Chobanian receives AHA’s first lifetime achievement award in hypertension

Aram V. Chobanian, M.D., the dean of the School of Medicine and founder of the School’s Whitaker Cardiovascular Institute, recently was presented with the first Bristol-Myers Squibb Lifetime Achievement Award in Hypertension. Chobanian received the award at the annual meeting of the Council for High Blood Pressure Research of the American Heart Association (AHA). The award honors Chobanian, who is known internationally for his research in hypertension, for over 30 years of contributions to the field of hypertension in such areas as fundamental research, education, clinical care and personal leadership.

Chobanian became interested in hypertension when he was a young research fellow at the Medical Center under Robert W. Wilkens, M.D., a pioneer in the treatment of hypertension. During his time at BUMC, Chobanian and his colleagues conducted research that improved the understanding of the causes and complications of hypertension and developed new approaches to its treatment.

The Whitaker Cardiovascular Institute, under Chobanian’s direction, was designated in 1985 by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute as the nation’s first and only National Research and Demonstration Center in Hypertension. In addition, the School also is designated as a Specialized Center of Research in Hypertension (SCOR). The center is involved in both basic and clinical research on the causes of high blood pressure, the development of new treatments for the disease, and the development of health policies that address the impact of hypertension.

Currently, Chobanian’s research involves examining the molecular and cellular biology of the arterial wall in response to hypertension and hypercholesterolemia. In addition, his research team is working on developing new methods and therapeutic approaches to prevent vascular diseases.

School hosts reception to honor Wolfson Foundation, student loan fund

The School of Medicine hosted a reception on Nov. 19 in honor of the Louis E. Wolfson Foundation, a private fund which provides a large number of low-interest loans to students in Boston’s three medical schools—Boston University School of Medicine, Harvard Medical School and Tufts University School of Medicine. Attending the reception were students, faculty and staff from the medical schools, and trustees of the foundation.

John I. Sandson, M.D., dean emeritus of the School of Medicine and chairman of the foundation, Henry Banks, M.D., dean emeritus of Tufts University School of Medicine, and Daniel D. Federman, M.D., dean of medical education at Harvard Medical School, each expressed their appreciation for the financial support the foundation provides for medical education. The foundation, which is the largest private loan fund devoted to providing low-interest loans to medical students, evolved from the concern and determination of Louis E. Wolfson, M.D., to help generations of physicians finance their medical education by establishing and funding a foundation for that purpose.

In 1981, two years before Wolfson’s death, the first foundation loans were made, and since that time hundreds of students at Boston’s medical schools have received these loans. The foundation has grown from approximately $11.5 million to around $17 million, thus enabling it to provide substantial funds each year to students at Boston’s medical schools.
Cold weather may force many to choose between heat and food, study shows

A link between the high cost of home-heating oil and increased malnutrition among children has been suggested by preliminary findings of a study conducted by researchers at the School of Medicine and Boston City Hospital.

Deborah Frank, M.D., an assistant professor of pediatrics and a pediatrician at BCH, and her colleagues recorded the weights of 3,018 children between the ages of six months and two years who visited the pediatric emergency room at BCH from July 1989 to July 1990. They found that during the spring, summer and fall months the prevalence of malnutrition was seven percent. Following one of the coldest Decembers on record, the prevalence jumped to 9.5 percent (a 35-percent increase) during January to March 1990.

"These statistics are very alarming and will probably get worse," said Frank. "With continued cuts in nutrition and fuel assistance programs, coupled with the rising cost of home-heating oil, we expect that even more parents will be forced to choose between heating or eating."

BUSBM alumna appointed president of Washington Business Group on Health

Mary Jane England '64 recently was appointed president of the Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH), a non-profit national health policy and research organization. England, who previously served as vice president of medical services for the Prudential Insurance Company of America, replaced Willis B. Goldbeck, the business group's founder, on Dec. 1.

Organized in 1974, WBGH serves as a primary information resource and voice on health policy for its corporate members. It also performs health-care systems research and tracks corporate managed-care innovations nationwide.

