

# Going Viral: LSU ID NOLA Newsletter

*LSU Infectious Diseases  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
Summer/Fall 2020*



Top Photo From Left: Ashaur Azhar '20, Victoria Burke Program Director, Kamir Boodoo '20, Julio Figueroa, Chief

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**LSU ID Celebrates Graduation 2020** Faculty and Graduating Fellows Ashaur Azhar and Kamir Boodoo gathered at DTB on Oak Street for a dinner at which their diplomas were handed out along with LSU ID fleece jackets and other tokens of appreciation. Faculty in attendance in addition to Burke and Figueroa included Yussef Ben-nani, Lynn Besch, Meredith Clement, Mike Hagensee, Joanne Maffei, and John Nanfro. The Fellows are both entering academic practices. Ashaur Azhar is joining the LSU ID Faculty in New Orleans, and Kamir Boodoo is joining the University of Mississippi ID Faculty in Jackson, MS. We wish them well in their future. *(See Graduation, page 5)*



## All Things COVID— here are the activities of our section related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Educational Activities:

- Department of Medicine Grand Rounds February 7, 2020 - 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) – Clinician Update - Julio Figueroa, Joseph Kanter, Joanne Maffei
- Jefferson Parish Medical Society and Orleans Parish Medical Society Physician Conference Calls – Meredith Clement, Lee Engel, Julio Figueroa
- Department of Medicine Grand Rounds August 21, 2020 - The Syndemic of HIV and COVID-19 - Paula Seal
- Student Contact Tracing Program Rotation – students trained to do a phone survey with COVID-19 specific educational content – John Nanfro

### Media Appearances:

- Fred Lopez – Daily WWL Radio COVID-19 Segment with Tommy Tucker, Fox News, The Advocate, and multiple radio and TV interviews.
- Julio Figueroa – Fox News, WWL, PBS NewsHour, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Reuters, ABC
- Meredith Clement – Fox News, CNN, WDSU/Channel 6, Channel 4, LA Radio Network
- Joanne Maffei – WWL Radio, Fox News
- Paula Seal - Vox News, Subverse News
- Yussef Bennani - WDSU/Channel 6

### Clinical Care/Clinical Trials:

#### UMC

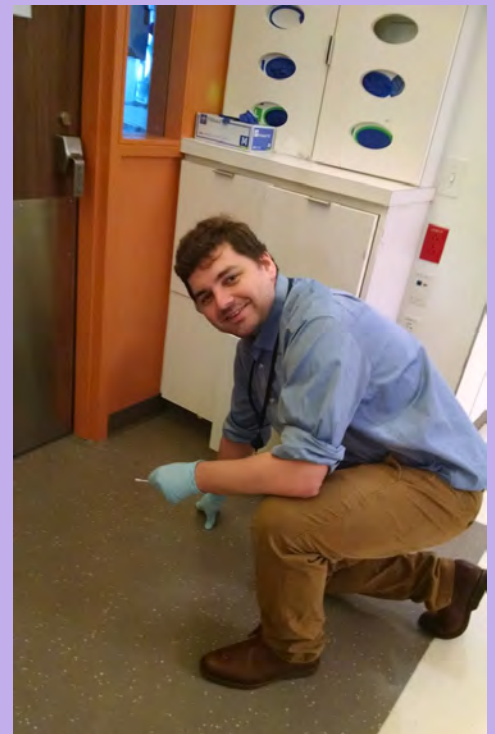
- Clinical Care (March and April 2020) – Yussef Bennani, Kamir Boodoo, Meredith Clement, Lee Engel, Anne Hull, Rebecca Lillis, Fred Lopez, Taras Nebeluk, Lauren Richey, Paula Seal
- Remdesivir expanded access – Anne Hull
- Mayo Clinic Expanded Access Program COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma – Yussef Bennani
- Randomized clinical trial Hydroxychloroquine alone versus hydroxychloroquine plus azithromycin versus supportive care for treatment of COVID-19 - Meredith Clement, Yussef Bennani
- Janssen Sirukumab study – Yussef Bennani and Meredith Clement
- Retrospective review of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 at UMC (published in OFID) – Paula Seal and Meredith Clement , as well as: Silver

V, Chapple AG, Feibus AH, Beckford J, Halapin NA, Barua D, Gordon A, Baumgartner W, Vignes S, Clark C, Kamboj S, Lim SC, Mackey SP, Kanter JM, Bell C.

