

2024 - 2025 Annual Report

100 YEARS OF ADVANCING MEDICINE & RESEARCH



VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

Department of Medicine

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE FY25 ANNUAL REPORT

Contributing Writers

Jordan Berlin, MD
Alexander Bick, MD, PhD
Lindsay Bischoff, MD
Gisella Carranza Leon, MD
Kelly Dooley, MD, PhD, MPH
Tom Elasy, MD
Tracy Frech, MD, MSCI
Jane Freedman, MD
Jill Gilbert, MD
Edward Gould, MD
Bryan Harris, MD, MPH
David Harrison, MD
Fiona Harrison, PhD
Anna Hennes, MD
Sydnie Hochstein, VUMC Office of Development
T. Alp Ikizler, MD
Loren Lipworth, ScD
John McPherson, MD
Francis Miller, MD
Daniel Muñoz, MD, MPA
Harvey Murff, MD, MPH
Richard Peek Jr., MD
John Sergent, MD
Sarah Wolf, VUMC Office of Development
Roy Zent, MD, PhD
Wei Zheng, MD, PhD, MPH

Copyediting and Design

Krystyna Daniels, Assistant Director of Communications
Theresa Laurence, Web Content Producer
Logan Mikolajczyk, Web Designer/Developer

Photography

VUMC News and Communications
Vanderbilt University Heard Libraries

Vanderbilt Health is committed to fostering an environment where everyone has the chance to thrive and is committed to the principles of equal opportunity. EOE/Vets/Disabled.

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Chair Message

Jane Freedman, MD

Professor of Medicine
Chair, Department of Medicine
Physician-in-Chief,
Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital



This year, we are excited to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Department of Medicine. For a department that has experienced a century of growth, innovation and transformation, this past year has been especially significant.

Amidst the many changes happening both on campus and beyond, our commitment to excellence in patient care, education and research has remained strong. None of this progress would be possible without the incredible people who make up the department and our supporters. Over the past year, we've faced unprecedented challenges, and I continue to be inspired by everyone's resilience, patience and unwavering dedication.

This year, we've continued to grow steadily in clinical volume, faculty, staff and financial strength, including a notable increase in our endowment. The upcoming expansion of the clinical tower marks an exciting milestone. At the same time, our educational programs have continued to flourish, reinforcing our role as a national leader in academic medicine. Despite a challenging external environment, it has been an exceptionally strong year for research in the department. For the second consecutive year, we are proud to be ranked No. 1 in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding according to the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research rankings. We've seen remarkable success across our divisions, including multiple major awards. These accomplishments are a testament to the talent and tenacity of our investigators.

We've also experienced significant leadership transitions. I have stepped down as Chair in July 2025 to take on a new role as Deputy CEO and Chief Health Systems Officer. Dr. Bryan Harris, who has served as the Executive Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs, has graciously stepped in as Interim Chair, and Dr. Sara Horst is now serving in his role as an Interim Vice Chair. Dr. Ed Gould has succeeded Dr. Brian Christman as Chair of Medicine at the Nashville VA Medical Center, and we thank Dr. Christman for his many years of dedicated service in that role. Within our divisions, we've welcomed new leaders and said farewell to others. Dr. Nancy Cox has stepped down as Director of the Division of Genetic Medicine, which is now led by Dr. Alex Bick. Dr. Leslie Crofford has also stepped down and was succeeded by Dr. Tracy Frech as Director of the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology. We are deeply grateful to Dr. David Harrison for his many years of service as Director of the Division of Clinical Pharmacology, which will merge with the Division of Genetic Medicine at the start of the 2025-2026 academic year to form the new Division of Genetic Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology. We also thank our interim leaders during the past year, including Drs. Dan Muñoz and Francis Miller in Cardiovascular Medicine, and Drs. Fiona Harrison, Lindsay Bischoff, and Gisella Carranza Leon in Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism, for their dedication during these times of transition.

As I begin a new chapter in my own leadership journey, I want to reflect on the extraordinary people who make this department what it is. The strength of our community includes collegiality, the shared mission, the passion for serving patients, training the next generation, and advancing knowledge. This is what sets us apart. Even as we face uncertainty and change, I am confident that the Department of Medicine will continue to thrive. I carry with me the lessons I've learned from everyone I've had the opportunity to work with, and I am deeply grateful for that.

