

Cancer, Pulmonary Specialists Join UC San Diego Department of Pediatrics

November 20, 2009

Steve Benowitz

Two new physician-researchers have joined the UC San Diego School of Medicine's Department of Pediatrics. Donald L. Durden, MD, PhD, has been named professor and Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Pediatrics and Research Director, Division of Hematology/Oncology at the Moores UCSD Cancer Center. James S. Hagood, MD, will serve as the new Chief of the Division of Pulmonary Medicine in the Department of Pediatrics.

Durden will help build the basic and translational pediatric oncology research program and also head efforts to apply targeted therapeutics to other pediatric diseases at UC San Diego Medical Center and Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego. His research focuses on angiogenesis and on major cellular and genetic control points that affect cancer development.

"We expect Dr. Durden to play a major role in our alliance with St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, enhancing translational research and drug trials for difficult-to-treat cancers and taking advantage of the many on-going genomics efforts here at UC San Diego," said Gabriel Haddad, MD, professor and chair of the UC San Diego Department of Pediatrics.

According to Haddad, Hagood and his team will work to meet the needs of patients at all levels, providing both patient care and education for future physicians and scientists and carrying out innovative science that will lead to new treatments.

"In Dr. Hagood, we are lucky to have a triple threat and a first rate physician-scientist," Haddad said, noting that Hagood is interested in both the clinical management of childhood chronic lung diseases and in "basic cellular and molecular investigations of chronic lung remodeling." The National Institutes of Health and the American Lung Association have both funded Hagood's research in lung fibrosis. "His interest in the molecular basis of pulmonary fibrosis dovetails very well with interests of others within our division, the department and institution."

Professional background

Durden was formerly the Aflac Endowed Chair and professor of Pediatrics at the Emory University School of Medicine and scientific director of Basic and Translational Research at Emory's Aflac Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders.

He earned both a PhD in microbiology and immunology and his medical degree from the University of Miami School of Medicine. He served pediatrics residencies at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Seattle and at St. Christopher Hospital for Children in Philadelphia, and was a postdoctoral fellow at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle and Children's Hospital Medical Center.

Hagood was formerly director of the Pediatric Pulmonary Center at Children's Hospital of Alabama. He was also associate professor in the Departments of Pediatrics, Cell Biology, and Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Medicine.

He earned his bachelor's degree in English as well as his medical degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After an internship and residency at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, he completed his pediatric pulmonary fellowship at UAB.

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