# **UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON**

**COLLEGE OF PHARMACY** 



Report to the Texas Pharmacy Congress — Nov. 8-9, 2017

### Generosity, Compassion Prevail in Wake of Hurricane, Flooding

Hurricane Harvey and the subsequent flooding from record rainfall brought devastation all along the Texas Gulf Coast, from Rockport to Houston and Beaumont. Yet, the bravery, compassion and generosity of Texans and their neighbors across the U.S. provided much-needed aid, reassurance and support to the region.

In the immediate aftermath, dozens of UHCOP students, faculty and alumni – some of whom were also flood victims – volunteered at emergency shelters, organizing and staffing the makeshift pharmacies in collaboration with physicians, medical and pharmacy residents, nurses and other volunteers, and collecting donated medical supplies.

In the days that followed, the UHCOP Chapter of the American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists launched a relief drive for schools in the affected areas. In total, the campaign generated more than \$41,000 in supplies from San Diego to Rhode Island for 13 schools in hard-hit Rockport, Port Aransas and Houston.

UHCOP students, faculty, staff and alumni also suffered personal property losses, from homes and vehicles to clothing and computers. Fellow colleges of pharmacy, organizations, and numerous individuals responded generously, providing impacted students with gift cards, equipment, clothing and financial help. The college's Texas Medical Center Building also had to be closed indefinitely, forcing the college to find temporary space for personnel and labs until their space in the college's new permanent home has been completed.



## APhA-ASP, Kappa Psi Chapters Win Honors at Regional Meetings

The UHCOP Chapter of the American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists won the Operation Diabetes Award at the Region 6 Midyear Regional Meeting Oct. 27-29 in Houston.

During the 2016-17 year, the UH chapter's Operation Diabetes team planned and participated in 28 health fairs and outreach activities on its own or in collaboration with other student, local and national organizations and institutions with a total impact of more than 4,000 people through screenings and education.

The Delta Delta Chapter of the Kappa Psi (KY) Pharmaceutical

Fraternity brought home its second consecutive "One for All" and "Man Mile" awards at the KY Southwest Province Fall Assembly Sept. 22-24 in Corpus Christi, Texas.The chapter previously received the two awards at the Province's Spring Conclave in February.

The "One for All" Award was bestowed on Chapter "Brother" **Sara Mirjamali** as one "who exemplifies what it means to be a student leader, student pharmacist and a dedicated brother of Kappa Psi." The "Man Mile" Award is given to the chapter with the most members traveling the longest distance for the meeting.





# **UHCOP Welcomes 7 New Faculty, Administrative Leaders**

UH College of Pharmacy recently welcomed seven new faculty members — two of whom also have college administrative appointments — to its departments of Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS), Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR), and Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP).

In the PPS department, the college welcomed a team of investigators led by Riuwen Zhang, M.D., Ph.D., D.A.B.T., Robert L. Boblitt Professor of Drug Discovery, professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology, and director of the proposed UH Center for Drug Discovery. Zhang team members also joining the college are Jiang-Jiang Qin, Ph.D., senior research scientist, and Wei Wang, M.D., Ph.D., research associate professor. Their research focus is the discovery and development of novel small molecule inhibitors of oncogenes as anticancer drugs and therapeutic agents, particularly in pancreatic and breast cancers.

A Diplomate of the American Board of Toxicology since 1999, Zhang earned his Ph.D. in Toxicology and Occupational Epidemiology and M.D. degrees from Shanghai Medical University (now Fudan University Shanghai Medical College), and completed a post-doc/clinical pharmacology fellowship at the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham, Ala. Zhang is the primary investigator on two active R01 grants from the National Cancer Institute: a five-year, \$2.9 million project, "Novel NFAT1-MDM2 inhibitor for breast cancer therapy," and a five-year, \$2.4 million project, "Novel small molecule MDM2 inhibitors for pancreatic cancer therapy."

A fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Molecular Medicine Society, he has more than a dozen U.S. or international patents awarded or filed and more than 200 journal articles, book chapters and reviews published. Among his many editorial appointments, Zhang serves as editor-in-chief of Current Cancer Drug Targets; associate editor-in-chief of the Journal of Nutritional Oncology and the Chinese Journal of Natural Medicines; and associate editor of the Journal of Biomedical Research, Frontiers in Pharmacology, and Therapeutics and Clinical Risk Management.

