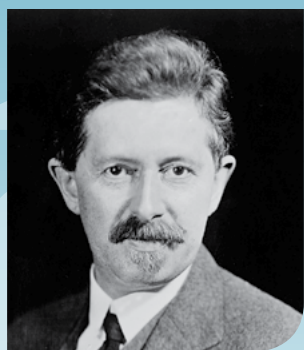




SOMnews

Point of PRIDE



Samuel T. Darling '03, a pathologist and bacteriologist, discovered the pathogen *Histoplasma capsulatum* in 1906 and identified it as the cause of the lung disease histoplasmosis. Considered a world authority in tropical diseases and epidemiology, he was nominated for the Nobel Prize.



SOMnews is your source for all news and information regarding the University of Maryland School of Medicine, including Clinical Care, Research, Education, Community Outreach, and its Culture Transformation Initiative.

- 2 Nearing the Goal
- 3 COVID-19 Research Update
- 4 Neuzil: Outstanding in her State
- 5 At the Top & Growing
- 6 Next Physician Leaders
- 7 Odonkor Promotion

DEAN'S MESSAGE

Returning to school and to work after the winter break, and after celebrating the new year, usually generates a fresh and exciting new beginning. While I hope that everyone had a chance to recharge and refresh with rest and recreation, I know that 2021 feels like anything but fresh at the moment. We remain in a state global pandemic and civic unrest, and we continue to tragically lose family and friends COVID-19 every day. The stroke of midnight on January 1 found us in the middle of various battles, not the end. As exhausted as we may all feel by now, our best response to persistent challenges has always included endurance, and our best resource has always included each other.

By remaining focused on the task at hand and continuing our critical collaborations, we find the answers for which everyone is looking. As one of the nation's leading institutions in the research and testing of the COVID-19 vaccines, the University of Maryland School of Medicine has a front-row view of the power of vaccinations now occurring all over the world. We should take great pride in the contributions we made to communities everywhere in 2020 through our diligent and grueling work. Those contributions will only increase exponentially in the months to come. The key to ending the pandemic will also unlock success in other regions. If we sustain our momentum into the new year, we will accomplish even more across all mission areas, including:

- Continuing to realize various major scientific advances for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of COVID-19;
- Garnering additional academic success with our new Renaissance Curriculum;
- Gaining even more funding in grant and contract awards in FY21; and
- Bolstering our clinical enterprise amid the challenges presented by COVID-19.

One of my favorite African proverbs that has inspired me throughout this pandemic is: *"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."* This has proven true in every one of our endeavors. While our efforts in developing the COVID-19 vaccines have included speed, the priorities have been safety and effectiveness. Therefore, we have

What's on My Mind...



...is the power of endurance and the strength in unity.

worked diligently together within the School of Medicine, within the state of Maryland, across the country, and with our international partners to help produce FDA-approved vaccines that citizens everywhere are now receiving. Similar to the collaborative spirit in the development of the vaccines, our unity in receiving the vaccinations will yield far greater benefits than if only a select percentage of us participated.

Our academic medical community has the advantage of immediate trust and confidence in the scientific research and interventions that are now being globally deployed. Thus, our responsibility is not yet fulfilled. We must now share our confidence with the extended members of our community. The example we set regarding our response to COVID-19, from wearing masks and social distancing to receiving vaccinations, serves as a precedent with the power to save lives and transform the state of events.

As the vaccine rollout continues and each group receives its turn for the opportunity to become vaccinated, I encourage you to serve as stewards of your knowledge regarding this preventive effort. Share your insight with family, friends, and members of our communities, so that together, we may end this pandemic. I hope that everyone has a safe, healthy, and productive start to the new year.

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, I am
Sincerely Yours,

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, UM Baltimore
John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and
Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine

Michael J. Naslund, MD Invested as UMSOM's John D. Young, Jr. Professorship in Urology

In a unique online ceremony Thursday, October 29, 2020 that was followed virtually by academic colleagues, friends, and family, **Michael J. Naslund, MD**, Professor of Urology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Chief of Urology at the University of Maryland Medical Center, was formally invested as the school's **John D. Young, Jr. Professor in Urology**.

"Today, we congratulate Dr. Naslund at this very special celebration of his career today, and honor him for all the contributions that he has

made to medicine and science," said UMSOM Dean **E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA**. *"At the same time, I'd like to once again thank all our donors for their generous contributions that have established this endowed professorship will significantly impact the division of Urology, the Department of Surgery and indeed, the School of Medicine."*



Michael J. Naslund, MD

Continued on page 8

Nearing the Goal

UMSOM Begins Phase 3 Trial of Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate

With the COVID-19 pandemic still raging around the world, UMSOM researchers are now engaged in a Phase 3 clinical trial of a new investigational vaccine designed to protect against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus causing COVID-19. This clinical trial will test the safety and effectiveness of NVX-CoV2373, a vaccine under development by U.S. biotechnology company, Novavax, Inc., based in Gaithersburg, MD.

