



**Boston University
School of Medicine**

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Dear Selection committee chair,

It is my distinct honor to introduce and nominate Dr. Jean Francis for the **DOM Clinical Innovations Award**. Dr. Francis is an Assistant Professor of Medicine and faculty in the Renal Section, Department of Medicine at Boston University School of Medicine. Besides directing the kidney transplant team at BMC and providing an exceptional care without exception for post-transplant patients, he continues to inspire medical resident and fellows with fascinating nuances of renal medicine and transplant immunology for which he has received 'best teacher' recognition from DOM in 2015. Our renal transplant program has thrived under the able guidance of Dr. Francis and prospered beyond the boundaries of BMC and now he directs the pancreas transplant program at Brigham and Women's Hospital. However, I do not intend to nominate Dr. Francis for this award, as BMC is blessed to have several exceptional clinicians and educators who have the above credentials. Dr. Francis has distinguished himself for single-handedly conceiving and developing a program of Thrombotic Microrangiopathic Hemolytic anemia (TMA), an onerous disorder with a grave prognosis.

As you may know that TMA is a multifactorial disease with etiologies spanning from genetic disorders to acquired autoantibodies and malignancies or medications. Delay in diagnosis and initiation of therapy results in permanent renal and neurological damage. Inspired by such a case whose diagnosis was delayed for weeks even being at an ICU at BMC, Dr. Francis vouched to build a multidisciplinary team of relevant clinicians such as nephrologists and hematologists. He garnered support from Drs. Mark Sloan, Karen Quillian (Hematology), Craig Gordon (Renal) and built a TMA task force, a dedicated team who streamlines the management of such complex cases. In fact, TMA taskforce in action has already facilitated management of a handful of patients over a short span of 3-4 months. The education arm of TMA taskforce has substantially enhanced the awareness on this campus by him organizing an international mini symposium (<http://www.bumc.bu.edu/cme/educational-opportunities/live-meetings/tma-symposium/agenda/>) with world-leaders in TMA such as Prof. Marina Norris, Italy, etc. His grand round on TMA in collaboration with Drs. Mark Sloan and David Salant was exemplary of a combined basic and translational platform at BUMC.

Despite the health impact of this disease, pathogenesis of TMA is poorly understood. To fill this knowledge gap, the TMA task force recently engineered a third arm 'Research arm' under the umbrella of ARC with co-directorship of Prof. Katya Ravid, myself and Elaine Hylek, and has

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developed an integrative program of TMA task force. This program is building a clinical registry of TMA patients and biobank of their blood, plasma, serum and genomic material, a rich resource that would help several investigators to gain a deeper understanding of its pathogenesis and help their research and attract pharma funding. Inspired by these efforts, Dr. Francis has been invited as a TMA speaker from several prominent institutions including BWH, Tufts Medical Center, Brown Uni. Med Ctr. and Univ. of Pittsburgh, etc. Propelling the flag and mission of BMC, his charming personality and effective reasoning have already convinced those institutions to collaborate with TMA ARC for sharing the data and referring patients to our TMA registry, a vision of building a regional registry of TMA, which Dr. Francis had envisioned for quite some time.

It takes 'a village to build such a program' but behind that stands an individual, whose idea and tireless effort has shaped this dream into reality. Dr. Francis' efforts epitomize clinical innovation, which spans from better patient management, education for our trainees and a rich resource for our researchers, with which he has placed BMC on the national platform. He is worthy of this award.

Regards,

Vipul Chitalia, MD PhD