Qin received his Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering from Shanghai Jiao Tong University in Shanghai, China, and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Amarillo. He is the author/coauthor nearly 100 papers in such publications as the Journal of Controlled Release, Journal of Biomedical Research, and Cancer Letters, and a co-inventor on several awarded or filed patents.

Wang received her Ph.D. in Molecular Pharmacology from Fudan University School of Pharmacy and her B.M. (M.D. equivalent) with Honor from Changzhi Medical College. In addition to serving as a co-investigator on Zhang's NIH projects, Wang is principal investigator on a \$780,889 American Cancer Society-funded project entitled "Targeting MDM2 Oncogene for Breast Cancer Therapy." A co-inventor on several patents filed or in progress, she is the author/coauthor of



Wang

nearly 40 presentations and abstracts as well as more than 60 papers in such publications as Oncotarget, Nature Communications, and Gastroenterology.

Joining the PPTR department are Ronnie Ozuna, Pharm.D., BCPS, clinical assistant professor; Alexa Vyain, Pharm.D., clinical assistant professor; and Evan J. Zasowski, Pharm.D., BCPS, clinical assistant professor. In addition to his faculty appointment, Ozuna will serve as the college's inaugural Assistant Dean for the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Satellite Program based at Doctor's Hospital Renaissance (DHR) in Edinburg.

Ozuna has worked in both clinical/hospital and community pharmacy settings, most recently as DHR's Pharmacy Clinical Manager since 2009. Fluent in Spanish, Ozuna is a Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist and certified in Medication Therapy Management. He earned a Pharm.D. degree from the University of Texas at Austin (UTA) College of Pharmacy and a B.A. in Biology from Texas A&M University (TAMU) in College Station. A licensed pharmacy preceptor,



Ozuna has received Preceptor of the Year awards from the UTA and TAMU Irma Rangel colleges of pharmacy.

Vyain is an infectious diseases pharmacy specialist with a focus on management of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and opportunistic infections. Vyain received her Pharm.D. from Nova Southeastern University College of Pharmacy in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and completed a PGY1 residency at Oklahoma State University Medical Center in Tulsa, Okla., and a PGY2 Ambulatory Care/HIV Clinical Pharmacogenetics at UHCOP, Texas Children's Hospital and Therapeutic Concepts.



Vyain

Zasowski is an infectious diseases pharmacy specialist whose research interests include epidemiology and clinical outcomes of patients with invasive antibiotic-resistant infections. predominantly methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE). Zasowski received his Pharm.D. from Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in Albany, N.Y. and completed a PGY1 residency at the University of Chicago Medicine in



**Zasowski** 

Chicago, Ill., and a postdoctoral research fellowship in the Anti-Infective Research Laboratory at Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich.

The newest member of the PHOP department is J. Douglas Thornton, Ph.D., Pharm.D., BCPS, assistant professor.

Thornton's research is focused on the transitions within chronic opioid therapy, including risks for continued use of opioids, health care costs and use evaluation, and patients access to opioid use disorder medications through community pharmacies. He received his Ph.D. in Health Services and Outcomes Research and his Pharm.D. from the West Virginia University School of Pharmacy, Morgantown, W. Va. He also completed a PGY1 residency at Saint Mary's Medical Center



Thornton

in Huntington, W. Va. Thornton is the recipient of Research Training Program in Behavioral and Biomedical Sciences grants from the NIH; Distinguished Service and Student Travel awards from ISPOR; and a Bronze Medal from AMCP for his co-first authored abstract. He also served as president of the ISPOR-awarded Student Chapter of the Year.

### Research & Faculty News

Bernadette Asias-Dinh, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCACP, CDE, clinical assistant professor, and Jeffrey T. Sherer, Pharm.D., MPH, BCPS, CGP, served as presenter and moderator, respectively, as part of the Clinical Reasoning Series in Pharmacotherapy—Gut Check Time: An Update in Gastrointestinal Pharmacotherapeutics during the American College of Clinical Pharmacy 2017 Annual Meeting Oct. 7-10 in Phoenix, Ariz. Asias-Dinh's lecture was on "Updates to the Management of Pain in Chronic Pancreatitis."

**Nicholas D. Beyda**, Pharm.D., BCPS, assistant professor, has received a \$20,000 Young Investigator Research Award from the Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists' for his project, "Uncovering Novel Mechanisms Governing Non-FKS Mediated Echinocandin Resistance in C. Glabrata."

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**Hua Chen**, Ph.D., M.D., associate professor, has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality for her project, "Does Access to Patient Centered Medical Home reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the care for Pediatric Major Depressive Disorders?"

