OPERATION HEALTH & WELLNESS & LONESTAR

Students and faculty volunteered their time and efforts to provide medical services to residents of the Coastal Bend during Operation Health and Wellness, a Texas A&M Colonias initiative. The program provides hands-on experience for troops, while providing needed medical services to the community at no cost.

For two weeks in June, pharmacy students worked alongside faculty and military service personnel to deliver services to these medically underserved communities. Students and faculty counseled patients, helped distribute medication, worked to connect patients with resources like medication assistance programs, and also performed screenings for blood pressure and diabetes.

In July, the college participated in Operation Lone Star, an effort by the Texas State Guard, Texas A&M University, and various local partners. College of Pharmacy faculty and students assisted in providing primary care health services to over 500 patients and worked alongside an interprofessional team of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, nutritionists and social workers.

NEW RESIDENCY PROGRAM ESTABLISHED

After 18 months of collaboration, the Texas A&M University Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy and St. Joseph Health have developed a new Pharmacy Residency Program at St. Joseph Regional Hospital in Bryan, Texas. The Postgraduate Year 1 (PGY1) Pharmacy Practice Residency program will promote clinical advancement of pharmacy practice and patient care.

The PGY1 pharmacy residency program at St. Joseph Hospital has been awarded a candidate accreditation status by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). The program currently offers three 12-month resident positions that provide training opportunities to strengthen skills in patient care; advancing pharmacy practice and improving patient outcomes; leadership and management; and teaching, education and dissemination of knowledge.
“St. Joseph Health has always been focused on service to our community, and with the support of world-renowned educators and research leaders at Texas A&M University, we are able to combine our strengths to positively impact our community by providing world-class health care services,” said Jessica Jones, PharmD, clinical pharmacy manager and residency program director at St. Joseph Health.

TEXAS A&M COVID-19 TRANSMISSION STUDY EXPANDS TO ADULTS AGES 18-29

Researchers from the Texas A&M College of Pharmacy and School of Public Health aim to answer the question of whether vaccinated individuals can still pass the virus on to unvaccinated people. The COVID-19 Prevention Network (CoVPN), headquartered at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, launched the Prevent COVID U study in March following an announcement from the White House. Researchers from the College of Pharmacy have been involved in enrolling participants and collecting data for the study. They have been recruiting in Bryan-College Station and Kingsville since the study launched and hope that by expanding to Houston they will reach or exceed their goal of enrolling at least 2000 young adults in Texas ages 18-29.

This is the first study of this kind to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of the vaccine on SARS-CoV-2 infection, how infectious a person with the virus may be, and transmission of the virus to others. Texas A&M University is the largest of the 20 participating U.S. colleges. Texas A&M is also the only institution in Texas participating in this national study, and Texas is leading the nation in participation, which means young adults who enroll play a vital role in representing their peers across the state.

TAMU FUNDING ALLOWS MORE STUDENTS TO ASPIRE TO BE AGGIE PHARMACISTS

The Aggie Student Pharmacists Initiative for Recruitment | Retention and Education (ASPIRE) was created in 2018 after it was determined that retention of minority students in the PharmD program was a top priority. The original funding for the program came from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Minority Health Research and Education Grant Program (THECB MHGP). The college was awarded approximately $160,000 to build and support the project for three years.

With various “tracks,” ASPIRE works toward two main goals: recruitment and retention. In
its first three years, ASPIR²E touched the lives of 282 total participants. Of those students, 71 percent were considered URM.

While the original THECB MHGP grant for ASPIR²E is complete, students will still be able to participate and aspire to be future Aggie Pharmacists thanks to additional funding provided by the Texas A&M University Provost Office. Interim Provost and Executive Vice President, Mark Weichold has awarded the college $70,000 in funding to support all tracks of the ASPIR²E program, sustaining the program for an additional two years.

DEAN REDDY ELECTED TO NATIONAL BOARD

Indra Reddy, PhD, dean of the Texas A&M College of Pharmacy was elected to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors, a three-year term on the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Technology & Education (NIPTE). “The NIPTE scientific community can play an important role in solving problems through innovative research, utilization of prior and creation of new knowledge, and transformational education of the next generations of pharmaceutical scientists and engineers. In my role as the Chair of the NIPTE Board, I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Board and NIPTE staff in advancing the mission and goal of the Institute,” Reddy said.

As Chair of the Board, Reddy will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing all Board activities, presiding/managing Board meetings, representing the institute in all appropriate activities at the national and international level pertaining improving quality of pharmaceutical manufacturing, and facilitating advocacy opportunities for the institute.

