



Division of Infectious Diseases

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS



September & October 2023

mRNA Vaccine Science is Awarded the 2023 Nobel Prize: Congratulations & Thanks to Katalin Karikó and Drew Weissman

Few can say that their scientific research has saved millions of lives and also reconfigured the entire landscape of a field. Molecular biologist Katalin Karikó and physician-scientist colleague Drew Weissman certainly can. The pair were awarded the 2023 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their [discovery](#) that base-modified mRNA (chiefly use of pseudouridine) can be used to profoundly mitigate activation of inflammatory reactions to mRNA while also enabling high protein production. They persisted through many setbacks to make possible the amazing advance that did so much to protect us all from COVID-19 and which will surely be applicable to many other infectious diseases in the future.

Eric Poeschla Leadership Announcement

After a decade in the role, Eric Poeschla announced his wish to step down as division head as of January 1, 2024. "It's the right time for me. The division is also in a good place and it's a good time to pass the baton. It's also the right time for me to focus more on my laboratory's research and my writing." He congratulated and thanked members for their commitment and service in the hospital, our diverse research arenas, education, and the community over the past decade. He related that he was especially gratified to have led the division successfully through the pandemic years. "The quality of clinical care and teaching in our division has

been consistently outstanding. Numerous career development awards and many other grants were awarded, and many great primary data papers, including breakthroughs in their fields, have been published by senior and young faculty alike. First-rate science has been done and we can be very proud of that." He communicated that Eddie Stenehjem has stepped up to serve as interim division head starting January 1, and will continue in the role until the search is completed and a new division head arrives. "We're really grateful to Eddie for taking this on. We could not do better than him for this. He will be a great resource for us all."

Some Recent Publications



Maheen Abidi

Maheen Abidi published a new primary data paper based on her work, and it was the subject of a commentary by top experts in her field at the University of Washington. Her paper is titled "Cytomegalovirus Immune reconstitution in cord blood transplant recipients on letermovir prophylaxis" and was published in *Transplant Infectious Disease*. Read the [paper](#) and [commentary](#).



Timothy Jenkins

Timothy Jenkins published a recent paper in *New England Journal of Medicine* titled "Ceftobiprole for Treatment of Complicated *Staphylococcus aureus* Bacteremia." [Read more](#).



Samantha (Sam) Kaplan

Sam Kaplan published a recent case report in *IDCases* titled "A case of disseminated coccidioidomycosis and immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome (IRIS) in a patient with HIV/AIDS." [Read more](#).



Brian Grundy

Brian Grundy published a recent paper in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases* titled "Complexity of Infectious Diseases Compared With Other Medical Subspecialties." [Read more](#).



Kristine Erlandson

Kristine Erlandson published a recent paper in *Clinical Infectious Diseases* titled "Weight gain after antiretroviral therapy initiation and subsequent risk of metabolic and cardiovascular disease." [Read more](#).



Andrés Henao-Martinez

Andrés Henao-Martinez was an author on multiple recent papers:

"Hospitalization risk among patients with Mpox infection-a propensity score matched analysis" in *Therapeutic Advances in Infectious Disease*.

[Read more.](#)

"Unintended Consequences: Risk of Opportunistic Infections Associated With Long-term Glucocorticoid Therapies in Adults" a State-of-the-Art Review in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. [Read more.](#)

"Treatment pathways, switches, and inappropriate treatment during invasive pulmonary aspergillosis: real-world experiences from a global research network study" in *Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy*.

[Read more.](#)

"Clinical Characteristics and Outcomes of Chagas Disease in the United States: A Multicenter Retrospective Analysis" in the *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*. [Read more.](#)

Andrés was also an author contributor to the American Trypanosomiasis chapter from ElsevierConnect [24th Manson's Tropical Diseases textbook.](#)

Awards Received

Mary Bessesen, 2023 VASPID Lifetime Achievement Award

Mary Bessesen is the recipient of the 2023 VASPID (VA Society of Practitioners of Infectious Disease) Lifetime Achievement Award, announced at the IDWeek Meeting in Boston in October 2023.

