



Scoop

Oct. 4, 2002

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

October

7 Blood Drive, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Fifth Floor Gallery. Please give if you can.

9 Clinical Research Lecture, Dr. Mark Munsell's topic is on interim analysis, 5 - 6:30 p.m., MSB 2.135.

UTMost Interest

Dr. Heinrich Taegtmeyer, Internal Medicine/Cardiology, recently addressed "From Adaptation to Maladaptation: Mechanisms of Metabolic Remodeling of the Heart" at the University of Toronto, as well as "Energy Substrate Metabolism as Regulator of Gene Expression in the Heart," in Boca Raton, Fla... **UT Nursing School Dean Patricia Starck** recently spoke on the national nursing shortage issue (*Houston Chronicle*, Sept. 30), saying, "The problem is not solved...In our area, we have about 800 students in 13 nursing programs. We need to double that by 2007."

NOTE - The second edition of *Physicians Practice*, September/October, is out. The journal features a 7-page insert highlighting UT-Houston Physicians.



16TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR

This fair will be 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Thurs., **Dec. 5**, in the Fifth Floor Gallery. Tables are available for vendors. Contact **Beverly Head**, 713-500-6512, or <Beverly.J.Head@uth.tmc.edu>. Sponsored by the Employee Relations Committee.

HAVING AN EVENT? - Want to see if the Webber Plaza is available? To make reservations, contact Auxiliary Enterprises at 713-500-8400, or <<http://ae.uth.tmc.edu/info/events.htm>>.

DR. OWEN WITTE TARGETS THE BODY'S IMMUNE RESPONSE

Leading the Dean's Lecture Series this fall will be **Dr. Owen Witte**, professor, Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics, and investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. He will address "Lymphocyte Growth Regulation," 4 p.m., Wed., **Nov. 13**, in MSB 3.001.



Dr. Owen Witte

Dr. Witte is interested in understanding the regulation of lymphocyte growth in both disease states and during immune responses. He and his researchers are using PET and other imaging modalities to study lymphocyte movement during the immune response to tumor antigens. He also has begun to study mechanisms of metastasis of epithelial cancers to bone marrow.

His laboratory is concerned with the interrelated problems of cell growth regulation and the differentiation of hematopoietic cells. One project centers around a set of in vitro culture techniques, which enable his laboratory to grow and manipulate defined hematopoietic cell types. A second concentrates on the function of oncogenes found in certain human leukemias, including Philadelphia chromosome positive chronic myelogenous leukemia, and acute lymphocytic leukemia.

He has discovered the gene defect in X-linked agammaglobulinemia is a specific tyrosine kinase and is now studying its mode of action. He uses advanced gene chip technologies. This information should help define potential targets for diagnosis and therapy in prostate cancer.

ALL ABOARD FOR INFORMATION-PACKED OCTOBER EVENTS

Be sure to check out the following events this month to see if one of them might be just what the doctor ordered:

The fall **History of Medicine** series, a blue-book credit course, begins noon, Mon., **Oct. 7**, MSB 2.006. **Dr. M. David Low** will address "Surgery on the Brain and Mind."

Volunteers are still very much needed for **Founders' Fun Fest**, 2 - 6 p.m. Fri., **Oct. 11**, Harris County Psychiatric Center. To volunteer, sign up at the Founders' Fun Fest site as indicated, <www.uthouston.edu/anniversary/founders_fun/index.html>, and click on "You Can Help."

Concepts in Contemporary Cardiology, from **Oct. 23-26**, at the Inter-Continental Hotel here in Houston, will feature speakers addressing all areas of cardiovascular medicine. Live case demonstrations on coronary and peripheral interventions and group discussions covering the spectrum of cardiovascular medicine and controversies also will take center stage. For more information, call **Valerie Wallace**, 713-500-5128, or e-mail her at <Valerie.L.Wallace@uth.tmc.edu>. Check out the Web site at <www.CardioConcepts.org>. To register online, click the registration button. The symposium is a continuing medical education activity for cardiologists, cardiac and vascular surgeons, cardiology technologists, and cardiac and critical care nurses.