"I have always considered the Washington Business Group on Health to be an important and influential organization," said Barry Manuel, M.D., associate dean for continuing education. "I am delighted that someone of Dr. England's background, experience and intellect will be leading the WBGH."

"I am honored to join an organization committed to a vision of the health-care system of America which supports quality, necessary health care available to all, at an affordable social cost," said England.

BUSBM establishes LabLink 2000 to expose high school teachers to biotechnology

The School of Medicine's Program in Biomedical Laboratory and Clinical Sciences recently began LabLink 2000, in a continuing effort to prevent Massachusetts' predicted shortage of laboratory personnel in biotechnology. LabLink is designed to give high school teachers in-depth exposure to biotechnology so that they in turn may educate their students about the subject and interest them in pursuing careers in the biomedical field.

Fifteen teachers from greater Boston were selected to participate in the program, which began on Saturday, Oct. 20. They are attending eight Saturday seminars, one a month for eight months.

"We hope that some of the students enriched by the knowledge their teachers have gained will continue learning about biotechnology and pursue careers in the field," said Connie Phillips, the director of the BUSM program.

LabLink 2000 is funded by the United States Department of Education, Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education. Stipends for the teachers, as well as supplies, are being provided by several biotechnology companies including Du Pont, Biogen and Hemagen.

School of Medicine abstracts presented at Gerontological Society meeting

Researchers from the School of Medicine presented numerous abstracts at the 43rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America. The meeting was held Nov. 16-20 in Boston.

The researchers and the topics they presented include: F. Marott Sinex, Ph.D., a professor of biochemistry at the School of Medicine, "Age and Risk for Alzheimer's Disease"; Tania J. Phillips, M.D., "Leg Ulcers in the Elderly: Etiology, Management and Impact on Quality of Life"; Gary S. Rogers, M.D., an assistant professor of dermatologic surgery, "Impact of Skin Cancer..."
and Altered Cutaneous Appearance"; Spencer Van B. Wilking, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of medicine, "A Prospective Evaluation of Functional Performance in an Alzheimer’s Treatment Group Using the Functional Independence Measure (FIM)."

Cohen receives international award honoring his pioneering research

The Jan van Breemen Research Institute in Holland recently announced that Alan S. Cohen, M.D., the Conrad Wesselhoeft Professor of Medicine and a professor of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics, is the recipient of the Jan van Breemen Gold Medal and is the van Breemen Lecturer for 1990. The award, in honor of Dr. Jan van Breeman, is given only once every two years to a medical scientist chosen on an international basis. Dr. van Breeman founded scientific rheumatology in Holland, and organized the International Congress of Rheumatology and the European Congress of Rheumatology as well as the Dutch Society.

Cohen, who is also director of the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory and chief of medicine at Boston City Hospital, will present "Amyloidosis as a Connective Tissue Disease," based on his pioneering research on amyloidosis. Cohen’s research has shown that the protein amyloid may play a role in the development of Alzheimer’s disease and adult-onset diabetes mellitus, and that amyloidosis may occur independently as an inherited disease.

Meenan installed as president of American College of Rheumatology

Robert F. Meenan, M.D., a professor of medicine and director of the arthritis section at the School of Medicine, recently was installed as the 55th president of the American College of Rheumatology at its 1990 annual meeting in Seattle, Wash. The College is a 5,000 member organization of physicians and scientists who will specialize in the care and study of arthritis and related disorders. Meenan will serve a one-year term as president.

Arthritis Foundation awards research grants to School of Medicine faculty

Four faculty members at the School of Medicine recently received research grants from the Arthritis Foundation. The grant recipients and their areas of research are: David T. Felson, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor of medicine and public health, who is researching whether occupational and leisure activities cause knee arthritis; Paul R. Meers, Ph.D., an assistant professor of pathology, who is investigating the degranulation of human neutrophils; Andrew A. Guccione, Ph.D., P.T., an assistant professor of medicine, who is looking at health perceptions of rheumatoid arthritis; and Martha Skinner, M.D., an assistant professor of medicine and director of the amyloid core unit, who is testing a treatment for amyloidosis.

