

# Physician receives top UNC faculty award

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Dr. Myron S. Cohen, one of the world's leading authorities on the transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, on Friday received the O. Max Gardner Award from the University of North Carolina Board of Governors.

The awards, given annually since 1949, were established by the will of Gov. Oliver Max Gardner to recognize faculty who have "made the greatest contributions to the welfare of the human race." It is the only award for which all faculty members of the 17 UNC campuses are eligible, and it carries a \$20,000 cash prize.

Cohen, the associate vice chancellor for global health and director of the Institute of Global Health and Infectious Diseases at UNC-Chapel Hill, was honored for his international leadership in advancing HIV research, treatment and prevention in countries around the globe.

He joined the UNC faculty in 1980 – the same year that AIDS was identified – and was one of the first to recognize that any attempt to stem the AIDS epidemic would require an international program targeting improved care, treatment and research in developing countries, the university said.

He and his colleagues have built and sustained research and medical training projects in countries such as Malawi, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Russia and the U.S.

The UNC team of researchers that Cohen leads developed sensitive assays to measure the concentration of the HIV virus in bodily fluids and was among the first to demonstrate that the presence of other sexually transmitted diseases can increase the likelihood of HIV transmission.

Their research provided the scientific foundation for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2005 strategic plan for HIV prevention and led the National Institutes of Health to tap UNC-Chapel Hill to help develop a safe and effective vaccine against HIV/AIDS, the university said in announcing the award.

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