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**Joydip Das**, Ph.D., associate professor, was invited to deliver presentations to the Texas A&M University's Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics Oct. 11 and at the 1st Annual Alcohol and Addiction Research Mini-Symposium Nov. 3 in Houston.

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Faculty members Marc L. Fleming, Ph.D., MPH, R.Ph., assistant professor; Matthew A. Wanat, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCCCP, clinical assistant professor; and Louis Williams, Ph.D., associate professor, were honored with the Rho Chi Society Beta Omicron Chapter's 2016-17 Teaching Excellence Awards at the chapter's 2017 Robert L. Boblitt Lecture Oct. 5.

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**Kevin W. Garey**, Pharm.D., M.S., FASHP, professor, has been awarded a \$57,229 contract from Magnolia Medical Technologies for a project entitled "Routine Use of Steripath to Reduce False Positive Blood Cultures: A Cost-Effectiveness Analysis."

**Anamitra Ghosh**, Ph.D., a post-doctoral fellow working with UHCOP Associate Professor **Joydip Das**, Ph.D., won in the poster presentation category at the inaugural UH Postdoctoral Research Symposium July 14-15. Ghosh's presentation was entitled "Ethanol upregulates active zone protein Munc 13-1: A possible implication in presynaptic physiology and alcoholism."

Pharmacology/Medicinal Chemistry Ph.D. student **Samanthreddy Kedika**, working in the lab of Associate Professor **D. Gomika Udugamasooriya**, Ph.D., won one of two poster presentation awards during the 10th Peptoid Summit Aug. 10-11 at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's The Molecular Foundry in Berkeley, Calif. Kedika was recognized for their project entitled "Harnessing Additional Binding Sites to Improve The Binding Specificity and Activity of Protein Targeted Ligands."

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**Samina Salim**, Ph.D., associate professor, was invited to speak at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) Aug. 2-3 in Irbid, Jordan. Salim also was invited to conduct a Scientific Writing Workshop at JUST's College of Pharmacy.

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Santosh Suryavanshi, a Pharmacology Ph.D. candidate working under Associate Professor Bradley McConnell, Ph.D., FAHA, FAPS, will present a poster entitled "Muscle-specific A-Kinase Anchoring Protein Polymorphisms Pre-dispose Humans to Cardiovascular Diseases by Affecting cyclic AMP/PKA Signaling" at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions Nov. 11-15, in Anaheim, Calif. The abstract also will be published in an upcoming issue of the journal Circulation.

**Evan J. Zasowski**, Pharm.D., BCPS, clinical assistant professor, has been awarded the \$20,000 Society of Infections Diseases Pharmacists/BioMérieux Microbial Diagnostics in Antimicrobial Stewardship grant for his project, "The Gut is the Source of Multidrug-Resistant Organisms: Diagnostic Development Using Shotgun Whole Genome Sequencing."

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UHCOP's Department of Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences hosted its 5th Annual PPS Research Symposium Aug. 10-11, with a record number of abstracts submitted for oral and/or poster presentation by doctoral, professional and undergraduate students as well as post-doctoral researchers affiliated with PPS faculty laboratories. This year's Scholar-in-Residence was **Jeff Aubé**, Ph.D., Eschelman Distinguished Lecturer at the University of North Carolina, who delivered both scientific and career-development talks.

Two graduate students were recognized with poster presentation awards: First Place — **Sameer Nikhar** for his project, "Optimization of pyrido[2,3-d]pyrimidinones as dual ALK2/RIPK2 or preferential RIPK2 inhibitors," (**Gregory D. Cuny**, Ph.D., UHCOP associate professor and advisor); and Second Place — **Santosh Suryavanshi** for his project, "Mechanistic role of human mAKAP polymorphisms in cardiovascular disorders" (**Bradley McConnell**, Ph.D., FAHA, FAPS, UHCOP associate professor and advisor).

Graduate students receiving awards for their oral presentations were: First Place — **Hesong Liu** for her project, "Animal model of early life stress: understanding stress resilience and susceptibility," (**Samina Salim**, Ph.D., UHCOP associate professor and advisor); and Second Place — **Henrietta Abodakpi**, Pharm.D. ('16), for her project, "Prevalence of extended-spectrum  $\beta$ -lactamase and carbapenemase-producing bloodstream isolates of *Klebsiella pneumoniae* in a tertiary care hospital," (**Vincent H. Tam**, Pharm.D., BCPS (AQ-ID), UHCOP professor and advisor).

