



## New Rheumatology Chief Cohen Spearheading Autoimmune Research



Philip L. Cohen, MD, new rheumatology section chief.

Philip L. Cohen, MD, a renowned rheumatology researcher, in April was appointed the new section chief of the Temple University School of Medicine's rheumatology section. Since 1999 Cohen had been a professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and co-director of its Rheumatology Training Program.

"I was fairly happy at Penn but this opportunity came along to build an outstanding rheumatology division," says Cohen. "My interests mesh together very well with the clinical researchers in the nephrology section. We had an idea that, together with Doina Ganea, PhD, the chairperson of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, and one of her professors, Marc Monestier, MD, PhD, who specializes in autoimmune research, we would be positioned to build a substantial presence in autoimmune disease and arthritis research."

Cohen has also recruited one of his top researchers at Penn, Roberto Caricchio, MD (see page 2). The chairman of the research committee of the Arthritis Foundation, Cohen and his colleagues were among the first to characterize the role that B-cells, lymphocytes that form antibodies, play in autoimmune disease. He also is responsible for early important research on the role T-cell lympho-

WE NOW HAVE MEDICATIONS AND APPROACHES WE DIDN'T DREAM ABOUT 10 YEARS AGO FOR PATIENTS WITH AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES AND ARTHRITIS.

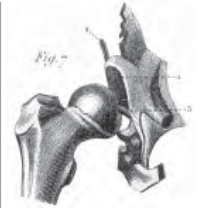
— Philip L. Cohen, MD

cytes play in lupus and in rheumatoid arthritis joint inflammation, as well as research regarding abnormal cell death in autoimmune disease.

He has brought to Temple an active National Institutes of Health grant that is funding an animal study of the use of the drug rituximab to treat Sjogren's syndrome, an autoimmune disease. In mid-June in Paris he will report results of the study at the annual congress of the European League Against Rheumatism. He also is following up an Alliance for Lupus Research study with additional investigations regarding the role mer receptors play in identifying and ridding the body of dead cells—research that could lead to clinical therapies to correct abnormalities that occur in lupus.

"I think Temple is already an outstanding place for rheumatology and, with a section now comprised of four

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RHEUMATOLOGY and GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE

*spring 2008*

*This issue of PULSE focuses on the work of the Department of Medicine's Rheumatology and General Internal Medicine sections.*

### More about Philip L. Cohen, MD

Professor and section chief  
Rheumatology section  
Department of Medicine  
Fellow, American College of Physicians  
Member, American Association of Immunologists  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Federation for Clinical Investigation  
Clinical Immunology Society  
Editorial Board, *Autoimmunity*

Kirkland Scholar in Lupus Research  
Lady Colyton Award for Autoimmunity Research  
MD: Yale University School of Medicine  
Research associate, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, 1973-75  
Asst., assoc. and professor, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, 1979-1999  
Interim Chief of Rheumatology, University of Pennsylvania, 2004-05  
Staff physician, Philadelphia Veterans Affairs Medical Center, 1999-2008

# The Best of Research and Clinical Care

*A message from Joel Richter, MD, FACP, MACG  
Richard L. Evans Chair, Department of Medicine*



Once again, I'm pleased to announce the appointment of another outstanding researcher from the University of Pennsylvania as one of our section chiefs. Our latest such recruit, Philip L. Cohen, is a renowned rheumatologist committed to our mission of pursuing research that can translate from the laboratory bench to the bedside, resulting in state-of-the-art clinical care for our patients.

Dr. Cohen is pleased to be working together with researchers in both our nephrology section and our Department of Microbiology and Immunology to advance autoimmune disease research.

Perhaps no one better embodies our research/clinical care philosophy better than Roberto Caricchio, an outstanding young lupus researcher who is following Cohen to Temple. Why? Because our Internal Medicine Residency Program was flexible enough to find a way for the Italian-born and trained rheumatologist to realize his ambition to treat patients by allowing him to continue his important research while devoting half his time to U.S. residency training.

And nothing better typifies our commitment to educating the next generation of outstanding clinicians than the innovative primary care residency program within our Internal Medicine Residency Program. As more and more internists pursue subspecialties, the infectious enthusiasm and mentoring skills of Shiva Chandrasekaran, MD, are producing general internists who are critically needed—both by patients and subspecialists who rely on generalists for patient referrals.

