

Lifetime Award In Genetics Presented To Peter H. Byers By March Of Dimes

16 Mar 2008

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A member of the team that established guidelines for the emerging field of molecular genetic pathology, which provides new ways to diagnose disease, is the 2008 recipient of the March of Dimes/Colonel Harland Sanders Award for lifetime achievement in the field of genetic sciences.

Michael Katz, MD, March of Dimes senior vice president of Research and Global Programs, presented the award to Peter H. Byers, MD, of the Departments of Pathology and Medicine at the University of Washington, at the Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting of the American College of Medical Genetics held here.

The specialty of Molecular Genetic Pathology was established in 1999 by the Assembly of the American Board of Medical Specialties and is a joint specialty of the American Board of Medical Genetics and the American Board of Pathology. It combines the principles and technologies of molecular biology and genetics and applies them to clinical situations

Dr. Byers' is known for his ability to integrate clinical knowledge and molecular genetic analysis in inherited disorders that involve collagen genes, providing needed information to guide treatment of connective tissue disorders.

Dr. Byers' research has focused on collagen gene mutations and the protein abnormalities they produce to explain the cause and progression of disorders that affect the skin, bone, blood vessels and ligaments. Mutations in collagen genes can cause serious diseases such as forms of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, characterized by fragile skin, unstable joints, and early death from arterial, bowel and uterine rupture; and osteogenesis imperfecta, (brittle bone disease), a disorder in which bones break easily, sometimes from only slight pressure.

More information about Dr. Byers' work can be found online at:
<http://depts.washington.edu/medgen/faculty/byers.html>

Dr. Byers began his career at the University of Washington School of Medicine in 1974 as a Fellow in Medical Genetics and Biochemistry, was appointed to the faculty in 1977 and named a full professor in 1986. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a member of both the American and European Societies of Human Genetics, the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the American Society for Investigative Pathology. He was Editor-in-Chief of *The American Journal of Human Genetics* from 1993 to 1999. He served as president of the American Society of Human Genetics in 2005 and in 1997 of the American Board of Medical Genetics, the accrediting and certifying body for the Medical Genetics profession.

The March of Dimes/Colonel Harland Sanders Award for Lifetime Achievement in the field of genetic sciences is given annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the genetic sciences.

Article adapted by Medical News Today from original press release.

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies, the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies. For the latest resources and information, visit <http://www.marchofdimes.com/> or <http://nacerasno.org/>.

Source: Elizabeth Lynch
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Article URL: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/100620.php>

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