USU Faculty, Student, Alumn Recognized for Life-saving Care

By Sharon Holland

The grateful words of a father led to an awards presentation for three members of the USU community on Feb. 11, 2016.

Army 2nd Lt. Anant Shukla, a fourth-year medical student and Dr. Edward Mitre, an associate professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, along with USU class of 1981 alumna, Dr. Wendy Bernstein, a hematologist in the Department of Research Programs at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), were recognized by Army Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Jeffrey B. Clark, former Director of WRNMMC and then-Director of the National Capital Regional Medical Directorate, for outstanding efforts that contributed to saving the life of a young woman at the hospital last year.

According to a letter sent by the father to Clark in December, the patient was taken to the emergency room at WRNMMC where she was diagnosed with accelerated hypertension and acute renal failure. She was transferred to the medical intensive care unit, where she was evaluated by a number of specialty teams.

Mitre was not officially assigned to the girl’s case, but was called in as a consultant. “His diligent review of the literature led to recognition of a novel diagnostic test for [atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome] aHUS called the modified HAM test, developed by Johns Hopkins Hospital; the new test was literally published in the journal Blood the same month,” the father recounted in his letter to Clark, which was read during the awards ceremony. “His independent communication with Johns Hopkins’ hematologists resulted in information sharing with Drs. [Dustin] Little [her primary case physician and nephrologist] and Bernstein, delivery of my daughter’s blood to Johns Hopkins, confirmation of the diagnosis of aHUS (a feat not achievable the prior month), and initiation of kidney and, likely lifesaving, eculizumab treatment.”

Bernstein thoroughly researched and coordinated the blood work-up and eventual treatment with the complement inhibitor, eculizumab, and provided emotional support to the patient throughout the hospital stay.

Shukla was on a nephrology rotation at WRNMMC and, as part of the health care team, was lauded for providing simplified explanations of complex medical issues and showing a compassionate bedside manner.

“His warm, caring demeanor were notably instrumental in my daughter’s care,” the father continued in his appreciation letter. Most notably, Shukla drove to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore to deliver blood for the modified HAM test and stayed there until the test was completed to ensure results would be conveyed quickly. “His commitment, diligence, and intelligence led to the Chief of Hematology at Johns Hopkins jokingly asking me if 2nd Lt. Shukla could be transferred from USUHS to Johns Hopkins Medical School.”

Mitre, Shukla and Bernstein’s efforts, along with the primary attending physician, Dr. Dustin Little, and the WRNMMC team of providers, led to the young woman’s clinical stabilization and initiation of lifesaving hemodialysis and state-of-the-art anti-complement therapy for presumptive diagnoses of two exceedingly rare diseases — aHUS and scleroderma renal crisis SRC.
Manzanares Named 2015 OSD Senior Enlisted Member of the Year

By Sharon Holland

Army Staff Sgt. (promotable) David Manzanares, a health physics specialist at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, was named 2015 OSD Senior Enlisted Service Member of the Year. Michael Rhodes, Director of Administration, Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer, Department of Defense, made the announcement March 15.

Manzanares, who has been selected for promotion to Sgt. 1st Class, was chosen from a candidate slate of service members in grades E-7 through E-9 representing the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington Headquarters Services, a variety of Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities. Nominees are assessed on the basis of performance of duty, military bearing, self-expression, general military knowledge, leadership qualities and potential, and must have been assigned to their command for at least one year prior to their nomination.

Manzanares was born in Managua, Nicaragua, but was raised in Miami. He joined the Army in 2003 and served as a preventive medicine technician and health physics NCO for four years before leaving the service for a year during which he served as a health inspector for the State of Florida. In 2008, Manzanares returned to the Army as the preventive medicine team leader for the 227th Preventive Medicine Detachment at Fort Lewis, Washington. The following year, he was assigned as a health physics NCO at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, and later at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital in Virginia. In January 2013, Manzanares reported for duty at AFRI.

In addition to his excellent work performance, Manzanares has also excelled academically. He earned an Associate of Science degree from Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, and will graduate in June 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Natural Science and Mathematics from Thomas Edison State University in Trenton, New Jersey.

