INSPIRING END-OF-YEAR FOR ISCOPES
MORE THAN 175 STUDENTS, faculty, staff, and community leaders gathered at the GW Hospital on April 21 for the Interdisciplinary Student Community Oriented Prevention Enhancement Service (ISCOPE) end-of-year presentations, providing an opportunity to reflect on learning and service that occurred throughout the academic year.

Fourteen student teams from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Public Health and Health Services, and George Mason University’s School of Nursing presented their work with 13 long-standing community partners organizations including: Academy of Hope, Bread for the City, Community of Hope, D.C., Healthy Start, Eastern High School, Grief and Loss, Health Care for the Homeless/Emery Shelter, Health Information Partners, La Clinica Del Pueblo, Mary’s Center for Maternal and Child Care, N Street Village, St. Mary’s Court, and Whitman-Walker Clinic.

Through these partnerships, students fostered health in the District by addressing public health concerns and working with community assets to prevent barriers and to improve access to care. The projects ranged from developing a Web presence for D.C. Healthy Start to improve awareness and access to the program’s prenatal resources to building upon the Fit For Fun exercise program at Bread for the City.

“If you look at what most Medical Center students’ interests are and why they came to GW,” said ISCOPE Director Emily Morrison, “you will find that helping others and community involvement are often expressed. The mission and purpose of ISCOPE is very much in line with why students came to GW in the first place.”

For more information about participating in the ISCOPE program as a team advisor, participant, or community partner, visit the ISCOPE Department at iscopes@gwu.edu or log on to www.gwume.edu/iscopes.

AVON GIVES $300,000 FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH
THOUGH A STORM dampened the day, spirits were high at the Avon Walk DC closing ceremonies on May 2. For the second year in a row, the Avon Foundation awarded GW a significant grant to support breast cancer initiatives.

Dr. Patricia Berg, professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, was on hand to accept the $300,000 check that will support research into a particular biomarker that is found in 80 percent of invasive ductal breast tumors and metastasis. Through the Foundation’s support, Dr. Berg and her team will research this biomarker and determine its use as a marker in risk assessment and as a predictor of disease progression.

“Avon’s support of breast cancer research gives an important boost to those of us looking for ways to improve early diagnosis and treatment of this disease, which kills about 40,000 American women each year,” said Dr. Berg. She accepted a ceremonial check during closing ceremonies for the annual Avon Walk for Breast Cancer.

Last year, GW received a $500,000 grant to support outreach, education, and screening services, including deploying of the GW Mammovan in Anacostia, an area which currently has no mammogram facilities.

AROUND GW

FOLLIES (above):
Medical students put on a Broadway-inspired dance choreographed by MSIII Micaella Davis-Plinn at the 26th annual Follies talent show held at Lisner Auditorium on April 3.

DAY IN THE LIFE (left):
Parents and family members get an insider look at the School of Medicine experience on April 18 at "A Day in the Life of a Medical Student," held in Ross Hall every other year.
explained Dr. Alexander, because often those children didn’t mature into adulthood. “Guess what? We’ve had so many advances in medicine that these children are growing up.”

UCEDD determined that primary care access was becoming an issue. Dr. Alexander developed a primary care service delivery system based on the medical home concept — an idea devised by the American Academy of Pediatrics back in the ’70s, coincidentally for special needs children. Their needs are so disparate, Dr. Alexander explained, a patient might need an orthopedic specialist or an ENT or a cardiologist. People with developmental disabilities often have a myriad of health concerns. “The coordination [between specialists] is the most difficult part.” In the original model, she said, “the pediatrician served as the glue that held everything together — a comprehensive, continuous, and coordinated approach.”

Over the past five or six years this concept has emerged as one that resonates with primary care physicians as well.

The goal is to help the city formulate a well-informed plan on how to fill these gaps and prepare for the future. “The fact of the matter is, with the advances in neonatal medicine over the past 20 years, this is a segment of the population that is going to become increasingly visible. They are just going to keep aging and developing more illnesses and require more care.”

