Ella A. Kazerooni, M.D., M.S.
Professor of Radiology

The bench-to-bedside leap can be a frustrating but extraordinary journey between the basic science and clinical environments. Researchers making gains at the bench are eager to see results translated into patient care. At the bedside, clinicians await the latest discoveries that will give them new treatment options. Having someone who can cross back and forth improves the experience for all, especially patients and their families.

Ella A. Kazerooni, M.D., M.S., has spent 25 years at the University of Michigan traversing the bench-to-bedside landscape, both for the benefit of the larger basic science community, and also for the advancement of her own work that includes innovative, cutting-edge research in the field of cardiopulmonary radiology. For demonstrating excellence in helping faculty translate research into clinical applications, as well as for her own clinical and research accomplishments, she is recipient of the Clinical and Health Services Research Award.

According to leadership and faculty who nominated Kazerooni for this honor, her most important work in the clinical and health services research arena has been in chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD), emphysema and lung cancer screening. Lung cancer is the most common cause of mortality in both men and women in the United States. Early detection is one of the most important factors in improving survival in patients.

Kazerooni introduced high-resolution CT (HRCT) as an improvement on existing techniques for the detection and characterization of lung diseases. She also played a vital role in ensuring that the U-M was a screening site for the National Lung Screening Trial. The trial, which used low-dose CT in patients 55-80 years old, was so successful that the U.S. Preventive Screening Task Force has recommended funding for low-dose CT screening in this subset of high-risk patients. She chairs the American College of Radiology national lung cancer screening registry, which focuses on the safe and effective implementation of this life-saving test in practice.

Director of the Division of Cardiothoracic Radiology, Kazerooni has advocated that screening for lung cancer — if applied to the right patient population and with the right technical factors — could assume its role in guarding the public, alongside mammography, colonoscopy and other screening tools. She also has made significant contributions in COPD — a progressive lung disease that is projected to be the third-largest global cause of mortality by 2030.

“Dr. Kazerooni exemplifies the very best in how to conduct collaborative research at the University of Michigan,” says MeiLan K. Han, M.D., M.S., an associate professor in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care. “For years, she has served as a critical link between pulmonology and radiology researchers.”

“I believe the heart of Dr. Kazerooni’s success rests in her sincere interest and compassion towards helping others.”
— Brian D. Ross, Ph.D., professor of radiology and biological chemistry and director of the Center for Molecular Imaging