



# Pharmacy Faculty Share Their Expertise at CPU

BY LYDIA LEVIS BLOCH

In 2007, Thomas Dowling, PharmD, PhD, an associate professor at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, published a study in *Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation*—a leading research journal—analyzing the effects of smoking on kidney disease.

Enter Nanette Steinle, MD, a physician/researcher in the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Nutrition at the School of Medicine. After reading the article, she asked Dowling if he could help design a clinical trial to evaluate the effect of a nicotine patch on cardiovascular function.

Their collaboration is a perfect example of the promising interactions that are being generated by a new enterprise at the School of Pharmacy—the Clinical Pharmacology Unit (CPU).

Through the CPU, faculty from the School of Pharmacy provide expertise and services in the early and advanced clinical development of pharmaceutical compounds, new formulations, and new systems of drug delivery. Academic researchers, members of the pharmaceutical industry, small biotech companies, and contract research organizations (CROs) are availing themselves of the new service.

A division of Shin Nippon Biomedical Laboratories (SNBL) USA, located at the University of Maryland BioPark, is a preclinical CRO and one of CPU's latest clients. SNBL came to the CPU for its expertise in clinical pharmacology and pharmacokinetics.

Typically, CROs offer clients a wide range of pharmaceutical research services. Although the CPU does provide services that some other CROs offer, technically the University's new venture is not a CRO.

"The CPU is staffed by School of Pharmacy faculty with knowledge of human disease, chemistry, drug administration, and FDA guidance in drug development," says its director,

Kenneth Bauer, PharmD, PhD. Besides Bauer, other members of the CPU team include Dowling; School of Pharmacy Dean Natalie D. Eddington, PhD; and James Polli, PhD, professor and vice chair of academic affairs for the School's Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Although the CPU was launched in fall 2007, it's already becoming a "win-win" for the University. The cross-pollination of ideas is increasing exchanges between the CPU and the researchers at the Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center, as well as School of Medicine investigators from cardiology, endocrinology, and nephrology.

The work of the CPU allows the University to keep resources in house, which translates to saving money since it is usually more expensive to contract out testing, analyses, and clinical trials.

"Furthermore, another of the needs we're fulfilling is the National Institutes of Health's Roadmap for Medical Research that encourages the bench-to-bedside approach of translational research," says Bauer. The aim of researchers is to translate data obtained at the molecular level to clinical applications and research.

According to James L. Hughes, MBA, vice president for research and development at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), "The CPU is among the most entrepreneurial groups on campus. By providing both faculty and companies with first-rate services, it is significantly advancing translational research at UMB."

In the future, the CPU expects to increase its on- and off-campus client base and become self-sufficient through client fees only. Yet it will not lose sight of its overarching goal: to advance science through scholarship and publish its findings.

[www.pharmacy.umaryland.edu/pps/cpu](http://www.pharmacy.umaryland.edu/pps/cpu)