PUBLICATIONS


PEER-REVIEWED PAPERS:


GRANTS
Dr. Joy Alonzo has been awarded the NIH SBIR Grant Award: OLERA Team – 2.2M for a 2 year SBIR grant (awarded 7/29) TAMU Presidential Clinical Research Partnership (PCRP) Grant See below: Co-Lead with Dr. Mary Meagher and Dr. Shereece Fields (awarded 8/5) Kick Off Presentation.pptx.pdf NIH SBIR: Award Description: NIH Small Business Innovation Research, Award is 2.297 million for 3 years, Goal is to form Academic and Admin/Operational Team
Business which is named Olera, to develop a commercial product aimed at provided support to care givers seeking elder care services that meet specific needs. Team is interprofessional including COP, COM, SPH, May’s Business School, COE.

**Dr. Joy Alonzo**, awarded the President’s Excellence Fund: President’s Clinical Research Partnership Grant (PCRP): 200,000 K over 2 years: Interdisciplinary research to improve health/health equity in Texas, Co-leads are Dr. Meagher and Dr. Fields. Preventing Opioid Relapse: Integrating Behavioral and Medication Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Jails.

**Udeani, G** is the Principal Investigator for the grant titled: A randomized controlled study to assess SARS CoV-2 infection, viral shedding, and subsequent potential transmission in individuals immunized with Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine (Funded by the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases – National Institutes of Health)

Theresa Morris, **Mahua Choudhury**, Samiran Sinha and Robin Page awarded an X-Grant ($325,000) Saving Babies Born with Birth Defects: Crafting Epigenetic Risk Scores to Reduce Racial Disparity in Mortality. The purpose of this support is to identify microRNA biomarkers in birth defects.  
Role: Multi-Lead

**Dr. Fatima Z. Alshbool** - Role : Co-I ; A randomized controlled study to assess SARS CoV-2 infection, viral shedding, and subsequent potential transmission in university students immunized with Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine.

**Dr. Chendil Damodaran** received the following NIH grants:

- **1R01ES028102-01** DAMODARAN, CHENDIL (PI) FREEDMAN, JONATHAN (MPI); 02/01-2017-11/30/2022, The role of autophagy in cadmium induced prostate carcinogenesis. Funds: (Direct +Indirect): $1,934,966.00.
- **1R01ES027778-01A1** Christopher states (PI); Mechanism for arsenic induced carcinogenesis 08/01/2017- 07/31/2022. Co-Investigator (Effort:0.6 calendar Months).
- **1 R01 CA257370-01** Damodaran Chendil (PI) Arun Sharma (MPI): 01/015/2021 - 12/15/2026 Targeting AR and AR-Variants in Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer.

**POSTER & CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

**Udeani, G** - Medicine – Nursing – Pharmacy CE Quarterly, (Conference Director, Moderator & Faculty), Corpus Christi, Texas, June 24, 2021 Presentation: *Venous Thromboembolism: Interdisciplinary anticoagulation management in acute care.*

Mishra, J presented “Identification of molecular switch regulating tyrosine phosphorylation of Intestinal breast cancer resistance protein (BCRP) mediated mucosal wound repair and barrier functions in obesity” (authored by Jayshree Mishra Khayati Amin) and Narendra Kumar for Live oral presentation at Experimental Biology 2021 April 28, 2021.

RESEARCH POSTER PRESENTATIONS


**Gunaseelan S, Galindo A, Galvan A, Reddy** I presented “Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Pharmacy Pre-Matriculation Program through Multi-Year Comparative Baseline Performances” at the AACP Annual Meeting, Virtual Pharmacy Education 2021, July 2021 virtual conference.


**Galindo A.** presented Inspire to ASPIR2E: Improving Student Success Recruitment and Retention at a Professional Health Science Program, at the 2021 NASPA Virtual First Generation Student Success Conference on Student Success in Higher Education, June 28, 2021 virtual conference.


PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

**Dr. Indra Reddy**, dean of the Texas A&M College of Pharmacy was elected to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors, a three-year term on the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Technology & Education (NIPTE).

**Dr. Fadi Khasawneh** was appointed by the AACP President to serve as member of the AACP Volwiler Research Achievement Award Committee, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, for the 2021-2022 year.

**Dr. Jayshree Mishra** has been re-elected to the Council of Principal Investigators as the representative for the College of Pharmacy for this coming September 1, 2021 term. Her term as a re-elected member will begin on September 1, 2021 and will expire August 31, 2024. The Council’s role in enhancing the research environment to optimize PI success is important for ensuring a healthy and robust research enterprise at Texas A&M.