#### Touro

- Clinical Care (March and April 2020) – Julio Figueroa, John Nanfro, Taras Nebeluk
- Remdesivir expanded access - Julio Figueroa

Photos—Top: UMC was the recipient of 3 healthcare worker salutes—the first was Barksdale Air Force Base B-52 bombers accompanied by Louisiana Air National Guard flyover on 5/1/20; there were 2 other salutes not pictured here: US Navy Blue Angels on 5/6 and US Army Black Daggers Parachute team 7/10/20 (page 8). Middle: Taras Nebeluk gathers environmental samples. Bottom, from Left: Taras Nebeluk, David Welsh and Ashaur Azhar at work on the COVID environmental study.



(See All Things COVID page 8)



## New Orleans Citywide Infectious Diseases Conference On Structural Racism/Bias and Health Equity

On June 19, 2020 Dr. Robert Maupin, Associate Dean of the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement at LSU School of Medicine, gave an interactive lecture titled, "Structural Racism/Bias and Health Equity" at the ID Citywide Conference. This lecture engaged clinicians in recognizing the intersection of racism with healthcare disparities as well as the influence of racism and bias on stereotypes and their subsequent impact on health outcomes. This presentation did an excellent job at demonstrating the early foundation of inequality in healthcare in our nation, and how that has impacted healthcare to this day. However, as early as April 1914, the LA State Board of Health identified key components to building health equality—including housing and education. Yet, here we are in 2020 faced with ongoing health disparities clearly visible with the COVID-19 pandemic. I encourage all of us to do our part in using our voices to invoke much needed change. —**Paula Seal**



(Above) LSUHSC students and faculty joined together with our Tulane neighbors in a peaceful protest against racial and social injustice on Thursday, June 11, 2020. There was a large turnout as those present stood or knelt in silence on Tulane Avenue. (Photo on Left) Dr. Besch (left) and Dr. Clement participated, with appropriate mask-wearing and social distancing measures in place.

### Peaceful Protest



### Blast from the Past—Remember Life Before COVID-19? —Mardi Gras 2020

Not so long ago, but very far away—Mardi Gras 2020—just prior to the pandemic.

From Left, Kamir Boodoo and Tulane ID colleagues John Dwyer and Michelle Blyth at a parade. Coveted Dong Phuong Oriental Bakery King Cake on right.

(See Pre-Pandemic Pics continued on page 6)



## Meet the New ID Fellows: Logan Ledet and Mohammed Ziada



Hello, everyone! I'm Logan Ledet. As is likely evident from my name, I'm Louisiana born and raised. I grew up - as they say - "down the bayou" in Houma. My undergraduate education was completed at Nicholls State in Thibodaux, where I majored in Biology, and minored in Chemistry and the Humanities. Following college, I attended medical school at LSUHSC in New Orleans. My husband and I couple's matched at Ochsner Medical Center for Internal Medicine and Radiology, respectively. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to return to LSU to complete my training. The atmosphere at LSU has been incredibly supportive and welcoming! My husband and I love living in New Orleans, and one of our favorite things to do (pre-pandemic) was to enjoy all the festivals the city has to offer. One of our favorites is Red Dress Run every August. I look forward to my time back at LSU, and continuing to serve the people of our wonderful state! —Logan Ledet

From Left: Logan and her husband Drew Ledet at the Red Dress Run

Infectious Diseases is Medicine for me!

Going to medical school and being trained in Sudan - which is a tropical country - made ID a big part of medicine for me. Where is the best place to get trained in ID? NOLA for sure! Tropical medicine fascinates me the most and definitely is a field to explore more. On the lighter side, my ultimate goal is to make an LSU soccer team! —Mohammed Ziada



Mohammed Ziada at soccer practice



## KUDOS to Members of the LSU Infectious Diseases Section:

**Victoria Burke**—Was the recipient of the Aesculapian award "Most Outstanding Educator for Class of 2022 Fall Courses"

**Paula Seal**—Presented a poster on behalf of the HOP Clinical Quality Improvement Committee at the Ryan White Conference in August on Viral Load Suppression in the US. "A Multidisciplinary Intervention to Address Patients In Care Who are Not Virally Suppressed." Authors include: Paula Seal, Lauren Richey, Desiree Goeb-Luth, Sadie Beckett, Louis Olguin and Maria Frontini.

