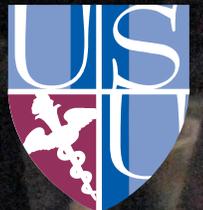


The Official USU Newsletter

the pulse

Volume 9, Issue 20 • November 10, 2014
www.usuhs.edu



DoD awards \$17 Million for TBI research

By Gwendolyn R. Smalls, chief, Media Affairs

Sharon Holland

Deputy Vice President for External Affairs and Managing Editor

Gwendolyn Smalls

Chief, Media Affairs

Master Sgt. Oshawn Jefferson

NCOIC of VPE and Deputy Chief, Media Affairs

MC3 Laura Bailey

Editor

Kyle Fuhrman

Layout and Design

Production

Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the USU Office of External Affairs unless otherwise indicated.

The Pulse staff may include or exclude articles based upon news value, impact on the university and space availability.

Submissions

The Pulse is published biweekly on Mondays. The deadline for submissions is at 4 p.m. Tuesday prior to the publication date. Submissions can be sent to laura.bailey@usuhs.edu or by calling 301-295-3116.



DoD photo by Sarah Marshall

On the cover

Fourth-year medical students work on a simulated patient presumed to be suffering from diabetic ketoacidosis, when the body has no insulin, as part of Operation Bushmaster, a field training exercise conducted at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa. (DoD photo by Sarah Marshall) See article on page five.

The Department of Defense has awarded an unprecedented \$17 million to a dynamic group of world-renown researchers to facilitate the development of better-run clinical trials in treatments for traumatic brain injury, a condition which affects thousands of service members as well as athletes and the general public. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated two percent of the United States population now lives with TBI-caused disabilities, at an annual cost of about \$77 billion. No TBI treatment has yet proven to be effective.



Courtesy photo

Dr. Ramon Diaz-Arrastia, director of Clinical Research Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine and professor of neurology, USU

Officially launched October 1, 2014, this new research initiative, called TBI Endpoints Development (TED) Award will bring together this country's leading academic clinician-scientists with innovative industry leaders in biotechnology and imaging technology as well as patient advocacy organizations and philanthropies. These individuals will analyze data from large existing and ongoing

studies to integrate into a dataset that can be interrogated to identify the most sensitive clinical outcome measures, imaging findings, and biomarker. The goal is for these to be useful as drug development tools for clinical research. This effort in itself is unparalleled.

The agencies involved not only include the DoD, but also the Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, academic medical centers, foundation-funded research networks, and patient advocacy groups.

Dr. Ramon Diaz-Arrastia, director of Clinical Research USU's Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine and a professor of neurology here at USU is a member of the leadership team of the TED project.

According to Diaz-Arrastia, the amount of money that DoD has allotted for this research isn't the only extraordinary aspect of this program.

"This is a big national effort and it's not just because of the amount of money," he said. "This is part of a major initiative by the FDA to let the investigators active in the field collaboratively determine which are the best outcome markers, the best biomarkers, and the best imaging methods that can be qualified as drug development tools. And it makes a lot of sense." The researchers will work directly with the FDA to develop better methods for selecting patients for clinical trials, and better ways to measure patient outcomes that may lead to the identification of effective TBI treatments.



TBI research, continued from pg. 2

“This TED effort is really the attempt to bring the traumatic brain injury field together and obviously it was made possible through the DoD and would not have happened without that (funding),” added Diaz-Arrastia.

The five-year award will give the researchers the opportunity to not only study all facets of TBI but possibly fast-track a successful treatment.

“Goal number one is to accelerate the clinical research,” said Diaz-Arrastia, “so if a company or investigator has a drug that they want to test, they don’t have to start from scratch to decide what outcome markers and biomarkers they want to use. They can use the outcomes of the TED effort, which will have already been qualified by the FDA. That will greatly accelerate the clinical research effort of a drug and could accelerate the approval process.”

While Diaz-Arrastia concedes that all the goals of the TED project may not be complete in the five-year timeframe, he feels it’s a great head start.

“I think five years is enough for this project,” said Diaz-Arrastia. “Likely there will be need to do a follow-up effort, but I think the key aspects will be in place.”

(UC San Francisco Public Affairs contributed to this article)

Annual Health Benefits Fair highlights FEHB Open Season

By Gwendolyn R. Smalls, Chief, Media Affairs

The Uniformed Services University will hold its annual one-day Health Benefits Fair on Tuesday, November 18, 2014 in the lobby of Building B, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Representatives from various health organizations will be present to provide information on their respective health plans as well as address questions concerning health coverage.