NVX-CoV2373 is a stable, prefusion protein antigen derived from the genetic sequence of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus spike (S) protein and is adjuvanted with Novavax' proprietary MatrixM™. It contains purified protein antigen and can neither replicate nor cause COVID-19. The vaccine is already in Phase 3 trials in the U.K., with more than 15,000 participants enrolled. Interim data in this event-driven trial are expected as soon as early first quarter of 2021, although the timing depends on the overall COVID-19 rate in the region.

UMSOM's vaccine trial is being conducted by researchers in the school's **Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health (CVD)** as part of their National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases-funded Vaccine Treatment and Evaluation Unit (VTEU), and the COVID-19 Prevention Network (CoVPN). It adds to the extensive COVID-19 vaccine research that has been underway on campus since early 2020. The current Novavax trial is part of Operation Warp Speed, a multi-agency collaboration led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which aims to accelerate the development, manufacturing and distribution of medical countermeasures for COVID-19.

The trial's principal is **Monica McArthur, MD, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics. **Karen Kotloff, MD**, Professor of Pediatrics, is Co-Chair for the trial protocol, which will be implemented at multiple sites across the country and Mexico, and plans to enroll up to a total of 30,000 adults. The UMSOM site is expected to recruit up to 500 participants.

"We know this virus disproportionately affects older adults, those with unstable medical conditions, and racial and ethnic minorities, which makes it all the more imperative that the vaccine works well in those who need it most," said Dr. McArthur.



Monica McArthur, MD, PhD




Karen Kotloff, MD

In that regard, the current trial aims to enroll the diverse populations most impacted by COVID-19. They will include people who have increased risk of exposure because of location or circumstance, such as occupation. Individuals 65 and older, African Americans and LatinX populations, as well as individuals at risk of severe COVID-19, will be represented.

"This virus has not been democratic. We have seen that it has impacted minorities, the elderly, and people with certain medical conditions the hardest, and so an important goal of this research is to learn about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine in these groups," said Dr. Kotloff, who is Associate Director for Clinical Research in CVD and principal investigator of the Vaccine Treatment and Evaluation Unit.

A key component of that research includes UMSOM's efforts is to enroll participants in Maryland's communities most impacted by the coronavirus, including Langley Park and Baltimore.

"Our COVID-19 experts at the University of Maryland School of Medicine have been at the forefront of vaccine research. This research — which builds upon extensive COVID-19 vaccine and therapy research that has been underway for several months — will lead us a step closer to licensure and impact millions of people," said **E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA**, Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, UM Baltimore; the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor; and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine. 

Volunteer for a COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Trial

Make a difference by taking part in research investigating a vaccine for COVID-19. Compensation up to \$1,750 may be provided. If interested, you must be willing to go to the University of Maryland, Baltimore, campus, or CASA de Maryland, Hyattsville, to enroll in the study.

To learn more:

VISIT

CVDTrials.org

TEXT

COVIDRESEARCH
to 52855

CALL

410-706-7926

UMSOM COVID-19 RESEARCH UPDATE

Prevention, Treatments, and Vaccines

PREVENTION RESEARCH

Hydroxychloroquine

Trials funded by the Gates Foundation in April 2020 included a uniquely structured study using telemedicine and couriers to test whether hydroxychloroquine — a drug in the same family of therapies used to treat malaria — can effectively help prevent COVID-19 in people exposed to the virus.

As most COVID-19 infection is transmitted within households, the UMSOM trial sought an effective treatment to protect individuals' health in the family and limit the broader spread of COVID-19. The study found that the treatment did not work to prevent COVID-19 infections, and results were published in December in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. **Kathleen Neuzil, MD, MPH, FIDSA**; **Miriam Laufer, MD**; and **Meagan Deming, MD, PhD** all served as co-authors on the paper.

THERAPEUTIC TREATMENTS

Remdesivir

In April 2020, CVD faculty helped to conduct the large-scale Phase III trial of remdesivir to treat patients at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) hospitalized due to COVID-19. Patients received this investigational antiviral drug as part of a randomized controlled clinical trial. This research was part of a national study funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and led to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of the drug to treat hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

Stem Cell Therapy

In May 2020, a UMMC patient was the first patient in the nation to be treated as part of a trial investigating stem cell therapy designed by Mesoblast Limited. This therapy, which is part of a national trial, is intended for patients with moderate-to-severe acute respiratory distress syndrome who rely on ventilators for breathing assistance.

Repurposed Drugs

In June 2020, UMSOM researchers partnered on an agreement funded by the federal government's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to rapidly test hundreds of drugs, approved and marketed for other conditions, to see whether any can be repurposed to prevent or treat COVID-19. The compounds are being tested in studies using state-of-the-art technologies in the laboratory of coronavirus researcher **Matthew Frieman, PhD**, Associate Professor of Microbiology and Immunology. UMSOM will receive up to \$3.6 million over 2021 to fund this effort.