The VASPID Lifetime Achievement Award was established in 2011 by the VASPID Board of Directors and members to honor individuals who have had a profound impact on the practice of Infectious Diseases within VA Medical Centers across the country through their passion, professionalism and contributions to providing excellence in clinical care, conducting seminal research, and in promoting education within the field of Infectious Diseases.

Congratulations, Dr. Bessesen! Well deserved!

Andrés Henao-Martinez, Infectious Diseases Society of America Honoree

Andrés Henao-Martinez has been named a Fellow by the Infectious Diseases Society of America. Fellowship in IDSA is one of the highest honors in the field of infectious diseases. It recognizes distinguished physicians and scientists from the United States and around the world who have achieved professional excellence and provided significant service to the profession.

"The 2019 individuals chosen to receive the FIDSA designation this year are on the front lines of discovery, patient care and public health, and we are proud to honor their work and dedication," said Carlos del Rio, MD, FIDSA, president of IDSA. "These ID physicians and scientists represent the passion and commitment needed to educate leaders around the globe about current and future health threats. We all benefit from their pivotal contributions to our local communities and expertise within the field of medicine. I am proud to work and learn alongside them."

Applicants for IDSA Fellowship must be nominated by their peers and meet specified criteria that include continuing identification with the field of infectious diseases, national or regional recognition and publication of their scholarly work. Nominees are reviewed and elected by the IDSA Board of Directors. Fellows of IDSA work in many different settings, including clinical practice, teaching, research, public health and health care administration.

Congratulations, Dr. Henao-Martinez! A well-earned achievement!

