

**PAIN KILLER:** The nation's two biggest pain societies recently issued new guidelines on the long-term use of potentially addictive opioids. Dr. Gilbert Fanciullo, a pain specialist at Dartmouth, was one of the authors of the guidelines.



## 'PEZ LADY' DISPENSES JOY

You could not believe the nose prints up against my window," says Kate Clay, the director of DHMC's Center for Shared Decision Making. When her office was on the Medical Center's main mall, kids and grownups alike would press their noses to her office window to admire her colorful collection of PEZ dispensers. Her office is no longer in as prominent a location, but she still displays a rotating, seasonally appropriate selection there (at left are some of her spring-theme dispensers).



Over the last 20 years, Clay has collected more than 350 of the whimsical candy dispensers, which feature the heads of cartoon, movie, or holiday characters. Total strangers will often strike up conversations with "the PEZ lady," and children are delighted when she lets them choose a dispenser for themselves from her bag of extras. She once gave a Smurfs dispenser to a cancer patient whose wife was decorating a Smurfs-theme room for him at home. "The one thing he didn't have was a Smurf PEZ," says Clay. "I did."

Although "people are here because they're ill," she observes, "a little comic relief brings a lot of joy." L.S.C.

## Grant income goes down as NIH funding falls

Due in large part to decreased funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and corporations, DMS researchers experienced an 11% decline in grant and contract income in fiscal year 2008. Overall, DMS brought in about \$111 million in funding, down from about \$125 million in FY07.

"The biggest reason is the National Institutes of Health budget," says Dr. William Green, the dean of DMS. He notes that the NIH budget has remained flat over the past several years, while the cost of conducting research has risen, resulting in a net loss in money available. Jennifer Friend, the director of research support services at DMS, says that it's a difficult time to obtain funding. "The grant environment is much more competitive for our researchers," she says. "So it's taking multiple iterations and resubmissions for people to get funded."

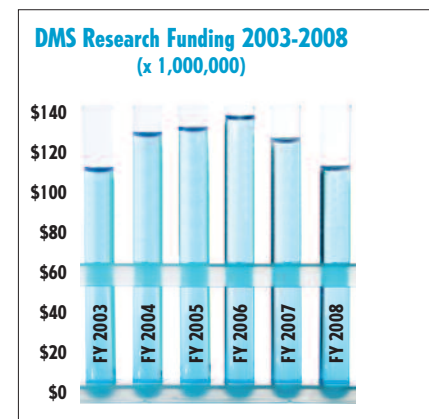
**Stimulus:** These effects have been felt elsewhere as well. The acting director of the NIH, Dr. Raynard Kington, has said that thousands of meritorious proposals have been denied funding in recent years because of a lack of funds. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), a supporter of biomedical research, pushed for the NIH to receive supplementary funding as part of the recently passed economic stimulus bill. "The National Institutes of Health have been starved recently," he said in a statement. (See the

"Facts & Figures" box on page 9 for more on NIH funding.)

**Gains:** But some DMS departments did make gains in FY08. The Department of Radiology, for example, saw its research income more than double. The Department of Community and Family Medicine saw an increase of about \$2.5 million, and income for the Department of Microbiology and Immunology rose by more than \$1 million.

Like other medical school and biomedical research institutions across the country, DMS may stand to gain further from the economic stimulus bill. The final version of the bill appropriated an extra \$10.4 billion to the NIH, more than \$8 billion of which was directed to be used to fund research.

Of course, Green notes, how that money will be disbursed by the NIH remains a crucial question. NIH director Kington has said that one way the agency will



DMS's research income reflects the decline in recent years in the NIH budget.

use this money is to fund meritorious proposals that could not previously be funded. The NIH also plans to issue calls for new proposals.

However, both new grants and earlier proposals will receive only two years of funding, rather than the standard four years associated with the NIH's so-called RO1 grants. (RO1 grants are awarded to a single investigator, in contrast to the agency's multi-investigator or multidisciplinary award mechanisms.)

"There are a lot of things we can't control," says Friend, noting that questions remain about how funding for biomedical research will change in years to come. That's why she thinks it's important to focus on what DMS can control—ensuring that every grant proposal has the best possible chance of success.

**Opportunities:** Green says, for example, that there are opportunities for DMS to gain ground in multidisciplinary areas, like the two Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence already funded at DMS by the NIH, in lung biology and immunology. "I think we need to do a better job at trying to take advantage of those opportunities," he says.

