



Our Team of Medical and Surgical Experts

Division of Liver and Pancreas Transplantation

2nd Quarter Newsletter

CHIEF'S UPDATE

I am excited to provide you with the first divisional newsletter. This publication will be sent out on a quarterly basis henceforth with the intention of providing a brief update on announcements and events within our programs. We will deliver this in both an electronic and paper format, but prefer the former to save our trees. You can elect to receive this in any format you wish or opt out as instructed below.

2020 has been nothing short of an unprecedented and challenging year. We have had to come to grips with not only a viral pandemic with an associated economic crisis, but also the reality of social and racial injustices that pervade our communities, schools, and work places. Our division has been deeply affected by these issues. In March and April, we had to develop mechanisms to protect our healthcare team, donors, and recipients from COVID-19 infections, which required flexibility and innovation. We came face to face with the retirement of the first and only Chief of our Division, Ronald Busuttill, MD, PhD, who is profiled in this newsletter. We are currently re-evaluating our diversity, equity, and inclusion within our programs. Lastly, we have faced financial crises within our Health System, which has stressed most hospitals in this country.

Through these challenges, our programs and teams have persevered. We have continued to expand to provide life-saving surgeries and technologies to our patients. I am so proud of the team and teamwork that has been displayed over these past several months. I continue to be honored and humbled to lead this great division and look forward to our future.

Douglas G. Farmer, MD
Professor of Surgery
Interim Chief, Division of Liver and Pancreas Transplantation



Dr. B, as he is affectionately known, retired in June 2020 after nearly 50 years of service to UCLA. He grew over this period from a young, ambitious and talented vascular surgeon to one of the preeminent transplant surgeons in the world. He took on the challenges of liver transplantation in the 1980's at a time when many thought it was not possible. He developed a team and a surgical model through which he performed the first successful liver transplant in the Western USA on February 1, 1984.

Afterward, he built upon this success to develop a comprehensive liver transplant program. Through the years, this program has grown into one of the most successful and largest transplant centers in the world and has expanded to include other organs and combinations of organs. It has led the way in research and clinical innovation. It has trained over 80 fellows in transplantation surgery. His local success led to recognition of his contributions by national and international medical societies – many of which he has held major leadership positions.

He became the Chair of the Department of Surgery at UCLA and has led both our department and division for the past 15 years. His contributions and impact on the field of transplantation are widespread and long-lasting. Although he retired from the University, he remains actively involved in our programs and, as Emeritus Professor of Surgery, is engaged in many aspects of our transplant programs.

Milestones and Accolades

- **Vatche G. Agopian, MD** was named Director of the Liver Cancer Center in July 2020.
- **Douglas G. Farmer, MD** was named Interim Chief, Division of Liver and Pancreas Transplantation, Interim Director, Dumont-UCLA Transplant Center, Interim Director, Pflieger Liver Institute in March 2020. Dr. Farmer is a nationally recognized leader and pioneer in transplantation having co-founded the intestinal and multivisceral transplant program at UCLA in 1991. Over the past 20 years, Dr. Farmer has created the west coast's foremost renowned program in intestinal failure/rehabilitation and transplantation.
- **Fady M. Kaldas, MD** has been named the inaugural chair of the "Kelly Lee Tarantello Endowed Term Chair in Integrative Liver Transplantation" effective May 2020. This chair has been established in recognition of, and to support Dr. Kaldas' research efforts in transplantation and in developing the UCLA heart-liver disease program and advancing combined heart-liver transplantation at UCLA.
- **Jerzy Kupiec-Weglinski MD, PhD**, received the 2020 Recognition Award for Mentorship or Education and Training from the Transplantation Society in September. He is also the Paul I. Terasaki Endowed Chair in Surgery and has received a new R01 grant (5 years; \$1.95M), entitled "The Relaxin Receptor GR/RXFP1 Signaling in Liver Transplant Ischemia-reperfusion Injury and the Inflammation Resolution" from the National Institute of Health – National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIH_NIAID). This is the third R01 Dr. Kupiec currently holds to support his laboratory translational research. In addition, he serves

Upcoming Events

Divisional Grand Rounds

"Contemporary Locoregional Therapy for Hepatocellular Carcinoma" by Sid Padia, MD., on December 8th, 2020.

