faculty

UHCOP recently welcomed hypertension/kidney researcher Sanket N. Patel, Ph.D., and ambulatory care clinical pharmacist Natalie Rosario, Pharm.D., MPH, BCACP, to its faculty.

Patel has been appointed as a research assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences. He has been a laboratory member of Tahir Hussain, Ph.D., FAHA, Joseph P. and Shirley Shipman Buckley Professor in Drug Discovery and Associate Vice Dean for Research & Graduate Programs, since joining the college as a postdoctoral fellow in 2014.

During his time at the college, Patel has been studying the molecular mechanisms of angiotensin-II type 2 receptor activation in combating oxidative stress, adiposity, inflammation and kidney dysfunction. Patel has been awarded the 2019 Biotex Laboratories Junior Scientist Award in Immunology by Association of Scientists of Indian Origin in America (ASIOA), the first-place oral presentation award at ASIOA's 7th National Meeting in 2017, and the 2016 Kidney Council New Investigator Award by the American Heart Association.

His work has been published in such peer-reviewed journals as the *American Journal of Physiology-Renal Physiology*, *Hypertension*, and *Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry*. He also serves as an academic editor for the journal *Medicine*, and is a reviewer for multiple journals.

Patel earned his Ph.D. and M.S. in Pharmaceutical Sciences degrees from St. John's University in New York, during which he was awarded a one-year competitive research fellowship, and his bachelor of Pharmacy degree from L.M. College of Pharmacy at Gujarat University in Ahmedabad, India.

Rosario has been appointed as a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research. She joins



PATEL



ROSARIO

the college from the Texas A&M University Irma Rangel College of Pharmacy in Kingsville, Texas, where she had served on the faculty since 2019.

Rosario earned her Pharm.D. degree from the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy (Advanced Pharmacotherapy Gateway track) in Lexington, Ky., and her Master of Public Health from the Creighton University Graduate School in Omaha, Neb.

She also completed a PGY1 pharmacy practice residency program at Palm Beach Atlantic University's Lloyd L. Gregory School of Pharmacy and a PGY2 pharmacy specialty residency program in ambulatory care at the University of Colorado's Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

In addition to being Board Certified in Ambulatory Care Pharmacy (BCACP) by the Board of Pharmacy Specialties, Rosario has completed certificate programs in medication therapy management, community-based pharmacy point-of-care testing, immunizations, naloxone dispensing, suicide awareness and referral, culturally competent care, collaborative institutional training, and residency teaching and research.

She has presented research at meetings of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, American College of Clinical Pharmacy, and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacy. Her academic and research interests are in health disparities, implementation of clinical pharmacy services, quality improvement initiatives, self care, chronic disease state management, and residency preparation.

Fluent in the Spanish language, Rosario will maintain a clinical pharmacy practice site at Vecino Health Center's Denver Harbor Family Clinic, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) serving a predominately Hispanic patient population in Houston's Inner Loop.

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**Rajender R. Aparasu**, Ph.D., FAPhA, professor, has received a \$425,000 grant from Gilead Sciences Inc. for his project, "Healthcare utilization and risk of incident hepatocellular carcinoma in Hepatitis B-infected older adults treated with oral antivirals: A Medicare study."

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**Bernadette Asias-Dinh**, Pharm.D., BCACP, BCPS, CDCES, clinical assistant professor, has been appointed 2020-21 co-chair of the Professional and Student Affairs Committee under the American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Pharmacy Practice and Management's Diabetes Management Special Interest Group.

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Diana S-L. Chow, Ph.D., FNAI, has received a \$25,000 grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation for her project, "Multi-Center, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Double-Blinded, Trial of Efficacy and Safety of Riluzole in Acute Spinal Cord Injury."

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**Kevin W. Garey**, Pharm.D., M.S., FASHP, FIDSA, professor, has received a \$146,250 grant from Summit Corporation PLC for his project, "Ridinilazole mechanism of action for the CDC."

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**Bin Guo**, Ph.D., associate professor, has received a one-year, \$100,000 grant from the William & Ella Owens Medical Research Foundation for

his project, "Discovery of a new drug that kills cancer cells by direct activation of the TET2 tumor suppressor."

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**Elisabeth Sulaica**, Pharm.D., BCCP, clinical assistant professor, has been appointed Cardiovascular Team State Liaison for the Texas Chapter of the American College of Cardiology.

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**Gabriel Tao**, Ph.D. candidate, was awarded Best Abstract Award from the Lone Star Regional Chapter of the Society of Toxicology for his presentation, "Neratinib Causes Persistent Gut Damage and Reduces Intestinal Cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A11 Enzyme," during the organization's virtual Annual Meeting Nov. 19-20.

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**Gomika Udugamasooriya**, Ph.D., associate professor, has received a one-year, \$100,000 grant from the William & Ella Owens Medical Research Foundation for his project, "Drugging the Undruggable: 3-Dimensional peptoids to target mutant Ras proteins in cancer."

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**Mingfu Wu**, Ph.D., associate professor, has received a three-year, \$300,000 grant from the American Heart Association-SouthWest Affiliate for his project, "Integrin Alpha 6 regulates trabecular specification and trabecular compaction."

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- Group-Based Trajectory Modeling to Identify Patterns of Adherence and Its Predictors Among Older Adults on Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme Inhibitors (ACEIs)/Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs). **Paranjpe R, Johnson ML, Essien EJ**, Barner JC, **Serna O**, Gallardo E, **Majd Z**, Fleming ML, **Ordóñez N**, Holstad MM, **Abughosh SM**. *Patient Prefer Adherence*. 2020 Oct 13;14:1935-1947. doi: 10.2147/PPA.S270809. eCollection 2020. PMID: 33116437
- Higher Resource Utilization and Costs in Long-Term Nursing Home Residents With Overactive Bladder: A Retrospective Study of Medicare Beneficiaries. **Sura S**, Shiozawa A, Ng D, **Aparasu RR**. *J Am Med Dir Assoc*. 2020 Oct 15;S1525-8610(20)30743-X. doi: 10.1016/j.jamda.2020.08.037. PMID: 33071158
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