



DR. LARRY HOLLIER

CHANCELLOR'S Notes



February 15, 2013

LSUHSC's Gee appointed to state committee

Governor Bobby Jindal has announced the appointment of Dr. Rebekah Gee, Assistant Professor of Public Health and Obstetrics and Gynecology at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, to the Medicaid Pharmaceutical & Therapeutics Committee.



Dr. Rebekah Gee

The Louisiana Medicaid Pharmaceutical and Therapeutics Committee is composed of 21 members who serve to develop and maintain a legal pharmacopoeia, a list of preferred drugs, for Louisiana. The pharmacopoeia is publically available and is formulated after evidence-based analysis of each drug.

Dr. Gee served as the medical director for the maternity program of Title V, the state's maternal health federal block grant program. In 2010, Dr. Gee was named Director of the Birth Outcomes Initiative, an Assistant Secretary level position in Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals. Dr. Gee will be appointed to serve as the designee of the director of the Medicaid Program in the Department of Health and Hospitals, as required by state law. ■

LSUHSC research finds protein that prevents light-induced retinal degeneration

Research led by Minghao Jin, PhD, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Neuroscience at the LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans Neuroscience Center of Excellence, has found a protein that protects retinal photoreceptor cells from degeneration caused by light damage. This protein may provide a new therapeutic target for both an inherited retinal degenerative disease and age-related macular degeneration. The paper is published in the February 13, 2013 issue of the Journal of Neuroscience.



Dr. Minghao Jin

The visual cycle is essential for regenerating visual pigments that sense light for vision. However, abnormal visual cycles promote formation of toxic byproducts that contribute to the development of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the leading cause of vision loss in elderly people that affects an estimated 2 million Americans. The mechanisms that regulate the visual cycle have been unclear. Identification and characterization of regulators of the visual cycle enzymes are critical for understanding these mechanisms.

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LSUHSC PAL event highlights resources



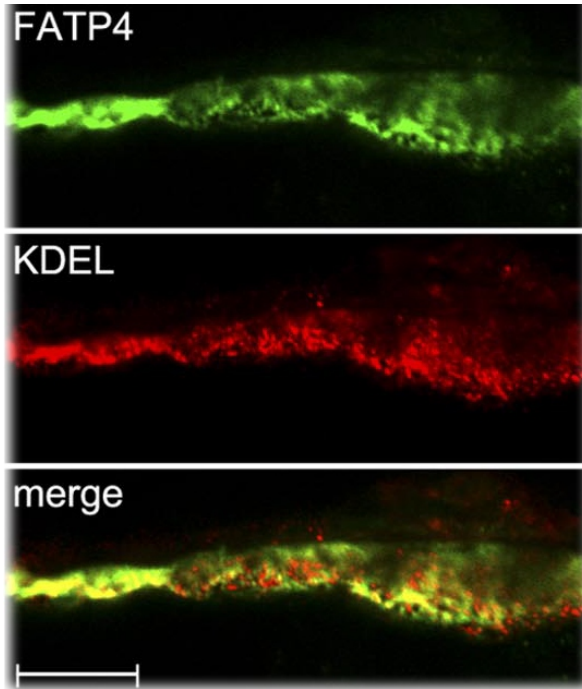
More than 120 people participated in the annual Peer Advocate Liaison Program (PAL) Student Resource Fair yesterday in the Medical Education Building.

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Retina, from page 1

RPE65 is a key enzyme involved in the visual cycle. RPE65 mutations have been linked to early onset vision loss, retinal degeneration, and blinding eye diseases. Despite such importance, the mechanisms that regulate the function of RPE65 are unknown. To identify and characterize previously unknown inhibitors of RPE65, the scientists tested five candidate proteins. Using gene screening, the LSUHSC research team discovered that one of them – fatty acid transport protein 4 (FATP4) – is a negative regulator; it inhibits RPE65. These findings suggest that FATP4 may be a therapeutic target for an inherited retinal degenerative disease caused by RPE65 mutations and AMD.

Along with Neuroscience Center Director Dr. Nicolas Bazan, the LSUHSC research team also included Drs. Songhua Li, Yongdong Zhou, William C. Gordon, and James M. Hill.



PAL, from page 1

The PAL Program was created to help students access resources when they are experiencing personal difficulties. Each year the program sponsors the fair so that students can gather information and talk to representatives of each program or department about their services.



This year's participants included: LSUHSC Wellness Center, CAP (Campus Assistance Program), Bonnie Adelsberg (free off campus counseling), Michael Levitsky (Americans with Disabilities Act contact person), LSUHSC Department of Rehabilitation Counseling (including the Play Therapy Clinic), LSUHSC Department of Communication Disorders, LSUHSC Department of Occupational Therapy, Dr. Dereck Rovaris with Multicultural Affairs, smoking cessation with the School of Public Health, LSUHSC Student Health, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and LSUHSC Campus Police.

Grad students Daviel Cardenas & Elaine Maggi welcome students. To learn more about the PAL program visit: <http://www.lsuhs.edu/no/organizations/campushealth/pal.htm>

LSUHSC's Osofsky appointed to state board

The appointment of Dr. Joy Osofsky, Professor of Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Public Health at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, to the Children's Cabinet Advisory



Dr. Joy Osofsky

Board was announced this week.

The purpose of the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board is to provide information and recommendations from the perspective of advocacy groups, service providers, and parents. The board consists of 42-45 statutorily authorized representatives from state agencies, advocacy groups and the community. Members of the board are appointed by the Governor.

One of the primary objectives of the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board is to offer recommendations to the Children's Cabinet on funding and budget priorities. After articulating general budget priorities, they hear presentations from state agencies before deciding their recommended programs.