Alabama's HIV Commission for Children and Adults well represented by UAB Faculty and Staff

Governor Don Siegelman has established the Alabama HIV Commission for Children and Adults to coordinate a comprehensive, long-term effort to reduce the risks of HIV and to prevent new infections and lower the number of deaths resulting from HIV/AIDS. The following UAB Faculty members are among the 24 charter members appointed to the newly formed commission. UAB is well represented with Dr. Eric Hunter, Director, UAB Center for AIDS Research; Dr. Michael Saag, Director, UAB AIDS Outpatient Clinic; Dr. Marilyn Crain, Director, UAB Family Clinic, and Dr. Katherine Stewart, Director of Psychological Services, UAB AIDS Outpatient Clinic. Dr. Hunter is chair of the Research Committee of the Commission.

CFAR Core Facilities

has 9 different Core Facilities which offer a wide range of services to the medical research community here at UAB. Each edition we will be spotlighting a Core to let you know the services available to you. These Core Facilities are the Biostatistics Core, Central Virus Core, Clinical Core, DNA Sequencing Core, Flow Cytometry Core, International Core, Molecular Biology Core, Prevention/Behavioral Sciences Core, and SCID-hu Mouse Core.

The Biostatistics Core Facility serves as a centralized resource for statistical expertise and data management. The staff members have a broad range of expertise and experience in data management and statistical application for clinical trials, preclinical and behavioral research studies. The CFAR Core Facility is part of the larger Biostatistics Unit of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, which provides statistical services and collaborative research support for the members of the Cancer Center.

Statistical and Data Management Services Available:

- Statistical analysis and mathematical modeling
- Development and management of AIDS-related research databases
- Computer programming and data communications

Dr. Seng-jaw Soong directs the Biostatistics Unit and Dr. Heidi Weiss is the co-director. For more information about the Biostatistics Core facility visit: http://www.uabcfar.uab.edu/cores/biostatistics.

The CFAR Flow Cytometry Core Facility was established to ensure UAB investigators access to the equipment and expertise needed to perform cell analysis and purification with state-of-the-art equipment and techniques, as well as to offer these services in a facility capable of handling potentially infectious materials in a safe manner. Thus, our equipment is located in the Biosafety level 2 containment area of the Lyons Harrison Building dedicated to the UAB AIDS Center.

The most commonly used services provided by the Flow Cytometry Core Facility include the following:

- Single or multiple color immunofluorescence analysis to detect cell surface antigens on cells using fluorochrome-conjugated antibodies. In some instances, multivariate analyses may be performed on cells that have been concurrently stained with different conjugated antibodies, and which emit different fluorescence. Populations of cells, which have been labeled with fluorochrome-tagged antibodies, can also be isolated for subsequent studies by investigators.

- Because some studies are based on the use of cells from HIV-infected individuals, our location in the BSL2 facility allows this to be performed in a safe environment.

- Direct cloning of cells can also be done by our instrument. Cells can be identified according to surface markers and placed into separate wells of culture plates. Any number of cells/well from 1 to 100,00 may be selected in this manner.

- Quantitation of cell surface receptors is made possible by using a standard curve derived from analysis of standards with known receptor number. Cells from a sample are measured and the cell surface receptor number is calculated from the standard curve.
Tranfection assays, in which cells are transfected with various genetically engineered DNA viruses or plasmids with the gene for a fluorescent marker. Populations of cells can be measured for statistical analysis or positive cells can be purified for further experimental analysis or culturing.

**Dinner Lecture Series**

www.uabcfar.uab.edu/lectures/dinner

**Wednesday, January 24, 5:30 p.m.**

Bevill Biomedical Research Building, Room 170

**Dan Litman, M.D., Ph.D.**
Professor of Pathology
Director of the Molecular Pathogenesis program in the Skirball Institute of Biomolecular Medicine, New York University School of Medicine.

http://mcbi-34.med.nyu.edu/groups/LitmanLab/index.html

For more information on the Dinner, Faculty, and Special Lecture series, please contact Rob McDonald at 934-2437 or by e-mail at rwm@uab.edu.

**Dr. David D. Chaplin named Microbiology Chair**

Dr. David Chaplin has been named as the new Microbiology Chairman. Dr. Chaplin comes to us from Washington University and will be at UAB full time by July 2001. Dr. Chaplin's leadership will be a critical component of the School of Medicine's drive to reach the top 10 of NIH research funding by 2010. Dr. Michalek will remain as interim chair until Dr. Chaplin can be here on a full time basis. Dr. Chaplin welcomes comments and may be reached through e-mail at David.Chaplin@microbio.uab.edu.

**Merck HIV DNA Vaccine Trial at UAB**

A Phase I safety and immunogenicity trial of the codon-optimized Merck HIV Gag DNA vaccine recently opened for enrollment of 12 HIV-negative, low-risk, healthy volunteers. The trial involves four DNA injections over six months, with 18-month study duration. The use of codon optimization should lead to higher Gag protein expression, and better cytotoxic T lymphocyte (CTL) responses. "DNA vaccination, especially when combined with live vector boosting, appears to be the technology of the future for vaccines," said Dr. Mark Mulligan, Principal Investigator of the study at UAB.

For more information on the vaccine trials or to become a volunteer, call Sherree Wright at 205-975-2841 or e-mail AVRC@uab.edu. To learn more about The Alabama Vaccine Research Clinic at UAB, please visit http://www.uab.edu/avrc.

**Biomedical Research Building II Now Under Construction**

The new BRB II building is now under construction. The new building will be 95,000 square feet with five levels. The first level will accommodate Animal Studies, the second and third levels will house Anaesthesiology, and the fourth and fifth levels will provide research space for Dr. David Curiel, Director of the CFAR Gene Therapy Program. It is estimated that the building will take 16 months to complete with a target date of March 2002 for occupation.

**Alabama AIDS Training and Education Center**

Did you know...that there is a center on campus that can assist you or members of your group with training on HIV/AIDS and its impact on you as a healthcare professional? Training & technical assistance is available to physicians, PAs, NPs, nurses, medical technicians, mental health professionals, et al.

The Alabama AIDS Training and Education Center (AATEC) is available to help with in-services, workshops, clinical rotations, etc. If you want to learn more, please contact Rick Meriwether in the Division of Infectious Diseases at 205-975-9380 via e-mail rick.meriwether@ccc.uab.edu.

**What's New?**

If you have a topic of interest for the Quest newsletter, please contact the Editor, Vicki Byrd at 205-975-7045 or by e-mail at vhbyrd@uab.edu.

**UAB AIDS CENTER**

**256 BBRR**

**BIRMINGHAM, AL 35294-2170**