The Temple Department of Medicine continues to grow in excellence, recruiting world-class scientists, improving the training of future internists and offering the flexibility to allow others to make their dreams become a reality.

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*(continued from page 1)*

full-time physician-scientists and one clinical investigator, I think it will get even better," says Cohen. "This will give patients access to the very latest treatments for autoimmune disease as they receive care from people on the cutting edge of clinical investigations."

For more information, contact Philip L. Cohen, MD, at 215-707-5660 or [philip.cohen@tuhs.temple.edu](mailto:philip.cohen@tuhs.temple.edu).

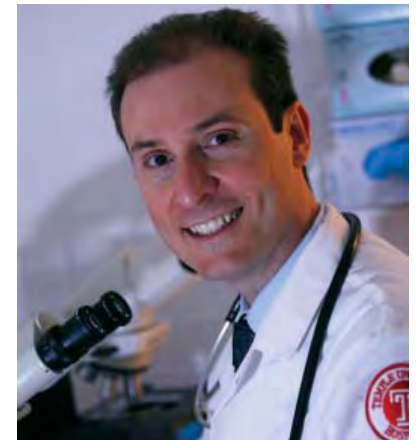
# Italian-born Rheumatologist Realizes His Dream at Temple

As a young rheumatologist completing his residency and fellowship in Rome, Roberto Caricchio, MD, enjoyed both caring for patients and conducting autoimmune research.

However, what was intended to be a single year of post-doctoral fellowship research at the University of North Carolina beginning in 1996 evolved into more than a decade of high level research—first at UNC and then at the University of Pennsylvania under an Arthritis Foundation postdoctoral fellowship, and since 2001 as a research assistant professor at Penn.

His prestigious research has focused on two aspects of lupus: the impacts of cellular death on systemic lupus and on one of the most devastating effects of lupus, kidney necrosis and failure.

Yet, because he had not undergone a U.S. residency, Caricchio has not been able to treat American patients—until now. Thanks to a unique arrangement Temple has worked out with the American Board of Internal Medicine, beginning in June



Roberto Caricchio, MD

citizen in February, 2008 has been a banner year for Caricchio. "Temple was flexible and supportive in enabling me to realize this dream of mine, to see patients again," he says. "When I see and treat my first patient I won't just be seeing that particular human being but also I'll be seeing an enormously complicated mechanism that brought the patient to me.

"That will better inform my research and possibly might inspire some other lines of investigation." His research will

**I'M QUITE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SEEING PATIENTS AGAIN.**

— Roberto Caricchio, MD

Caricchio will spend the next six years alternating every other month between residency training and research.

"He has achieved international recognition here and in Europe for his research," says Philip L. Cohen, MD, the new rheumatology chief who first began working with Caricchio at UNC.

Combined with being sworn in as a U.S.

include clinical pharmaceutical trails targeting lupus.

Darilyn Moyer, MD, professor and director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program, says, "He'll be a wonderful resource for our house staff, helping them think about conducting research projects and how to strike a good balance between clinical and research endeavors."

## **More about Roberto Caricchio, MD**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Medicine  
Rheumatology section  
Fellow, American College of Rheumatology  
Member: Clinical Immunology Study  
Section, Arthritis Foundation; Abstract  
Selection American College of  
Rheumatology National Committee;  
Alliance for Lupus Research Study Section  
Reviewer, The Wellcome Trust, UK

Advisory Editor, *Current Rheumatology Review*

RESEARCH GRANTS: Lupus Foundation of America, American Heart Association, Barra New Research Initiative Fund Award, Lupus Research Institute, Alliance for Lupus Research, Arthritis Foundation, NIH/NIAMS K08, NIH/NIAMS R03

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# A New Petri Dish for General Internists

Ironically, as the nation's population ages and the concomitant need for skilled preventive care and chronic disease management increases, the rate of new physicians eschewing subspecialties for primary care is dismally low and plummeting.

To help reverse that trend, Shiva Chandrasekaran, MD, assistant professor, directs an innovative program within the Internal Medicine Residency Program to train and mentor primary care internists. Currently six residents—two enrolled in each year of the three-year residency—are participating in a program Chandrasekaran modeled after his primary care residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates.