Aspirin Therapy

UMSOM researchers conducted a landmark study in October 2020 that found hospitalized COVID-19 patients who were taking a daily low-dose aspirin to protect against cardiovascular disease had a significantly lower risk of complications and death compared to those who were not taking aspirin. Aspirin takers were less likely to be placed in the intensive care unit (ICU) or hooked up to a mechanical ventilator, and they were more likely to survive the infection compared to hospitalized patients who were not taking aspirin. The study, published in the journal *Anesthesia and Analgesia*, provides "cautious optimism," researchers say, for an inexpensive, accessible medication with a well-known safety profile that could help prevent severe complications.

"This is a critical finding that needs to be confirmed through a randomized clinical trial," said study leader **Jonathan Chow, MD**, Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at UMSOM. "If our finding is confirmed, it would make aspirin the first widely available, over-the-counter medication to reduce mortality in COVID-19 patients."

Innovative New Drugs

Researchers at the UMSOM and the School of Pharmacy (UMSOP) announced in November 2020 the discovery of new drug compounds to potentially treat the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. The compounds disrupt the functioning of a protein complex inside human cells that the researchers discovered is critical for the replication and survival of coronaviruses. This finding could lead to the development of new broad-spectrum antiviral drugs that target viruses such as influenza, Ebola, and coronaviruses, according to a new study published in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) Journal*.

The protein complex, called SKI complex, is a group of human proteins that regulates various aspects of the normal functioning of a cell. In the new study, the researchers discovered that this complex also plays a crucial role in helping a virus replicate its genetic material, called RNA, within the cells

it infects. **"We determined that disrupting the SKI complex keeps the virus from copying itself, which essentially destroys it,"** said Dr. Frieman, the study's corresponding author.

Vaccine Testing

CVD tested the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines that received Emergency Use Authorizations from the FDA in December 2020. In addition, led by Senior Scientist **Karen Kotloff, MD**, Professor of Pediatrics at UMSOM and Division Head of Ped-Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine, the team is now testing the safety and effectiveness of NVX-CoV2373, developed by U.S. biotechnology company, Novavax, Inc.

Pfizer


In May 2020, UMSOM became the first center in the United States to begin testing experimental COVID-19 vaccine candidates developed by Pfizer /BioNTech. In July, Pfizer received nearly \$2 billion to produce a vaccine by the end of the year. Early results published in September in *Nature* showed that trial participants tolerated these vaccines well, and healthy adult volunteers produced a robust immune response. The vaccine received Emergency Use Authorization from the FDA in December.



Moderna

CVD researchers led a Phase 3 clinical trial of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine candidate in September 2020. This clinical trial was a key step toward the FDA granting Emergency Use Authorization of the vaccine in December 2020. The vaccine trial was the first to be implemented under Operation Warp Speed, a multi-agency collaboration led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which aims to accelerate the development, manufacturing, and distribution of medical countermeasures for COVID-19.

Novavax

Beginning in December 2020, UMSOM became one of the first clinical research sites in the U.S. to conduct Phase 3 testing of a vaccine from the biotech company Novavax. 

Outstanding in Her State

UMSOM's Dr. Kathleen Neuzil Receives 2020 Marylander of the Year Award from the *Baltimore Sun*

Calling her “among the world’s leading research scientists in vaccine development and policy,” the *Baltimore Sun* has named **Dr. Kathleen Neuzil, MD, MPH, FIDSA**, the Myron M. Levine, MD, DTPH, Professor in Vaccinology and Director of UMSOM’s Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health (CVD), 2020 “Marylander of the Year.” In a historic year dominated by COVID-19, the Sun editors also named Maryland’s front-line health care and service workers as co-recipients for their essential roles during the current pandemic.

Dr. Neuzil, who is among the world’s foremost vaccine researchers, was recognized, along with the entire team at CVD, for her unprecedented leadership and achievement in vaccine testing and treatment for COVID-19. The CVD team devoted most of 2020 to studying vaccine candidates, researching and testing potential candidates and treatments that could help end the COVID-19 pandemic.

CVD’s National and International Response

Dr. Neuzil and the CVD team’s contributions to the pandemic has been broad, and included clinical research, national and international leadership in COVID response, and policy and educational leadership roles. She and others at CVD have shared their expertise broadly and generously through work with local and national media outlets, and through education programs for their peers and the public. Likewise, Dr. Neuzil and CVD have made major contributions to the design and execution of studies on prevention and treatment of COVID-19, and on local and national policy through innovative design concepts and transmission modeling activities.

Dr. Neuzil’s team has been at the forefront of nearly every major prevention and treatment initiative aimed at saving lives from COVID-19. In May 2020, she and the CVD team initiated the first study on the Pfizer vaccine — a vaccine that would later achieve the first Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) in the United States.