So far the response from stakeholders has been positive. In March, the Mayor’s office reported progress at the Department on Disability Services, emphasizing initiatives that have “won praise from community organizations and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.”

“The Department on Disability Services is winning widespread praise for its marked improvements to services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” said Mayor Fenty. “The District has moved aggressively to ensure a better quality of life for our most vulnerable residents.”

### Walking the Walk in the Fight Against Breast Cancer

Glenda Hall, executive coordinator, Resource Management and Medical Center Safety, Bio-Security and Emergency Management, reached an impressive milestone during the Annual Avon Walk for Breast Cancer, May 2–3. She has logged more than 400 miles while completing 10 Avon charity walks. Beginning in 2000, when it was known as the Avon Breast Cancer 3-Day and walkers traveled nearly 60 miles, Hall has put her best foot forward in the fight against breast cancer.

The support of her fellow walkers says Hall, is what sends her back out each May, despite the bugs, blisters, and occasionally bad weather. “It gets into your soul. I’ve already signed up for next year.”

### Avon Grant Supports Biomarker Research

The George Washington University received a $300,000 grant from the Avon Foundation to support research into a particular biomarker found in 80 percent of invasive ductal breast tumors and metastasis. Dr. Patricia Berg, professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, accepted a check on May 2, as part of the Avon Walk D.C. Closing Ceremony.

“The Avon Walk for Breast Cancer is extremely meaningful to all participants, including women with breast cancer, survivors, relatives of breast cancer patients and others walking to support the cause of breast cancer,” said Dr. Berg. “Avon’s support of breast cancer research gives an important boost to those of us looking for ways to improve early diagnosis and treatment of this disease, which kills about 40,000 American women each year.”

The Foundation’s support will allow Dr. Berg and her team to research this biomarker and determine its use as a marker in risk assessment and as a predictor of disease progression. “We are very grateful for the support from the Avon Foundation for this important work and have every hope that the research being performed by Dr. Berg will lead to lives saved from breast cancer and potentially other cancers,” said Dr. Jim Scott, dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences.
GW cancer researchers receive Avon Foundation grant

By: Rachel Barker
Hatchet Reporter

Posted: 6/11/09

The GW Hatchet

A new grant worth hundreds of thousands of dollars is helping GW researchers discover new information about cancer.

Last month, the Avon Foundation gave $300,000 to a group of GW cancer researchers, led by Dr. Patricia Berg, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, to aid in breast cancer research.

"Dr. Berg's studies possess clear clinical translation potential. We are optimistic that the study's findings will advance our understanding of breast cancer," Marc Hulbert, director of the Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade said in an e-mail.

Berg, who in the past has received grants from organizations such as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, said her research was chosen for the grant as part of a competitive application process.

Berg said the grant would help fund research into BP1, a breast cancer marker known as beta protein 1 that was discovered by Berg's laboratory. BP1 is active in 80 percent of breast cancer cases, according to Berg's research. The grant from Avon will help researchers identify women who have the marker, Berg said.

Researchers hope to investigate whether the amount of BP1 in a person's body could be measured to determine whether a cancer treatment has been successful.

Berg said connections have also been made between BP1 and other forms of cancer, such as prostate cancer.

The Avon Foundation previously gave $500,000 to the GW Cancer Institute in 2008, a grant announced at the Institute's Fifth Annual Gala.
GENE FOUND ACTIVATED IN 70% OF PROSTATE CANCER CASES,
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER SCIENSTS REPORT

DRS. PATRICIA BERG AND ARNOLD SCHWARTZ LED TEAM, Article in Modern Pathology
Set for print publication January 2009

BERG HAD ALSO DISCOVERED SAME GENE’S ACTIVATION IN MAJORITY OF BREAST CANCER CASES

(Washington, DC) -- A gene has been found activated in 70% of prostate cancer tumors, the same gene that has been discovered activated in a majority of breast cancer cases, report scientists at the George Washington University Medical Center led by Dr. Patricia Berg, who discovered and cloned the gene, and Dr. Arnold Schwartz. Berg is Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry and directs a laboratory at the George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, DC, and Schwartz is Professor of Pathology and a practicing clinician at GWUMC.