Now, as we mark this special centennial moment, I want to thank our physicians, advanced practice providers, administrative teams, and trainees for their tireless commitment to excellence in care, teaching and learning. Also, thank you to our patients across Tennessee and the Southeast for your trust. You are the reason we do everything we do.

“

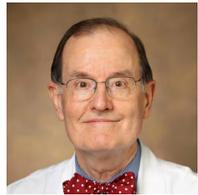
Amidst the many changes happening both on campus and beyond, our commitment to excellence in patient care, education and research has remained strong.

”



Department Leadership

Jane Freedman, MD
Chair, Department of Medicine



Brian Christman, MD
Vice Chair,
Nashville VA Medical Center
Outgoing FY25



Walter Clair, MD, MPH
Vice Chair
for Culture and Community



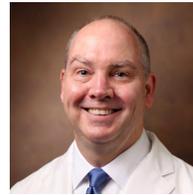
Jill Gilbert, MD
Vice Chair
for Professional Development



Bryan Harris, MD, MPH
Executive Vice Chair
for Clinical Affairs



T. Alp Ikizler, MD
Vice Chair for Clinical Research



John McPherson, MD
Vice Chair for Education



Roy Zent, MD, PhD
Vice Chair for Research



Jane Case, DNP
Associate Vice Chair
for Advanced Practice



Edward Gould, MD
Associate Vice Chair
for Quality & Safety



Sara Horst, MD, MPH
Associate Vice Chair
for Digital Health



Henrique Serezani, PhD
Associate Vice Chair
for Research

100
Years of
Medicine Chairs



1925-1928
Canby Robinson



1928-1935
Charles Sidney Burwell



1935-1958
Hugh J. Morgan

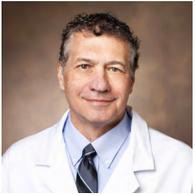


1959-1968
David Rogers

Division Directors



Anna Hemnes, MD
Allergy, Pulmonary
and Critical Care
Medicine



Francis Miller, MD
Cardiovascular Medicine
Interim, Academic Affairs



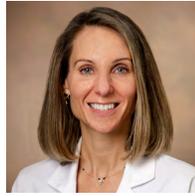
**Daniel Muñoz, MD,
MPA**
Cardiovascular
Medicine
Interim, Clinical Affairs



David Harrison, MD
Clinical Pharmacology



Alvin Powers, MD
Diabetes, Endocrinology
and Metabolism
Outgoing FY25



Lindsay Bischoff, MD
Diabetes, Endocrinology
and Metabolism
*Interim Incoming FY25,
Educational and Clinical
Faculty Affairs*



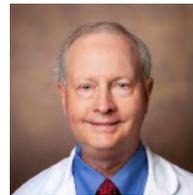
**Gisella Carranza Leon,
MD**
Diabetes, Endocrinology
and Metabolism
*Interim Incoming FY25,
Senior Division and Clinical*



Fiona Harrison, PhD
Diabetes, Endocrinology
and Metabolism
*Interim Incoming FY25,
Research*



**Wei Zheng, MD, PhD,
MPH**
Epidemiology



**Richard Peek Jr.,
MD**
Gastroenterology,
Hepatology and
Nutrition



Tom Elasy, MD
General Internal
Medicine
and Public Health



Nancy Cox, PhD
Genetic Medicine
Outgoing FY25



**Alexander Bick,
MD, PhD**
Genetic
Medicine
*Incoming
FY25*



**Harvey Murff,
MD, MPH**
Geriatric
Medicine



Jordan Berlin, MD
Hematology and
Oncology



**Kelly Dooley, MD,
PhD, MPH**
Infectious Diseases



T. Alp Ikizler, MD
Nephrology
and Hypertension



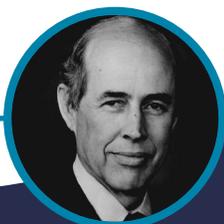
Leslie Crofford, MD
Rheumatology
and Immunology
Outgoing FY25