*(See KUDOS continued on page 7)*



From left: Ashaur Azhar '20, Kamir Boodoo '20

**Graduation (continued from page 1)** The Fellows were asked to write a brief note about their experience in the LSU ID Fellowship Program and their thoughts on graduation. Here is what they had to say:

**Ashaur Azhar**—My experience at LSUHSC, New Orleans as an Infectious Diseases Fellow is hard to explain in words. A robust program of HIV with a blend of general infectious diseases, hepatitis and transplant, attracted me to join this LSU Infectious Diseases Fellowship program. An ID Fellow gets exposed to a diverse patient population with HIV, tropical diseases, transplant related and general infectious diseases in both outpatient and inpatient settings. Not to forget the colorful sprinkling of microbiology conferences (where you will get a chance to smell great tutti frutti and caramel smells) and the Infection Control rotation experience. It was wonderful to share the interesting clinical cases that we encountered during clinical months, at the New Orleans Citywide ID and LSU ID conferences. The experience during the peak of COVID-19 pandemic is something that will never be forgotten. It will be cherished and remembered in the coming years. It was a great experience in a wonderful learning atmosphere with a loving and dedicated faculty; in the city of New Orleans, a city of festivals, home for the Saints and LSU Tigers football team, and a place with finger-licking good seafood restaurants and history.



Informal pre-graduation gathering at Mandinas Restaurant. From left: Maya Augustivsky, Taras's fiancé, Taras Nebeluk, first year LSU ID Fellow, Scott Melton '19, Lauren Richey, LSU ID Faculty, and Kamir Boodoo '20.

**Kamir Boodoo**—The finish-line for fellowship approaches and, as with other deliberate efforts, there is both relief and a sense of achievement. Reflecting on my time at LSU, the most important gain has been exposure to the values and wisdom of the Attendings with whom I have worked. I hope that these have found their way past my blood brain barrier and, even though I may not be aware of everything I have learned right now, perhaps the knowledge will flare up later under stress. Like shingles. New Orleans itself has been an interesting and eventful place and I am leaving with many life lessons that I can mull over in the years to come. I am grateful for my time here and look forward to a new home and a new phase of life.

*(See Graduation continued on page 6)*





### Graduation (Continued from page 5)

**Graduation Celebrations Continued**—with an informal get together at "Dat Dog" on June 30, 2020, the last day of the Fellowship for second year ID Fellows. From left: Maya (Taras's Fiancée), Taras Nebeluk, first year ID Fellow, Ashaur Azhar, Kamir Boodoo (graduating fellows) and Dr Scott Melton, MD PhD (LSU ID Fellowship Class of 2019)

### **Pre-Pandemic Pics (Continued from page 3)** **More Mardi Gras 2020**



Left: Victoria Burke in the LSU Tiger Alumni Band marching in the Thoth parade. Below: Victoria Burke with her Aunt riding in the Cleo parade. Right: Julio Figueroa riding in the Orpheus parade.  
(See Pre-Pandemic Pics pg. 7)





## Pre-Pandemic Pics *(continued from page 6)*

Let's not forget that the LSU Tigers Football team won the 2019 National Championship on January 18, 2020. Perfect season—Fifteen & EAUX!!!



Above: Victoria Burke with members of the LSU Tiger Alumni Band in the French Quarter the night before the championship.



Above: Shu-Hua Wang '04, Scott (spouse) and friends from Columbus, Ohio completed the Disney's Dopey Challenge in January 2020. Dopey Challenge is where you run a 5K, 10K, Half marathon and full marathon on 4 consecutive days. Scott and Shu had fun dressing up in their favorite Disney characters. Hope this brings a smile to your face during these difficult times! Stay safe and healthy! *(See More Pre-Pandemic Pics continued on page 9)*



## **KUDOS—Rebecca Lillis named University Medical Center Consultant of the Year!!!**

*(KUDOS Continued from page 5)*

The UMC Physician Recognition Awards 2020 recognized Rebecca Lillis, LSU Infectious Diseases Faculty, "outstanding consultant who effectively communicates, educates and contributes mightily to the management of some of our most complex cases." Congratulations Rebecca!!! You deserve the recognition!!!