At this point, Friend cautions, it might be a bit late for recent changes to affect funding for the current fiscal year, but she is hopeful that things will get better given the Obama administration's professed commitment to scientific research. "We certainly have reason to be optimistic that the environment will improve," she says.

AMOS ESTY

## 'POETIC' PROSE WINS PRIZE

A piece of prose about a poet—the cover story in the Spring 2008 issue of DARTMOUTH MEDICINE (pictured below)—has won the top writing prize of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). The article, about former New Hampshire and U.S. poet laureate Donald Hall, received the AAMC's Robert G. Fenley Award of Excellence in the Solicited Articles category.



Titled "The Poetry of Caregiving," the story was written by freelancer Susan Salter Reynolds, a staff writer at the *Los Angeles Times*, for whose pages she has also written about Hall. The focus of the piece was the death from leukemia of Hall's wife (and fellow poet) Jane Kenyon, especially the way he grew into his caregiving role during her illness. Both Hall and Kenyon had high praise for the care she received at DHMC. (See [dartmed.dartmouth.edu/sp08/f02](http://dartmed.dartmouth.edu/sp08/f02) to read the article.)

The AAMC judges said of Reynolds's story: "Loved the details. Really well done—you could hear his voice. The tone matches the subject matter—at times poetic." The award will be presented at an AAMC meeting in late March. A.S.

## INVESTIGATOR INSIGHT



In this section, we highlight the human side of biomedical investigation, putting a few questions to a researcher at DMS-DHMC.

**James DiRenzo, Ph.D.**

**Assistant Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology**

*DiRenzo studies the biology of mammary stem cells with the goal of determining if these cells are the site of breast cancer initiation. He is scientific director of the Comprehensive Breast Program at the Norris Cotton Cancer Center and came to DMS in 2001.*

**When you were very young what did you want to be?**

I was convinced that I would be a park ranger at Acadia National Park.

**Are there misconceptions people have about your field?**

The minute some people hear the words "stem cells" they think of the political and cultural controversies surrounding research involving human embryonic stem cells. Currently my work does not involve embryonic stem cells, and I really try to avoid the debates surrounding this area because they are fueled by intense personal beliefs that are very unlikely to change.



**What is the greatest joy in your work?**

Training the people in my lab and sharing in their success.

**And the greatest frustration?**

The amount of time I spend finding and retaining funding. The last several years have been difficult in terms of federal funding, but I'm fortunate that there are many private foundations that support breast cancer research, and they have been exceedingly generous.

**Of what professional accomplishment are you most proud?**

My lab was among the first to isolate mammary stem cells and show that they are capable of regenerating a functional mammary gland. I still love doing that experiment.

**If you could travel anywhere that you've never been, where would you choose to go?**

Patagonia. There is such an incredible variety of terrain, and between the active volcanoes and the constant flow of the glaciers you almost get the sense that this is a part of the planet that is still evolving in a largely undisturbed way.

**What about you would surprise most people?**

I occasionally take a short nap in my office. I get up very early to work on papers or grants, and as a result I tend to hit a wall around midafternoon. For me, a 20-minute nap is the only way to salvage any productivity in the latter part of the day. I guess it is one of those rare times when professionalism and productivity diverge.

**Do you always have a working hypothesis in the lab?**

Yes! I find it hard to develop good, focused experiments without one. The danger, of course, is that a hypothesis can start to seem so attractive that it gets transformed into a model before there is sufficient data to warrant that. The risk is that you "marry the model," which can blind you to specific pieces of data because they don't fit the model. In the past three to four years there have been many surprises that serve as a reminder to remain critical of our models.

**What do you admire most in other people?**

Passion and determination. It amazes me what a single person can achieve when they get behind something they truly believe in.

**What three people would you like to have over for dinner?**

I'm lucky because I get to have dinner with the three most important people in my life every night. But if we're talking about guests, I would choose Barack Obama, Lance Armstrong, and Greg Mortenson. Anyone who's unfamiliar with Mortenson should read *Three Cups of Tea*.

**Hollywood is doing a movie of your life. Who plays you?**

I really like Kevin Spacey because of his versatility, though I think that versatility would be pushed to its limit in an effort to make what I do seem glamorous enough for Hollywood.