I was grateful for the opportunity to share our successes and vision for the future with you at the State of the Section presentation on September 2nd. I appreciate everyone who submitted content and helped it all come together. Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the Section of Surgical Sciences had a great year in 2016, and I couldn’t be prouder of our team.

VUMC has once again been named among the nation’s finest providers of specialty care by U.S. News & World Report and has also been named the No. 1 hospital in Tennessee and the Metro Nashville area. VUMC had 12 out of a possible 16 specialties either nationally ranked or designated as nationally high performing.

For the 10th year, Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt has received the honor of being named among the nation’s leaders in pediatric health care by U.S. News & World Report in their annual Best Children’s Hospitals rankings. Again this year, owing much to the efforts of John Brock, III, M.D. and his team, MCJCHV achieved a maximum of 10 out of 10 nationally ranked pediatric specialty programs and continues to be the only pediatric hospital in Tennessee to receive this distinction.

With the VU and VUMC legal and financial separation earlier this year, VUMC can now focus fully on our medical mission and benefit from greater nimbleness and flexibility in today’s dynamic healthcare market. However, amid this transition, our core mission has not changed. We have been and will continue to remain dedicated to patient care, discovery and education. Furthermore, our core values of commitment, compassion, integrity, respect and scholarship remain central to who we are.

In addition to the VUMC split, the Section experienced several major transitions in 2016. We also welcomed an exceptional new group of faculty members, bringing our faculty total up to 246 individuals. Furthermore, we are thrilled to be training the next generation of first-rate surgeons with 160 residents and 16 fellows. We are grateful for our 165 Section staff members, without whom we would not be able to provide such outstanding care.

In 2016, the Section performed exceptionally well with regard to our Quality, Growth & Finance and Innovation Pillar Goals. Over the coming year, we will focus on retention, resource length of stay, new patients seen within 14 days, mortality, OR utilization, wRVU/cFTE, EpicLeap and our Academic Reputation. We will need all hands on deck, and I know that no one is better equipped to tackle the future than all of you.

I’d like to offer a special thanks to Bess Wildman for her administrative leadership, and I would also like to thank each and everyone of you. It’s all about people, and we would not be here without you. Thank you for all that you’ve done, and I have no doubt that you will all remain committed to excellence going forward. Our future is bright, and our sun is rising! Come join the fun.
Terhune named vice chair of Education

Kyla Terhune, M.D., MBA, associate professor of Surgery and residency program director, was appointed by Dr. Dan Beauchamp as vice chair of Education for the Section of Surgical Sciences. In this role she will oversee all education programs of the Section including, but not limited to, fellowship and residency training programs, undergraduate education programs, and Continuing Medical Education.

Dr. Terhune will partner with Patient Care Center leaders to ensure that we maximize the learning and engagement of our trainees in process improvement initiatives while continuing to meet the needs of our education mission. She will provide executive leadership and oversight of all section/department CME courses. Dr. Terhune will also work collaboratively with the vice chair of Research and department chairs to promote educational research and scholarship.

“Dr. Terhune will provide critical leadership in organizing, evaluating and improving what are already some of the most outstanding surgical educational programs in the world,” said Dr. Beauchamp.
J. Kelly Wright, M.D., professor of Surgery, informed us about one year ago of his intent to step down as the chief of the hepatobiliary surgery and liver transplant service. Dr. Wright oversaw tremendous growth of the liver transplant service to the point where it is one of the largest in the country, with excellent outcomes. He has participated in the training and mentoring of countless residents, won numerous teaching awards, and is regarded as an extraordinary surgeon. Dr. Wright will continue to be active on the faculty at Vanderbilt and at the Nashville VA Hospital, performing liver transplants and hepatobiliary surgery.

Sunil Geevarghese, M.D., M.S.C.I., graciously agreed to serve as interim chief of Hepatobiliary Surgery and Liver Transplantation and surgical director of the Vanderbilt Liver Transplant Program effective July 1, 2016. He has provided steady leadership, outstanding mentoring of residents and students, and has been instrumental in helping to establish a transplant fellowship. In addition, he collaborates with Department of Radiology and Radiological Sciences faculty to develop new techniques for imaging and the treatment of liver cancer. Dr. Geevarghese has also championed clinical research in the Vanderbilt Transplant Center with projects ranging from hepatic intraoperative navigation, transplant immunosuppression and post-transplant cognitive dysfunction.

Bruce Shack, M.D. has wrapped up 26 years as chair of the Department of Plastic Surgery. “This decision was the most difficult of my entire professional career,” Shack said. “My devotion to and fondness of all of my faculty, residents, nurses and staff made this a gut-wrenching and heart-rending decision. However, after all these years, I truly believe it is time for some fresh vision and energy at the helm of our department.

