MDADVANCE ANNOUNCES 2012 RECIPIENTS OF PRESTIGIOUS EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE AWARDS

Paola Leone, PhD, of UMDNJ's School of Osteopathic Medicine and Resident of Cherry Hill Among Honorees


The Excellence in Medicine Awards are named after Edward J. Ill, MD, a New Jersey physician who was a pioneer in promoting continuing education in ways that set the national standard. Every year since 1939, exemplary New Jersey physicians and leaders whose dedication to education, research and public service have significantly impacted the delivery of healthcare in the state and around the nation have been honored. This annual event has been sponsored by MDAdvantage Insurance Company of New Jersey since 2003.

Patricia A. Costante, Chairman and CEO of MDAdvantage, stated, “MDAdvantage is honored to sponsor this prestigious event. Once again this year, we look forward to recognizing Excellence in Medicine Scholarship Honor Roll members, such as Kern, Augustine, Conroy & Schoppmann, PC, who share our commitment to investing in the future of medicine in New Jersey and to improving access to healthcare for New Jersey residents.”

Among those being honored this year is Paola Leone, PhD, Associate Professor of Cell Biology and Director of the Cell and Gene Therapy Center at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) – School of Osteopathic Medicine and resident of Cherry Hill, who will receive the Outstanding Medical Research Scientist Award for Basic Biomedical Research. The award is presented to an individual who has carried out biomedical research leading to important advances in biotechnology or in the understanding of disease processes.

Also being honored are:

- **Outstanding Medical Educator Award**: Jeffrey S. Abrams, MD, Medical Director, Princeton Orthopaedic Associates, PA, Chief, Shoulder Surgery, SportsMedicine Princeton, Clinical Professor, Seton Hall University School of Graduate Education, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and attending surgeon, University Medical Center at Princeton.

- **Outstanding Medical Executive Award**: William F. Owen, Jr., MD, former president of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ).
Edward J. Ill Physician’s Award®: Jeffrey C. Brenner, MD, Executive Director, Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers and Director, Institute of Urban Health at Cooper Hospital.

Verice M. Mason Community Service Leader Award: Executive Director Judy Donlen, RN, DNSc, JD, on behalf of the Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative.

Outstanding Medical Research Scientist Award for Clinical Research: Jeffrey L. Carson, MD, Richard C. Reynolds Professor of Medicine and Chief, Division of General Internal Medicine, UMDNJ – Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Peter W. Rodino, Jr., Citizen’s Award®: Eve E. Slater, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and former Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Paul J. Hirsch, MD, Chairman of the Edward J. Ill Excellence in Medicine Foundation, stated, “Once again, we are proud to acknowledge the many accomplishments and contributions of this year’s honorees, and are looking forward to an outstanding awards program. Profits from the event will be dedicated to fund scholarships for six extremely talented and deserving students who represent the future of New Jersey healthcare.”

This year’s awards will be presented at the Edward J. Ill Excellence in Medicine Awards ceremony on May 2, 2012 at Greenacres Country Club in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. To participate in the 2012 Excellence in Medicine Awards by purchasing tickets, an Honor Roll sponsorship or an advertisement in the awards journal, contact the Edward J. Ill Excellence in Medicine Foundation at 609-803-2350 or visit www.EJIawards.org.

Paola Leone, PhD

Paola Leone, PhD, is Associate Professor of Cell Biology and Director of the Cell and Gene Therapy Center at UMDNJ – School of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Leone’s research focuses on characterizing white matter diseases and identifying mechanisms to repair white matter and prevent disease progression. In 1987, she earned her PhD in Neuroscience from the University of Padua, Italy. During the past two decades, she built expertise in the clinical application of novel therapeutics to Canavan disease, a fatal and progressive pediatric brain disease, and other neurological conditions. Dr. Leone received federal approval and sponsorship to conduct the first clinical trial in history using gene therapy for a neurodegenerative disease. This was a benchmark project that has been widely cited and implemented worldwide by other investigators. She has been able to contribute to the characterization of the natural history of the disease and has identified a novel role of the enzyme involved in Canavan disease in myelination.

Dr. Leone has published data regarding the clinical benefit of a pharmacological therapy beneficial to Canavan patients and in doing so has changed the clinical management of patients newly
diagnosed with Canavan disease. Dr. Leone’s work has been broadly recognized worldwide. She is the recipient of many prestigious distinctions, including the UNESCO Career Achievement Award, the Canavan Research Illinois Scientist of the Year Award, the Woman of the Year-Lions Club Award and the Foundation of UMDNJ Excellence in Research Award. She was also nominated for the International Rare Disease Day 2011 Hall of Fame.