

UI HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY

Connections

News from the University of Iowa Hematology/Oncology Fellowship Program

Winter 2018

Chitneni Joins UI Health Care System



Shobha Chitneni, MD

Shobha Chitneni, MD, has provided cancer care to Quad Cities-area residents for more than 20 years, and now she and her partner are part of University of Iowa Health Care. Building upon an already outstanding clinical practice, UI Health Care continues to integrate access to Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center's oncology services into other communities.

The youngest of six children who grew up in Hyderabad, India, Chitneni's interest in medicine developed early. She attended Osmania Medical School in Hyderabad and recalled, "It's more of a clinical training. There's not that much money for all kinds of tests, so you have to learn to listen to the patient."

She remembers one instructor, a surgeon, diagnose a liver condition after a cursory exam. After that hypothesis was later borne out in the operating room, she thought: "Wow, I want to be like him."

After finishing sub-internships in infectious diseases and rheumatology and a year as a research associate in hematology, Chitneni completed an internal medicine residency in Cleveland and a fellowship in hematology-oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York. Then she got a call from a recruiter with an offer. "Honestly, I didn't know where the Quad Cities were," she said. But after a visit, she was sold.

Before long, Chitneni became well established in her new community—and highly respected within her profession. She joined the Iowa Oncology Society and today serves as its president. And together, she and her clinic partner, Mario Sy, MD, built one of the few private practices in the country to achieve American Society of Clinical Oncology certification in the Quality Oncology Practice Initiative.

It was only in February 2017 that Chitneni and Sy formally joined UI Health Care. The physicians have already noticed a slight increase in patients seen as well as in the variety of patients. "It's allowed us to bring more innovative treatments to patients closer to home," Sy said.

It's clear that providing the best care to her community is also vital to Chitneni: "I want this practice to continue, I want good care for my patients, I want my staff to have a place to work. It all came together at the same time and I think Dr. Sy and I, with the help of the University, can do more for the community. We're all excited."

Schaffner, Nadiminti Present ASH Abstracts



Meredith Schaffner, DO

Fellows Meredith Schaffner, DO, and Kalyan Nadiminti, MD, visited Atlanta in December to take part in the American Society of Hematology (ASH) 59th Annual Meeting.

The pair submitted abstracts of research work completed in the hematology/oncology fellowship. “The abstracts were accepted for poster presentation, meaning we displayed a poster about our work at the meeting for the attendees to review,” said Schaffner, who is originally from rural northeast Iowa.

Nadiminti, who is from the coastal city of Vizag, India, had two abstracts accepted, both related to stem cell transplantation. The first examined the co-morbidity index score in patients undergoing stem cell transplants for myeloma. The second was a preliminary efficacy and toxicity report of a novel combination chemotherapy regimen used for conditioning in elderly myeloma patients receiving stem cell transplants.

Schaffner’s accepted abstract was on a quality improvement project on the diagnosis of heparin-induced thrombocytopenia, a cause of low platelet counts and thrombosis in hospitalized patients.



Kalyan Nadiminti, MD

Both Schaffner and Nadiminti have high praise for the UI Hematology/Oncology Program. “It’s very supportive of fellows and encourages us to perform better and achieve our goals,” Nadiminti said. “It also has a strong tradition of research and provides excellent infrastructure and support for clinical and translational research in cancer. The faculty are very approachable and resourceful.”

“I’ve been at the UI for six years, I did my internal medicine residency here prior to starting my hematology/oncology fellowship,” Schaffner said. “It’s been a great experience. I’ve been trained by world-class faculty in an environment that’s very conducive to learning in a relaxed setting.”

Going forward, Schaffner plans to go into private practice in hematology/oncology, likely in the Pacific Northwest. Nadiminti’s immediate next step is a move to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester to complete a one-year stem cell transplant fellowship, with the ultimate goal of pursuing an academic career focusing on malignant hematology and cellular therapy.



Photography & Fine Art by Heather

Parting Shot

Here is a shot from the 2nd annual Hematology/Oncology Tailgate, which took place September 2 during the Hawkeyes’ win over Wyoming! Join us again next year for food, beverages and fun. Details will be announced in a later issue of *Connections*.



We Need Your Support!

Many of the activities featured in *Connections* are made possible or enhanced by the support of private donors. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible gift to the Hematology-Oncology Fellowship Program, please contact the University of Iowa Center for Advancement:

Alli Ingman
 Assistant Vice President, Health Sciences Development
 319-467-3401
alli.ingman@foriowa.org



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