“I’m truly humbled by my selection for the Office of the Secretary of Defense Service Member of the Year. I know that all of the nominees were the best service members from their respective organizations. I am proud to have been able to represent and win for the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences,” said Manzanares.

“We are extremely pleased that Staff Sgt. (promotable) Manzanares was selected for this honor. He is a truly outstanding Soldier and leader who sets the example for all NCOs,” said USU Brigade Commander Army Col. (Dr.) Jerome Buller. “His exemplary performance is reflective of the quality of the NCOs here at USU and throughout the Military Health System.”

Manzanares is USU’s second enlisted member to earn the OSD honor. Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Daryl Mercado, was selected for the Secretary of Defense’s 2012 Junior Enlisted Member of the Year award. Mercado, a laboratory technician, served as the leading petty officer and enlisted advisor for the Graduate Education Office at USU. Mercado, who is now a Chief Hospital Corpsman, was recently selected for a Navy in-service commissioning program to become a Health Care Administration officer.

The award, which includes a Joint Service Commendation Medal, will be presented to Manzanares during a formal Pentagon ceremony April 15.
 Proper Nutrition Helps Fuel a Proper Lifestyle

By Eric D. Ritter

Nutrition is relatively new to the medical field. It wasn’t until the early 1900s when vitamins such as Vitamin A was deemed critical to health. The study of nutrition is also becoming more important because obesity and other weight-related health problems such as diabetes and heart disease are affecting more and more Americans.

To help spread the message of healthy eating, March has been set aside as National Nutrition Month. According to Uniformed Services University (USU) Senior Nutritionist, Sheryl C. Hoehner, MS, RDN, LDN, National Nutrition Month began in 1973, but at that point it was just a week. However, by 1980, it became so popular with dietitians that it become a month-long observation.

“The purpose of the observation is to increase the public awareness of the importance of good nutrition and to help the public become aware of the dieticians as the nutrition experts,” Hoehner said.

“We know there is a crisis of overeating in this country that is leading to weight gain and obesity, and I think people give up trying to eat properly too easily.”

Hoehner’s Nutrition branch falls under USU’s Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) which aims to be DoD’s best resource for evidence-based information on human performance optimization (HPO) to improve the performance and resiliency of service members and their families.

Hoehner said she has more than 30 years of nutrition knowledge from the grocery store perspective as well as being a retired army dietitian, so meal planning is very important to her.

“When I work in grocery stores, I love helping people find what they need and make needed dietary changes,” she said. “Sometimes these changes can be revolutionary for them in terms of health and wellness.”

Nutrition is important, especially for military members, she said, because it helps servicemembers “go the distance in the field, so that they work more efficiently, think more clearly and do what they need to do.”

Proper nutrition is also important because improperly managed meals can lead to weight gain, and that can affect someone’s military career.

The availability of poor food choices is far greater now, too.

“When I was younger, and we would stop at a gas station, it was for gas,” she said. “Now, you can get hotdogs, candy and giant sodas while you’re getting gas. We are inundated everywhere we go with poor food choices, and that makes it difficult for many people to stick with healthier choices.”

“Proper meal planning is also healthy for the social aspect of families,” she said. “Families tend to interact more during proper meal preparation. Too many people want to do things quickly, like a drive-through, and that can be very unhealthy. “It’s in our nature to want something that’s fast and available. We don’t always want to do the hard work of preparing meals, but proper nutrition often will require some of that hard work.”

She continued that there are many healthy options that are quick such as cooking chicken in a crock pot and then using that chicken for sandwiches, casseroles and soups all week long. Also, having on-the-go snacks available like raisins, dried prunes, and peanut butter which can stay fresh indefinitely in a desk or back pack, so you have nutritious choices available.

Hoehner said she and fellow CHAMP nutritionists mentor a group of USU students called STING (STudents Interested in Nutrition Group) to help them learn more about nutrition and how it relates to medicine and health.

One of the biggest challenges she sees with nutrition is that there’s so much information out there, and sometimes the media will run with one study.

“With the proliferation of technology we have today, bad information can be spread quickly,” she explained. “Trying to correct those misconceptions is one of the biggest challenges we have as dietitians.”

She pointed out another misconception she sees often is the cost of healthy eating.