“I am assured that my successor, whomever that person may be, will be an individual who will continue to support and promote the faculty and staff, as well as our long traditions of excellence in patient care, teaching and research.”

“I want to thank Dr. Shack for his steady leadership of the department for the past two decades,” said R. Daniel Beauchamp, M.D. “He has strengthened the department during his tenure, having added significant numbers of new faculty members who have increased the clinical volumes substantially, while offering our patients many new reconstructive options.”

Reuben Bueno Jr., M.D., associate professor and residency program director of Plastic Surgery, and chief of Pediatric Plastic Surgery at the Monroe Carell, Jr. Children's Hospital, is serving as interim chair while a national search is conducted for Dr. Shack’s successor. Dr. Bueno joined our faculty after serving 8 years at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield, IL, where he was residency program director, director of Pediatric Plastic Surgery, and associate director of the Burn Unit. Dr. Bueno is a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society and has received multiple resident and medical student teaching awards. In 2013-14 he served as President of the Midwestern Association of Plastic Surgeons, after also serving as its Treasurer, Vice President, and President-Elect. Previously he was selected as a Young Leader in Hand Surgery by the American Society for Surgery of the Hand (2011) and was selected as Chair of the Young Microsurgeons Group for the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (2013).
More cases of life-threatening oral absesses being seen by McKenna

Sam McKenna, DDS, M.D., chair of the Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, has an important message for both the public and medical providers after treating an increasing number of patients with life-threatening infections that all began as abscessed teeth — one of whom died as a result: Take oral health very seriously.

“There has been a definite escalation in the number of people we’re seeing who just don’t have access to necessary oral care services,” McKenna said. “They’re ending up here with some really horrible infections. The most extreme examples of this problem are two recent cases of necrotizing fasciitis, a condition associated with, at best, disfigurement and, at worst, death.

“Over the past 10 years we have seen a fourfold increase in the number of patients requiring surgical drainage of face and neck infections caused by tooth abscess. We saw on average nearly two cases per week in 2015-2016.”

“The lack of access to affordable dental care has become a significant public health issue.”

Complete story link

Thayer, Dortch and Does head study to track recovery of peripheral nerve damage for Department of Defense and NIH

Surgeons have limited tools to successfully repair and track the recovery of peripheral nerves that have been severely damaged as a result of a traumatic injury, but Vanderbilt investigators hope to change this through research studies recently funded with more than $3 million in grants from the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health.

“The Department of Defense is excited about our research because nerve injuries, particularly in the Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom, were one of the main problems affecting wounded soldiers,” said Wes Thayer, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of Plastic Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation. “Now they wear body armor that keeps their core protected. Those who in prior conflicts would not have survived their injuries are now surviving, but they have more devastating extremity and orthopaedic injuries.

“That’s what this research is all about. We hope it will translate not only to help our wounded warriors, but also oncologic patients and our regular civilian trauma patients, and that it has other applications such as tissue transplantation,” Thayer said.

The peripheral nervous system is a network of 43 pairs of motor and sensory nerves that connect the brain and spinal cord (central nervous system) to the rest of the body.

Complete story link
Heart transplant program among busiest in U.S.

Vanderbilt’s heart transplant program is ranked No. 2 nationwide in volume for its combined adult and pediatric procedures, according to the most recent data released by Organ Procurement and Transplant Network (OPTN) in July. The ranking puts the program at No. 1 in the Southeast region for volume for the first six months of 2016. It is the second consecutive year the program garnered the top spot in the region on the rankings list.

“Our goal was never about volume,” said Ashish Shah, M.D., professor of Cardiac Surgery and surgical director of the Adult Heart Transplant Program. “It has always been about delivering the highest quality of care.”

In 2015, the program performed a record number of heart transplants — 65 — which ranked the Medical Center at No. 3 nationally for the combined adult and pediatric programs.

Larger transplant centers produce improved outcomes: study

Vanderbilt’s Ashish Shah, M.D., was part of a novel study that used a computerized algorithm to highlight the value of high-volume transplant centers with corresponding improved outcomes. The study, published in The American Journal of Transplantation, is the first to look at the positive relationship between high operative volume and improved patient outcomes.

Complete story link

Penson, Arora to conduct Profound clinical trials with FDA grant

A Canadian-based medical device company focused on prostate care has announced that it has been granted Investigational Device Exemption approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for a multicenter clinical trial. Vanderbilt University Medical Center is noted as one of the sites chosen to conduct the trial.

“We are very pleased to learn about the IDE approval for the TULSA-PRO device. As an institution, we recognize the potential of MR-guided therapeutic ultrasound ablation and are investing a lot of resources in this direction,” said Drs. David Penson and Sandeep Arora.

