CUMC CELEBRATES acknowledges faculty, staff and students at Columbia University Medical Center who receive grants and major awards, who are elected to honorary societies, or who take leadership positions in professional organizations. Celebrates also gratefully acknowledges the gifts made by donors and friends of the Medical Center. This list is representative of the many grants, awards, honors and gifts that are received on a monthly basis.

FEDERAL RESEARCH GRANTS

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

Rando Allikmets, PhD, Department of Ophthalmology, has received $7.3 million over five years from the National Eye Institute for “Therapeutic Approaches for ABCA4-associated Disorders.”

Anne Gershon, MD, Department of Pediatrics, and Michael D. Gershon, MD, Department of Pathology and Cell Biology, have received $1.4 million over four years from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases for “VZV in the Enteric Nervous System: Pathogenesis and Consequences.”

Andrew Marks, MD, Department of Physiology & Cellular Biophysics, has received $1.6 million over four years from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute for “Novel Therapeutic Approaches to Atrial Fibrillation Targeting Intracellular Calcium Leak.”

Lori Zeltser, PhD, Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center, has received $1.7 million over five years from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases for “Interactions Between Neuronal Networks that Regulate Food Intake and Body Weight.”

MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Mary Beth Terry, PhD, Department of Epidemiology, has received $9.5 million over five years from the National Cancer Institute for “Genes, Environment and Breast Cancer Risk: The 15-Year Follow-up of the Prof-SC.”

Wafaa El-Sadr, MD, MPH, MPA, Department of Epidemiology, International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs, and Sharon B. Mannheimer, MD, Department of Medicine-Harlem Hospital, have received $2.6 million over five years from the National Institute on Drug Abuse for “Seek, Test and Retain. Linkages for Black HIV+, Substance Using MSM.”

NY STATE GRANT: Christopher Henderson, PhD, Department of Pathology and Cell Biology, has received $5.9 million over four years from the New York State Department of Health for “High-Throughput Screening and Chemistry Shared Facility.”

CORRECTION: Rachel Moresky, MD, MPH, Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, has been awarded two grants totaling $6.4 million by the GE Foundation for “The Systems Improvement at District Hospitals and Regional Training of Emergency Care” (sidHARTe) in Ghana and Rwanda. In partnership with co-investigators Drs. Katherine Biagas and Patrick Wilson, Dr. Moresky also has been awarded $99,290 from the General Electric Foundation to conduct a study on Nasal Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) in children in rural Ghana.
PHILANTHROPIC GIFTS
(Gifts Received Since August 1, 2011)

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

A bequest of more than $4.2 million will be directed toward the Department of Ophthalmology's endowment fund.

A pledge of $1 million will support clinical and epidemiological research in the Department of Medicine.

A commitment of $1 million will support research in the Division of Family Planning in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society made grants totaling $625,000 that will support research at the Institute for Cancer Genetics.

The American College of Rheumatology Research and Education Foundation made a grant of $331,000 to the Department of Medicine to advance rheumatoid arthritis research.

A family foundation made a commitment of $300,000 to the Division of Pediatric Endocrinology to support fellowship training.

The Kaplen Foundation made a gift of $250,000 to support age-related macular degeneration.

The Essel Foundation made a gift of $225,000 to the Department of Psychiatry to support laboratory equipment.

The Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation awarded a grant of $209,537 to the Department of Pediatrics to support blood and marrow transplantation research.

The Eye Surgery Fund Inc. made a gift of $200,000 to the Department of Ophthalmology to support research.

OMJ Scientific Affairs, LLC, made a gift of $179,429 that will support continuing medical education.

The Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation made a grant of $150,000 to support research in the Department of Medicine.

St. Baldrick’s Foundation made a grant of $110,000 to support research at the Institute for Cancer Genetics.

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund made a grant of $100,000 to advance research in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

A donor made a gift of $100,000 to advance research in chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy research within the Department of Neurology.

The Simons Foundation made a grant of $100,000 to support autism research in the Department of Physiology and Cellular Biophysics.
AWARDS AND HONORS

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

Anthony Ferrante Jr., MD, PhD, Department of Medicine, was awarded best paper on obesity-related research by an investigator affiliated with the New York Obesity Research Center; the paper is titled “Weight Loss and Lipolysis Promote a Dynamic Immune Response in Murine Adipose Tissue.”

J. P. Mohr, MD, PhD, Department of Neurology, has been awarded the 2011 Raymond D. Adams Lectureship from the American Neurological Association.

Lori Mosca, MD, MPH, PhD, Department of Medicine-Cardiology, has received the American Heart Association’s Award of Meritorious Achievement. She also received the Wenger Award for Excellence in Medical Leadership from WomenHeart.

Sharat Parameswaran, MD, postdoctoral residency fellow, Department of Psychiatry, has been selected as a 2012 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar.

COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE

Dennis Mitchell, DDS, MPH, has been selected to serve on the Medicaid Redesign Team’s Health Disparities work group. The MRT was created by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to develop recommendations to reduce costs and increase quality and efficiency in New York’s Medicaid Program.

The College of Dental Medicine chapter of the Student National Dental Association was named “large chapter of the year,” for the second year in a row, at the SNDA conference in July 2011.