UCLA Liver Hour Series

We are also excited about the successful launch of the "UCLA Liver Hour" series - a monthly (1st Thursday of every month) Zoom-based didactic and Q&A session with outside community physicians discussing important topics in liver disease and transplantation. Our upcoming dates are 12/3/2020 and 1/7/2021.

as a Program Director and Project Leader for UCLA-based NIH P01 grant, which brings together scientists and clinicians from Departments of Surgery, Pathology/Laboratory Medicine and Immunology/Molecular Genetics. This is only one of 10 federally funded Program Project Grants devoted to organ transplantation in the U.S.

To sign up, please email
vyavila@mednet.ucla.edu or
ssaab@mednet.ucla.edu

Fellowship Training Program Updates

- Congratulations to **Dr. Priyal Patel** who successfully completed the UCLA Transplant and hepatobiliary Fellowship in July 2020. She joined the group at Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee which is led by former UCLA Fellow and Faculty member Johnny Hong, MD.
- Congratulations to **James Butler, MD, PhD., Andrew Perry, MD,** and **Rashmi Seth, MD** on completing their first year of fellowship and starting their second year in August 2020.
- We are excited to welcome our new first year surgical transplant fellows, **Harvey Chen, MD,** and **Jennifer Li, MD.** Dr. Chen completed his residency in General Surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and Dr. Li joins us after completing her residency in General Surgery at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver).



Program Highlights

ADULT LIVER TRANSPLANT

The adult liver transplant program was commenced with the first transplant on February 1st, 1984. Currently, approximately 160 transplants are performed per year. Over 6500 adult liver transplants have been performed to date.

For more information:

Call 310-825-8138

Email adultlivertransplant@mednet.ucla.edu

Web www.uclahealth.org/transplants/liver

PEDIATRIC LIVER TRANSPLANT

The Pediatric Liver Transplant Program performed its first transplant on March 20th, 1984. Nearly 15 transplants are performed in children each year. Over 1060 transplants have been performed to date since its start.

For more information:

Call 310-825-8138

Email pedsLivertransplant@mednet.ucla.edu

Web

www.uclahealth.org/transplants/liver/pediatric-transplant

INTESTINAL TRANSPLANT

The Intestinal Transplant Program will celebrate

PANCREAS/ISLET TRANSPLANT

The Pancreas Transplant Program was started on November 14th, 1993. To date, 239 pancreas and kidney-pancreas transplants have been performed.

For more information:

Call 310-825-8138

Email pancreastransplant@mednet.ucla.edu

Web www.uclahealth.org/transplants/pancreas

LIVING DONOR LIVER TRANSPLANT PROGRAM

The Living Donor Liver Transplant Program started in 1993 with the first Adult to Pediatric transplant. The Adult to Adult Program started in 1999. Both are actively evaluating donors for transplants.

For more information:

Call 310-825-8138

Email livingdonor@mednet.ucla.edu

LIVER CANCER CENTER

The comprehensive, multi-specialty Liver Cancer Center was established in 1999 to treat patients with primary and secondary cancers of the liver and biliary tree. Today, nearly 1500 patients are seen annually in this center with many requiring

its 29th Anniversary on November 12th, 2020.
To date, 155 intestinal type of transplants have been performed.

For more information:

Call 310-825-8138

Email intestinetransplant@mednet.ucla.edu

Web www.uclahealth.org/transplants/intestinal

multimodal therapies including surgery, locoregional treatments, chemotherapy and radiation/radiotherapy.

For more information:

Call 310-825-1412

Email livercancercenter@mednet.ucla.edu

Learn
More

Farewells and Fresh Faces

- **Dr. Takahiro Ito**, our visiting surgeon from Japan, has completed a very productive three years with our team at UCLA and returned with his family to his home university at Mie University Hospital in September 2020.
- **Kevin King RN, CTC** has served as a highly regarded Post Liver Transplant Coordinator for over 20 years. He retired in June 2020.
- **Brianna Lumpkin** joined as the Liver Transplant Division office assistant in 2020.
- **Stephanie Margolin, MPH** joined our program in September 2020 as our Division Administrator.
- **Aline Y. Matsuo, PhD**, who has been assisting Dr. Kaldas, has taken a position at Yale University and will be relocating to Connecticut in November 2020.
- **Dwana Nicholson, RN** took a new position after seven years of service with the Pre Transplant Liver Program.
- **Todd Pruitt** retired after 32 years at UCLA as the Manager and Administrative Analyst for our division as well as the Department of Surgery.
- **June C. Ramsay**, Dr. Kaldas' and Dr. Lipshutz' new administrative assistant, started November 2020.
- **Tina Smith RN, CTC** has retired from the transplant program after over 30 years of service.

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