**Tracy Frech, MD,
MSCI**
Rheumatology
and Immunology
Incoming FY25



1968-1983
Grant Liddle



1983-1997
John A. Oates



1998-2010
Eric Neilson



2010-2019
Nancy Brown



2020-2023
Kimryn Rathmell



2023-2025
Jane Freedman

2024-2025

Taking Pulse of the Numbers

13

Subspecialty
divisions

566

Trainees
in Department of
Medicine graduate,
residency and
fellowship programs

\$277M

in NIH funding

1,025

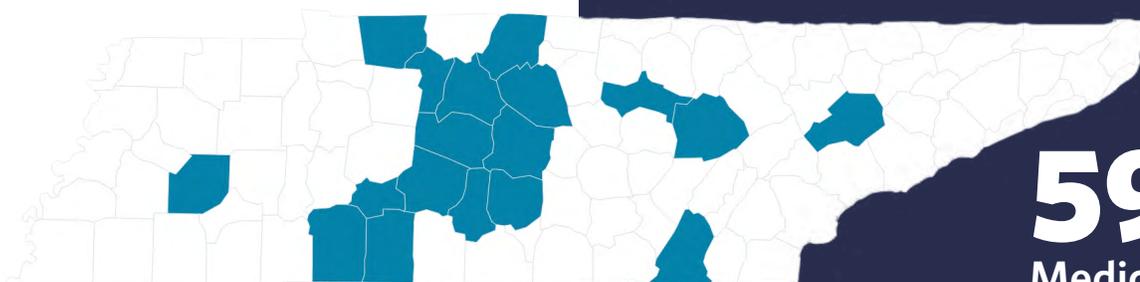
Faculty

599

Advanced Practice
Providers
across 11 divisions

#1

ranked in NIH funding
by the Blue Ridge Institute



59

Medicine clinics
serving 22 Counties
across four states,
including 18 counties in
Tennessee



Clinical Operations

\$264.1M

Sponsored Activities

\$301.7M



Mission

To dedicate our talents to advance human health for all.



Vision

A world where we have the tools and knowledge to enable every person to have the opportunity to enjoy health that allows them to live their lives to the fullest.



Values

We value being on the forefront of personalized care for all patients, making and implementing impactful scientific discoveries, advancing excellence, and training the next generation of clinicians, scientists, educators.

VICE CHAIR UPDATE

Clinical Affairs

This past year has been nothing short of extraordinary for our clinical enterprise. Our team’s unwavering dedication to advancing patient care has resulted in remarkable achievements that underscore our collective commitment to improving lives. While the full impact of our work – such as lives saved and suffering eased – cannot always be easily quantified, several milestones highlight the transformative efforts of our department.

A key highlight was Vanderbilt Heart and Vascular Institute (VHVI) becoming the number one heart transplant center in the world with 183 heart transplants. Similarly, the Vanderbilt Lung Institute (VLI) set new records for extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) cases in the Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU) and performed the highest number of lung transplants in Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) history at 126 lung transplants, all while maintaining quality outcomes ranked in the top five nationally. These accomplishments reflect our commitment to delivering cutting-edge, high-quality care.

Innovation has been a cornerstone of our progress this year. Under the leadership of Dr. Rob Lentz and colleagues, VLI developed a lung cancer tracker that optimizes the patient journey by identifying bottlenecks and resource needs, ensuring more efficient and effective care delivery. The Cancer Patient Care Center (PCC) continued its expansion and outreach efforts, including a new collaboration with Cookeville Regional Medical Center to provide clinical and administrative oversight for their cancer program. Additionally, the Cancer PCC inaugurated a new clinical space in Lebanon, Tenn., in January 2025, offering medical oncology and infusion services to better serve our patients in the region.

To meet the growing demand for timely care, we successfully expanded procedural volumes on weekends across our pulmonary and cardiology specialties, reducing wait times and enhancing operational efficiency. In January, we also launched a post-discharge clinic to provide seamless transitions of care for patients after hospitalization, ensuring better outcomes and continuity of care.

Our inpatient footprint also saw significant expansion, with the acquisition of the entire 14th floor of Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt in October 2024, adding 38 new beds to accommodate increased patient volume. Our Hospital Medicine section led a pivotal initiative to geographically localize providers and patients on designated

floors, improving both length of stay and quality outcomes. Furthermore, enhanced collaborations between Hospital Medicine and Cardiovascular Medicine resulted in the creation of new Page Campbell services, demonstrating the power of interdisciplinary teamwork.

Advances in technology have played a critical role in transforming how we deliver care. Earlier this year, we launched a virtual scribe service, DAX Co-Pilot, in the ambulatory environment, with nearly 500 clinicians actively using the tool to improve documentation efficiency and provider satisfaction. Additionally, we introduced new iterations of e-visits for outpatients, enabling patients to access convenient, modern care that aligns with their expectations and needs.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making this year truly remarkable. Together, we are reimagining what is possible.