McCaffrey one of five inducted into Royal College of Physicians of Ireland

Ronald P. McCaffrey, M.D., a professor of medicine and the chief of the Section of Medical Oncology at the University Hospital, recently was inducted into the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland as an overseas fellow. Only five fellows are admitted into the college annually.

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland is the legal body that governs medicine in Ireland. As a member of the college, McCaffrey, who was born in Dundalk, Ireland, hopes to serve on the committee on higher medical training and the education and examination committee for internal medicine.

Berman receives Fulbright Award

Marlene Oscar Berman, Ph.D., a professor of psychiatry and neurology, recently received a Fulbright Award for Senior Scholars to lecture and conduct research in Australia from March to August of 1991. Her host institutions will include the University of Melbourne (Victoria) and the University of New England in Armidale (New South Wales). Berman’s lectures and research activities will focus on the neuropsychological consequences of long-term chronic alcohol abuse.

Feldman to receive annual HDSA award

Robert G. Feldman, M.D., chairman of the Department of Neurology and a professor of neurology, pharmacology and experimental therapeutics, and public health, as well as chief of the Department of Neurology at the University Hospital and the Veterans Administration Medical Center, will be presented with the eighth annual Marjorie Guthrie Memorial Award in recognition of his contributions to the Huntington’s Disease Society of America (HDSA). The award ceremony will take place on Sunday, Jan. 27, from 2 to 4 p.m., in the Francis deMarneffe Building at McLean Hospital.

The Massachusetts chapter of the committee to combat Huntington’s disease, the forerunner of the HDSA, was established at the Medical Center through the combined efforts of Feldman and Marjorie Guthrie, the founder of the national organization and the widow of folksinger/songwriter Woody Guthrie, who died of Huntington’s disease in 1967. HDSA is dedicated to the detection of the disease and care of those who suffer from it and to research aimed at developing a cure for the condition.

Levin to serve new national organization

Robert M. Levin, M.D., an associate professor of medicine and director of the Medicine Clerkship at Boston City Hospital, was elected a councillor of the recently organized Clerkship Directors in Internal Medicine for 1990-91. Previously, Levin served as a member of the steering committee to organize the association’s first national meeting—held in San Francisco on Oct. 18 and 19—during which he presented several workshops.
The purpose of this new association is to foster an exchange of information, ideas and educational methodologies in the quest for excellence in the education of students in the core medicine clerkship. A high priority of the association will be the promotion of research in medical education.

**Giller appointed to chair AHA committee**

Donald R. Giller, the director of marketing and public affairs at the Medical Center and the vice president of marketing and public affairs for the University Hospital, recently was appointed chairman of the Committee on Personal Membership by the American Hospital Association's (AHA) board of trustees. The 16-member committee acts as a liaison to the AHA board and represents the interests of over 50,000 personal members of the association in advising on the AHA’s policy development. The AHA represents approximately 7,000 hospitals in the country.

**Upcoming CME courses**

The following is a list of upcoming courses sponsored by the Department of Continuing Medical Education:

- "Current Clinical Pediatrics" will take place on March 3-7 at the Olympia Hotel in Park City, Utah.
- "Musculoskeletal Imaging for Orthopedic Surgeons and General Radiologists—A Basic Course in Film Interpretation" will be held on March 4-8 at the Heywoods Resort in the Barbados.
- "Tunable Dye Laser: Workshop on Treatment of Vascular Lesions of the Skin" will take place at The Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston on March 9-10.
- "Infectious Diseases in Children" will be held on March 16 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Boston.
- "Behavioral Pediatrics" will take place at the Charles Hotel in Cambridge on March 22-23.

For further information, contact the Department of Continuing Medical Education, 80 E. Concord St., Boston, MA 02118, or call (617) 638-4605 (x4605).

*News & Notes is a publication of the Office of Publication Services. If you have news of interest to the BUSM community, please contact Angela Sullivan, x8482 (638-8482) or write to her at the Office of Publication Services, 80 East Concord Street, Robinson 7 (B-7), Boston, MA 02118.*