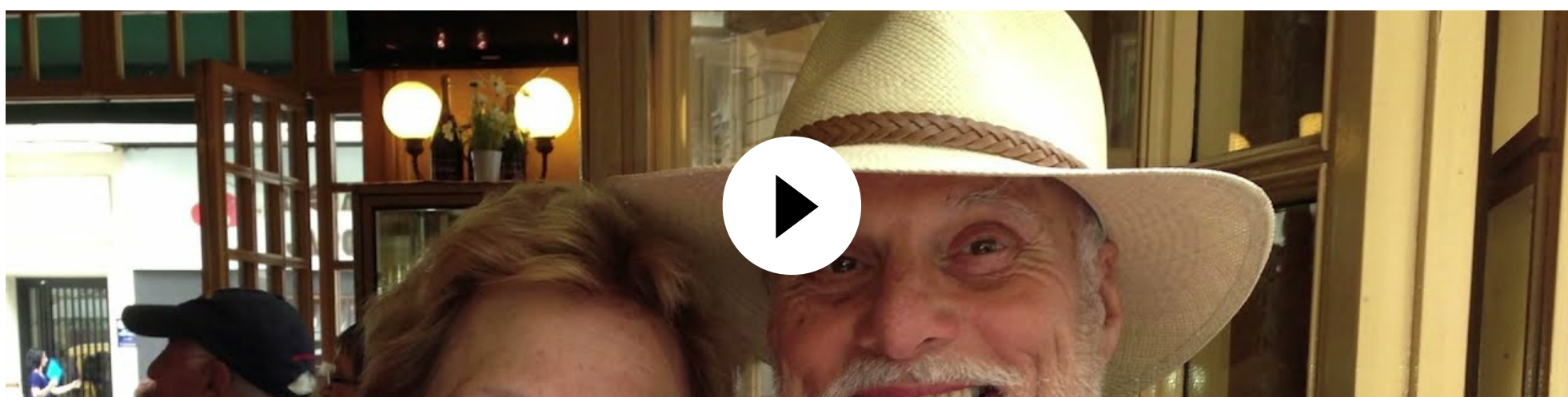


SDM Shout Out

Weekly News Updates for SDM Faculty, Staff and Students

SDM'S Department of Orthodontics Renovates the Dr. John Cunat Library and Conference Room



Recently, the School of Dental Medicine completed the renovations to the Dr. John Cunat Library and Conference Room in the Department of Orthodontics.

The renovations were made possible by a generous gift from Dr. and Mrs. A. James Felli, an alumnus of the school and postgraduate program in Orthodontics.

The room is named after Dr. John Cunat, who had a long, industrious career at the school and a wide-reaching impact on many people, including Dr. Felli.

Gifts like this enable the school to continue with construction, as most state-funded construction at the university has been halted due to the pandemic.

SDM has secured nearly \$400,000 to help with further renovations for the Department of Orthodontic's clinic and additional department spaces.

SDM continues to raise funds to support not only renovations but also to support scholarships, research, facility initiatives and much more. To date, the school has raised nearly \$29 million, through the Boldly Buffalo campaign.

Thanks to the many donors, like Dr. Felli, who have contributed to our on-going success.

UB Awarded \$1.5 million to Reprogram White Blood Cells in Fight Against Oral Cancer



Keith Kirkwood, Associate Dean for Innovation and Technology

Veterans are two times more likely to develop head and neck cancers than non-veterans

The University at Buffalo received a \$1.5 million grant from the United States Department of Defense to develop new therapies that help reduce chronic inflammation and immunosuppression in oral cancers.

Through the three-year grant, the research will center on a type of white blood cell called a macrophage that – after recruitment by tumor cells – triggers uncontrolled inflammation, which suppresses the body's immune response and lowers the effectiveness of anticancer therapies.

The researchers aim to reprogram the macrophages by targeting genes that regulate inflammation. By lowering inflammation, oral cancers will become more sensitive to new and traditional chemotherapies.

If successful, the findings could help increase survivorship of oral cancers, which claim the life of roughly half of all patients within five years, according to Keith Kirkwood, DDS, PhD, principal investigator, Centennial Endowed Chair and professor of oral biology in the UB School of Dental Medicine.

“A change in behavior in the white blood cells within the tumor itself removes the ‘brakes’ in the system, causing more oral cancer growth,” says Kirkwood, also associate dean for innovation and technology transfer in the UB School of Dental Medicine. “We propose to reprogram the white blood cells to regain control of the brakes.”

[Click here to read full article](#)

Dr. Stephen Abel to Lead Community Initiative Programming



Stephen Abel, Senior Director of Community and Professional Initiatives



Paula Fischer, Project Coordinator for Rural Dentistry and School-Based Programming

Recently, the School of Dental Medicine received a \$780,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to expand its successful S-Miles to Go dental outreach programming through the addition of a second, drivable mobile dental clinic. With the addition of the second dental unit, the S-Miles to Go program will be in a position to better meet the service requests from our communities.

Stepping out of retirement, Stephen Abel, DDS, MSD, returns to lead the S-Miles to Go and other new community initiatives. The new mobile dental unit will meet the needs of underserved populations in Western New York, including senior citizens, veterans and persons living with disabilities. It will also provide SDM students with much needed experiential learning opportunities in caring for the most vulnerable populations in the region.

"I am happy and proud to be working to expand our community programming here in Erie County. This new mobile dental van which will bring dental services into the communities of the most-neediest in Buffalo and Erie County," states Abel. "We anticipate the new van will be heading out throughout our area by December 2021. We are very grateful for the generosity of individual donors and foundations that make this possible"

As Senior Director of Community and Professional Initiatives, Dr. Abel will partner with Paula Fischer, SDM's Project Coordinator for Rural dentistry and School-Based Programming, as they seek out new collaborations and funding opportunities. As an example, the S-Miles to Go program will be stationing our current mobile dental unit at Arc of Genesee Orleans. Arc of Genesee Orleans is an organization that promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Starting next month, the SDM will begin offering services at Arc of Genesee Orleans to their clients who face significant barriers accessing dental services. To learn more about Arc of Genesee Orleans, go to <https://thearc.org/>.

Both Dr. Abel and Ms. Fischer are actively working with community agencies/partners to identify additional sites for the new MDU to visit. To date they have entered into discussions with outreach coordinators of several SDM student clubs along with Batavia School District, Henry Schein, Fidelis Health Insurance, Knox Presbyterian Church and Colgate's Bright Smiles, Bright Futures program.

Please join me in welcoming back Dr. Abel and wishing him well in his new position.

If you have any news you would like to share, please contact Kelli at natale@buffalo.edu.

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