

DIVISION OF NEPHROLOGY WELLER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



October 2019 (Issue 4)

Welcome from the Chief



Leaders and Best. Originally used to describe the University of Michigan football team's prowess, today this phrase has taken on a broader scope to encompass the entire University of Michigan community. Indeed, this is the same ideal embraced by our division in our tripartite mission to seek scientific breakthroughs, to inspire the next generation of nephrologists, and to provide cutting edge clinical care. In this newsletter, we will provide some updates on our efforts in each of these areas.

In addition to keeping an eye on the future, it is also important to celebrate the past. This year marks the **55th anniversary** of the founding of the University of Michigan Division of Nephrology. Our history is rich in achievement: from the start of the USRDS and other landmark kidney disease data systems, to novel drug discoveries, to breakthroughs in glomerular diseases, to most recently driving the forefront of precision medicine. I sincerely hope that you will join me in Washington D.C. next week to help celebrate our division's legacy and continuing efforts to serve as leaders and best in nephrology.

-Sub Pennathur

Annual Weller Society Meeting

Thank you to all that were able to attend the annual Michigan Weller Society meeting at ASN Kidney Week in San Diego last October, one of our biggest turnouts ever! It was great to catch up with so many friends, and we look forward to seeing many of you in Washington D.C. This year's reception will be **Friday November 8th, from 7-9pm at the Marriott Marquis D.C. (Marquis Salon 13).**

Our annual event continues to grow, bringing together current faculty, past fellows, and friends.



Guests celebrated our rich history with the 3 most recent Division Chiefs (L to R): Chip Brosius (2004-16), Roger Wiggins (1988-04), and Sub Pennathur (2016-present).

Fellowship Update

This past June we celebrated another class of fellow graduates, adding 6 more members to the Weller Society (from L to R, flanking program director Pandu Rao): **Thomas Cook, Ahmed Shahbaz, Ryann Sohaney** (and her daughter), **Jamal Abu-Khaled, Doug Atchison** and **Vidhit Puri**. We are thrilled that Drs. Sohaney and Atchison are staying on as Michigan faculty members to further their respective research careers.



Championing Nephrology Education

In recent years the interest in nephrology has declined substantially. Our division is working to reverse that trend, and several faculty members have gone “upstream” to promote interest in kidney diseases.



Julie Wright-Nunes gives a tour of the nephrology clinic to Detroit-area students.

Last year **Julie Wright Nunes** and **Pandu Rao** partnered with Project Healthy Schools to teach students at Detroit’s Cody High School about the importance of kidney health. Using interactive techniques, they covered a variety of topics including kidney anatomy and physiology. As part of the Science of Wellness program, their session was so well-received that it has now been incorporated into the curriculum! Students subsequently got to visit Michigan Medicine for a

firsthand view of cutting edge kidney research and care.

At the undergraduate level, **Michael Heung** ('05) serves as primary faculty advisor for the University of Michigan’s Kidney Disease Screening and Awareness Program (KDSAP). This student club organizes community health screenings focused on kidney health, and our faculty members support these by providing patient counseling. In addition, the club puts on a variety of educational sessions for members, including guest speakers and even a kidney dissection event. We are proud to support and inspire the students of this club, many of whom are pre-med students – and thus possibly a future nephrology pipeline!

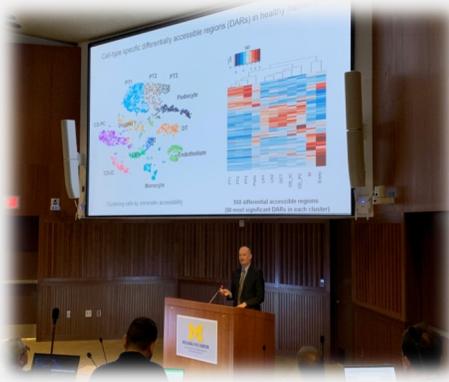


This model was created to help teach students about kidney function.



Jason Watts ('17) demonstrates kidney biopsy techniques to undergraduate students who are part of KDSAP.

Division Happenings



Ben Humphreys describes his cutting edge research in glomerular diseases during the O'Brien Center retreat.

Our division is proud to be **one of just 8 NIH-funded George M. O'Brien Kidney Centers in the U.S.** – a distinction and honor that we've held continuously since 1987. This past June we held the annual O'Brien Kidney Center research retreat, during which we celebrated the breadth of amazing kidney disease research occurring at Michigan. Dr. Ben Humphreys from Washington University in St. Louis provided the keynote address, entitled "Progress Towards a Single Cell Atlas of Human FSGS". The retreat featured several other speakers presenting both basic and clinical science, and also a poster session highlighting the extensive research activity of Michigan nephrology faculty and trainees.

Guests peruse the >20 posters highlighting research across the division of nephrology



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Research Accomplishments

Matthias Kretzler was recently awarded a third 5-year cycle of funding from the NIH to continue supporting the **Nephrotic Syndrome Study Network (NEPTUNE)**, which includes 38 recruitment centers across North America. He and his team continue their landmark work using systems biology approaches to improve pathophysiologic understanding of nephrotic syndromes and to identify novel therapeutic targets.

In addition to leading the charge on nephrotic syndrome, Matthias also serves as principal investigator for Michigan's involvement in NIDDK's **Kidney Precision Medicine Program (KPMP)**. The goal of this program is to better characterize both CKD and AKI through next generation analysis of biopsy samples. The hope is that an improved understanding of these common syndromes at the tissue and molecular level will guide development of future therapies.



Matthias Kretzler leads both NEPTUNE as well as the University of Michigan arm of KPMP, both NIH funded programs.



