Local research team earns national honor

By JUSTIN MUSZYNSKI
STAFF WRITER

BRISTOL — A Bristol Hospital research team recently received national recognition for a poster it created outlining new medical criteria for treating patients with irritable bowel syndrome.

The poster, created by executive director Dr. Salam Zakko and his team, gives the framework for physicians interpreting the results of a lactulose breath test – a non-invasive test for people with IBS. It concluded that the test can predict, with reasonable accuracy, the response to antibiotic therapy in patients with IBS, thus avoiding the use of unnecessary medications and saving millions in health care dollars.

The team, from the Connecticut Gastroenterology Institute and Clinical Research Foundation of Bristol Hospital, received the Award of Distinction at the Digestive Disease Week Conference last month in Chicago. Of the over 1,000 research entries submitted, only about 10 awards were given out.

"More than 17,000 physicians and scientists from all around the world attended the conference so receiving this blue ribbon award is quite an honor for us," said Dr. Zakko, who is also a consultant gastroenterologist at Bristol Hospital and clinical professor of medicine with the University of Connecticut's School of Medicine. "This award shows that you don't have to be a major academic research center to produce this level of quality research."

Zakko credits his research team comprised of Rafid Kasir, Aaron Lee, Philip Zakko, Dr. Sachin Dhingra and Michael Adler, for the success of the project – which is called, "Criteria of a Lactulose Breath Test Highly Predictive of Response to Antibiotic Therapy in Patients with the Irritable Bowel Syndrome." Zakko said gathering data for the retrospective study began about five years ago.

"This award has resulted in us receiving inquiries from some major pharmaceutical and food corporations that are interested in funding a larger prospective study," said Zakko. "Funding of this magnitude will help take our research to the next level with the hope of ultimately benefiting patients who suffer from IBS."

The conference is the world's largest gathering of physicians and researchers in the fields of gastroenterology, hepatology, endoscopy and gastrointestinal surgery. IBS, which affects more than 15 percent of people in the United States, is a bowel function disorder that leads to symptoms such as, abdominal discomfort or pain, cramping, bloating and many others.

Recent research, co-authored by Zakko and published in the New England Journal of Medicine, shows that a short course of specific antibiotics can lead to the relief of IBS symptoms in a significant number of patients.

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Funds approved for Plainville senior center

SPECIAL TO THE PRESS

PLAINVILLE—Representative Betty Boukus (D- Plainville, New Britain) announced funding for the Plainville Senior Center was recently approved by the state Bond Commission. The $105,000 grant will fund improvements to the parking lot of the facility at 200 East St.

"The senior center parking lot has become a safety hazard," Boukus said. "I want to thank former Councilman Dan Hurley and Senior Center Executive Director Shawn Cohen for bringing this issue to my attention. I also want to thank Assistant Director Ronda Guberman and Shawn for all their hard work to make our senior center an important destination in town."

Rep. Boukus and Gov. Malloy celebrate the announcement of state funding for the Plainville Senior Center with members of the center recently.

In 2008 Boukus was able to secure a $1 million state small cities grant to help expand and renovate the senior center.

SOUTHINGTON BLOTTER

Southington Police report the following:

One person was charged with seat belt violation.

James P. Cardinal, 31, of LKA 550 Darling St., Southington was charged June 3 with 2nd degree breach of peace.

Sergio Martinez, 67, of 279 North Main St., Southington was charged June 4 with violation of a protective order.

Amy Rose Caminiti, 35, of 149 Hanover Ave., Meriden was charged June 4 with illegally altering a prescription, conspiracy to alter a prescription, risk of injury to a child, conspiracy to commit risk of injury to a child, 6th degree larceny and conspiracy to commit 6th degree larceny.

Lindsey Caminiti, 25, of 37 Wyndcrest Court, Southington was charged June 4 with illegally altering a prescription, conspiracy to alter a prescription, risk of injury to a child, conspiracy to commit risk of injury to a child, 6th degree larceny and conspiracy to commit 6th degree larceny.

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CORRECTIONS

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