

# ASN NEWS

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## **ASN Recognizes Members through Annual Honorary Awards**

The ASN has announced the recipients of its annual honorary awards, all of which will be presented at Renal Week in Philadelphia.

The Homer W. Smith Award is presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding scientific contribution that has a major, direct impact on the discipline of nephrology. The 2002 recipient is Jurgen Schnermann, MD, from the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Schnermann will be presented with this award and will address the annual meeting attendees on Sunday, November 3, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Young Investigator Award recognizes young investigators for excellence and creativity in nephrologic research. Applicants must be younger than 41 years of age and are judged on the significance and originality of their published work. The 2002 recipient is Fadi Lakkis, MD, from Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. Lakkis will also be presented with this award and will address the annual meeting attendees on Sunday, November 3, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Belding H. Scribner Award was established in 1995 to recognize outstanding contributions to nephrology in the area of clinical practice and patient care and is presented annually at the ASN annual meeting. The 2002 co-recipients are Anthony Sebastian, MD, and Curtis Morris, MD.

The John P. Peters Award was established in 1983 to recognize outstanding contributions to the field of nephrology. The 2002 recipient is Alfred Michael, MD, from the University of Minnesota.

Warm congratulations to all 2002 award winners!!

## **Renal Week 2002**

Plan NOW to join the ASN in Philadelphia from October 30<sup>th</sup> to November 4<sup>th</sup> for the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Scientific Exposition. Renal Week begins with ten two-day and one-day Postgraduate Education Courses. These courses, which are chaired by experts in the field, will include popular topics such as Pathology, Glomerulonephritis, Dialysis, Hypertension, and Critical Care; new topics will include Molecular Biology and Divalent Ions.

This year's Program Committee is also pleased to announce that three outstanding individuals have been invited as the State-of-the-Art speakers. Dr. Richard Lifton, Yale University School of Medicine, will address "Genes, Genomes, and the Future of Medicine" on Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. "AIDS as a Zoonosis: Scientific and Public Health Implications" will be discussed by Dr. Beatrice Hahn of the University of Alabama at Birmingham on Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Finally, Dr. Ronald Evans of The Salk Institute for Biological Studies will begin the final day of the meeting on Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, with "Nuclear Receptors and Lipid Physiology." Annual Meeting registrants will have the opportunity to attend any of the 43 basic and clinical science symposia, 22 clinical nephrology conferences, free communications, and official evening symposia.

Registration and program information is available on the ASN web site [www.asn-online.org](http://www.asn-online.org). All ASN members should already have received a copy of the preliminary program by mail. If you have not received your copy or if you are not an ASN member and would like to receive registration information, please e-mail the ASN staff through the web site.

## **ASN Announces Winners of the Gottschalk Research Grants**

ASN is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2002 Carl W. Gottschalk Research Scholar Grant. The Carl W. Gottschalk Research Scholar Award is designed to foster the independent careers of young investigators in biomedical research that is related to nephrology. The award provides \$100,000 annually for two years beginning July 1. There was increased interest in this grant opportunity this year, and there was an extraordinary number of outstanding applications; the ASN has therefore increased the number of grant awards to four. The grant recipients are . . .

- Patrick David Brophy, MD, a Lecturer in Pediatric Nephrology at the University of Michigan Medical Systems. Dr. Brophy's study is focused on the biomedical and genetic mechanisms of Pax2, a gene that is critical for renal epithelium development. Pax2 is a DNA-binding protein that may help initiate the genetic program underlying epithelial cell differentiation. Pax2 is required for proper renal development in mammals and has a gene dosage effect. According to Dr. Brophy, Pax2 has been associated with renal dysplasia, renal cystic diseases, and the renal-coloboma syndrome in humans, but little information is available regarding the genes that are regulated by Pax2. Dr. Brophy hypothesizes that Pax2 regulates key genes in renal development, and he aims to test this hypothesis by identifying Pax2 gene targets and subsequently investigating the mechanisms whereby Pax2 accomplishes such regulation.
- Sumant Chugh, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Chugh's grant is titled "Role of Neph1 in podocyte structure and function." The overall goal of Dr. Chugh's study is to investigate the characteristics of the protein encoded by the recently identified Neph1 gene and to investigate its potential role in pathogenesis of proteinuria. Dr. Chugh proposes three specific aims. First, he will try to identify putative associative proteins that bind to the Neph1 gene in podocytes. Second, he hopes to determine the functions and associations of specific motifs located in the cytoplasmic tail of Neph1 gene. Third, he will examine the expression of Neph1 in a variety of animal models of podocyte injury as well as human glomerular diseases.