The top two postdoctoral oral presentations were: First Place — **Anamitra Ghosh**, Ph.D., for his presentation, "Ethanol upregulates Munc13-1: A possible implication in presynaptic physiology and alcoholism," (**Joydip Das**, Ph.D., UHCOP associate professor and sponsor); and Second Place — **Indira Pokkunuri**, Ph.D., for her project, "Simulated vehicle exhaust exposure causes age-related impairments in the kidneys of adult rats," (sponsors **Mohammad Asghar**, Ph.D., UHCOP assistant professor, and Salim).

### **Recent Publications**

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Endothelial NLRP3 inflammasome activation and arterial neointima formation associated with acid sphingomyelinase during hypercholesterolemia. **Koka S**, Xia M, Chen Y, Bhat OM, Yuan X, **Boini KM**, Li PL. Redox Biol. 2017 Oct;13:336-344. doi: 10.1016/j.redox.2017.06.004. Epub 2017 Jun 15. PMID: 28633109

Increased Training Intensity Induces Proper Membrane Localization of Actin Remodeling Proteins in the Hippocampus Preventing Cognitive Deficits: Implications for Fragile X Syndrome. **Martinez LA**, **Tejada-Simon MV**. Mol Neurobiol. 2017 Jul 8. doi: 10.1007/s12035-017-0666-4. [Epub ahead of print] PMID: 28688003

Acquisition of Clostridium difficile Colonization and Infection After Transfer From a Veterans Affairs Hospital to an Affiliated Long-Term Care Facility. Ponnada S, Guerrero DM, Jury LA, Nerandzic MM, Cadnum JL, **Alam MJ**, Donskey CJ. Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol. 2017 Sep;38(9):1070-1076. doi: 10.1017/ice.2017.140. Epub 2017 Jul 11. PMID: 28693636

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UbMES and UbFluor: Novel probes for ring-between-ring (RBR) E3 ubiquitin ligase PARKIN. Park S, Foote PK, Krist DT, Rice SE, **Statsyuk AV**. J Biol Chem. 2017 Oct 6;292(40):16539-16553. doi: 10.1074/jbc. M116.773200. Epub 2017 Jul 14. PMID: 28710279

Effects of ß-blockers on house dust mite-driven murine models pre- and post-development of an asthma phenotype. **Joshi R**, Valdez D, **Kim H**, **Eikenburg DC**, **Knoll BJ**, **Bond RA**. Pulm Pharmacol Ther. 2017 Oct;46:30-40. doi: 10.1016/j.pupt.2017.07.004. Epub 2017 Jul 17. PMID: 28729042

The Fluorocycline TP-271 Is Efficacious in Models of Aerosolized Francisella tularensis SCHU S4 Infection in BALB/c Mice and Cynomolgus Macaques. Grossman TH, Anderson MS, Christ D, Gooldy M, Henning LN, Heine HS, Kindt MV, Lin W, Siefkas-Patterson K, Radcliff AK, **Tam VH**, Sutcliffe JA. Antimicrob Agents Chemother. 2017 Jul 25;61(8). pii: e00448-17. doi: 10.1128/AAC.00448-17. Print 2017 Aug. PMID: 28559261

Impact of CYP2D6 polymorphisms on endoxifen concentrations and breast cancer outcomes. Hwang GS, Bhat R, Crutchley RD, **Trivedi MV**. Pharmacogenomics J. 2017 Aug 1. doi: 10.1038/tpj.2017.36. [Epub ahead of print] Review. PMID: 28762370

Atypical Antipsychotic Prescribing in Elderly Patients with Depression. **Rege S, Sura S, Aparasu RR**. Res Social Adm Pharm. 2017 Aug 2. pii: S1551-7411(17)30235-8. doi: 10.1016/j.sapharm.2017.07.013. [Epub ahead of print]

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of blood pressure in Sprague Dawley rats. Zhu Q, Hu J, Wang L, Wang W, Wang Z, Li PL, **Boini KM**, Li N. J Hypertens. 2017 Sep;35(9):1872-1880. doi: 10.1097/HJH.0000000000001373. PMID: 28445205

UPLC-MS/MS assay of riluzole in human plasma and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF): Application in samples from spinal cord injured patients. **Sarkar M**, Grossman RG, Toups EG, **Chow DS**. J Pharm Biomed Anal. 2017 Nov 30;146:334-340. doi: 10.1016/j.jpba.2017.08.045. Epub 2017 Sep 1. PMID: 28917164

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