“It’s very much a misconception that eating healthy costs a lot of money,” she said. “There are many foods in grocery stores that are healthy and do not cost much such as dried beans and peas, pota-
Nutrition, from Page 4

Toes, apples and frozen vegetables, plus produce in season. Restaurant meals, which is where many folks use their food dollars, are usually many times higher in price and not as healthy.

Eating well is easy to achieve with simple planning, and to help guide service members and their families, CHAMP has information available.

Don’t forget the importance of breakfast, Hoehner also said.

“Breakfast is key. It fuels you through the day. If you skip breakfast, you may find yourself starving later and may eat much more than you would if you ate properly earlier in the day.”

Hoehner said she is excited for the future of nutrition.

“It is still such a young science, and we are learning new things about how our bodies perform better all the time.”

Hickey to Lead HIV Research Team in Thailand

By MC3 Laura Bailey

A 2010 alum of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) Emerging Infectious Disease Program will begin a six-year assignment with the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), Thailand, leading a Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Research Laboratory team.

U.S. Public Health Service Lt. Andrew Hickey, Ph.D., M.P.H., said he feels prepared for his new assignment in Thailand, due in part to lessons learned from previous assignments. During the last three years, Hickey has been on detail to Department of Homeland Security where he served as the subject matter expert for more than ten biological events, including the Ebola epidemic in West Africa for which Hickey has been deployed to Liberia twice. He served as the safety and infection control officer at a U.S.-led Ebola Treatment Unit in Monrovia, Liberia, during the early stages of the Ebola epidemic until Feb. 2015. In Sept. 2015, he returned to Liberia to serve as the team lead for Ebola Rapid Diagnostic Testing (RDT) and laboratory advisor for the CDC, where he developed a national strategy for introducing an Ebola RDT in Liberia and began pilots at two sites to initiate phased implementation of the Liberia national strategy to provide presumptive Ebola diagnostic testing for approximately 5,000 patients and dead bodies in the most densely populated regions of Liberia. He will begin his Thailand assignment in April.

The CDC Thailand works closely with the Thailand Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to develop model approaches and expand prevention, surveillance, care and treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

As the new chief of the HIV and STD lab section, Hickey will be leading a group of 15 to 20 assignees to conduct studies of HIV and STD incidence and risk behaviors, and evaluate current clinical trials for efficacy and safety with the people of Thailand. If the efficacy trial in Thailand proves effective, participants in that trial and their community will be the first to benefit. All trial participants will receive treatment for at least one year after efficacy is proven while the CDC works with the Thai Food and Drug Administration for approval of use by the Thai health care system.

“To say that I’m excited would be an understatement,” said Hickey. “It’s really exciting to be able to participate in something that will eventually go into clinical practice around the world. As a virologist, you want to see that what you’re doing will have an effect. That’s the gratifying part for me.”

The CDC Thailand provides support to neighboring countries, including Laos, as the Asia Regional Office. Their support efforts provide technical assistance and often includes Thai government partners in the collaborations. The CDC, along with their partners, work to improve HIV programs by building country capacities needed to mount and sustain an effective national HIV response. These activities support a data-driven, evidence-based approach that is tailored to the unique characteristics of the local epidemic for maximum health impact and the most efficient use of resources.

Hickey to Lead HIV Research Team in Thailand

USPHS Lt. Andrew Hickey, USU 2010 PhD graduate, to lead HIV research team in Thailand. (Courtesy Photo)
Students and faculty at the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine (SOM) at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) received awards during the Class of 2017 Academic Awards Ceremony at USU, March 4.

For more than 25 years, the SOM has been sponsoring a student awards program recognizing the academic excellence of USU medical students. The ceremony recognizes students in the Class of 2017 who have completed the year-long clerkship phase of the curriculum which consists of six major core clerkships. The awards program identifies those students who achieved significant academic success by receiving the grade of ‘Honors’ in at least four of those clerkships. In total, 26 students were recognized.

There are three tiers of awards: The Outstanding Academic Performance Award is present to students who have four grades of ‘Honors’; the Distinguished Academic Performance Award is presented to students who received five grades of ‘Honors’; and the Dean’s Award for Academic Excellence is the highest award and is given to those students who maintained a broad general excellence by receiving ‘Honors’ in all six clerkships.

In addition to student awards, the leadership of the Class of 2017 presented several awards recognizing accomplishment of faculty, staff and departments.