All eligible employees are encouraged to attend. Those who are currently enrolled in a Federal Employees Health Benefit plan are strongly urged to review their plan’s rate and benefits for 201.

“It’s important for new employees and those who’ve been in federal service to attend the Health Benefits fair because employees can get the latest information directly from the health care carriers,” said Carla Adams, a human resource specialist at USU.

“The carriers will inform employees of the various changes for the upcoming year so that employees can make an informative decision as to whether they want to keep their current health plan or change to another plan,” she added.

The 2014 FEHB Open Season enrollment period will be held from November 10 through December 8, 2014, during which all eligible active duty civilian employees who do not have health coverage may enroll in a FEHB plan. Also,

employees currently enrolled in a FEHB plan may change their enrollment option (for example, from self only to self and family) or select a different health plan.

According to Adams, there are some changes in this year’s open season of which both new and existing employees should be aware.

“In 2015 there will be some FEHB program changes,” said Adams. “The changes will include the following:

- Coventry Health Care (enrollment codes IG1, IG2, IG4, IG5, GZ1 and GZ2)

will be terminating in the state of Maryland.

- United Healthcare Insurance Company (enrollment codes L91 and L92) will be

entering the FEHB Program

- Innovation Health Plan (enrollment codes LQ1 and LQ2) will be entering the

FEHB Program in Northern Virginia.

“Employees currently enrolled in Coventry Health Care plan must enroll in a new health plan during open season if they want coverage. If they do not enroll in a new plan, they will not have FEHB coverage in 2015,” Adams continued.

To enroll or change your FEHB plan or enrollment option this open season, employees are advised to use the Navy’s Employee Benefits Information System or call 1-888-320-2917, TTY 1-866-328-9889, and speak with a customer service representative. FEHB elections or changes must be submitted (via EBIS or calling the above telephone number) by December 8, 2014. The Navy Northwest Human Resources Service Center located in Silverdale, Wash., request employees process FEHB elections through EBIS or by calling 1-888-320-2917.

To avoid any chance of missing the FEHB December 8, 2014 deadline, CHR will not be accepting hard copy SF-2809 election forms.

During the enrollment period, both Adams and Kima Watts, will be available to assist USU personnel with their FEHB submissions through EBIS.

As with any benefits change, Adams recommends reviewing leave and earning statements to make sure the correct deductions are withheld.

A copy of the 2015 FEHB rates may be obtained by logging on to the OPM

<http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/premiums/>

School of Medicine Presents its Annual Faculty Teaching Awards

By the Office of Academic Affairs

The Uniformed Services University F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine dean Dr. Arthur Kellermann recently announced the winners of the School of Medicine annual Faculty Teaching Awards.

These awards recognize two faculty members who demonstrated outstanding performance in their roles as educators during the preceding academic year (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014).

Several exceptional nominations were received and reviewed by the advisory committee. After scoring and deliberation, Dean Kellermann presented Navy Cmdr. (Dr.) Todd Gleeson, Department of Medicine, and Air Force Maj. (Dr.) Grant Lattin, Department of Radiology, with the awards.

Gleeson was selected for the award for providing critical educational leadership in the internal medicine clerkship program, mentoring medical students, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center residents and fellows, and building collaborative bridges with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Gleeson has been instrumental in building a collaborative educational experience at the VA medical center in Washington, D.C., and helping USU students embrace the continuity of care between active-duty service and veterans' care. Gleeson was the driving force behind the creation of a sixth inpatient internal medicine team at the D.C. VA, which is staffed by internal medicine house-staff from WRNMMC as well as faculty from both WRNMMC and USU. According to the nomination narrative, medical students routinely rave not only about the patient care experience at the D.C. VA, but also acknowledge Gleeson's vital role in sparking their interest in internal medicine and veterans' care.

Gleeson has been an invited speaker for the past two years by the Joining Forces collaborative initiative between the Association of American Medical



Navy Cmdr. (Dr.) Todd Gleeson,
Department of Medicine

Colleges and the White House Offices of the First and Second Ladies.

"Cmdr. Todd Gleeson is an outstanding USU faculty member, and an exceptional teacher, who has been recognized as a role model by medical students, residents, fellows, and colleagues," said Dr. Louis Pangaro, chair of the Department of Medicine, USU.

Lattin served as the director for the integrated radiology curriculum, the pre-clerkship radiology selective and the clerkship radiology elective. He also incorporated novel methods of education to include re-engineering the classroom experience and the incorporation of web-based teaching for enhancement of the student experience akin to that used for a more interactive reverse classroom model of teaching.