- S. Ananth Karumanchi, MD, Instructor in Medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center. Dr. Karumanchi's application is titled "Role of Sflt-1 in the pathogenesis of Pre-eclampsia." Dr. Karumanchi will be studying the role of sflt-1 (soluble fms-like tyrosine kinase) in the pathogenesis of pre-eclampsia. Dr. Karumanchi notes that pre-eclampsia complicates 5% of pregnancies and is the leading cause of maternal and fetal morbidity and mortality. It is characterized by hypertension, generalized edema, proteinuria, and occasionally renal failure. Several abnormalities, including endothelial cell dysfunction, have been implicated in the pathogenesis of this disorder; the molecular mechanisms responsible are however poorly understood. Dr. Karumanchi notes that there is accumulating evidence for a pathogenic model for pre-eclampsia whereby a hypoxic placenta secretes a factor that causes endothelial cell dysfunction into the maternal circulation. Using gene expression analysis from pre-eclamptic and normal placentas, he has identified sflt-1 as a factor that is upregulated in patients with pre-eclampsia. Dr. Karumanchi proposes following pre-eclamptic patients longitudinally to determine if systemic sflt-1 levels change as the disease progresses. He will then test the hypothesis that increased serum sflt-1 levels are responsible for the endothelial dysfunction and the clinical manifestations of pre-eclampsia.
- Jianchao Xu, MD, PhD, Research Associate Scientist from Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. Xu will be studying the Kv1.3 function in vascular resistance blood pressure regulation. The Kv1.3 gene encodes a voltage-gated potassium channel. Kv1.3 is expressed in vascular resistance by affecting the contractile state of the SMC. Moreover, it has been shown that the level of Kv1.3 expression is associated with hypertension in spontaneous hypertensive rats. According to Dr. Xu, the exact role of Kv1.3 in vascular tone and blood pressure regulation is not conclusive because of the lack of a Kv1.3-specific inhibitor. His goal will be to examine the role of Kv1.3 in vascular resistance *in vitro* and to study the role of Kv1.3 in blood pressure control *in vivo*.

Please join the ASN Grants Review Committee in congratulating all four grant recipients!

## **Speaking of Science . . . Save the Date: ASN Will Host a Basic Science Conference in March of 2003**

Join the ASN Basic Science Committee on March 8 through 12, 2003, at the Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge, Colorado, for the biannual Basic Science Conference. ASN expects 200 people to attend this meeting on "Autoimmunity and Tolerance in Organ Injury." The meeting will be co-chaired by Drs. Jeffrey Platt, Thomas Coffman, and Laurence Turka. This three-and-a-half-day meeting will begin with a keynote address and follow with a series of sessions that include such topics as:

- B Lymphocyte Activation and Function
- T Lymphocyte Recognition and Activation
- Anatomy of an Immune Response
- Control of Complement and Lymphocyte Functions
- Molecular Basis of Immune Effector Functions
- Lymphocytes, Homeostasis, and Tolerance
- Immune Regulation and Suppression
- How is Tolerance Broken?
- Kidney Responses to Cellular and Humoral Immunity
- Therapeutic Applications of Immune Modulation and Tolerance

There will also be poster sessions and much more, so put this important conference on your calendar NOW. Remember to bring your skis, snowshoes, and ice skates so you can enjoy all that the mountains of Breckenridge have to offer while taking advantage of an opportunity to network with colleagues in an intimate setting.

More information, including program details, registration, and housing, will be available in early Fall of 2002.

## **ASN Headquarters Has Successfully Moved!**

By now, you should have received information about ASN's new office location, including address, phone, and fax details. The staff is still busy putting the finishing touches on this exciting and fabulous new Downtown DC location, but they are happily settling into new offices and meeting spaces. While getting used to a new network and computers, new association management software, and a new phone system, the staff is also preparing to welcome our sister organizations to a full-day meeting of the Council of American Kidney Societies (CAKS) on July 10<sup>th</sup>. We would also like to welcome all of you. When in Washington, plan to stop in!!

## **Call for Committee Nominations**

The recent Call for Committee Nominations was hugely successful. ASN received over 200 nominations for committee participation, all of which are now being reviewed by Committee Chairs and Council members. Recommendations for new committee and advisory group members will be finalized in August, and letters of invitation will be issued shortly thereafter to ensure that all members of ASN committees will have ample time to plan initial face-to-face meetings during Renal Week. Thanks to all of you for responding in such a positive way to this opportunity to get involved in ASN!

## **ASN Web Site Changes**

ASN Council, with the unselfish assistance of the Renal Informatics Committee, has awarded the contract for the redesign and development of an ASN interactive website to DefenseWeb Technologies in California. Work has already started on this design and upgrade project, and we expect that it won't be long at all before each of you has the opportunity to design, build, and develop your own "My ASN" web page. More details to follow.