Clinical Updates

Dialysis Care

After much anticipation, this past August our third freestanding dialysis center opened its doors in Canton, Michigan. This center offers both in-center and home dialysis therapy, and expands our clinical footprint into one of the fastest growing areas in Michigan. **Sanj Patel ('99)** serves as the center's inaugural medical director.



The Team, The Team, The (Multidisciplinary Dialysis) Team



Karthik Ramani leads the monthly educational case conference in the INU.

Interventional Nephrology

Alex Yevzlin continues to lead our interventional nephrology program and push innovation in the field as a whole. As evidence of his innovative approaches, he was recently named **an inaugural KidneyX “Redesign Dialysis” award winner** for his proposal on dialysis catheter redesign. To learn more about his winning project, you can hear his “pitch” at Kidney Week on Sat 11/9 from 10a-2p.

This past July we graduated our first interventional nephrology fellow, **Shaker Qaqish!** We will miss his ever-present smile around the

INU, but wish him well as he starts his new position doing fulltime vascular access work in New York City. Meanwhile, this year's interventional nephrology fellow, **Faroug Suliman**, is now well on his way to mastering procedural techniques.

In September we welcomed a new interventional nephrology faculty member, **Karthik Ramani**. Karthik trained at the University of Cincinnati and has worked for the past couple of years in southern California. We are excited to have him join the team and continue to grow our interventional program.

Michigan Presence at ASN Kidney Week

As usual, Michigan Nephrology will be well-represented at ASN Kidney Week. In addition to the Weller Society reception on Friday evening, come catch up with friends at the following:

- **Michael Heung ('05)** continues as Co-Director of the Critical Care Nephrology precourse offered on Tue 11/5 and Wed 11/6. This is a great venue to get up to date on the latest trends in acute kidney injury, critical care, and acute dialysis. therapies
- Transplant faculty member **Mona Doshi** will present at the Kidney Transplantation precourse on Tue 11/5 from 4-6p, speaking about “Outcomes, Risk Assessment and Ethical Considerations for the Living Kidney Donor”.
- Division Chief **Sub Pennathur** served on the ASN Kidney Week Planning Committee this year. He is moderating a session on “Unraveling Connections Between Obesity and Kidney Diseases” on Thu 11/7 from 2-4p.
- **Rajiv Saran** will speak about “MBD Guidelines and Quality Improvement Program: Anything Changed in Clinical Practice?” on Thu 11/7 from 1:15-1:35p.
- **Joel Weinberg** will moderate “AKI: Mechanisms of Injury and Repair” on Thu 11/7 from 4:30-6:30p. He is also speaking on “Oxidative Metabolism Reprogramming in AKI” on Sat 11/9 from 2-2:30p.
- **Jeff Beamish ('16)** will discuss his research on “Modeling the Renal Epithelial-Microvascular Niche with Perfusable Pericyte-Lined Capillary Networks in vitro” on Thu 11/7 4:42-4:54p.
- **Abhijit Naik** is presenting “Obesity, Podocyte Depletion, and Risk for Allograft Loss” on Thu 11/7 2:30-3p.
- **Laura Mariani** has a couple of talks: “Indications and Goals of Treatment in FSGS” on Thu 11/7 1:15-1:35p, and “Characterization of Nephrotic Syndrome: What are we Learning from Deep Learning?” on Thu 11/7 2:30-3p.
- **Anna Mathew** will be moderating “Functional Proteomics: Unraveling Molecular Machines to Protein Networks in Metabolic Disease” on Fri 11/8 10:30a-12:30p.
- **Markus Bitzer** will moderate a session on “Hope on the Horizon: Novel Therapeutics for Glomerular Disease” on Fri 11/8 2-4p.
- **Jon Segal ('02)** will present his research on “Outcomes of AKI Patients Receiving Dialysis in ESRD Facilities” on Fri 11/8 from 5:42-5:54p.
- **Puneet Garg** will moderate a session on “The Right Tools for the Job: Model Systems for Glomerular Disease” on Sat 11/9 from 2-4p.
- **Farsad Afshinnia ('12)** will speak about “Lipid Remodeling in CKD” on Sat 11/9 3-3:30p.
- **Jennifer Harder ('10)** will moderate a session entitled “Beating the Law of Averages: Predicting Diabetic Kidney Disease Outcomes Through Integrative Biology” on Sun 11/10 from 10a-12p.

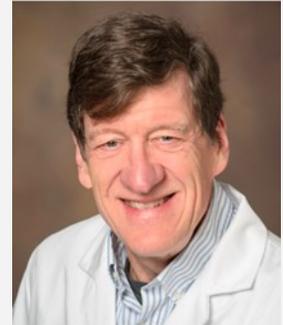


Brosius Professorship

After serving for years as Fellowship Program Director, Chip Brosius went on to serve as Division Chief from 2004 until 2016, all while maintaining a highly successful research career. He left an indelible mark on our division, and we hope to permanently honor his contributions through the **Frank C. Brosius M.D. Collegiate Professorship in Nephrology**.

Thanks to some lead gifts, we have now eclipsed the \$100,000 mark in donations. But we still have a long way to go towards achieving the \$500,000 target which is necessary to endow the professorship. If you haven't already, please consider making a contribution.

<https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#!/give/basket/fund/799814>



Contact Us!

We are always looking for updates from alumni and friends of Michigan Nephrology. If you wish to share any information, or have suggestions for other future content, please send a message to Michael Heung (mheung@med.umich.edu; @keepingitrenal on Twitter). For more real-time updates on division activities and news, you can also follow us on Twitter (@umichkidney).