**Dr. Simi Gunaseelan** (Director of Assessment and Instructional Associate Professor), Dr. Delaney Ivy (Clinical Assistant Professor) and **Dr. Sandy Diec** (Clinical Assistant Professor) have been Selected to the Inaugural Year-long (CY 2021) ‘2021 Texas A&M Inclusive Teaching Faculty Fellows Program (Professional Programs)’ sponsored by the Texas A&M University’s The Dean of Faculties (DOF) and The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE).

**Dr. Mahua Choudhury** Mentor for Fulbright Scholar Winner.

**Dr. Mahua Choudhury** was selected as Chair of Translational Biomarkers Focus Group, National Institute for Pharmaceutical Technology & Education (NIPTE).

**Udeani, G** was elected as President of the Coastal Bend Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

**Udeani, G** was elected to the Board of Directors of the Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists.
AWARDS

Dr. Fatima Alshbool received the 2020-2021 RCOP Early Career Faculty Research Achievement Award.

Dr. Andrea Mora (Course Coordinator), Dr. Simi Gunaseelan (Course Co-Coordinator), Dr. Hamed Ismail Ali, Dr. Michael Horseman, Dr. Ladan Panahi and Dr. Jaye Weston were awarded the 2020-2021 Teaching Team of the Year, IPT VII: Infectious Diseases at the virtual awards ceremony for the College on May 27, 2021.

Dr. Simi Gunaseelan, Director of Assessment and Instructional Associate Professor has been the Recipient of the ‘2021 Texas A&M Provost Academic Professional Track Faculty Teaching Excellence Award’ (https://provost.tamu.edu/Menu/News/2021-Provost-Academic-Professional-Track-Faculty-T).

Each year the College of Pharmacy hosts an awards ceremony to recognize the outstanding individuals within the College. This year, the ceremony was held virtually and awards were mailed directly to the recipients. Please click here to view student, faculty and staff awards from the College of Pharmacy for 2021.

NEW EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION

The Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Chendil Damodaran, Ph.D. as Interim Associate Dean of Research and Innovation.

Dr. Damodaran will join the Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy as a Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences as a tenured professor of pharmaceutical sciences and will also serve as Interim Associate Dean of Research and Innovation.

Dr. Damodaran has dedicated the last 16 years of his illustrious research career to understand the etiology and develop preventive/treatment strategies for urogenital cancers. His laboratory currently focuses on identifying minimally toxic natural compounds such as dietary supplements with potent anticancer activities and translating them to the clinic for cancer prevention and individualized treatment for cancer patients. Damodaran and his research team have identified several natural compounds and synthesized their next-generation analogs that target AR, AKT, and Notch-1 signaling in genitourinary and gastrointestinal carcinomas.

Dr. Damodaran’s research has been supported by continuous extramural funding for the last 18 years from several funding agencies, including the Early Investigator Award from the American Cancer Society, the Susan Komen Research Foundation, and the National Institute of Health.
His current awards include three R1 federal research grants, which he brings with him to Texas A&M. He comes to us from the University of Louisville, where he served as Professor and Director of Urologic Research.

The Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy is pleased to announce the appointment of Kim Tanzer, PharmD, RPh as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Dr. Tanzer will be responsible for providing visionary and energetic leadership in the development of policies and procedures that affect the overall academic professional program at the College of Pharmacy. She will support faculty in achieving excellence in teaching, scholarship, and clinical engagement; provide leadership in the continued development and ongoing assessment of the curriculum for the PharmD program; and assist department Heads in determining teaching responsibilities of the faculty to optimize faculty credentials and skills in order to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Dr. Tanzer brings a wealth of administrative experience to the position. She comes from the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences where she served as Assistant Dean for Experiential Affairs, leading her team to establish excellence in experiential programming. In 2017, she was appointed to the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy where she served as President of the Board in 2020.

NEW FACULTY
Trager Darin Hintze, Clinical Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice (pictured left to right)

Andrew Scott Tenpas, Clinical Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Frank North, Instructional Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice

NEW STAFF
Maggie Abrigo, Administrative Associate IV

Debbie Branstetter, Business Coordinator II

Elaine L. Demps, Lead Data Analyst

Beth Johnson, Administrative Associate V
NEW POSTDOCTORAL AND RESEARCH STAFF
Nitya Shree, Postdoctoral Research Associate
Daniel Villalobos, Postdoctoral Research Associate
Nitin Bharat Charbe, Postdoctoral Research Associate
Renuka Khatik, Postdoctoral Research Associate
Tamizhselvi Ramasamy, Research Scientist
Vaishnave Sundar, Research Associate
Ashish Tyagi, Associate Research Scientist
Uttara Saran, Associate Research Scientist

NEW RESIDENTS
Noah Christophe Cahill, Resident I
Andrew A. Ramirez, Resident I