Recently, Lattin won the Faculty Senate's Innovation in Education Award for his development of the "Radiology Hunger Games." This educational method adapted a means of challenge detailed in the popular book and movie series "The Hunger Games," in which representatives from smaller groups would "duel." In the radiology version, the students were asked to prepare for "combat" by reading and



Air Force Major (Dr.) Grant Lattin,
Department of Radiology

learning how to manage three distinct imaging scenarios using the American College of Radiology Appropriateness Criteria Guidelines as well as several select pertinent peer-reviewed journal articles. The actual event was initiated by faculty-mentored group discussions, which were also in the manner of a reverse classroom in that the majority of topic discussion was by the students with faculty serving as facilitators.

Lattin served as the assistant program director for the National Capital Consortium Body Imaging Fellowship which he personally transformed into a more rigorous academic fellowship with formal inclusion of radiologic pathologic correlation with pathologists at the Joint Pathology Center.

"Dr. Lattin epitomizes a great faculty educator," said radiology department chair Dr. Vincent Ho. "His tour of duty at USU has made an incredible, positive impact on how radiology is taught and, perhaps more importantly, on how USU educators are perceived within the NCC and greater academic community."

Both winners have been recognized by placement of their names on tribute bricks in the USU courtyard.

Military Medical Students Learn to Care for Combat Injured

By Sarah Marshall, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center



DOD photo by Sarah Marshall

Fourth-year medical students respond to a simulated mass casualty scenario as part of Operation Bushmaster, a field training exercise conducted at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.

About 170 medical students from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences recently experienced the demands of caring for patients in a simulated combat environment, complete with mock explosions, operational problems, reality-based missions and numerous casualties.

The fourth-year medical students journeyed here this month to participate in a field training exercise known as “Operation Bushmaster.” Graduate School of Nursing students also participated, along with international military medical officers from Mexico, the United Kingdom, Israel and Japan, said Navy Cmdr. (Dr.) James Palma, an assistant professor of Military and Emergency Medicine at USU.

Graduate School of Nursing students also participated, along with international military medical officers from Mexico, the United Kingdom, Israel and Japan, said Navy Cmdr. (Dr.) James Palma, an assistant professor of Military and Emergency Medicine at USU.

Preparing for first operational assignments

The goal is to prepare students for their first operational assignment when they graduate from medical school, Palma explained. They might complete a one-year internship and then immediately deploy, or they might go straight into a residency

and not deploy for another three or four years, he said. Either way, he added, “our goal is that they are well prepared for their first operational assignment, and that they’re going to be lifelong leaders in our military health care system.”

Before “Operation Bushmaster,” students go through a two-week military contingency medicine course, during which they are presented operational problems and receive pre-deployment training, just as they would prior to a real deployment, Palma explained. This classroom phase includes lectures and is focused on team building. The students become a cohesive unit as they prepare to deploy to a fictional country facing challenges from rebel forces, he added.

Divided into two groups, the students were sent, sequentially, to spend four days at this large National Guard base nestled in the mountains just north of Hershey, Pennsylvania. They were assigned to one of four platoons – all undergoing identical scenarios, planning and executing missions, while simultaneously caring for a variety of casualties, ranging in severity from fatigue to gunshot wounds. The exercise featured nearly 1,000 encounters with simulated patients, Palma said.

Leadership, communication skills, logistics

While patient care is a large part of their training, leadership, communication skills and logistics are just as important, Palma said.

Bushmaster, continued from pg. 5

The students also were graded on how well they performed key positions, including platoon leader, ambulance team leader, surgeon, and combat stress control officer. They were graded on a number of factors, such as communication and leadership skills, as they were observed by more than 60 faculty members from USU, as well as from across the country.

The students also were graded on how well they performed key positions, including platoon leader, ambulance team leader, surgeon, and combat stress control officer. They were graded on a number of factors, such as communication and leadership skills, as they were observed by more than 60 faculty members from USU, as well as from across the country.



Photo by Thomas Balfour

A first year medical student explains her responsibilities during Operation Bushmaster to former U.S. Senator, Charles S. Robb, who is now a USU Board of Regents member. The annual Military Field Practicum is held at Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania for USU first and fourth year medical students.

Dr. Art Kellermann, dean of the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine of USU, noted that while the exercise is focused on leadership and enhancing the students' patient care skills, they also interact with role players representing local host-nation citizens, practicing cultural sensitivity and expanding their problem-solving abilities while handling complex issues of their unit's wellness.

