



UT Tyler School of Medicine Professor Awarded \$300,000 to Advance Research in Infectious Lung Disease

TYLER, Texas (May 18, 2023) – Dr. Jennifer R. Honda, the inaugural director for the Center for Mycobacterial Treatment and Discovery, received a \$300,000 Science and Technology Acquisition and Retention Award from UT System.

“Dr. Honda’s expertise and accomplishments in the field of nontuberculous mycobacterial diseases make her a significant asset to the school. Already, she is a visionary leader who is changing the way we think about environmentally acquired infections,” said Dr. Brigham Willis, School of Medicine dean. “The STARs award will allow her to expand her research capabilities to address these critical health issues. We are thrilled to have her expertise and leadership on our team at UT Tyler.”

Nontuberculous mycobacterial infections are an emerging public health threat that is growing in importance globally. This award will purchase lab equipment for Honda’s growing NTM disease research program. Her center will focus on recruiting and developing the brightest new researchers to the growing field of NTM to solve the most pressing problems related to this global infectious lung disease.

“I’m very thankful to be a recipient of the STARs award and look forward to collaborating with my colleagues in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Biology and School of Medicine and contributing to the improvement of health care in East Texas and beyond. My goal is to make UT Tyler *the* destination institution for studying NTM infections,” said Honda.

A National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation funded researcher and renowned expert in the field of NTM, Honda’s research program is also supported by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation with numerous awards from the American Thoracic Society. She was named an Innovator in NTM Science and Medicine by the European Respiratory Society.

Honda joined UT Tyler in April. She obtained her Bachelor of Science from Colorado State University, Master of Science in Microbiology from the University of Hawai’i at Manoa and her Doctor of Philosophy in Microbiology from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. She currently also serves as an adjunct graduate faculty for the Tropical Medicine and Medical Microbiology Program at the University of Hawai’i.

The University of Texas System uses STARs awards to provide seed funding, matched locally, to recruit world-class faculty, acquire equipment and upgrade research facilities. Awardees are nominated by their respective institutions and must show evidence of excellence in research.

With a mission to improve educational and health care outcomes for East Texas and beyond, UT Tyler offers more than 80 undergraduate and graduate programs to 10,000 students. UT Tyler recently merged with The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler (now known as UT Tyler Health Science Center). Through its alignment with UT Tyler Health Science Center (HSC) and

UT Health East Texas, UT Tyler has unified these entities to serve Texas with quality education, cutting-edge research and excellent patient care. Classified by Carnegie as a doctoral research institution and by U.S. News & World Report as a national university, UT Tyler has campuses in Tyler, Longview, Palestine and Houston.

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