Complete story link

Drs. Miller and Edwards save woman in auto accident on Natchez Trace

Ruth Root was driving to a routine check up at her cardiologist Friday morning. She had been having heart problems since February, but something felt off as the Nashville woman drove down Natchez Trace near Blakemore Avenue.

“I drive myself to the doctor all the time, but I didn’t realize something was really wrong until I got into the car,” she said.

The 73-year-old grandmother tried to pull over — and that was the last thing she remembered.

Root was having a heart attack. She crashed her car into a light pole and suffered multiple bruises and cuts. According to doctors and nurses, she should have died right there.

But at that very intersection was Dr. Rick Miller, a trauma surgeon at Vanderbilt University. Miller sprang into action. Along with surgical resident Dr. Gretchen Edwards, and several other bystanders, Miller helped Root to a grassy knoll by the crash. She had no pulse, and her eyes had rolled into the back of her head. Miller’s team began administering CPR. After using a cardiac defibrillator, Root began to show color and regain consciousness. Shortly after, she was taken to the trauma center at Vanderbilt.

Complete story link

View TV News Story
The chance to help others and show compassion drives neurosurgeon Thompson

Reid Thompson, M.D., chair of the Department of Neurological Surgery, vowed to be two types of doctor: The type of physician who is interested in diseases that people happen to have and the type of physician who is interested in people who happen to have those diseases.

This sage wisdom from his professor caused him to form his own opinion. Not believing the two approaches had to be mutually exclusive, he aspired to be both types of doctor.

“Equally important, I would say, to honing your skill and your craft as a surgeon is your ability to hone your skill and your craft to communicate with patients,” said Thompson.

Complete story link

Vanderbilt doctors urge caution with fireworks

Thousands of people, most often children and teens, are injured each year using consumer fireworks. Vanderbilt doctors annually treat burns and eye injuries and even see patients with hearing loss due to fireworks usage.

WKRN, WTVF, WAVE (Louisville, Kentucky) and other NBC, CBS and FOX affiliates around the country reported on tips offered by doctors at Vanderbilt on how to keep safe while handling fireworks. Oscar Guillamondegui, professor of Surgery, was interviewed.

Complete story link

Adjuvant Chemo in the Mix for High-Risk Prostate Cancer?
Chang’s opinion quoted

Men with high-risk prostate cancer had a 10-month improvement in progression-free survival (PFS) with adjuvant chemotherapy, although the difference did not achieve statistical significance, results of a randomized trial showed.

When the trial ended, patients who received docetaxel after radical prostatectomy had a median PFS of 55.5 months as compared with 45.6 months with prostatectomy followed by observation. The difference translated to a hazard ratio for progression of 0.82 (95% CI 0.59-1.14, P=0.24).

The negative primary outcome does not signal an end to evaluation of adjuvant docetaxel in the setting of high-risk prostate cancer.

Patients with high-risk prostate cancer, including African Americans, will be interested in the results, and clinicians should be aware of them when discussing treatment options, agreed Sam Chang, M.D., of Vanderbilt University.

“No question, that for high-risk patients, I will mention this,” said Chang, who moderated a press briefing about the findings. “Radiation is a localized treatment, and these patients don’t fail locally. They fail systemically.”
Pope’s surgical team’s quick actions identify and treat young patient’s malignant hyperthermia – a rare but potentially serious problem for surgical patients

John C. Pope, IV, M.D., professor of Urologic Surgery and Pediatrics, performed a minor procedure on 8-month-old Maverick Longoria. Soon after the successful surgery, nurses noticed his CO2 rising quickly. This signaled the rare condition known as malignant hyperthermia. The Malignant Hyperthermia Association estimates that MH complicates one in about 100,000 surgeries in adults and one in about 30,000 surgical procedures in children. The OR team quickly used the drug dantrolene which can reverse an MH reaction, but only if it is administered quickly.

Proposed changes could impact liver transplant patients

Seth Karp, M.D., chair of the Department of Surgery said, “This proposal to reallocate livers for transplantation will significantly decrease our access to livers for transplant, leading to longer wait times for our patients. We have opposed this proposal since it was first introduced three years ago. This change is motivated by concerns in other parts of the country that wait times for livers are longer than in others.”

The new proposal under consideration by the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) would change the way donated livers are distributed and would negatively impact patients listed for liver transplantation at VUMC and across the Southeast.

The Vanderbilt community is urged to comment on proposed UNOS changes that will reallocate livers for transplantation

By government regulations, the proposal is being offered for public comment until October 15. We ask that you consider placing a public comment by clicking here; join the discussion and then add your comment.
ER doctors see increase in gunshot victims over past year

The trauma department at Vanderbilt University Medical Center reports an increase of young people being treated for gunshot wounds.