That June, Dr. Neuzil took the reins as a co-principal investigator for the national COVID-19 Prevention Network, which was formed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to bring together the experience and expertise of clinical research sites. The goal was to address the pressing need for vaccines and monoclonal antibodies against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Dr. Neuzil co-led this major effort — now comprising vaccines from AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna and Novavax to develop, test, and launch an effective COVID-19 vaccine. She and her CVD colleagues also were instrumental in a definitive trial of hydroxychloroquine that showed no benefit of the drug for postexposure prophylaxis.

“The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines represent groundbreaking collaborations between Dr. Neuzil, her UMSOM CVD team, and scientists worldwide involved in doing the investigational work that ultimately led to the FDA’s emergency authorization of both vaccine candidates,” said Vice Dean



Kathleen Neuzil, MD, MPH, FIDSA

for Academic Affairs **James Kaper, PhD**, who is also the James and Carolyn Frenkil Distinguished Dean’s Professor, and Chair, Department of Microbiology & Immunology. *“As they now turn to testing the Novavax vaccine candidate, I am confident that the team’s vast scientific expertise and eye toward diversity in recruitment will bode well for evaluating this additional possibility for helping to address the COVID-19 pandemic.”*

Pathway to Leadership

Dr. Neuzil’s professional background makes her ideally suited for confronting COVID-19. She has conducted clinical and epidemiologic studies on vaccine-preventable diseases, yielding high-profile publications that inform policy decisions and public health actions. At the global non-profit, Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), Dr.

Neuzil was instrumental in the introductions of rotavirus, HPV, and Japanese encephalitis vaccines. At CVD, she leads a large Gates-funded consortium (TyVAC) to accelerate the introduction of typhoid vaccines into low-resource countries, while overseeing a robust influenza research program.

Dr. Neuzil’s research capabilities are complemented by nearly 20 years of involvement in domestic and international policy. She currently serves as a member of the coronavirus vaccine working group for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and as the only U.S. member of the World Health Organization Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization. She has contributed to the literature more than 230 scientific publications on vaccines and infectious diseases, with original research articles on SARS-CoV-2 vaccines, and policy and perspective pieces on SARS-CoV-2 challenge models and innovative trial design.

“We could not be prouder of Dr. Neuzil and the CVD team for their expertise and their laser focus on the pandemic as the nation faced these uncharted challenges,” said **E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA**, Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor, and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine.

“Our successes were due to a collaborative effort with so many other UMSOM faculty and laboratory researchers and other staff members. It has truly been extraordinary.” 🏆



Dr. Neuzil receives her COVID-19 vaccination

GROWING

UMSOM's Department of Radiation Oncology Named a National Leader in Patient Accruals to Advanced Clinical Trials, Driven by a Two-Pronged Strategic Model

According to recent data from the American Cancer Society, the U.S. has seen an amazing 31 percent decline in cancer death rates between 1991 and 2018, including a record 2.4 percent decrease from 2017 to 2018. While earlier detection methods and decreases in smoking figure into this decline, a greater determining factor is the rising number of national clinical trials that test and validate new treatment approaches, leading to federal approval of new therapies that have helped to improve patient outcomes.

UMSOM's own Department of Radiation Oncology is a clear leader in this ongoing global initiative to discover and apply new cancer treatments. In 2020, the department was recognized at NRG Oncology's national meeting as **consistently being among the top ten of its main member institutions, both in the U.S. and worldwide, in the highest numbers of patient accruals (enrollments) for clinical trials.** The department has held this distinction consistently since 2018.

NRG Oncology, a major sponsoring organization for clinical trials, is the largest member of the National Cancer Institute's National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN), which coordinates and supports cancer clinical trials at more than 2,200 sites throughout the United States, Canada, and the world.

"We achieved this top ranking over those of hundreds of other nationally recognized institutions," notes **William F. Regine, MD, FACR, FACRO**, the Isadore and Fannie Schneider Foxman Chair and Professor of Radiation Oncology. *"This is a great accomplishment in which we can all take pride. Our efforts have, and no doubt will continue to improve the lives of the cancer patients we care for every day, as well as for cancer patients around the world."*

Driving the department's leading accrual volumes is a geographic strategy that pairs the department's growing statewide clinical network with a regional Affiliate Program based at the Maryland Proton Treatment Center (MPTC).

According to **Mark Mishra, MD**, Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology and Director of Clinical Research, *"Our community-based*

locations have made the largest contributions to our accrual rate."

Currently, each of the department's six network locations is staffed by Radiation Oncology faculty who offer leading-edge treatment modalities as



Mark V. Mishra, MD

well as expert consultation with University of Maryland Greenebaum Comprehensive Cancer Center (UMGCCC) physicians. Each location also maintains an on-staff research coordinator and research nurse who screen all visiting patients for their potential candidacy for open clinical trials, while attending physicians are briefed regularly on all available trials.