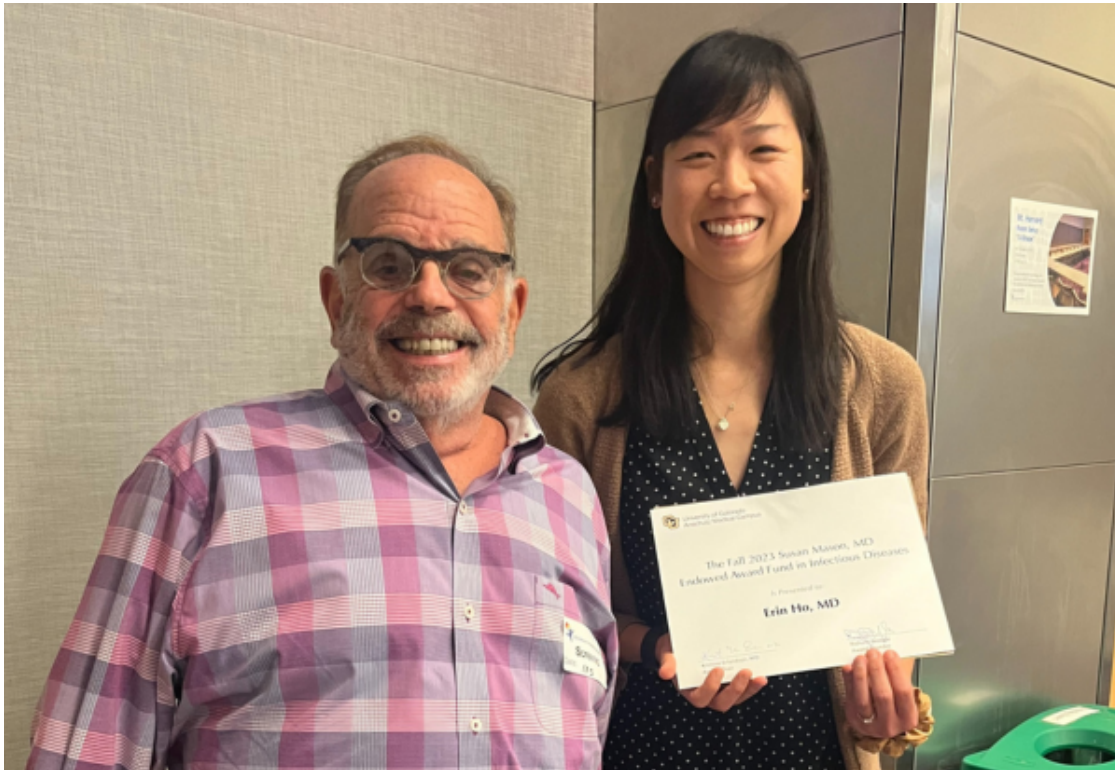
Kaylee Mickens, PhD Student Award

Congratulations to Kaylee Mickens for being awarded one of two graduate student American Association of Immunologists Young Investigator Awards in recognition of her outstanding poster presentation at the 22nd Annual Colorado Immunology and Microbiology Conference held in Steamboat Springs.

Erin Ho, Susan Mason Educational Endowment

Congratulations to Erin Ho, a pediatric ID fellow, who was awarded the Susan Mason Educational Endowment award for her project developing diagnostics for the improvement of bacteria identification in pediatric pneumonia. She is shown with Mr. Richard Wedgle, husband of the late Dr. Susan Mason, receiving her award on October 5, 2023.

The Susan Mason Educational Endowment is awarded in the Spring and Fall of each year to support additional education, research, or clinical experiences for fellows and residents passionate about infectious diseases. For more information about the award, please contact kristine.erlandson@cuanschutz.edu.



Infectious Diseases Clinical Trials Unit

We are excited to announce that the **Infectious Diseases Clinical Trials Unit (IDCTU)** is now established to support clinical trials of treatments and preventions for a broad range of infectious diseases. The IDCTU is overseen by Dr. Thomas Campbell and Program Director & Site Coordinator Nicola Haakonsen. The clinical research team includes Clinical Research Nurse Practitioners, Vanessa Sutton and Joanna Nowakowski, Clinical Research Nurses, Joslyn Axinn and Jackie Rausch, Regulatory Manager, Austin Daw and Data Manager, Mustafa Al-Mafrachi. The IDCTU also includes the Infectious Diseases Clinical Trials Lab managed by Rick Rapaport and his team Beth White, Zachary Snyder and Kathryn Love. Formerly, the unit was known as the Colorado AIDS Clinical Trials Unit. This name change reflects the unit's goal to support innovative research conducted by ID Division faculty to improve the treatment and prevention of infectious diseases that affect people in Colorado.

Please contact Nicola Haakonsen at nicola.haakonsen@cuanschutz.edu to hear more information about how the IDCTU can help support your clinical trials research.



Other Division News

Infection Prevention FY23 Summary

The University of Colorado Hospital Infection Prevention team would like to share a summary of accomplishments achieved during fiscal year 2023 that were recently included in the UCH Department of Quality and Safety Annual Report. Several innovative tools were launched within the electronic medical record and other processes to hardwire best practice contributed a 32% and 34% decrease in reportable CAUTI and CLABSI cases respectively. Significant decreases in usage of indwelling devices and surgical site infections were also seen. Congratulations to Dr. Barron, Dr. Pisney, Dr. Castillo and their team for these contributions to patient care. Check out the slides [here](#).

Kristine Erlandson & Sarah Jolley

Kristine Erlandson and Sarah Jolley (Pulmonary Sciences & Critical Care) were interviewed in a CPR News article about their research on long COVID and the RECOVER Study titled "Do you have long COVID? This Colorado research is trying to help identify just what it does and what to do about it." The article addresses research goals and the substantial funding received to make it possible. Notably, Sarah Jolley was recently awarded a [\\$1 million Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\) grant](#) to continue this important work. [Read more](#).

Thomas Campbell

Thomas Campbell was recently interviewed for a news article by the School of Medicine titled "The New COVID-19 Booster is Rolling Out, Here's What You Should Know." In the article, Tom answers some of the most common questions about the new vaccine and how it has evolved from previous versions. [Read more.](#)

Call for Submissions

We want to hear your news! Please email submissions for our next newsletter to eleanor.shields@cuanschutz.edu.

Visit the [ID Division Website](#)