For teens aged 16 to 19 years old, emergency room doctors have seen a 30 percent increase over last year.

The increase is even larger for patients aged 20 to 25 years old. Gunshot wounds among that age group have increased by 50 percent over last year.

“For the ones we lose that die, the impact to family and to the community is horrendous,” said Dr. Oscar Guillamondegui, the medical director of Trauma ICU.

Vanderbilt is the only Level 1 Trauma Center in Middle Tennessee. The most critically injured gunshot patients come to the hospital from across our region.

“Prevention is key,” Dr. Guillamondegui said. “Gun safety like locking up guns, keeping them from children, and maintaining gun safety in the home are all important things for gun owners to remember.”

Goldenring recognized with Research Mentor Award from the AGA Institute

James Goldenring, M.D., Ph.D., co-director of the Epithelial Biology Center at VUMC was one of 10 Research Mentor Award recipients honored in San Diego during Digestive Disease Week 2016, an annual meeting and scientific conference sponsored by the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) and three other specialty societies.

“I am incredibly honored to receive this award,” Goldenring said. “I truly believe that we have no greater obligation than to mentor not only our students and postdocs, but also our scientific colleagues and even those who will be our competitors.”
Ahmya Calloway, the 13-year-old girl who had end-stage renal failure that impacted her heart function, received her lifesaving heart transplant on May 2, and early on May 3 surgeons implanted her new kidney. The back-to-back surgeries came nearly one year after she was listed for both organs and five years after she began dialysis.

According to United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) data, there have been just 37 heart/kidney transplants in children younger than 18 performed in the United States since 1998.

“The most remarkable thing about this case is that we took a child with multi-system organ dysfunctions requiring dialysis multiple times a week, and within a 24-hour period, we have given her a new heart and, more importantly, given her a new kidney,” Dr. Bret Mettler said. “She no longer has to have dialysis. Removing the dialysis component improves her quality of life exponentially.”

Complete story link

Nesbitt behind the first Cardiothoracic resident surgical SimCAB Boot Camp

The month-long VUMC boot camp is the first of its kind in the country and was conducted in August over 42 consecutive four-hour sessions.

The program was the culmination of nearly eight years of work, said Jonathan Nesbitt, M.D., and its origin is in an eight-institution research study funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) that investigated whether simulation training for cardiothoracic fellows can improve surgical skills and decision-making. Nesbitt was a co-principal investigator in the study.

“The best time to train our fellows using simulation is at the beginning of their training, when they have the least knowledge and experience,” said Nesbitt, director of the Cardiac Simulation Program.

Complete story link
Beauchamp honored with the prestigious Sheen Award

R. Daniel Beauchamp, M.D., chair of the Section of Surgical Sciences, was awarded the Dr. Rodman E. and Thomas G. Sheen Award. He will receive the award during the December 3, 2016 annual clinical meeting of the New Jersey American College of Surgeons (ACS) Chapter in Iselin, NJ, and will be the featured speaker at the meeting.

The Sheen Award was started in 1938 by Thomas Sheen in the memory of his brother, Dr. Rodman Sheen, a pioneer in the field of radiology, to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions to mankind in medicine and medical research.

NIH grant boosts Englot’s epilepsy research efforts

Dario Englot, M.D., Ph.D., a clinical instructor and epilepsy fellow in the Department of Neurological Surgery, has received a grant from the National Institutes of Health to support his research into better understanding brain connectivity disturbances in patients with focal epilepsy.

The grant supports work that entails using fMRI scans in patients whose seizures cannot be controlled by medication and who have undergone or will undergo brain surgeries. The scans will be done before and after surgeries. Scans will also be done on individuals without epilepsy for comparison.

“We used to think of epilepsy as a disorder where only a small part of the brain is abnormal — and that’s the part where the seizures come from — but that doesn’t explain why patients with epilepsy have cognitive problems, behavioral problems and problems with alertness,” Englot said. “What we have come to realize more recently is that actually areas throughout the entire brain are affected in patients with epilepsy.”

More Southerners at risk for kidney stones

“Needles to the groin” or “knife in the back” are two of the ways people recount the pain of passing a kidney stone. It seems most people in the South know someone who can personally describe a jagged crystalline stone moving through a sensitive part of the anatomy.

Middle-aged white men in the southern United States remain at the highest risk of getting kidney stones, but research shows that teens, women and blacks are catching up.

“The South as our nation’s kidney stone belt is real,” says Nicole Miller, M.D., a surgeon specializing in stone disease and endourology at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center Urology Clinic. “Population studies show that Southerners are up to 50 percent more likely to develop stones.”
Vascular surgery researcher Komalavilas studies airway diseases and drug treatments

Inhaled beta-agonists – drugs that relax constricted airway smooth muscle – are the mainstay of asthma therapy. Some patients, however, do not respond to these drugs.