With our Class of 2017 Clerkship Awards, we knew we wanted to recognize the work of our outstanding clerkship directors and particularly good teaching hospitals, and we had precedence for those awards,” said 2nd Lt. Aimee Moores, a third-year medical student at the SOM at USU and the vice president of the Class of 2017. “However, as a class, we also had the desire to recognize specific attending physicians who played an integral role in our development over the clerkship year. In order to facilitate this, the class officers created a portion of the awards survey that allowed our classmates to nominate up to three attendings – each who they felt should be commended for their outstanding teaching. For a class of over 150 students rotating in all core specialties in more than 20 military training facilities, we saw striking consistency in the names put forth. Typically, when asked to provide reasons for nominating a particular staff physician, the students would describe characteristics of enthusiasm for teaching, respect for all team members to include medical students, and consistent demonstration of qualities we hope to emulate in our practice of medicine.

The class officers ultimately agreed on a list of ten of these faculty – the ten who received the most nominations, to be formally recognized and awarded at our ceremony.”

This was the first time the awards had been extended to recognize faculty from teaching hospitals outside the USU campus. The ceremony was originally just for recognizing students, but over the years, it has evolved, said William Wittman, Ph.D., the associate dean for the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) at the SOM, USU.

The awards are as follows:

**Faculty Awards**

Best Clerkship Director: Lt. Col. Matthew Eberly; Col. William Kelly (Tie)

Best Teaching Site (Large): Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC); (Small): Eglin Air Force Base

Best Support Staff: Mrs. Rachel Darling, Naval Hospital Portsmouth, Va.

Exceptional Attending: Cmdr. Todd Gleeson (Infectious Diseases, Wash-
MHS ‘Think Tank’ Based at USU

By Sharon Holland

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) is headquarters for a newly-established ‘think tank’ to study issues of concern to the Military Health System (MHS).

The Defense Health Horizons (DHH) was created at the direction of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD HA), Dr. Jonathan Woodson, to provide critical insights into key MHS issues, develop proposed courses of action, and outline potential policy implications to MHS leadership – in 90 days or less.

Comprised of a diverse cross-section of relevant USU, MHS, and external scholars and leaders, the DHH provides access to both civilian and military healthcare expertise on issues the MHS leadership views as being potentially important and challenging in the foreseeable future.

The group recently finalized its first effort, which was to outline the potential effects of new CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) coding rules on Graduate Medical Education (GME).

At the ASD HA’s direction, they recently began an analysis of GME in the MHS as their next challenge.

Among future approved topics are a review of pain management and opioid use in the MHS; examining policy implications for women’s health benefits in comparison with those of the Affordable Care Act; and a study on potential productivity measures to succeed the current RVU (relative value unit) approach.

Dr. Linda Degutis, former director of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, serves as the DHH executive director, and Ms. Racine Harris is the group’s program manager.

Other members of the DHH include Dr. Carolyn Clancy, chief medical officer, Department of Veterans Affairs; Navy Lt. Cmdr. Eric Dietrich and Dr. Robert Marcut (Surgery, Tripler Army Medical Center); Maj. Jennifer Hepps (Internal Medicine, WRNMCC); Maj. Lauren Greer (Surgery, WRNMMC); Capt. Gregory Gorman (Pediatric Nephrology, WRNMMC); Col. Brent Lechner (Pediatric Nephrology, WRNMMC); Lt. Col. (P) Todd Villines (Cardiology, WRNMMC); Maj. Jennifer Hepps (Pediatrics, WRNMMC); Col. Dwight Kellcut (Surgery, Tripler Army Medical Center) (TAMC); Dr. Robert Martin (Surgery, San Antonio Military Medical Center); Lt. Cmdr. Shellie Kendall (Pediatrics, Naval Medical Center San Diego); Capt. Bill Shi-
Third-year medical students at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (SOM) at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) participate in the third annual "Gunpowder Challenge" adventure race, March 24, 2016. This race is the capstone event for the Medical Field Practicum (MFP) 201 "Operation Gunpowder." MFP201 is a two-day exercise that focuses on small-team leadership, group dynamics, crisis communication and how stress affects performance. (photo by MC3 Laura Bailey)