Greetings from the UA Senior Vice President for Health Sciences

With the fall semester under way, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to campus and highlight some recent major accomplishments, milestones and honors at the UA Health Sciences.

In July, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded UA Health Sciences and Banner Health a $4 million research grant that will total more than $43 million over five years to participate in the national Precision Medicine Initiative® Cohort Program. Together with Banner, we are one of four Healthcare Provider Organizations selected nationally to enroll 1 million or more U.S. participants to improve prevention and treatment of disease based on individual differences in lifestyle, environment and genetics. This landmark award is the largest NIH peer-reviewed grant in UA history, and this UA/Banner Health partnership broadens the impact we are making in every corner of our state.

Our asthma and airway research also continues to see significant growth. A recent study, co-authored by UAHS researcher Dr. Donata Vercelli and published in the New England Journal of Medicine, describes how house dust differences between Amish and Hutterite communities affect immune development and asthma risk. In addition, Dr. Monica Kraft was recently awarded a $7 million NIH grant to gain a better understanding of mediators that help control lung inflammation and improve therapies to reduce severe attacks in those with asthma.

Finally on the research front, the National Cancer Institute (NIC) has renewed the UA Cancer Center's designation as a Comprehensive Cancer Center with a five-year, $17.6
million award. Dr. Andrew S. Kraft, director of the Center, leads one of only 45 NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers in the nation and the only Center headquartered in Arizona.

It also is my great pleasure to announce the appointment of Dr. Rick G. Schnellmann, a leading pharmacologist, researcher and drug discovery entrepreneur, as the eighth dean of the UA College of Pharmacy. Rick began his duties Aug. 1 and received an outstanding welcome from the UA community at a campus reception last Tuesday.

Lastly, I want to give a big shout-out to two of our programs that continue to bring health-care services to people in Arizona’s rural and underserved communities: the Mobile Health Program is celebrating its 40th year, while the Arizona Telemedicine Program is celebrating its 20th. Congratulations to all of the faculty, staff and trainees – past and present – that have made these two programs so impactful in pursuit of improving the health of Arizona.

With your help, we continue to encourage the pioneering spirit of innovation and collaboration by working to create a learning environment like nowhere else in the world. I hope you all have a successful start to the new academic year – Go Wildcats!

Joe G.N. “Skip” Garcia, MD
UA Senior Vice President for Health Sciences

UAHS, Banner Receive Historic Funding in Precision Medicine

The UA Health Sciences and Banner Heath have received a major NIH grant to participate in President Barack Obama's Precision Medicine Initiative Cohort Program.
New UA Pediatric 'Center of Excellence' Established

The center is the first in the Southwest to conduct research into acute-onset neuropsychiatric disorders that historically have been misdiagnosed or undiagnosed in children.

Dr. Schnellmann Appointed to Head UA College of Pharmacy

Rick G. Schnellmann, PhD, a leading pharmacologist, researcher and drug discovery entrepreneur, has been appointed dean of the UA College of Pharmacy.

Precision Medicine Has Applications for Pancreatic Cancer

A team led by UAHS researchers is taking a new, patient-directed approach to treating pancreatic cancer.

Amish Farms May Protect Children Against Asthma

House dust differences between Amish and Hutterite communities affect immune development and asthma risk, according to a study co-authored by UA Health Sciences researcher Dr. Donata Vercelli.
Dr. Burgess Receives Fulbright Schuman European Union Award

Jeff Burgess, MD, MPH, received a Fulbright Schuman Award to conduct international policy-related research on safety and health programs for fire service and emergency medical services in the United Kingdom and France.

UAHS Study of Lung Disorders Gets $11.4M Boost

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute program has granted $11.4 million to a project led by Dr. Joe G.N. "Skip" Garcia, the UA's vice president for health sciences.

$7M NIH Asthma Grant to UA College of Medicine – Tucson

Led by Dr. Monica Kraft, researchers will conduct a five-year study to investigate the interrelationship of genetic mediators to reduce lung inflammation and attacks in asthma patients.

UA Cancer Center Retains Prestigious NCI Comprehensive Status with $17.6M Award

The Comprehensive Cancer Center designation gives Arizonans access to research-driven, highly personalized, cancer care and treatments.
Delivering Health-Care Services to People ‘Where They Need Them’

Two University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson programs that bring health-care services to people in Arizona’s rural, underserved communities are reaching major milestones this year.

UA College of Medicine – Phoenix Researcher: Age-Related Protein Linked to Depression

Deveroux Ferguson, PhD, recently was featured in Science News for his research about a busy protein’s role in depression.

UPCOMING EVENTS

| SEPT 7 | Mini-Medical School 3.0 |
| SEPT 9 | Lymphatic Cancer & Leukemia |
| SEPT 12 | Advances In Aging Lecture Series |

UAHS IN THE NEWS

Is It Flu, or Is It Valley Fever?
U.S. News & World Report

Wearable technology tracks heart health
WNDU-TV

Juntos por la Salud "Together for Health" Mobile Health Unit
PBS Channel 8

RESEARCH
View a monthly listing of UA Health Sciences grant awards here.