Previous studies demonstrated that the protein HSP20 is part of the beta-agonist signaling cascade and mediates relaxation of airway smooth muscle. Padmini Komalavilas, Ph.D., and colleagues, have now explored the effects of a cell-permeable peptide (P20) that mimic the action of HSP20.

They demonstrated that P20 relaxed isolated airway smooth muscle and blocked the actions of a contractile drug. In isolated smooth muscle and cultured airway cells, they found that P20 regulated the actin cytoskeleton. They showed that inhaled delivery of P20 reduced airway hyper-responsiveness in vivo in a mouse model of allergic airway disease with features of human asthma.

The results, reported in the American Journal of Respiratory Cell and Molecular Biology, demonstrate that P20 peptide reduces airway hyper-contractility via mechanisms that bypass beta-receptors. The P20 peptide may be a potential therapeutic for asthma that is refractory to beta-agonists.

This research was supported by the National Institutes of Health (grants HL122735, AI111820, AI095227, HL090664, HL122554, AI121420, TR000445) and in part by resources and materials from the Veterans Affairs Tennessee Valley Healthcare System.

Complete story link
O’Neill honored with international surgical volunteerism award

James O’Neill, M.D., left, instructs a surgical trainee in Kijabe, Kenya, on how to do a pericardial window for tuberculous pericarditis and tamponade.

James O’Neill, M.D., professor of Surgery and former chair of the Section of Surgical Sciences at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), has received an International Surgical Volunteerism Award from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) for more than three decades of service as a surgeon and educator in medically underserved countries.

“The International Surgical Volunteerism Award from the American College of Surgeons is a well-deserved high honor for Dr. O’Neill and makes us all proud of his accomplishments,” said R. Daniel Beauchamp, M.D., John Clinton Foshee Distinguished Professor of Surgery and chair of the Section of Surgical Sciences. “This is appropriate recognition of his years of outstanding contributions to establishing and sustaining surgical education and improving surgical care to Kenya and other underserved regions of the world.”

O’Neill joined VUMC in 1971, serving as chair of Pediatric Surgery until 1981, when he left to become surgeon-in-chief at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the C.E. Koop Professor of Pediatric Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He returned to Vanderbilt in 1995, serving as chair of the Section of Surgical Sciences and surgeon-in-chief at VUMC and Children’s Hospital through 2002.

Rex Parton, the Medical Center’s oldest combined heart/kidney transplant, is four months post surgery with a good prognosis

The old adage that age is just a number actually became a lifesaver for 71-year-old Rex Parton.

There was something different about Parton, said Ashish Shah, M.D., professor of Cardiac Surgery and surgical director of Heart Transplant and Mechanical Circulatory Support.

He was such a good patient as far as his compliance, his ability to successfully follow a complex medical regime, his high health care literacy and his self advocacy,” Shah said. “Age and renal failure made him not a good candidate on paper, but because of our collective experience, we set aside conventional wisdom and utilized our instinct.

“As a program we reflected on Mr. Parton’s case and our answer was ‘Yes. Yes we can do this and yes, they can get through this as a family.’”

Today Parton, the Medical Center’s oldest combined heart/kidney transplant, is four months post surgery with a good prognosis.

Vanderbilt Transplant Center had a record of 481 solid organ transplants in FY16

**ADULT**
- 26 lung transplants
- 148 liver transplants
- 203 kidney transplants
- 65 adult heart transplants
- 4 pancreas transplants

**PEDIATRIC**
- 17 heart transplants
- 13 kidney transplants
- 5 liver transplants
**Thompson records audio on the NIH StoryCorps project**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is launching its Voices of the NIH Community website, which features a collection of StoryCorps audio recordings from patients, families, researchers, doctors, nurses, staff and volunteers in both the NIH and Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) communities.

A total of eighteen 40-minute stories were recorded in Vanderbilt’s Eskind Biomedical Library from April 22-24, 2015, and are catalogued in the National Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Six Vanderbilt stories are now edited and currently being featured on the NIH website.

**Chung and team report on “Proliferative capacity of neuroblastoma” in journal**

Reporting in the journal *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications*, Dai Chung, M.D., and colleagues use a technique called “limiting dilution analysis” to show that the frequency with which neuroblastoma stem cells form spheres in suspension cultures accurately quantifies their stemness, or ability to “self-renew.”

Neuroblastoma is a neural crest cell-derived extracranial solid cancer that affects infants and young children. The most vigorous of these cancers spreads through self-renewing cancer stem cells. Knowing the nature of these cells is essential to understanding the progression of neuroblastoma and devising the right treatment strategy.

