BCM researchers play major role in Human Microbiome Project

The first publications coming out of the Human Microbiome Project appeared this June, in *Nature* and journals in the *Public Library of Science* family. Baylor College of Medicine, the Baylor Human Genome Sequencing Center, the Alkek Center for Metagenomics and Microbiome Research and many physicians, scientists and laboratory staff members took a leadership role.

Half of the subjects recruited for the project were sampled at BCM by clinicians who devoted considerable time and effort to the project. Labeling and processing the samples was a monumental task as was the bacterial sequencing. The fact that this all took place at BCM is a tribute both to the facilities available here as well as to the collaborative spirit of the College and its people. The findings and the activities involved are outlined in a special feature on the BCM website. It is only the beginning of microbiome science, but BCM is well positioned to take it to the next level.

Resident alum carries Olympic torch

The London 2012 Olympic Games torch was carried through Bicester, England, by Dr. William Zoghbi, BCM resident alum, who is a cardiologist at the Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center and standing president of the American College of Cardiology. His wife, Dr. Huda Zoghbi, is also a resident alumna and a professor of pediatrics, molecular and human genetics, neurology and neuroscience at BCM.

[Click here](#) to read more about Zoghbi’s trip.
Supreme Court upholds Affordable Care Act

The Supreme Court’s ruling to uphold virtually all of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is an important step forward in increasing the number of insured in our country and improving access to care. Before the ruling, Baylor College of Medicine’s focus was on creating the best model to provide the highest quality health care for the lowest costs. This ruling simply reaffirms the importance of our decision to re-engineer the manner in which care is provided to focus on an efficient, value-driven system that is patient-centric.

Our mission continues to provide the best care available, at the best value, to all of the patients we serve—through the Harris County Hospital District, the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Texas Children’s Hospital, our own clinics and our other private hospital affiliates.

Dr. Darrell Kirch, President and CEO of the Association of American Medical Colleges, issued a statement following the ruling applauding the decision and indicating that AAMC would closely examine the court’s ruling as it relates to Medicaid expansion. His statement says in part, “America’s medical schools and teaching hospitals are committed to improving the nation’s health care and have been leading the transformation of health care delivery through innovations in medical education, clinical care and research. The court’s decision to uphold the ACA allows the important work of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute and the programs supported by the Prevention and Public Health Fund to continue.”

2013 Alumni Awards

The Alumni Association is taking nominations for 2013 alumni awards. Physicians, scientists and allied health professionals with national or international standing in their fields are eligible. Please e-mail your recommendations (including name, year and accomplishment) to alumni@bcm.edu by Sept. 1.

“I Am BCM” campaign wraps up

The “I Am BCM” employee campaign raised $253,218, a 16 percent increase from the “Believe in BCM” campaign in FY10. Thank you to the 1,116 faculty, staff and alumni who participated in the campaign for the BCM Fund, which benefits all mission areas of the college.

STUDENT CORNER:
Alicia Lay

Baylor College of Medicine student spends summer helping children in Iraq

If Baylor College of Medicine fourth-year medical student Alicia Lay had to write a “how I spent my summer vacation” paper, she would have a lot to say.

Lay, who is also pursuing a master’s in public health through BCM’s dual degree program with The University of Texas School of Public Health, is spending 10 weeks of her summer in Iraq through the Preemptive Love Coalition, a charity dedicated to eradicating a backlog of more than 30,000 Iraqi children waiting for lifesaving heart surgery.

She will work with children with congenital heart disease in Northern Iraq. In her first week, she was a part of an incidence study in the city of Dohuk. Although there have been reports of high rates of congenital heart defects in Iraq, there are few published in peer-reviewed journals. Lay worked alongside a pediatric cardiologist to screen every newborn born in Azadi Teaching Hospital.

Lay is also an active member of the Global Health Track at BCM and plans to pursue a residency in general surgery.

To follow Lay’s journey throughout her internship in Iraq, visit her blog.

BCM to pilot resident humanism society

BCM has been selected to become a pilot resident chapter of the Gold Humanism Honor Society. The Society honors medical students, residents, physician-teachers and others for demonstrated excellence in clinical care, leadership, compassion and dedication to service. As one of 10 resident pilot chapters in the country, BCM Gold society residents will develop initiatives focusing on the role of compassion in medicine for residents across BCM’s 88 GME programs. They will also host gatherings for residents and faculty and collaborate with the medical student chapter to further emphasize the critical role of compassion in medicine.

White coats/lab coats

Alumni keep alive an important tradition at BCM. Each summer, alumni contributions purchase white coats and lab coats for all first-year medical students, second-year physician assistant students and first-year graduate students to support them on their journey to professionalism. To give to the White Coat Fund, click here.