



DR. LARRY HOLLIER

# CHANCELLOR'S Notes



October 11, 2013

## Powel named as recipient of Nursing endowed chair

LSUHSC Nursing Dean Dr. Demetrius Porche has appointed Dr. Lorrie L. Powel to the \$1 million Tenet Health System/Jo Ellen Smith, BSN Endowed Chair of Nursing.



We recruited Dr. Powel from Joint Base San Antonio/San Antonio Military Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, where she was a Senior Scientist in the Office of the Chief Scientist and the Division of Nursing Research. She made substantial contributions to the development of a military clinical and translational medical research program, which led to an increase in the Chief Scientist's portfolio by tens of millions of dollars. She also created cross disciplinary and international research partnerships.

Dr. Powel's work has focused on improving the emotional adjustment and quality of life for cancer survivors. Her research in prostate cancer offers the framework for further research and health policy to improve the lives of people with cancer.

## Ochoa 1 of 10 chosen for NIH Transformative Research Award

Dr. Augusto Ochoa, Director of the Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center and Al Copeland/Cancer Crusaders Chair in Neuroendocrine Cancer at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, is one of ten scientists in the country funded by the National Institutes of Health to conduct groundbreaking, exceptionally innovative, original and/or unconventional research with the potential to create new scientific paradigms, establish entirely new and improved clinical approaches, or develop transformative technologies. Awarded a 2013 National Institutes of Health Transformative Research Award by NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins, LSUHSC has also received a \$2.5 million grant over five years. to support the development of new treatments for severe viral diseases, including herpes infections, pandemic influenza and cancers caused viruses, by manipulating how the immune system responds to severe viral and inflammatory infections.



Severe viral diseases, such as infections of the eye and brain caused by herpes viruses, influenza, and certain cancers, are caused by a combination of direct initial damage to the cells by the virus and damage from severe and chronic inflammation resulting from the body's fight against the infection. These diseases are difficult to treat and can cause long-lasting complications, disabilities, and sometimes even death.

*see NIH, page 2*

## LSUHSC research discovers target for new Rx class for inflammatory disorders

Research led by Charles Nichols, PhD, LSUHSC Associate Professor of Pharmacology, describes a powerful new anti-inflammatory mechanism that could lead to the development of new oral medications for atherosclerosis and inflammatory bowel disorders. The findings are published in PLOS ONE, available online.



One of the master inflammatory molecules in the body is Tumor Necrosis Factor-alpha (TNF-alpha). Infections and certain diseases lead to the production of this molecule, which then stimulates an immune response. Diseases like atherosclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and IBS are believed to have inflammation influenced by TNF-alpha as a primary component. Unfortunately, there are no convenient therapeutics to treat inflammation caused by TNF-alpha. Current therapies directed at blocking TNF-alpha inflammation are very expensive antibody treatments that are administered in the clinic.

The research team found that activation of serotonin 5-HT2A receptor proteins potently blocks TNF-alpha induced inflammation and represents a potential breakthrough of a new first in class orally available small molecule-based therapeutic strategy to treat inflammatory diseases involving TNF-alpha.

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Preliminary LSUHSC research on Herpes keratitis, a severe eye infection caused by herpes simplex virus 1 (HSV1) and the most frequent cause of blindness by a infectious agent in developed countries, shows great promise. The LSUHSC research team discovered that a substance produced by the immune system not only kills the virus, but also controls the damaging inflammation that accompanies this disease.

The grant will fund a research team including LSUHSC's Dr. Ochoa and Dr. Paulo Rodriguez, leaders in the field of immunology, chronic inflammation and immunotherapy, and Dr. James Hill and Dr. Timothy Foster, experts in ophthalmology and virology, as well as scientists from the Medical College of Georgia and the University of Tennessee. This award will also create two new postdoctoral positions at LSUHSC and support the training and mentorship of junior scientists, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students. This research is also supported by the Copeland/LSU Partnership in Viruses, Cancer and Immunotherapy in collaboration with the Al Copeland Foundation. ■



### Giving it their best shot!

*The LSU Healthcare Network teamed up with the LSUHSC School of Nursing to provide flu shots on campus for LSUHSC faculty, staff, and students. Dr. Stephanie Pierce, Professor and Director of the CARE BSN and Nurse Educator MSN programs, coordinated the event with Brian Fath, LSUHN Chief Operating Officer. LSUHSC nursing students, under faculty supervision, administered the vaccinations. Over the 4 days the flu shots were offered, our nursing students gave 1,682 flu shots. Since health care personnel are among the groups recommended to be vaccinated against the flu annually, the event made getting vaccinated much more convenient and contributed to greater coverage. Thanks to all who participated!* ■

### Dental outreach helps kids' smiles

Upper level students, under faculty supervision at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans' School of Dentistry, provided free oral health exams for about 30 children ages 1 - 16 recently. Mostly juniors and seniors, they also reviewed the children's oral habits and hygiene with parents. Parents were notified if their children required treatment, provided either by their own dentist or at the LSUHSC School of Dentistry, which accepts Medicaid and LACHIP.

Screenings like this fill an important need because they can identify cavities and other conditions requiring treatment. More than half of all 5-to-9-year-old children have at least one cavity or filling. Serious tooth decay is an infectious disease for which there is no immunization. It remains the most common, chronic disease of children

and is a key cause of tooth loss in younger people. It is second only to the common cold in prevalence, can affect overall health and lead to problems in eating, speaking and even cause school absences. More than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness. They can also affect children's ability to concentrate and learn. Tooth decay can lead to problems in eating, speaking and paying attention in class.

The event was an outreach and community service activity of the Student Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry at the LSUHSC dental school. It provided an opportunity for LSUHSC to give back to the community while enriching the clinical education experience. ■