In the January, 2009 print issue of Modern Pathology, a journal of the Nature Publishing Group, the team of researchers led by Berg and Schwartz will report that "Significant BP1 immunoreactivity was identified in approximately 70% of prostatic adenocarcinomas, whether the analysis was performed on tissue sections (60 cases) or tissue microarray platforms (123 cases). The findings compare to "less than 5%" BP1 activity in normal cells. The researchers conclude that "These findings suggest that BP1 is an important upstream factor in the carcinogenic pathway of prostate cancer and that the expression of BP1 may reflect or directly contribute to tumor progression and/or invasion."

In addition to Berg and Schwartz, the team of authors includes Drs. Yan-Gao Man, Department of Gynecologic and Breast Pathology, The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington DC; M Katayoon Rezaei, Department of Pathology, The George Washington University Medical Center, Washington DC; and Samuel J Simmons, Department of Biostatistics, The George Washington University Medical Center, Washington DC.

Berg had previously published and reported, and the authors cite in the current article, that BP1 is activated in a majority of breast cancer (80%) and acute myeloid leukemia (63%) cases. The authors say, "Our current and past findings suggest that BP1 may be an important regulatory factor in the oncogenic pathway of several malignancies including prostate cancer." Berg stated today, "BP1 is a new, potentially significant target for therapy. It could be an important new diagnostic marker for prostate cancer and the other cancers in which it is expressed."

Prostate cancer is the leading cancer among men. The National Cancer Institute estimates 186,320 new cases and 28,660 deaths from prostate cancer in the U.S. in 2008.

The article is titled, "BP1, a homeoprotein, is significantly expressed in prostate adenocarcinoma and is concordant with prostatic intraepithelial neoplasia." The article is also available as "advance online publication" (Citation: Modern Pathology advance online publication 17 October 2008; doi: 10.1038/modpathol.2008.168).

Link to abstract: www.nature.com/doifinder/10.1038/modpathol.2008.168.

Source: Dr. Patricia Berg/GWUMC and Robert Weiner Associates 301-283-0821 or 202-329-1700.
Many Voices, One Goal

Benefit Draws Thousands Affected by Breast Cancer

The mall was awash in pink yesterday morning as more than 40,000 people took part in the 17th annual National Race for the Cure.

Many participants wore pink ribbons on pink T-shirts, passing the finish line under an arc of pink balloons signifying breast cancer awareness. The 5-kilometer race raises money for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation to fund breast cancer research and screening.

American women have a one in eight chance of developing the disease. It is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women, but the death rate has been dropping because of earlier detection and improved treatment.

Many of the men and women who took part in the event have a personal connection to the disease. Some have it now. Some count themselves among the survivors. And some have lost someone dear.

COMPILED BY JEFFREY RICE

51, SECRETARY OF STATE MOTHER DIED OF BREAST CANCER

Rice lost her mother to breast cancer 21 years ago. Hours after returning from a diplomatic trip to Vienna, Austria, she rallied the walkers and runners yesterday at the starting line at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue NW, her personal trainer by her side. They demonstrated squats and hip-flexing stretches.

Rice was 15 when her mother was diagnosed.

"I'm now marvel at the treatment options that weren't there for her back then. I just think we have to get the word out to people that while there's no cure yet, there are so many things you can do with diet and exercise. My message to people would be to make sure to take advantage of the screening options available to you."

PATRICIA BERG

OF ACCOREK BREAST CANCER RESEARCHER

Berg is a physician who directs a breast cancer research laboratory at George Washington University Medical School. Through a grant from the Komen Foundation, she is studying a gene called BRCA that is activated in 80 percent of breast cancer tumors. She hopes to develop a blood test for the gene.

"One thing I'd like to bring to women's attention is that 5 percent of breast cancers are a very aggressive strain that's not detected by a mammogram. Half the time, there's no lump. It first appears as a red spot. It looks like an inflammation."