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DR. MICHAEL W. BUNGO BEGINS WORK AS ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR HARRIS COUNTY PROGRAMS

Our country has been in a health-care crisis during the last decade, and there is much that physicians can do to reclaim stewardship of the health-care system, says **Michael W. Bungo, M.D.** Dr. Bungo, the new chief of staff at Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital and associate dean for Harris County Programs, assumed his new role Aug. 1 and is already at work to make a difference.



Dr. Michael W. Bungo

His philosophy is simple but direct: “Our greatness as physicians will be measured by our research and education efforts. Our greatness as a people will be measured by our ability to provide health care to the least fortunate among us.”

Helping people less fortunate is what Dr. Bungo is all about, and his survey of the needs and challenges at hand reveals numerous opportunities that attracted him to Houston. Managed care implications on health-care delivery, staffing in an era of nursing shortages, public funding of county medical resources, and issues related to the growing number of citizens who are uninsured or underinsured – all present challenges on Dr. Bungo’s radar screen.

“Hospitals like this (Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital), have been the mainstay of medical education in this country, and medical education is undergoing considerable change addressing service versus learning. All of the complex issues that confront LBJ potentially can serve as a poster child for solutions regarding care for the underserved and underinsured. We have a unique opportunity here to design health-care management systems and project a model that can be used by others throughout the country,” he said.

Dr. Bungo, a cardiologist, replaces Dr. James Hefner, who retired after 20 years of distinguished service to the Medical School (see back page *Scoop* Aug. 23, '02). A graduate of the New Jersey Medical School, Dr. Bungo completed his residency and cardiology fellowship at the New England Deaconess Hospital. Most recently he served as the medical director of the Heart Station, vice chair for inpatient affairs, and professor of internal medicine/cardiology at UTMB.

“I’m not the traditional kind of physician who knew medicine would be my career from an early age,” Dr. Bungo said. “I dabbled with the idea and started college (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY), where I received a degree in chemistry. Early on I imagined I’d make a career somewhere as a professor teaching chemistry.”

As a college student looking for a career that could sustain his interest in helping others, medicine soon emerged to better fit the bill. Following medical school and fellowship training, Dr. Bungo recalls sending “blind” letters to each of the three federal space facilities, including the Johnson Space Center in Clear Lake. Calling the Space Center to follow up, he was surprised that they not only were interested, but also wanted him to come to Houston the very next day for an interview. That began a distinguished, 11-year career with NASA as director of the Space Biomedical Research Institute and chief scientist of the Medical Sciences Division. One of the highlights of his work at NASA, he recalled, was implementing the first use of echocardiography aboard a U.S. spacecraft. That project established new insights into the physiology of the cardiovascular system in the absence of gravity. For his work, NASA awarded him the Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal.

Seeing patients through private practice and developing joint NASA programs with UTMB, led to his volunteer faculty appointment in Galveston in the late 1980s. Additionally, he has held volunteer faculty roles at Baylor College of Medicine and UT-Houston Medical School. In 1995, he became the director of the UTMB’s Heart Station, where approximately 55,000 tests (ECGs, stress tests, and Holter monitors) were overseen annually. Additionally, he took on a growing list of responsibilities and leadership roles at UTMB, including vice chairman for inpatient affairs in the Department of Internal Medicine.

Dr. Bungo and his wife, Pam, have two children and reside in Clear Lake. Their daughter recently completed a degree at the University of Chicago and their son is beginning classes at UT-Austin. Summarizing his first days on the job, he noted, “Enough can not be said for the warm welcome I’ve received, and I’m looking forward to addressing both the challenges and the many opportunities ahead.” - **B. Boutwell, Dr. P.H.**