## All Things COVID (Continued from page 2)

### Clinical Care/Clinical Trials (continued)

#### West Jefferson Medical Center

- Clinical Care – Michael Hagensee, Julio Figueroa

#### New Orleans East Hospital

- Clinical Care – Victoria Burke

#### Ochsner Medical Center

- Clinical Care (March and April 2020) – Ashaur Azhar, Victoria Burke, John Nanfro
- NIH Adaptative COVID treatment trial (ACTT-2) Remdesivir/Baricitinib vs. Remdesivir/placebo – Stephanie Taylor, Najy Masri, Ben deBoisblanc, Alisha Lacour

#### Ochsner Medical Center Kenner

- Clinical Care (March and April 2020) – Ashaur Azhar, Lynn Besch, Michael Hagensee, Joanne Maffei, Stephanie Taylor
- Mayo Clinic Expanded Access Program COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma – John Nanfro
- NIH Adaptative COVID treatment trial (ACTT-3) Remdesivir/Interferon beta-1a vs. Remdesivir/placebo – Stephanie Taylor, Najy Masri, Ben deBoisblanc, Alisha Lacour

#### LSU Sexual Health Center/LSU STD Research Laboratory/CrescentCare Health

- Becton Dickinson Prospective COVID specimen collection for COVID test development – Stephanie Taylor

#### LSU STD Research Laboratory/St. Tammany Hospital Laboratory

- Becton Dickinson COVID remnant specimen collection – Stephanie Taylor

#### LSU Health Sciences Center

- MMR vaccine to prevent severe consequences of COVID-19 - blinded randomized controlled study comparing the live attenuated vaccine MMR vs placebo in health care workers – Michael Hagensee, Paul Fidel (Dental School)

### Basic Science Research:

- COVID Antibody Screening Project – Duration and function of serum antibodies against SARS-COV-2 focusing on 3 populations: (1) health care workers, (2) those with COVID-19 positive nasal tests who are recovering and (3) those with severe COVID-19 in the ICU setting. Also investigating the antibody levels and function in plasma donors and the outcome in their recipients. Michael Hagensee, Taras Nebeluk
- Environmental Epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 during COVID-19 Pandemic-related Health System Stress – Dr. David Welsh (Pulmonary), Ashaur Azhar, Taras Nebeluk, Joanne Maffei

### Other Activities:

#### Infection Prevention and Control

- UMC – Joanne Maffei
- LCMC System – Julio Figueroa
- Touro – Julio Figueroa
- Ochsner Medical Center Kenner – Julio Figueroa
- LSU Health Sciences Center and LSU System – Julio Figueroa

#### Antimicrobial Stewardship

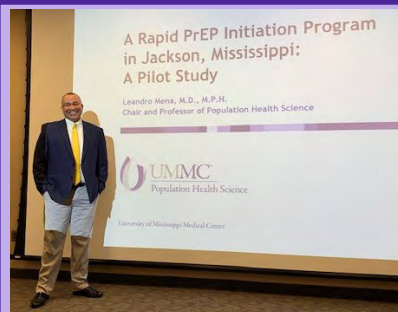
- UMC and LCMC – Julio Figueroa

#### HOP Clinic Administration

- HOP Clinic policies relating to COVID-19 – Lauren Richey
- COVID-19 and HIV Ryan White Funding – Lauren Richey



US Army Black Daggers Parachute team—3 land at UMC 7/10/20



LSU ID Alumnus, Leandro Mena '02, returned to give a New Orleans Infectious Diseases Citywide Conference 1/10/2020 titled: A Rapid PrEP Initiation Program in Jackson MS: Results from a Pilot Study. Leandro is the founding chair of the Department of Population Health Science at the University of Mississippi Medical Center John D. Bower School of Population Health and Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases, directs the Center for HIV/AIDS Research, Education & Policy at the Myrlie Evers-Williams Institute for Elimination of Health Disparities, and serves as the STD Medical Director for the state of Mississippi. He is also the Medical Director of the Five Points Clinic (Jackson's public STD clinic) and co-founded Open Arms Healthcare Center (first LGBT clinic in Mississippi). It was great to have him present his work at the conference.