Chandrasekaran attributes the paucity of generalists to both income disparities with subspecialists and current medical culture. "Primary care has acquired second-class status," he says. "Being a physician is now viewed as being an



Shiva Chandrasekaran, MD (fifth from left) with this past year's six general internal medicine residents (from left) John Podkowa, DO; Gina Simoncini, MD; Heather Silver, MD; Gelsey Lynn, MD; Rachel Rubin, MD; and Matthew Megill, MD.

forms and help the nurses whenever patients walk in and need care.' It's challenging at first, but it really gives them a sense of what it's like to be someone's doctor, as opposed to a doctor who happens to take care of them."

articles and participates in e-mail discussions, a speaker's program and faculty mentoring.

Because the need for primary care internists is particularly critical in underserved rural and urban areas, the native of western Pennsylvania says, "I think the need for change in this direction is becoming more accepted by both patients and physicians. My hope is that the residents we are training will become leaders in such a movement."

**A COMPETENT GENERALIST WHO KNOWS A PATIENT OFTEN CAN PROVIDE FAR BETTER COORDINATED CARE BECAUSE HE OR SHE CAN TAILOR THEIR APPROACH NOT JUST TO THE DISEASE BUT TO THE PERSON.**

— Shiva Chandrasekaran, MD

expert in performing a specific procedure rather than being a doctor for a group of patients you treat for decades.

"But we tell residents that if being someone's primary doctor, coordinating their care and being intellectually stimulated by anything that walks in the door excites you, we want you."

Chandrasekaran strongly promotes ownership of patient care. "I tell them from day 1 that 'You are your patients' doctor. You answer their phone calls, fill their prescriptions, complete

Each week residents see patients together and meet and conference with each other, Chandrasekaran and other internal medicine professors. Resident-led discussions focus on such topics as dealing with difficult patients, pay for performance, the role of prayer and the uncertainty of not always knowing what's going on with a patient—essential aspects of medicine that often aren't covered in lectures or textbooks.

Residents apply to the program before beginning their residencies. For other interested residents, the residency offers an interest group that shares

## More About Shiva Chandrasekaran, MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine  
General internal medicine section  
BA, University of Pennsylvania  
MD, University of Michigan  
Medical School

Postgraduate Education:  
Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard  
Vanguard Medical Associates

Interests: Chronic disease management,  
electronic health records

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## Temple appoints its second primary care chief resident



John Podkowa, DO

After completing his innovative primary care residency, in May John Podkowa, DO, became only the second chief resident focusing on ambulatory care at Temple University Hospital.

who has been a tremendous mentor to me and everyone in the program," says Podkowa. "We commiserate and learn from one another, and it's been inspiring to watch all the people I work with become better clinicians."

Podkowa attended Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine on a National Health Service Corps scholarship and—following his chief residency—will provide primary care in an underserved (and probably rural) area for the

NHC. As a result, he isn't facing the kind of medical school debts that force some young doctors into higher paying specialties.

"I like the fact I get to be someone's doctor, hopefully, for the majority of their life, and I love taking a history and diagnosing new problems. Patients don't walk into your office saying they have COPD or cardiomyopathy, they say I have shortness of breath or my shoes don't fit any more."

"Dr. Shiva Chandrasekaran is a great clinician

# PULSE

Newsletter of the  
Department of Medicine,  
Temple University  
School of Medicine

## Oncologist, Two Cardiologists Join School of Medicine Faculty

The Department of Medicine is pleased to announce the appointment of the following three distinguished physicians to the Temple University School of Medicine faculty.



SHEIKH ASIM ALI, MD

**Sheikh Asim Ali, MD**

**Oncologist**

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MD, The Aga Khan University Medical College, Karachi, Pakistan

**POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION:**

The Cleveland Clinic; University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

**SPECIAL INTEREST:** Pregnancy-associated breast cancer, GI cancer and novel approaches to treating brain cancer



CAROL I. DUFFY, DO, FACC

**Carol I. Duffy, DO, FACC**

**Cardiologist**

carol.duffy@tuhs.temple.edu

DO, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine

**POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION:**

Brentwood Hospital, Warrensville Heights, Ohio; Mount Sinai Medical Center, Cleveland, Ohio; The Cleveland Clinic Foundation

**SPECIAL INTEREST:** Echocardiography



BINDI K. SHAH, MD, FACC

**Bindi K. Shah, MD, FACC**

**Cardiologist**

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MD, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

**POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION:**

Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; New York Presbyterian Hospital

**SPECIAL INTEREST:** Electrophysiology