

Tulane rheumatologist named Doctor of the Year by Scleroderma Foundation

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Lesley Ann Saketkoo, MD, addresses the Scleroderma Foundation at its annual gathering. (Photo provided by the Scleroderma Foundation.)

Lesley Ann Saketkoo, MD, an associate professor of clinical medicine at Tulane University School of Medicine, has been named Doctor of the Year by the [Scleroderma Foundation](#). The award recognizes leadership and commitment to the community battling scleroderma, a disabling and life-limiting multi-organ autoimmune disease with progressive lung, heart, kidney, gastrointestinal tract and/or vascular involvement.

Saketkoo is an internationally recognized researcher, educator and clinician in scleroderma/systemic sclerosis, sarcoidosis, myositis, pulmonary hypertension and interstitial lung disease. She was principal investigator of a large study that identified the minimal set of outcome measures for connective tissue disease-related Interstitial Lung Disease and also for Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis for use in clinical trial. She is also the principal investigator for multiple clinical trials and registries in scleroderma, sarcoidosis, pulmonary fibrosis and pulmonary hypertension.

“As an expert in scleroderma care, Dr. Saketkoo is a great champion of the Foundation’s mission,” said Robert Riggs, CEO of the Scleroderma Foundation. “Her commitment to advancing patient care through clinical research and patient education helps those living with the disease become stronger advocates for themselves in the ever-changing healthcare environment.”

In 2011, Saketkoo established the Scleroderma and Sarcoidosis Patient Care and Research Center between Tulane and Louisiana State University, which received international recognition as a “center of excellence” by the European Scleroderma Trials and Research Group (EUSTAR), the Scleroderma Foundation, and the Scleroderma Clinical Trials Consortium (SCTC). Saketkoo also established the Pulmonary Hypertension clinic program at LSU, which is now the LSU-Tulane collaborative Comprehensive Pulmonary Hypertension Center at University Medical Center, a Pulmonary Hypertension Association certified center of excellence, where she is co-director.

"Raising awareness about scleroderma is a life-saving act," Saketkoo said. “Local patients with scleroderma are heroes in this regard – they work so hard to reach out to each other. It’s because of them patients in our center are being diagnosed and treated earlier than ever before, and this is imperative in preventing death and disability. This national award represents the collaborative dedicated efforts toward patient care and research in New Orleans of which the Tulane physician community is a strong part.”