Dr. Mishra points out that that by offering a flexible approach and easy access to clinical trials for patients, the department's accrual rates

have continued to rise. *"Taking part in a clinical trial can be a multi-week commitment, so making a number of trips to downtown Baltimore can be challenging, especially for our older patients,"* he says. *"While some advanced treatment modalities are only available downtown, we have made it a priority to allow our patients to complete their trial in their community at our network locations. Our focus is all about removing barriers and making clinical trial participation more patient-centric, while tapping into a broader and more diverse patient population."*

Greater patient access, in this case to the advanced benefits of proton therapy and associated clinical trials, is the motivation behind the MPTC's Affiliate Program. Through negotiated agreements, each of the four currently participating regional radiation oncology and medical oncology groups (or "affiliate partners") assigns one of their physicians to serve a liaison between their patients and the MPTC's on-site services, providing a seamless continuity of care. These affiliated physicians also are given appointments as UMSOM Visiting Professors. Since its start in 2016, MPTC's Affiliate Program has treated 303 patients from around the region while serving as a source for trial referrals.

"We are proud of our leadership in patient accruals, and the momentum that brings to cancer research and potential breakthroughs in treatment," says Dr. Mishra. *"However, it is just as gratifying to give our patients the opportunity to participate in cutting-edge, NCI-sponsored clinical trials close to home."* 🏠

UMSOM Department of Radiation Oncology Clinical Network

BALTIMORE CITY

University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Comprehensive Cancer Center
22 S. Greene Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-328-6080
www.umm.edu

Maryland Proton Treatment Center (MPTC)
850 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-424-5754
mptcproton.com

HOWARD COUNTY

Central Maryland Radiation Oncology Medical Pavilion at Howard County
10710 Charter Drive, Suite G030
Columbia, Maryland
443-546-1300
cmradonc.org

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

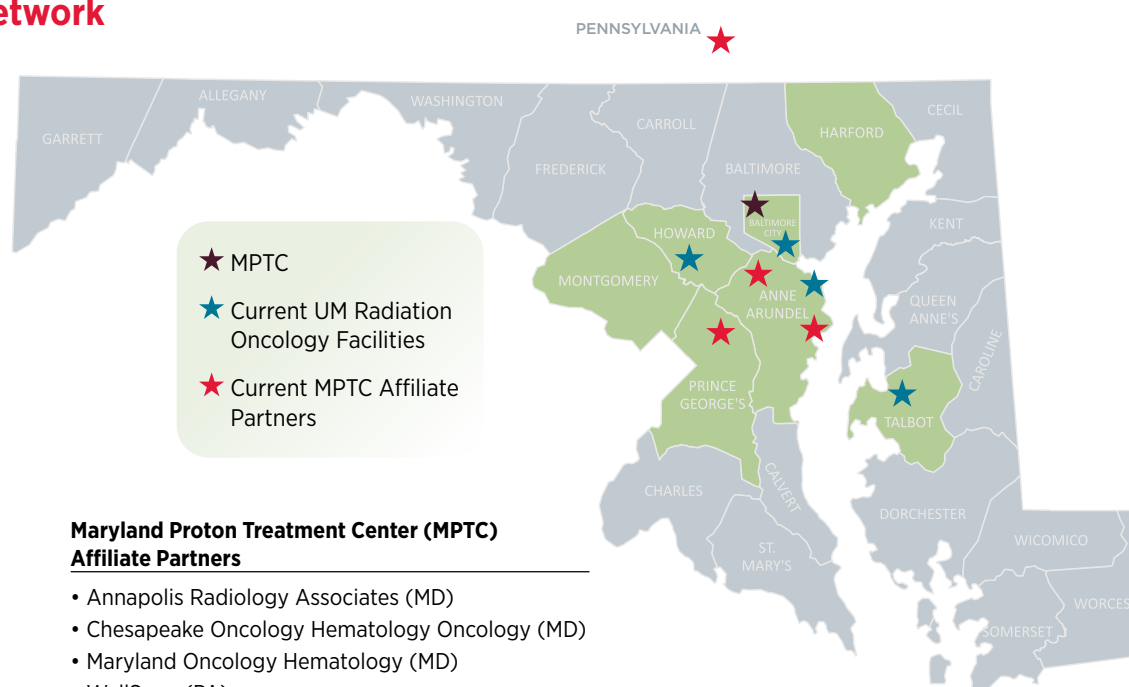
Tate Center at Baltimore Washington Medical Center
301 Hospital Drive
Glen Burnie, Maryland
410-553-8100
www.mybwmc.org

HARFORD COUNTY

Patricia D. and M. Scot Kaufman Cancer Center at Upper Chesapeake Health
500 Upper Chesapeake Drive
Bel Air, Maryland 21014
443-643-1199
umuch.org

TALBOT COUNTY

Requard Radiation Oncology Center at University of Maryland Shore Regional Health
219 S Washington Street
Easton, MD 21601
410-822-1000
www.umms.org