"All of this is wrapped into an incredibly challenging series of unfolding scenarios," Kellermann said. "They are

constantly being thrown problems. They have to adapt and learn to work with one another in a variety of ways and a variety of combinations."

Upping the ante

As the exercise progressed, they "upped the ante," until the fourth and final day, Kellermann said. Their training then culminated with a large mass-casualty exercise. "We try to make it as realistic as we can," Kellerman said. "We don't pull punches."

On the final day, the platoons, with about 24 students each, responded to a simulated mass casualty. They were informed that the fictional country's rebel force leader was identified and had started a last effort to take over the country's government, Palma explained. As the students responded, they heard loud, rapid gunfire, screaming and

explosions booming from a speaker. Smoke billowed from the woods, where casualties were coming from left and right.

"You think you know what you're going to walk into, but the sheer magnitude, the sights ... it's a shock to the senses," said Army 2nd Lt. Rowan Sheldon, a fourth-year medical student in the 2nd Platoon. "You have to take a step back and say, 'This is my plan, this is what I have to do,' and execute the

plan."

As he played the role of a surgeon during the mass casualty scenario, Sheldon said, his platoon worked to find balance. Those dedicated to providing immediate care did just that, while others remained focused on setting up the triage and treatment areas. "Within the chaos of the environment, we had to create order," he said. "It was difficult, and very realistic."

Challenging, rewarding training

Overall, he said, the students' experience throughout the training was both

challenging and rewarding. "Every single person out there now is better than they were four days ago," he added. "It was the most realistic training I've ever done."

Navy Ensign Tony Romero agreed, adding that even though it was simulated, it was still very stressful. During the mass casualty scenario, playing the role of a medic in the 2nd Platoon, he said, he walked by people who clearly needed help. Though he wanted to delay his assigned tasks to stop and help, he reminded himself his job was just as vital to meeting the mission -- saving as many lives as possible.

Romero said he appreciated the feedback he received while being graded on his performance. "The [faculty] are there to help you, and helping make you better will help the entire system," he added.

He also noted everyone looked out for each other's well-being, ensuring they had taken time to eat and were not overexerting themselves, an important aspect of avoiding combat stress."

Incredibly stressful

"It's incredibly stressful for them," said Navy Ensign Meghan Quinn. She was among the many first-year students at the exercise who played the role of casualties.

During the mass casualty scenario, Quinn acted as though she was exposed to a roadside-bomb blast, unable to hear and very confused. She said she tried to make it difficult for the students to treat her by stumbling around. She enjoyed watching how they responded, she said, and to "see them really respond to you as a person and as a patient."

The training also gave Quinn a first-hand look at the difficult training she will go through in just a few years, when she returns for the exercise as a fourth-year student, she said. She recognized the importance of the training, she added, as it tests students in ways that can't be accomplished in a classroom. She also said it's important to train in this environment, because military medical personnel will not always be providing care in a hospital.

After the exercise, the students returned to their clinical rotations across the country.

Military Health System Expands Partnership with American College of Surgeons

Courtesy of Health.mil staff

On Oct. 27, 2014, the Department of Defense and American College of Surgeons signed a strategic partnership agreement establishing a formal process for sharing information and expertise across a wide range of surgical care issues in areas of medical education, research, and evidence-based practices.

Dr. Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, and Dr. David Hoyt, executive director of the American College of Surgeons were the co-signatories of the agreement.

“After our 13 years of experience in combat medicine in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Military Health System has learned a great about trauma medicine, and we have shared it with our colleagues throughout American medicine” Woodson said.

“This partnership directly supports our readiness mission,” Woodson said. “You only have to glance at the headlines every day, to understand that we continue to be a military medical force that has to respond on a moment’s notice, anywhere in the world – whether it’s military contingencies, humanitarian crises, or disaster response.”

The relationship with the American College of Surgeons provides an avenue for military surgeons in all subspecialties to sustain their trauma skills at both military and civilian institutions around the country, explained Navy Capt. (Dr.) Eric Elster, professor and chairman of surgery at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Elster will serve as DoD’s co-chair for the partnership.

“This collaboration is as important for peacetime as wartime,” Elster said. “DoD has benefited greatly from our participation in the ACS’ National Surgical Quality Improvement Program. This initiative allows us to compare our performance across a wide range of quality measures with leading civilian institutions.”