## **Meet ASN's New Staff**

As the ASN has transitioned to self-management and its new location, two new staff members have been hired to support ASN operations and member services. Hector Ruiz joined ASN on April 1<sup>st</sup> of this year as our new Manager of Financial Operations. Most recently, Hector worked for KPMG Consulting, Inc., where he was a Senior Management Analyst in the Public Services Practice. While at KPMG Consulting, Inc., he was involved in a wide range of consulting assignments covering the implementation and maintenance of the Defense Departmental Reporting System (DDRS), an automated financial reporting system used throughout the Department of Defense (DOD) community. He was primarily responsible for the development of functional validation testing for the DDRS application and was the lead for the testing of DDRS and the associated software applications. He has also assisted in the development of training materials for all users of the DDRS application as well as on-site training at various DOD centers throughout the country, including demonstration of the functionality of the DOD financial reporting system. Before joining KPMG Consulting, Inc., Hector had financial responsibility for the Department of Pediatrics at Georgetown University Medical Center. In those few hours each week that Hector is *not* working for ASN, he enjoys biking, sports, and traveling. Hector also speaks fluent Spanish and is engaged to be married this November (but not during Renal Week!). Hector earned a Bachelor of Liberal Studies Degree in Business Administration from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. A big welcome to Hector!!

The second and newest staff member is Shari Dwoskin, Senior Coordinator of Communications. Shari's responsibilities will include a variety of communications functions, such as web site content and maintenance, writing and editing our quarterly newsletter, and assisting members of ASN's Meetings Team in preparation of the Renal Week *Program and Abstracts Book*. (Shari LOVES to proofread!!!)

Shari comes to ASN with a great deal of association experience, having worked in membership capacities at the American Academy of Optometry and most recently at the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. She improved membership services at both organizations, by writing, editing, and distributing e-mail action alerts to help update members on a regular basis. Shari graduated Magna cum Laude with a B.A. in Religion and Communications from Muhlenberg College. Welcome, Shari!

## **The Senate Introduces the Kidney Disease Educational Benefits Act of 2002**

On April 22, 2002, Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) introduced the Kidney Disease Educational Benefits Act of 2002, S. 2218. The bill would provide coverage for kidney disease education services, upon the managing physician's referral, to an individual with kidney disease that will require dialysis or a kidney transplant. The education services would provide comprehensive information regarding management, prevention, and treatment options for kidney disease, and it would also ensure that such individuals have the opportunity to participate actively in their choice of therapy. Specifically, the program would provide an overview of kidney function, a review of hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis options and vascular access alternatives, and presentations by a nephrology social worker and a transplant coordinator.

Medicare-eligible predialysis beneficiaries (aged and disabled Medicare beneficiaries) would be entitled to the benefit covered by the bill. The benefits would begin when an individual's glomerular filtration rate is 30 or below.

Representative Phil Crane (R-IL) introduced the House companion bill, HR 3770, earlier this year.

## **Congressional Kidney Caucus**

In March 2002, Representatives Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Jim McDermott (D-WA) formed the Congressional Kidney Caucus to increase congressional and public awareness of kidney disease. The Caucus will help the kidney community gain support for legislation geared toward kidney patients and will identify research opportunities to discover the causes of kidney disease and the potential for improvements in the prevention and management of kidney disease. Finally, the Caucus hopes to develop educational initiatives for both patients and health care providers and help to coordinate the efforts of federal agencies, such as NIH, in fighting kidney disease.

The current members of the Congressional Kidney Caucus are: Mark Kirk (R-IL), Co-Chair; Jim McDermott (D-WA), Co-Chair; Charles Rangel (D-NY); Philip Crane (R-IL); John Tanner (D-TN); Tammy Baldwin (D-WI); Xavier Becerra (D-CA); Donna Christensen (D-VI); John Conyers (D-MI); Elijah Cummings (D-MD); Jim Greenwood (R-PA); William Jefferson (D-LA); John Lewis (D-GA); Michael McNulty (D-NY); Connie Morella (R-MD); Richard Neal (D-MA); Lynn Rivers (D-MI); Bobby Rush (D-IL); Vic Snyder (D-AR); Karen Thurman (D-FL); Fortney 'Pete' Stark (D-CA); Shelley Berkley (D-NV); Clay Shaw (R-FL); Dave Camp (R-MI); Michael Bilirakis (R-FL); David Hobson (R-OH); Mark Udall (D-CO); John Tanner (D-TN).

## **Important Dates . . .**

Time is running out, so make your plans NOW to attend the ASN Official Board Review Course and Update, which has been moved back to the popular San Francisco area this year. The BRC is scheduled for August 24<sup>th</sup> through August 30<sup>th</sup> to allow

course participants the option to add a few days in San Francisco immediately after the course and over the Labor Day weekend to just relax and enjoy all that San Francisco has to offer.

This week-long course is designed to:

- Prepare attendees for the 2002 Nephrology Board Certification and Recertification Examination, scheduled for November 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Provide a timely, comprehensive and thorough update for the practicing nephrologists.
- Translate the results of clinical investigations into practice use in patient care.

The course faculty has been carefully selected for expert teaching skills and highly rated past performance in this and similar courses. To ensure fresh delivery and new points of view, the ASN turns over approximately one third of the faculty each year. In addition, all participants receive a comprehensive syllabus that contains outlines of all lectures, explanatory text, copies of key slides, and updated bibliographies. Finally, all registrants for the course receive an official Board Review T-shirt, personally designed by Bob Narins and guaranteed to be a valuable keepsake!!

Don't miss out! Get those registration materials in today!!