Maryland Proton Treatment Center (MPTC) Affiliate Partners

- Annapolis Radiology Associates (MD)
- Chesapeake Oncology Hematology Oncology (MD)
- Maryland Oncology Hematology (MD)
- WellSpan (PA)

The Next Physician-Leaders

Drs. Niederhaus and Offurum to Head UMSOM Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development

In a strategic move to promote a new generation of leadership, UMSOM Vice Dean for Academic Affairs **James Kaper, PhD**, along with UMSOM Dean **E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA**, have chosen **Silke Niederhaus, MD**, Associate Professor and Transplant Surgeon in the Department of Surgery, and **Ada Offurum, MD**, Assistant Professor and Leader of the Hospitalists Program in the Department of Medicine, to head the Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development as Associate Dean and Assistant Dean respectively. Their joint appointments follow the passing in May 2020 of **Nancy Ryan Lowitt, MD, EdM**, a longtime University of Maryland School of Medicine educator and Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs & Professional Development.

In their new roles, Drs. Neiderhaus and Offurum will share responsibilities that include leading UMSOM's faculty professional development opportunities, as well as new faculty orientations; overseeing Continuing Medical Education (CME) initiatives; assisting in the coordination of the annual Festival of Science; serving as co-directors and the public face of the School's Culture Transformation Initiative (CTI); and working with the Office of Student Affairs to coordinate graduation activities. Both will report to Dr. Kaper on matters related to faculty affairs, professional development and CME, and jointly to the Dean and Dr. Kaper on matters of culture transformation.

"With the appointments of these two highly qualified professionals, the legacy of accomplishments achieved by the late Dr. Nancy Ryan Lowitt will be maintained and further nurtured," said Dr. Kaper, who is also the James and Carolyn Frenkil Distinguished Dean's Professor, and Chair, Department of Microbiology & Immunology. *"I know that the Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development will be in the best of hands, thanks to the collective expertise of Drs. Neiderhaus and Offurum."*

Dr. Niederhaus, originally from Germany, is a transplant surgeon who was inspired to pursue a career in medical transplantation by her own experience as a kidney transplant patient on two separate occasions. She received her MD degree from the University of Alabama School of Medicine and completed her surgical residency and a two-year fellowship at the University of Wisconsin, as well as two years of sub-specialty training in abdominal transplantation. Dr. Niederhaus



James Kaper, PhD



Silke Niederhaus, MD



Ada Offurum, MD

has had a number of publications, focusing on organ transplants, organ donors, and recipients. In her current position in the UMSOM Department of Surgery, she specializes in kidney and pancreas transplant, laparoscopic and single-port donor nephrectomy, and dialysis access.

"I am very excited to start working in my new role as the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development, and I am thrilled to join a dynamic team of fellow medical school leaders," said Dr. Niederhaus. *"Together with Dr. Offurum, and under the guidance of Dean Reece and Dr. Kaper, I hope to build a strong and well-connected team in the Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development."*

Dr. Offurum completed her undergraduate degree (BS) at the University of Rochester, then graduated with her medical degree (MD) from New York University (NYU) School of Medicine. She subsequently completed her residency training in Internal Medicine also at NYU Medical Center. She joined the UMSOM in 2001. In addition to her clinical duties, she is the Associate Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine, and leads the Inpatient Hospitalist Services, leading various activities in recruitment, retention, leadership and guidance to the hospitalist physicians at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC)..

"After working with our faculty as a hospitalist leader for the past 20 years, I am excited to bring that expertise to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development as its Assistant Dean," said Dr. Offurum. *"I look forward to working closely with Dr. Niederhaus to ensure that every School of Medicine faculty member is supported in their growth and advancement in a pleasant, diverse and inclusive professional environment."*

Dean Reece commented: *"I am convinced that Dr. Niederhaus and Dr. Offurum are the perfect persons to continue the legacy of Dr. Lowitt in these critical areas for the UMSOM. This new leadership team will provide perspectives that will continue the strong momentum of the CTI program. In addition, they are ideally suited and committed to advancing the programs in Faculty Affairs, Professional Development and faculty CME. I am delighted that they have agreed to join the team of dedicated and committed professionals in the Dean's Office."* 🏢

DR. PATRICK ODONKOR NAMED INTERIM CHIEF FOR CARDIOTHORACIC DIVISION OF ANESTHESIOLOGY

Peter Rock, MD, MBA, Professor and Dr. Martin Helrich Chair for Anesthesiology at the UMSOM, has announced that **Patrick N. Odonkor, MB, ChB**, Associate Professor of Anesthesiology, has been named Interim Chief for the Cardiothoracic Division of the Department of Anesthesiology. Dr. Odonkor assumed his new role in mid-January 2021, following the departure of former Division Chief Kenichi Tanaka, MD, who left the department to become the Plewes Chair of Anesthesiology at the University of Oklahoma, starting in February 2021.