**Improved blood management system reduces waste, costs. Study authors Martin and Guillamondegui reviewed patients in VUMC’s National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) database.**

“The Transfusion Committee at Vanderbilt wanted to see how the group could implement evidence-based guidelines around restrictive transfusion,” said lead study author Barbara Martin, MBA, R.N. The guidelines were developed based on current best-practice recommendations and first implemented in 2011-2012, initially in the intensive care units, the Emergency Department and then institution-wide.

To evaluate the impact of the restrictive transfusion recommendations on patients who were not necessarily transfused for anemia, study authors reviewed patients in VUMC’s National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) database. The patients in the VUMC database benefited from the restrictive approach; between 5 and 6 percent were transfused with an average of 2.4 units of blood per patient in 2015, compared with 11 percent transfused with an average of 4.6 units of blood per patient in 2011.

“We were able to change the mindset of the entire institution, initially, and then determine that the improved usage with decreased wastage was beneficial to patient outcomes,” said study co-author Oscar Guillamondegui, M.D., professor of Surgery and Vanderbilt’s NSQIP Surgeon Champion.
Idrees receives award for cancer outcomes research

Kamran Idrees, M.D., MSCI, assistant professor of Surgery, has received a Young Investigator Award from the Society of Surgical Oncology Foundation (SSO). The award supports innovative concepts designed to improve health outcomes through advances in the delivery of care.

Idrees, who joined the Vanderbilt faculty in 2012, said the one-year award “was an unexpected honor and was awarded to evaluate the impact of health literacy on cancer outcomes.”

The Vanderbilt Center for Effective Health Communication already administers a brief health literacy screen to patients who are admitted to the hospital or visit certain clinics. Patients are asked if they are confident in filling out medical forms, whether they need assistance to read the hospital material and whether they have difficulty understanding written medical information.

Naftel’s early volunteer spirit prepared him for pediatric neurosurgery

Robert Naftel, M.D., assistant professor of Neurological Surgery grew up witnessing the intense dedication, passion and life-changing moments that physicians experience. Yet, it wasn’t until college that he realized it was his calling. “Many of my family members were various types of physicians and I was inspired by the way that I saw them affect others’ lives, each in their own way,” said Naftel.

“When I volunteered in the local hospital, it felt like it was where I belonged,” Naftel said. “I wanted to be a part of the team that helped patients get through tough times in their lives.”

“My favorite thing about our work is seeing my patients and their families back in clinic after we have treated them—especially when they have been through a really challenging medical problem,” Naftel said, “We have all been through something major together. The stress is gone and instead there is often laughter.”

Vanderbilt seminar focused on the latest sports related concussion research for professionals: Drs. Solomon and Sills offer expertise by speaking at the event

Neuropsychologist Gary Solomon, Ph.D. recently weighed in on one of the hottest debates in sports medicine, asserting that research doesn’t support the popular theory that concussions put athletes at higher risk for psychiatric illness.

He made the remarks during Sports Concussion: The State of the Science, a seminar he and other experts with the Vanderbilt Sports Concussion Center hosted in July for health care professionals, athletic trainers and school officials.

The seminar covered a broad range of topics, including concussion treatment, long-term effects of the brain injury, efforts by the National Football League (NFL) to prevent head trauma and a former professional hockey player’s account of dealing with postconcussion syndrome (PCS).
Patient Ira Baxter, urologic surgery patient, benefited from the 3-D Artemis biopsy system. He still enjoys long distance biking.

After Ira Baxter was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the fall of 2014, he tried just about everything to treat it. He had his prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels tested and retested. He sought a second opinion, then a third—consulting physicians in Nashville, Los Angeles and Houston.

Faced with a big decision—options included removing his prostate and risking serious side effects or spending years keeping an eye on the cancer and risking it spreading outside of the gland—Baxter turned to David Penson, M.D., MPH, director of the Center for Surgical Quality and Outcomes Research at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

“When I met him, it just clicked,” said Baxter, who was 62 years old at the time.

Hanto’s study about life after transplant improving post-transplant finds positive outcomes for pediatric patients with liver cancer

“There is no better place in Tennessee than Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital to care for infants, young children and adolescents who have liver disease, which also provides the option of liver transplantation,” said Douglas Hanto, M.D., Ph.D.

A recent study looking at the long-term outcomes of all pediatric patients across the United States who underwent liver transplantation after a malignant liver tumor diagnosis is giving Vanderbilt physicians reason to smile.

The paper “Long-term Outcomes after Pediatric Liver Transplantation for Malignant Liver Tumors: Effects of Era and Age,” was presented at the American Transplant Congress in June.