“ACS has a long-term commitment to serve the public through our relationship with the uniformed services,” said ACS Executive Director, Dr. David B. Hoyt. “We want to sustain that relationship through peace time. Our shared leadership in this partnership allows us to do just that, as we contribute our resources toward ensuring the readiness of the Military Health System.”

Ongoing, close collaboration with civilian partners is important on many levels for the Military Health System, Woodson said. Both benefit from understanding what the other is doing in its respective areas of research and operational experience – and both can accelerate their learning from those experiences.

“This is the future of military medicine,” Woodson concluded. “It’s important for both recruitment and retention of our superb surgeons. And there is the inherent value in providing our civilian colleagues with insight into the unique and indispensable role of the Military Health System in supporting our broader national security needs.”



Courtesy photo

Dr. Charles Rice, Dr. Bill Schwab, Capt. (Dr.) Eric Elster, Rear Adm. (Dr.) Raquel Bono, Dr. Alan Hoyt, Dr. Jonathan Woodson, Col. (Dr.) David Murdock, Col. (Dr.) Todd Rasmussen, and Col. (Dr.) Jeffrey Bailey celebrate the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Military Health System and the American College of Surgeons.

“But, knowledge sharing is a two-way street,” he continued. “Achieving the highest survivability from injuries in the history of warfare came about because of the close collaboration we have sustained over decades with our civilian colleagues.”

The partnership with the American College of Surgeons has been an example of how military-civilian partnerships can be fostered and strengthened. The Military Health System and the American College of Surgeons share a common heritage and ethos, Woodson said: A focus on continuous learning seeking to improve care for everyone they serve.

Navy, Marine Corps Students to Join 'Enlisted-to-Medical-Degree Preparatory Program'

Program gives enlisted service members pathway to become military physicians

By Sharon Holland, managing editor

Navy and Marine Corps enlisted service members will join their colleagues in the Air Force and Army for an opportunity to prepare for future careers as uniformed physicians through a program headquartered at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus officially authorized their participation in the program in a memo dated Sept. 9, 2014.



Courtesy photo

Navy and Marine Corps enlisted service members will join their colleagues in the Air Force and Army (shown here) for an opportunity to prepare for future careers as uniformed physicians through a program headquartered at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus officially authorized their participation in the program in a memo dated Sept. 9, 2014.

The "Enlisted to Medical Degree Preparatory Program," or EMDP2, is a 24-month program for highly-qualified enlisted service members interested in a career as a military doctor. Candidates attend school full-time at George Mason University-Prince William campus in Manassas, Va., to prepare them to apply to medical school, while remaining on active duty. Candidates must possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited academic institution with a minimum of a 3.2 grade-point average and meet service requirements for commissioning.

The inaugural EMDP2 class, five students each in the Air Force and Army, reported to USU at the end of August to begin the program, which includes full-time medical school preparatory coursework in a traditional classroom setting at GMU-PW, structured pre-health advising, formal Medical

College Admission Test preparation, dedicated faculty and peer mentoring at USU, and integrated clinical exposure. Students completing the program successfully will qualify to apply to USU, or other U.S. medical schools through the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program.

Mabus directed the Navy Surgeon General to establish criteria for participation in the program as well as application procedures and policies and to coordinate policy guidance with the Chief of Naval Personnel and Commandant of the Marine Corps. The announcement to Navy and Marine Corps enlisted members, including criteria for applying, will be forthcoming.

"We are thrilled to welcome Navy and Marine Corps service members to the Enlisted to Medical Degree Preparatory Program at USU," said Army Lt.Col. (Dr.) Aaron Saguil, assistant dean for Admissions and Recruitment at the Hébert School of Medicine. "With the participation of Navy and Marine Corps candidates, military medicine will even better reflect the faces of our service members and our nation."

"Based on the caliber of the first group of Army and Air Force EMDP2 students, we are fully realizing the vision of this program – to attract outstanding non-commissioned officers for careers as physicians in the Military Health System. The addition of Sailors and Marines will build upon their success, make this program stronger and make it a truly joint endeavor," said Dr. Art Kellermann, dean of the Hébert School of Medicine.

CAMPAGN NUMBER: 0990
REPORTING NUMBER: 4078100

Come and Support the CFC

When: 13 Nov 2014
Where: Hall of Flags
Time: 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Make it Possible!

Bake Sale

Final Frame



Uniformed Service University personnel celebrate Diwali or the “festival of lights” in USU’s small dining room on October 23. Diwali is an ancient Hindu festival celebrated in autumn every year. It signifies the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, good over evil, and hope over despair. The festival preparations and rituals typically extend over a five day period.