



# IBD Newsletter

PENN STATE INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE CENTER

[hmc.pennstatehealth.org/inflammatory-bowel-disease](http://hmc.pennstatehealth.org/inflammatory-bowel-disease)

**IBD Direct Line 717-531-3998**

## IBD Center Expands Introducing more patient providers and resources

### **Kofi Clarke, MD**

*New institutional leader with focus on IBD and celiac disease*



This past September, Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center introduced Kofi Clarke, MD, as the new chief of the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology in the Department of Medicine. Dr. Clarke's

clinical and research interests primarily focus on inflammatory bowel disease and celiac disease, making this appointment of even greater meaning for the IBD team and our patients. Prior to coming to Hershey, Dr. Clarke most recently served as chief of gastroenterology at the Allegheny Health Network in western Pennsylvania.

Dr. Clarke fulfilled a faculty development research fellowship at Michigan State University before moving to Pennsylvania for further fellowship training in gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. He completed an internal medicine residency through Temple University School of Medicine at West Penn Allegheny Health System. There, Dr. Clarke practiced internal medicine before directing the internal medicine residency program. In 2005, he was appointed chief of the Division of Internal Medicine at West Penn Allegheny Health.

Dr. Clarke earned his undergraduate and medical school education from the University of Ghana Medical School. He trained in medicine and gastroenterology at Imperial College in England.

We are pleased to share Dr. Clarke's experience and expertise with our patients. Dr. Clarke currently cares for patients in the IBD Center.

### **Gregory Yochum, PhD**

*Developing therapies and treatment strategies through research*



After earning his Bachelor of Science degree in biology at Bucknell University, Gregory Yochum, PhD, worked at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine as a research technician in a tumor immunology lab. Following his work at Johns Hopkins, Dr. Yochum pursued his graduate studies at the Huntsman Cancer Institute at the

University of Utah, where he earned his PhD in oncological sciences. Through that experience, he pursued an understanding of how cellular proto-oncogenes promote cancer development by deregulating target gene expression.

Dr. Yochum held a National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded postdoctoral position at the Vollum Institute at Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU), where he and his team made key insights into understanding the molecular activity that could lead to colorectal cancer. Following his time at OHSU, he was awarded an NIH grant to study signaling proteins and their role in intestinal disease.

In 2009, he was recruited to serve as an assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the Penn State College of Medicine. He and his team reported a crucial role for proteins in repairing cells in the colon following damage caused by ulcerative colitis.

Dr. Yochum was awarded tenure in 2015 and was promoted to associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology. To date, he has co-authored over 30 publications. In the summer of 2016, he accepted a position as the Director of the Colorectal/IBD Biobank Research Laboratory. In this role, Dr. Yochum oversees research efforts in the Koltun/Yochum labs. These research efforts focus on understanding how genetic predisposition and environmental factors can lead to IBD. Through these efforts, better therapeutics and treatment strategies can be developed to help patients afflicted by intestinal diseases.

**Sanjay Yadav, MBBS***Addressing mental health needs of the IBD patient*

Dealing with the stress of a chronic gastrointestinal illness can be very isolating and difficult. Now, with the expert resources of the leading academic medical center in the region, we proudly introduce Sanjay Yadav, MBBS,

a Penn State Health psychiatrist with a special interest in patients with chronic illness and the effects on their mental health. Dr. Yadav now offers mental health evaluations and treatment to support IBD patients dealing with stress and anxiety. He completed his residency in psychiatry at Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, and then fulfilled his fellowship in psychosomatic medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, Massachusetts. Dr. Yadav graduated from Tribhuvan University Institute of Medicine, Kathmandu, Nepal. Please contact the IBD Center at 717-531-3998 if you are interested in a referral.

**UPCOMING EVENTS****IBD Support Group**

**WHEN:** First Wednesday, every other month (January 4, 2017; March 1, 2017; May 5, 2017) from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

**WHERE:** University Physician Center, suite 4200

Please join our Crohn's and ulcerative colitis support group that meets every other month from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Our inflammatory bowel disease team will be on hand to answer questions on all aspects of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. Both patients and family members are encouraged to attend. We hope to see you there!

**Call Rachael Hays at 717-350-3354 or email [gotgutshhmc12@gmail.com](mailto:gotgutshhmc12@gmail.com) for more information.**

**CCFA Take Steps Walk**

**WHEN:** May 20, 2017 at 10 am

**WHERE:** Canton Waterfront, Baltimore, MD

**Pediatric Corner*****Does your vitamin D level increase your risk of broken bones?***

Patients with IBD are already at increased risk for osteopenia (weak bones at an early age), due to various factors, including but not limited to malabsorption of calcium and vitamin D, chronic inflammation and steroid therapies. Pediatric IBD patients are at a greater risk than the general population for low vitamin D levels. Osteopenia can lead to increased risk of bone fractures and, ultimately, osteoporosis. In our region of the United States, vitamin D levels are at their lowest during the winter months as time outdoors and skin exposure to the sun (a key source of vitamin D) decreases. We recommend every IBD patient, both pediatric and adult, have their vitamin D level checked, especially during the winter months.

Vitamin D can be checked with a simple blood test added to routine bloodwork. Check with your physician regarding your own recommended doses of vitamin D and calcium, which vary based on age and current vitamin D level. If you have lower vitamin D levels, you may also have lower levels of calcium. This, unfortunately, can further increase the risk for osteopenia and broken bones. Thankfully, there are many vitamin D supplements available, including liquids, chewables, gummies and pills. Be sure to check with your provider for your best options.

**Offering Advanced Therapies for Patients**

The FDA recently approved Ustekinumab (known as 'Stelara') for the treatment of Crohn's disease. The medication is given as a one-time infusion and then administered by self-injection every eight weeks. We are pleased to offer this new therapy to our patients. Please contact Anne Bobb, IBD Nurse Navigator, for more information at 717-531-3998.