“There were three very important conclusions as we analyzed all the data,” said Hanto, senior author of the paper. “There was a fairly remarkable improvement in long-term post-transplant survival in the last decade for both groups of tumor patients, and this was particularly true for patients younger than 18 years of age. The third finding was that liver transplantation is very beneficial and can be curative when resection of the liver is not feasible.”
Antwane Cole Jr., known as “AJ” to friends and family, began his summer playing football and enjoying his favorite superhero, Spiderman. A seemingly healthy 7-year-old, the whites of his eyes suddenly turned bright yellow. No previous signs indicated that in a three-week span his health would be in such dire straits that his liver would fail, requiring a transplant at Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt. “Antwane is doing very well. He is an excellent example of how the (pediatric liver transplant) program is functioning very efficiently and very collaboratively. He was admitted on a Friday and his evaluation was completed in less than a day,” said Douglas Hanto, M.D., Ph.D., chief of the Pediatric Liver Transplant Program and director of the Vanderbilt Transplant Center.

Wellons, Braun and MCJCH fetal surgery team help train and set up first fetal neurosurgery program in Australia

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) made history in 1997 when two surgeons pioneered fetal surgery to treat spina bifida, or myelomeningocele, the most common birth defect in the central nervous system. Almost two decades later, armed with overwhelming evidence from a seven-year study that confirms the effectiveness of the complicated surgery, and with more than 300 cases already performed at Vanderbilt, the institution recently made history again when a team traveled to Australia in July to help launch that country’s first-ever fetal surgery program for spina bifida and guide the first surgery.

Seven Vanderbilt team members traveled to Brisbane, Australia, to take part in the historic moment at Mater Mother’s Hospital — Jay Wellons, M.D., MSPH (Neurosurgery); Stephane Braun, M.D. (Plastic Surgery); Kelly Bennett, M.D. (Maternal Fetal Medicine); Ray Paschall, M.D. (Anesthesiology); Ann Kavanaugh-McHugh, M.D. (Cardiology); Alicia Crum, RDMS (fetal sonographer); and Melissa Broyles (surgical tech).

Complete story link
International story link
Tarpley honored at event by Nashville Mayor with the Proclamation of “John L. Tarpley, M.D. Day”

John Tarpley, M.D. officially retired from Vanderbilt on June 30. A man of his word, he stepped down as director of Residency Education on his 70th birthday, November, 19, 2014. Kyla Terhune, M.D., associate professor of Surgery, one of his many mentees, took over the role the next day.

During the past 15 years, he has directed Vanderbilt’s Multidisciplinary Surgical Critical Care/SICU Residents Service and served as program director for the Surgical Critical Care Residency and the Acute Care Surgery Fellowship. Since 2001, he has served as the Director of the Multidisciplinary Surgical Critical Care Committee.

Dr. May has also played a significant role in Vanderbilt’s research mission during the past 15 years, and in 2012 he has named the director of research for the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care. He has been principal investigator or co-investigator on approximately 50 competitive grants and contract research projects. His primary research focus has been to improve the treatment of patients with ventilator-associated pneumonia, severe sepsis, and severe trauma. He is currently the Principal Investigator of a 4-year, $1.2 million RO1 grant from the NIH to define the pulmonary flora in critically injured ventilated adults by serial, non-invasive molecular analysis of exhaled breath condensate.

Mind your dentist, and floss every night: Dr. Rezk weighs in

“To floss or not to floss?” has become a big question recently. News reports have been conflicting and confusing.

Despite conflicting recent reports, as a hospital dentist practicing in an academic setting, Julie Rezk, D.M.D., assistant professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, writes that she has personally observed the detrimental health effects of poor flossing habits. While there may not be studies yet that substantiate the health benefits of flossing, she sees the benefits every day.

Addison K. May, M.D., FACS, FCCM, professor of Surgery and Anesthesiology, has been named to the Ingram Chair in Surgical Sciences. Dr. May is a nationally prominent surgeon and educator in the field of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care, and has excelled in many areas, including clinical care, teaching, research and administration at VUMC.

May named Ingram Chair in Surgical Sciences

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Complete story link

Tarpley, 71, remains professor, emeritus, of Surgery and Anesthesiology, and program director, emeritus, for the General Surgery residency at VUMC. Affectionately known as “Tarp”, he also served as associate chief of the surgical service at Nashville’s VA Hospital. For nearly two decades, he led VUMC’s General Surgery residency program, one of the largest on campus.

“We’re going to be on what we’re calling a ‘five-year plan,’” said Tarpley, about he and his wife, Maggie Tarpley, who worked as a senior associate for the Section of Surgical Sciences at VUMC. “We hope to spend most of the next five years in Africa. We’re keeping our house here, and we’re still going to be affiliated with Vanderbilt. We’re going to keep watering our relationships here, but now we see ourselves focusing on service with Vanderbilt International Surgery and the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health.”

