April 27, 2015

We are proud to announce the selection of four outstanding junior faculty members who exemplify the department’s core values of excellence in research, clinical work, education, and community service. These four faculty members were selected from an extremely qualified pool, for recognition as 2015’s Rising Stars:

**Lila Cervantes, MD**

Nominated by Mark Earnest, Interim Head, Division of General Internal Medicine, Dr. Cervantes has dedicated her career to increasing diversity in the physician workforce through community outreach. In 2009, she launched the Healthcare Interest Program (HIP), which brings together CU Anschutz and Denver-based community organizations to increase the number of underrepresented minority students maintaining an interest in a healthcare career. She received the Rosa Parks Award and the President’s Diversity Award for her efforts with HIP, and the successful results of the HIP were published in the *Journal of Hospital Medicine* in 2014. Dr. Cervantes also helped re-establish the University of Colorado Organization for Racial and Ethnic Support (UCOLORES), now a monthly and semi-structured mentoring program for junior faculty from underrepresented groups.

Dr. Cervantes founded the quarterly Health Equity Lecture Series at Denver Health, bringing academic and community leaders together to increase understanding of the social determinants of health in Denver. In addition to her community outreach, Dr. Cervantes conducts health disparities research focused on improving palliative care outcomes for Latinos with end-stage renal disease and was recently awarded the prestigious four-year Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She was also selected to join the Clinical Faculty Scholars Program for 2015. She is a hospitalist at Denver Health and an assistant professor of medicine (general internal medicine) at CU Anschutz.

**M. Kristen Demoruelle, MD**

Nominated by V. Michael Holers, Head, Division of Rheumatology, Dr. Demoruelle launched her research career during her CU internal medicine residency (resulting in a first-author publication in Arthritis and Rheumatism). During her rheumatology fellowship, she published several first-author publications and reviews, and gave oral presentations at all of the annual American College of Rheumatology (ACR) scientific meetings, ultimately receiving one of ten highly competitive Distinguished Fellow Awards from the ACR.

She has generated significant grant support beginning during her fellowship and continuing with several highly competitive awards. She received an NIH K12 BIRCWH award last year and most recently, she has begun work on a five-year NIH K23 Award. The research undertaken by Dr. Demoruelle is innovative and highly competitive in the field, and focuses on identifying the causal pathogenic mechanisms underlying the development of rheumatoid arthritis (with special attention to mechanisms that drive the increased...
incidence in women). Her work has already generated a change in the research paradigm in her field, and Dr. Holers expects that her work will continue to have a major impact on the field.

Dr. Demoruelle has been a valuable mentor for several medical students and clinical fellows, as well as for PhD graduate students working on translational research projects. She is an assistant professor of medicine (rheumatology) at CU Anschutz.

Christopher Lieu, MD

Nominated by Wells Messersmith, Head, Division of Medical Oncology, Dr. Lieu serves as the Director of Colorectal Medical Oncology within the GI Cancer Program. During his four years as a faculty member, he has helped to grow the colorectal program by 15% annually; he now has the highest volume of patients within the GI program, with high patient satisfaction ratings.

Dr. Lieu serves as Deputy Director of the Clinical Trials Office at the CU Cancer Center, and initiated the first NCI trial in the experimental clinical trials network (ET-CTN). As the medical oncology lead for colorectal cancer in the multidisciplinary (which also involves surgery, radiation oncology, pathology, radiology, nutrition and social work) he helped to develop a program enabling patients to meet and discuss their treatment plan with all of these providers at once.

Dr. Lieu also has a research interest in resistance mechanisms to targeted therapy in GI cancers, and he was awarded the 2013 Conquer Cancer Foundation Career Development Award to study targeted therapies in colorectal cancer. Dr. Lieu is an assistant professor of medicine (medical oncology) at CU Anschutz.

Read Pierce, MD

Nominated by Mark Earnest, Interim Head, Division of General Internal Medicine, Dr. Pierce has broad interests in coaching and education, health systems redesign, healthcare financing, and policy. At CU, he has helped to create and lead two programs for aspiring physician leaders: the Health Innovations Scholars program for first-year medical students interested in leading systems redesign, and the Hospitalist Training Program (Leaders Track) within the internal medicine residency program. Both programs offer a core curriculum focused on developing leaders of clinical systems, experiential projects designed to practice both systems redesign and leadership skills, and intensive faculty mentorship. To date, the programs have enrolled nearly 50 participants, with graduates going on to acquire leadership positions in academic and non-academic hospitals in the first year of their careers.

Since 2012, Dr. Pierce has been a founding member of CU’s Institute for Healthcare Quality, Safety and Efficiency, a campus-wide initiative to increase organizational capacity to pursue clinical transformation. He has directed three training programs supported by the Institute, which have worked with more than three dozen teams from CU Anschutz, resulting in implementation of robust, sustainable improvements.

Dr. Pierce also serves as Director of Quality Improvement and Clinical Innovations for CU’s Hospital Medicine Group. He is an assistant professor of medicine (general internal medicine) at CU Anschutz.

The photographs and stories of these faculty members will be featured on the 8th floor of Academic Office One, as a reminder of their contributions to the department’s clinical, research, education and community missions. Please join us in congratulating Drs. Cervantes, Demoruelle, Lieu and Pierce.