From Left: HOP Patient Access Judy Christophe, Lynn Besch, and Lauren Richey celebrating Dr. Besch's retirement.

## HOP Spotlight

Our very own HOP clinic pharmacist Dr. Demaurian Mitchner was selected to speak at the National Ryan White Conference this August. She presented on "The Impact of Clinical Pharmacist-Led Initiatives in HIV Care." Her presentation was on August 14, 2020. HOP's hard working Health Educator Sadie Beckett was also selected to present on "The Role of Health Educators in Improving the Health of People with HIV" on August 14, 2020. Both presentations were part of a session on Improving Patient Outcomes for Initiatives in HIV Care. Both presented a summary of their quality improvement projects including outcomes for our patients living with HIV. Congrats to both of them on this honor.

Hira Hasan a third year LSU medical student with an interest in a career in Infectious Diseases, under the mentorship of Dr. Richey, will present a poster of her work at the International Association of Providers in AIDS Care meeting this fall. Her poster is entitled, "Anti-retroviral Therapy for Women of Child-Bearing Years. Congrats to Hira!

**Also noteworthy,** Dr. Besch retired officially at the end of June after decades of service to LSU Infectious Diseases Section, the HIV community and the HOP clinic. We will miss her. We are grateful for all the guidance and mentorship she has provided over the years.



## More Pre-Pandemic Pics—just can't get enough of them!!!

*(Continued from page 7)*



Top Left: New Orleans Eastbank Baseball Allstars won the 2019 Little League World Series, they rode in a 2020 Mardi Gras parade. Bottom Left: from left: Joanne Maffei and her sister, Rose Schaubhut, wait for the Iris parade. Right: a float in the 2020 Iris parade.



## **Victoria Burke— LSU ID Fellowship Program Director**

In program news, Victoria Burke has taken over as full-time Fellowship Program Director in July 2019. Dr. Burke first joined the LSU faculty in the fall of 2014 after completing her Internal Medicine Residency and Infectious Diseases Fellowship training at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. At LSU, in addition to her clinical interests in transplant infectious diseases, Dr. Burke has assumed an active role in medical education at the institution including as a clinical curriculum consultant for the medical school and core lecturer for the second year medical student classes. She was named Associate Program Director for the ID Fellowship Program in 2018. She is looking forward to recruiting future fellows who are passionate about infectious diseases and contributing to the training of future generations of physicians.

Of note, Dr. Burke has taken over the program reigns from Dr. Julio Figueroa, who served as program director from 1996—2019 (23 years!!!) As a section we are most grateful for his program leadership over this time and look forward to his continued guidance as our section chair for many years to come.



Dr. Victoria Burke with her Clinical Skills Integration Esplanade House 3rd year medical students. From Left: Paige Guilloiry, Tim Harmon, Victoria Burke, Ashley West, Brooke Davidson, and Jewel Datri.

Dr. Burke treated her students to food and drinks at the Bulldog in Mid-City after a recent test for a much needed celebration.

### **In the spirit of giving...**

For the grateful graduate of our program interested in supporting future LSU ID Fellows: did you know that you can earmark donations within the institution to our Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program? All donations generously given to the LSU Health Foundation can be preferentially directed to the LSU ID Fellowship Program account to support our trainees. We utilize these funds to help defray costs for our ID Fellows to attend professional conferences to present their work by covering conference registration fees, travel, and lodging expenses. Foundation funds helped send both of our ID fellows to ID Week in Washington DC last year for this purpose to present their clinical research. All donations are tax-deductible through this non-profit entity and can even be used to acquire TAF points for the avid LSU sports fan. For more information, please contact Krystal Oliveira at [koliveira@lsuhealthfoundation.org](mailto:koliveira@lsuhealthfoundation.org) or visit the Foundation website <https://www.lsuhealthfoundation.org>.

*Send us your thoughts on the COVID-19 Pandemic, the changing face of the HIV Epidemic, or anything else you want to share. Let us know how you, your family and your practice are doing. Next issue of Going Viral is the Winter issue—please send in articles by December 15, 2020 to be included.*

LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, Louisiana

Department of Medicine Section of Infectious Diseases/HIV [https://www.medschool.lsuhscc.edu/internal\\_medicine/fellowship\\_id.aspx](https://www.medschool.lsuhscc.edu/internal_medicine/fellowship_id.aspx)

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