Complete story link
### Positive changes in the General Surgery Residency and Fellowship programs

The Surgical Specialties Education Office has a strong team of coordinators who are here to assist the fellowship, residency, clerkship, and education leadership in furthering the academic mission of the Section of Surgical Sciences. These coordinators are the liaisons for the GME and LCME Offices, and are available for any questions related to our trainees.

The team assists our programs with recruitment, scheduling, new trainee onboarding, graduations, annual program reviews, and various other day-to-day activities which keep the programs running smoothly.

If they don’t know the answer, they know how to find the answer. The Education Office is open during regular business hours and is located in Medical Center North, Suite CCC-4322. Feel free to call, email, or stop by. They look forward to meeting you!

**Meet our Team**

- **Teri DeLoria** – Fellowship Program Coordinator for Surgical Critical Care and Burn, Thoracic Surgery, Colorectal Cancer, and Liver Transplant
- **Connie Head** – Fellowship Program Coordinator for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Vascular Surgery, Breast Oncology, and Minimally Invasive Surgery
- **Debi Hinton** – Residency Program Coordinator for General Surgery
- **Jessica Padgett** – Medical Student Clerkship Coordinator for Surgery, and Assistant Residency Coordinator for General Surgery
- **Melissa Patrick** – Education Program Manager

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### Nguyen and Wildman present winning poster at the AASA Annual Conference

**Evaluation and Development of Shared Services: A Framework in Practice**

**Nick Nguyen, MHA**, administrative officer, Department of Surgery and **Bess Wildman, MBA**, chief business officer, Section of Surgical Sciences & associate operating officer, Surgery Patient Care Center, recently presented as poster winners at the 29th Annual Conference of the Association of Academic Surgical Administrators (AASA) in Washington, DC in October.

Services in academic medical centers are often delivered and managed in either a fully decentralized environment or corporate process managed by institutional core services. This poster discusses a framework that depicts a spectrum, including ‘Regional, Core, and Shared Services’ and describes how the framework may be used as a structured guide in the assessment and decision-making for implementation of a shared structure. The poster emphasizes models where similar business units realize operational and financial efficiencies, recognizing the unique nature of surgical specialties and the specialization required for maximum efficiency and effectiveness of certain business processes. The poster includes details on how to identify opportunities for centralization, recognize challenges, and understand how to make it successful in 3 case-study examples across the academic medical center.
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HEALTH AND ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES
A FUN AND TEAM BUILDING WAY TO SUPPORT THE FACULTY & STAFF PEOPLE PILLAR

Section Administration organized this goal for all department and division Faculty and Staff to participate. Our overall goal is to develop a robust team engagement around employee health and well-being.

Congratulate our official Wellness Commodores:
Chereta Brigman, Administrative Officer—Section and Plastic Surgery
Kathy Dieterich, Administrative Officer—Urology
Tabitha LaCourse, Administrative Assistant II—Department of Surgery
Shelia Dunn, Executive Secretary—Neurosurgery
Sallie Walker, Administrative Fellow—Section
Patrick Moss, Administrative Officer—Thoracic Surgery
Dan Ott, Associate Director-Finance—Section and Surgery PCC

Second Quarter Activities
• Go For The Gold! – Deadline is October 31st
• Flulapalooza - October 11th
• Follow Up Survey to add to our participation levels
• More Lunch and Learns
• SNEAKers OUT DAY - Every Friday, Noon to 1:00 pm
• Walking Groups for different days and times of the week

Key Initiatives you will not want to miss!
October - “Warm Coat Drive” to benefit Vanderbilt’s Homeless Mission and Park Center
November - “Food Drive” to benefit Second Harvest Food Bank
December - “Toy and Gift Drive” for MCJCH

Click here to view the list for - Teen Bling

Christy Hinkle is Section Credo Award winner

Christy Hinkle, administrative manager in Surgical Research, is the Section’s Credo Award winner for the past quarter. Christy began her career 12 years ago as an administrative assistant II in Stem Cell Biology before transferring to Surgical Research in 2005. Christy was highly recommended by several faculty and staff for the credo award.

One faculty member said of Christy, “I have worked with Christy a lot over the past several years. She is one of the hardest working members of the surgical team that I have worked with. She is always there with a big smile on her face, eager and willing to help, spending the time required to accomplish the mission. Christy is a great team member and one of the kindest human beings I have ever had the pleasure to work with.”

Another person wrote, “I have had the pleasure of working with Christy Hinkle several times during my tenure in the Section. Not only do I find her very easy to work with, but she also has a depth of knowledge and professionalism that is a welcome part of any interaction with her.”

Click here for the Section Credo Award nomination form Deadline, Oct. 31 (supports the People Pillar)