



## SPOTLIGHT ON: GRAVES' DISEASE & THYROID FOUNDATION

It's been a busy year for the Graves' Disease & Thyroid Foundation!

In April 2016, the GDATF headed to Baltimore, MD to host a patient education event and to exhibit at the annual meeting of the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons. Endocrinologist Dr. David Cooper, MD, Director, Thyroid Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medicine and Dawn M. Elfenbein, MD, MPH, Clinical Instructor, Surgery, University of California, Irvine School of Medicine fielded questions from patients on Graves' disease, autoimmunity, and thyroid eye disease. Attendees traveled from New York, New Jersey, and Washington DC to attend.

In May, the GDATF hosted a full-day patient education event at University of California Shiley Eye Institute. The first part of the event was devoted to presentations on Graves' eye disease (also called thyroid eye disease) from physicians at UC San Diego Shiley Eye Institute. Presentations included:

- "Ophthalmic manifestations of thyroid eye disease and update on medical therapy" from Bobby S. Korn, MD, PhD
- "Orbital and Eyelid Surgery in Thyroid Eye Disease" from Don O. Kikkawa, MD
- "Strabismus in Thyroid Eye Disease" from David B. Granet, MD

The presentations on thyroid eye disease were followed with a question and answer session featuring all three presenters.

The morning session concluded with two patient panels, featuring patients who were living with Graves' disease and thyroid eye disease.

The afternoon presentations focused on treatment

options for Graves' disease. An attendee question and answer session followed each presentation. Presentations included:

- "An Endocrinologist's view of Graves Disease" from Karen McCowen, MD
- "Radioactive Iodine for Diagnosis and Treatment of Graves' Disease" from Farshad Moradi, MD, PhD
- "Thyroid Surgery for Graves Disease" from Kevin Brumund, MD

All three afternoon presenters are affiliated with University of California San Diego.

The program concluded with a support group session where attendees were allowed to discuss their questions and concerns in a small group setting. There were separate groups for Graves' patients, thyroid eye disease patients, and for family members of patients. Facilitators were GDATF Board Co-Chairs Steve and Kathleen Flynn and GDATF Executive Director/CEO Kimberly Dorris.

Out of state participants traveled from as far as Oregon and North Dakota. Attendees had an opportunity to connect outside of the formal sessions over dinner at some excellent local restaurants. Attendees called the program "informative" and even "life-changing". We are grateful to the County of San Diego for helping to fund this important event via their Community Reinforcement Program!

In September, the American Thyroid Association hosted its 86th Annual Meeting in Denver, CO. The GDATF had an opportunity to attend presentations from Dr. Rebecca S. Bahn and Dr. Michele Morino on thyroid eye disease; by Dr. David Cooper and Dr. Susan Mandel on Graves' disease in pregnancy; and by Dr. Douglas Ross and Dr. George Kahaly on



## SPOTLIGHT ON: Graves' Disease & Thyroid Foundation, continued

the pros and cons of methimazole versus definitive therapy for Graves' disease. On the final Saturday of the meeting, the ATA and the Alliance for Patient Education hosted a public forum for patients and family members.

In October, we headed to Chicago, IL for the Fall Symposium of the American Society of Ophthalmic, Plastic, and Reconstructive Surgery (ASOPRS). This meeting gave us the opportunity to let eye surgeons know about our education and support services, as living with thyroid eye disease is challenging both physically and emotionally. We also hosted a patient support group meeting at Dollop, a local coffee shop.

The following week, our friends at ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors, Inc. invited us to host a satellite symposium on Graves' disease and thyroid eye disease as part of their annual patient conference in Los Angeles. This was a successful collaboration between fellow members of the ATA's Alliance for Patient Education! Several conference attendees stopped by to listen to the presentation or to pick up materials for friends and family members. We are grateful to ThyCa for the opportunity, as well as to the presenters who donated their time on a Saturday to

### GDATF Board Updates

The Graves' Disease & Thyroid Foundation extends our best wishes to Dr. Lawrence C. Wood, who announced his retirement from the GDATF Board of Directors after serving two three-year terms. GDATF Founder and Chair Emeritus Nancy Hord Patterson, Ph.D., noted, "Dr. Wood has been a pioneer in the area of patient support and education for decades. He is known and respected throughout the world, and has been my/our friend, mentor and colleague

help promote patient education: Dr. Raymond Douglas (speaking about thyroid eye disease), Dr. Ira Lesser (speaking about the emotional aspects of thyroid dysfunction), and Dr. Andrew Gianoukakis (speaking about Graves' disease treatments).

We have some exciting events in the works for 2017! To get the latest news, please visit us at [gdatf.org](http://gdatf.org), follow us on social media, or sign up for our free monthly e-newsletter by e-mailing [info@gdatf.org](mailto:info@gdatf.org).

In addition to in-person patient education events and local support group meetings, GDATF advocates are available to speak one-on-one with patients and family members. Our staff will not give medical advice (such as interpreting labs or making treatment recommendations), but we are happy to share general information and resources. Advocates can be contacted at 877-643-3123 or [info@gdatf.org](mailto:info@gdatf.org). We are also active on Facebook and Twitter, and we have an online support forum on our website at [gdatf.org](http://gdatf.org). (There is no cost to participate in the online forum, although users who wish to post or reply on the forum must register with a valid e-mail address.)

through all these years." As we say a fond farewell to Dr. Wood, Carla DiMare and Ashok Bhaseen join the GDATF as the organization's newest Board members. Carla is a trial attorney in California and Massachusetts who specializes in civil litigation and social justice issues. Ashok worked with Abbott Pharmaceuticals (Canada and International) for 12 years and has served as the Global President of Thyroid Federation International since 2011.

— **Kimberly Dorris, Executive Director/CEO**  
 Graves' Disease and Thyroid Foundation