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By Ron Hartung
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FSU PROFESSOR NAMED TOP U.S. CLINICIAN IN GERIATRICS

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The Florida State University College of Medicine, one of the nation's leading educators in geriatric medicine, now also has the nation's top geriatrician of 2012.

Dr. Niharika Suchak, an associate professor in the [Department of Geriatrics](#), has been named Clinician of the Year by the American Geriatrics Society (AGS). She will receive the award in May at the group's annual scientific meeting.

"I cannot imagine another clinician more deserving of this award than Dr. Suchak," said Barbara Resnick, president of the AGS. "She has an innate ability to guide patients and their families through the maze of complex medical decision-making and considers the patient's individual needs, which is essential when caring for older adults."

Teaching students how to care for older adults is a key part of the [College of Medicine](#)'s mission. Florida State has one of the few medical schools in the country with a separate geriatrics department. In addition, it integrates geriatrics throughout its four-year curriculum, because all physicians — not just geriatricians — are likely to provide care for older patients. For that reason, all students, no matter what specialty they want to pursue, complete a full rotation in geriatrics.

"Geriatrics faculty have a strong presence in all of the doctoring courses," Suchak said. "The doctoring continuum is the strong thread that holds together the education received by the medical students throughout their four-year curriculum. I expect geriatrics to continue to lead the way in the evolution of innovative educational methods that maintain a focus on compassionate and advanced patient-centered health care."

Suchak received her medical degree at the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune, India, and completed her residency and fellowship training at Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore. She has a master's degree in clinical epidemiology from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene & Public Health. She is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in internal medicine, geriatric medicine, and hospice and palliative medicine.

Suchak was intensely involved in graduate and postgraduate medical education in geriatrics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in OklahomaCity and later at the Hackensack University Medical Center (in affiliation with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey). Dr. Kenneth Brummel-Smith, the department chair who brought Suchak to Florida State in March 2011, was not surprised by this latest honor.

“We knew we were getting a gem when we recruited Dr. Suchak from New Jersey,” Brummel-Smith said. “It was the first time that each reference began their letter by saying, ‘I really hate to be writing this letter because we don’t want to lose her.’ In fact, two of the letters lamented that their biggest regret was that they would be losing the doctor who took care of their parents! We couldn’t be happier having her at FSU and are very proud of her accomplishments.”

Suchak said she was “deeply humbled” to receive the AGS award.

“I wish to share this recognition with my family, my mentors, my colleagues, my trainees, and foremost the patients, families and caregivers that I have had the privilege to serve,” she said. “A patient-physician relationship is a sacred relationship, and I am very grateful for the trust that my patients have placed in me. I will continue to work hard to earn the honor that this award signifies to our community.”

To obtain a photo of Suchak, send an email to news-office@unicomm.fsu.edu. For additional information, contact her at (850) 645-8440 or niharika.suchak@med.fsu.edu.

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