The Division of Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology provides anesthesia services for more than 1,400 cases a year in state-of-the-art operating rooms as well for as the electrophysiology and cardiac catheterization laboratories. Division physicians work collaboratively with surgeons, perfusionists, and intensivists in a wide variety of cases, including minimally invasive valve repairs, coronary revascularization, major aortic surgery, ventricular assist device placement, transplantations, and adult congenital procedures. During these procedures, the division provides perioperative transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) services with the help of sonographers using 4 TEE machines with 3D imaging capabilities.

Dr. Odonkor has enjoyed a long professional relationship with the UMSOM, stretching back some 25 years. In 1996, he began his residency at the school's Department of Anesthesiology, graduating as Chief Resident in 1999. He then completed the department's one-year fellowship in Cardiothoracic Anesthesia in 2000, after which he joined the department's faculty as an assistant professor with a subsequent promotion to associate professor in 2018. Dr. Odonkor currently practices at University of Maryland Medical Center and at a UM Capital Region Hospital, providing cardiac anesthesia services. He played a key role as clinical director of cardiac anesthesia services during the establishment of the UM Capital Region Hospital Cardiac Surgery Program in 2014, which went on to achieve a 3-star rating for Coronary Artery Bypass Graft surgery by the Society of Thoracic Surgery. He also is actively involved in research efforts within the UMSOM's accelerating xenotransplantation program. Dr. Odonkor also has served for several years on



Patrick N. Odonkor, MB, ChB

the American Board of Anesthesiology, both as an oral board examiner and as a question author for the Maintenance of Certification in Anesthesiology program.

In regard to the department's educational programs, Dr. Odonkor is involved actively with medical students who rotate through the cardiac anesthesiology division, as well as with residents from the department's Anesthesiology Residency Program. He also plays a primary role in mentoring fellows in the department's Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology Fellowship, an intensive one-year program designed to train leaders in perioperative cardiovascular care.



Peter Rock, MD, MBA, Professor and Dr. Martin Helrich Chair for Anesthesiology

"Dr. Odonkor is a highly regarded and respected clinician-educator with the experience and preparation to successfully lead the Division," says Dr. Rock. ***"I have every confidence in his ability to build upon the many successes of the cardiac anesthesia group, continue our strong relationship with and collaboration with our surgical partners, and help further elevate the national profile of our team."***

Named a "Top Doctor" in the specialty of Cardiac Anesthesia by *Baltimore Magazine* in 2016 and 2020, Dr. Odonkor has served as clinical director for the Cardiac Anesthesia Division for the past six years, as well as stepping in when needed to manage the position of Interim Chief. He also helped to lead the department's successful on-time start initiative. The initiative, originally piloted in cardiac surgery, involved the collection of data and subsequent analysis of a number of care facets, such as the timing of case preparation, completion of procedures, and room turnover. ***"The goal was to achieve more efficient operations and to cut down on downtime,"*** says Dr. Odonkor. ***"In that regard, we were quite successful. Of course, all of these metrics can be improved with time, and we're still working on making them even better."***

In responding to his new role, Dr. Odonkor is enthusiastic about the possibilities that lie ahead. ***"In the big picture, I believe my mission is to maintain the overall goals of the School of Medicine — to heal, to teach, and to discover,"*** he says. ***"I look forward to expanding upon the very high standards that we have within cardiothoracic anesthesiology, while ensuring that our faculty, residents, and fellows are successful in all of their clinical and research endeavors."*** 🏥

Michael Naslund

Continued from page 1

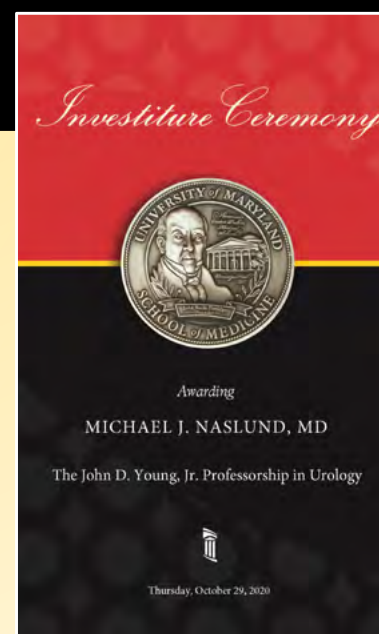
The John D. Young, Jr. Professorship in Urology endowment was established in 1984 through generous contributions from Dr. Young's former residents and associates to acknowledge the great influence he had on the training and practice of future urologists. After obtaining his medical degree from the UMSOM in 1941, he served in World War II, returning to Baltimore in 1950 and entering into private practice. In 1956, Dr. Young was recruited by the UMSOM to head the Division of Urology, which he led until his retirement in 1987. Nearly 25 years after his death, Dr. Young remains beloved by his resident alumni and former colleagues.