SCHOOL OF NURSING

Kathleen Hickey, EdD, ANP-BC, FNP, has been elected to the American Academy of Nursing.
GENE STUDY IDENTIFIES NON-HEREDITARY LINKS TO SCHIZOPHRENIA – August 7, 2011
Researchers have found that more than half the cases of non-hereditary—or sporadic—schizophrenia are caused by “new” protein-altering gene mutations. “Identification of these damaging de novo mutations has fundamentally transformed our understanding of the genetic basis of schizophrenia,” first author Bin Xu, an assistant professor of clinical neurobiology at Columbia University Medical Center, said in a medical center news release.

PEN LITERARY AWARDS FOR 2011 – August 11, 2011
The accolades continue for Siddhartha Mukherjee, a physician and an assistant professor of medicine at Columbia, who won a Pulitzer earlier this year and has now won the PEN/E.O. Wilson literary science writing award, also for his The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer (Scribner).

CREATING NERVE CELLS FROM SKIN CELLS OFFERS ALZHEIMER’S INSIGHTS – August 4, 2011
A study just published in the journal Cell may offer a better way to study what goes wrong in Alzheimer’s, its authors say, and also potentially provide a source of replacement tissues down the road, as well as a way to test drugs in the lab. The authors of this new paper, headed by Columbia University researcher Asa Abeliovich, say their technique may have an edge on iPS cells because they made the nerve cells straight from skin cells with high efficiency, and relatively quickly too. (Also covered by Live Science, ABC News Radio, TMC, Xinhua, Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News, and Medical News Today.)

AGE-RELATED MUSCLE LOSS MAY BE INEVITABLE, BUT AN EXPERIMENTAL DRUG MIGHT HELP – August 2, 2011
Loss of muscle mass is a fact of life starting in middle age. Researchers say they’ve not only discovered the cause of that loss but may have found a drug that could help it as well. Lead author Dr. Andrew Marks, director of the Wu Center for Molecular Cardiology at Columbia University Medical Center, said in a news release that sarcopenia and muscular dystrophy may have ryanodine receptor leak-age in common. (Los Angeles Times story picked up by Baltimore Sun, Chicago Tribune, Hartford Courant, Orlando Sentinel, Belleville News Democrat, Centre Daily, Herald, Bradenton, Bellingham Herald, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Jerusalem Post, Medical News Today, MediLexicon, All Headline News, Fox News, VietnamNet, MedIndia and Seattle Times.)

TELLING THE STORY BEHIND CANCER – August 8, 2011
Health correspondent Betty Ann Bowser talks to Siddhartha Mukherjee, author of The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer, about the history of the search for ways to treat cancer and how it has been perceived. Dr. Mukherjee is an oncologist and cancer researcher at the Columbia University Medical Center in New York City.
CUMC IN THE NEWS

WALL STREET JOURNAL

ANTIDEPRESSANTS GIVEN MORE WIDELY – August 4, 2011
More people without any documented psychiatric condition are taking antidepressants, according to a study and some of them are likely receiving little benefit. The findings spark concern about whether these medicines are effective for the patients receiving them, since previous research has shown that antidepressants are most effective for people with severe symptoms, said Mark Olfson, a professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University and an author of the study being published in the journal Health Affairs.

MARATHON EFFORT BEHIND A TRIATHLON – August 6, 2011
Thousands of Lycra-clad athletes will stream into Riverside Park as early as 4 a.m. Sunday to compete in the 11th annual Nautica New York City Triathlon. “Once they get going, they go on auto-pilot,” said Dr. Stephen Sands, an assistant professor of medical psychology at Columbia University. “It’s usually the first few minutes leading up to the event and the first few minutes of it that are the worst.”

BUSINESS OR PLEASURE, HEALTH IS HOT FOR HOTELS – August 7, 2011
With Americans becoming more health-conscious and employers looking for ways to reduce insurance costs and increase productivity, hotels are adding nutrition, fitness and even cleaner air to the amenities with which they court business traveler. Those who take more than 20 trips per month are likelier to suffer from obesity and other health problems, according to a study of 13,000 workers by Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health.

The New York Times

10 YEARS AND A DIAGNOSIS LATER, 9/11 DEMONS HAUNT THOUSANDS – August 10, 2011
The DSM-IV says PTSD can develop through a range of exposures to death or injury: direct personal involvement, witnessing it or, if it concerns someone close, just learning about it. Almost no other psychiatric diagnosis has generated as much controversy, according to Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, a retired psychiatry professor from Columbia University and an expert in mental disorder classifications. “It’s a way of saying something terrible has happened to me and I’ve been damaged in some way, but that doesn’t necessarily mean it’s an illness,” Dr. Spitzer, who advocates tightening the criteria, said in an interview.

TIME

ONE SHOT WONDER? PROGRESS ON A UNIVERSAL FLU VACCINE – July 29, 2011
A universal flu vaccine may be on its way, thanks to a team of scientists in Britain and Switzerland and one anonymous patient who was immune to both of the main types of influenza A virus, one of the more common classes of flu bugs that circulate each year. As Healthland reported earlier this year, an unrelated team of researchers from Columbia University have discovered a group of five antibodies that are protective against a number of flu strains as well.