In addition to Dean Reece, other speakers at the event included the master of ceremonies **Christine L. Lau, MD, MBA**, the Dr. Robert W. Buxton Professor and Chair of Surgery at the UMSOM; Dr. Young's daughter **Karen Young, VMD, PhD**, Professor Emerita of Clinical Pathology, Department of Pathobiological Sciences, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Wisconsin Madison; and Dr. Naslund's medical school mentor, **Patrick Walsh, MD**, University Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, James Buchanan Brady Urological Institute, Johns Hopkins Hospital. Also speaking were Dr. Naslund's medical school classmate **Craig Peters, MD**, Chief of Pediatric Urology, Children's Health Texas, and Professor of Urology, UT Southwestern Medical School; as well as former UMSOM faculty colleague **Richard Alexander, MD**, Professor of Surgery, University of Massachusetts School of Medicine, Baystate.

After the presentation of his medal by Dean Reece, Dr. Naslund expressed his thanks to all in attendance, while reflecting on his early encounters with Dr. Young.

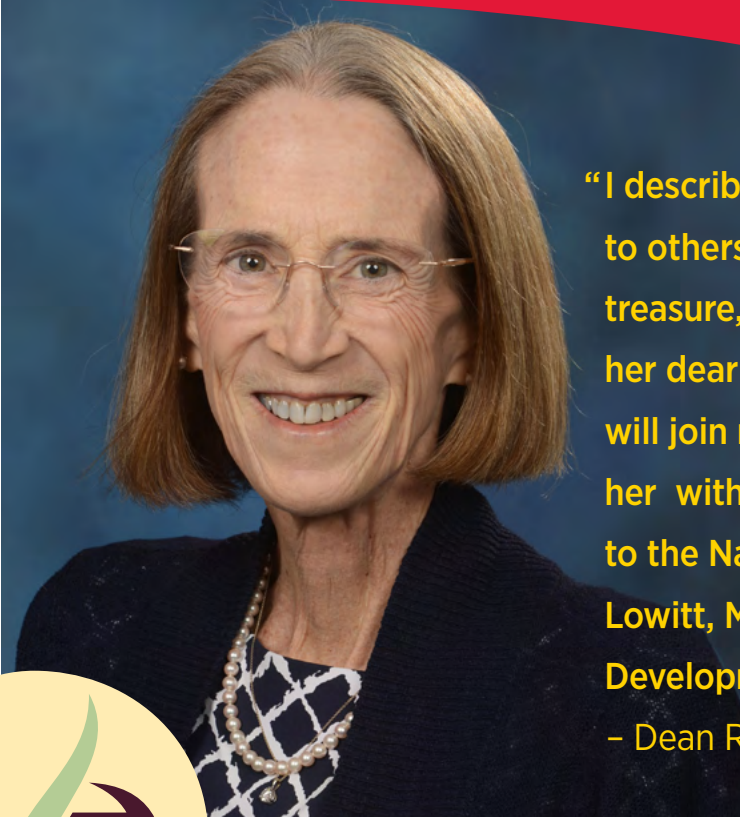
"It's really an honor to be awarded a professorship under Dr. Young's name because he was a great physician and a great man," he said. "When I arrived at the UMSOM in 1990, Dr. Young was still on the faculty and gave me excellent advice about the importance of the urology program and how to get my career started here. He was just the nicest person in the world."

A board-certified urologist, Dr. Naslund specializes in benign prostatic hyperplasia and prostate cancer while maintaining a general urology practice. In 1992, he founded the Maryland Prostate Center, the first center of excellence for treating patients with prostate disease in the United States. With most of his work centering on benign prostatic hyperplasia and prostate cancer, Dr. Naslund has performed several clinical trials on minimally invasive treatment options for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) as well as NIH-funded trials on medical management options for BPH. He also has served on numerous national committees and boards, including the American Prostate Society and the Prostate Cancer Detection Committee for the American Cancer Society. 🏛️




January 2021 Vol. 23 No. 1
SOMnews

UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
655 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-1559



"I describe Dr. Lowitt to others as a 'UMSOM treasure,' and I will miss her dearly. I hope you will join me in honoring her with a donation to the Nancy Ryan Lowitt, MD, EdM, Faculty Development Fund."

– Dean Reece



As Dr. Lowitt touched the lives of so many, your gift in her honor can make all the the difference to an outstanding and deserving UMSOM faculty member. To learn more and make your gift today, please visit the **Nancy Ryan Lowitt, MD, EdM, Faculty Development Fund**.

SOMnews is produced by the University of Maryland School of Medicine Office of Public Affairs

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, UM Baltimore
John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine
Chris Hardwick, Executive Editor
Dave Beaudouin, Managing Editor

Tom Jemski & Mark Teske, Photos
Deborah Kotz, Lisa Morris, January Payne, Contributing Writers
Kris Rifkin, Art Direction

Find the University of Maryland School of Medicine on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/Maryland.Medicine> or follow us on Twitter @UMmedschool.



www.medschool.umaryland.edu