The pulmonary stepdown unit, located on Level 7 of the new Jim Ayers Tower, will be the first of six patient care floors to open in fall 2025. The project is expected to be completed in early 2027.



Notable Recognition

**Vanderbilt University School of Medicine (VUSM)
Academy for Excellence in Clinical Medicine**

Rajiv Agarwal, MD (Hematology and Oncology)

Christina Fiske, MD, MPH (Infectious Diseases)

Anthony Gamboa, MD (Gastroenterology,
Hepatology and Nutrition)

Paula Herrmann, MD (General Internal Medicine
and Public Health)

Merranda Holmes, MD (General Internal Medicine
and Public Health)

Rishi Naik, MD, MSCI (Gastroenterology,
Hepatology and Nutrition)

Dan Patel, MD (Gastroenterology, Hepatology and
Nutrition)

Carmen Tuchman, MD (General Internal Medicine
and Public Health)

Katie White, MD, PhD (Infectious Diseases)

DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses

Jeneth Aquino, MSN, APRN (Hematology and
Oncology)

Angela Fitzpatrick, APRN (Hematology and
Oncology)

Kathryn Kennedy, APRN (Hematology and
Oncology)

Krista Kuhert-Gainer, ACNP (Hematology and
Oncology)

Our Commitment to Quality and Patient Safety

Quality and patient safety are cornerstones of everything we do in the Department of Medicine. This year, through our collective efforts, we made significant strides, identifying many potential gaps across the department, engaging in meaningful discussions with relevant stakeholders and collaboratively developing strategies to adapt our workflows. This proactive approach is vital as we continuously strive to become a more highly reliable organization.

Several key themes emerged this year across various domains that are worth highlighting. In an era dominated by electronic messages, we are working to prioritize direct communication. Open and timely discussion remains one of our most potent tools in preventing adverse patient outcomes. While closed-loop communication demands time and energy, it's through these vital conversations that we can often identify potential pitfalls in our therapeutic planning before they ever arise. We are focusing on increased vigilance, even with tasks that may seem routine. This includes respecting the important jobs of our nursing colleagues by avoiding interruptions during medication dispensing, maintaining impeccable hand hygiene practices, and paying close attention to potential medication interactions at the time of prescribing. Additionally, several cases presented to our department in our regularly scheduled Morbidity, Mortality and Improvement conferences underscore the importance of avoiding premature diagnostic closure. This reminds us to continually step back and consider what we could be missing.

This year, we're incredibly pleased to note the continued growth in the use of the Veritas system by our faculty, fellows and house staff for reporting potential adverse events and near misses. This engagement is invaluable when it comes to improving the quality of care we provide in our clinics. It is through these insights that we can collaboratively identify recurring themes and tailor our educational programming to effectively prevent potential issues before they become larger concerns. Our dedication to these practices truly strengthens our department, fostering an environment where both our patients and our team will continue to thrive.

Highlights

1,116,660

Outpatient visits

89,886

Telehealth visits

26,702

Inpatient discharges

57,992

Cancer PCC infusions

37,026

Endoscopies

859

Adult transplants



VICE CHAIR UPDATE

Research

The Department of Medicine remains one of the premier research departments in the country. It continues to carry out basic, translational and clinical research in all the divisions and once again it is ranked as No. 1 in NIH funding by the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research. This outstanding achievement is due to the hard work and dedication of our incredible faculty and staff.

To maintain our ranking, we increased the department's NIH funding to \$277 million from \$266 million the previous fiscal year. This was due to the renewal of old grants as well as the addition of new grants. In total, we had nearly \$288 million in grants and contracts. This funding included 20 new RO1 awards, 10 new VA career development and Merit Awards and six new K awards. The department also has 14 active T32 awards, the most of any other department at VUMC.

In addition to the increased funding, our faculty obtained major awards from national and international societies. These included two new inductees into the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). We published more than 1,100 journal articles, many of which were in high impact journals like *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *Blood*, *Circulation Research*, *JAMA*, *Lancet Oncology*, and *Nature*. Thus, we continue to produce both young and established scientists that are recognized by the top scientific societies in the country, and who publish in elite scientific journals.

The achievements over the last year show that, despite the challenges faced by academic institutions today, research within our department remains strong across the spectrum of research activities. We value innovation in basic discoveries that are required to understand the mechanisms of disease. We also strive to translate these discoveries and implement strategies to prevent and treat disease. Ultimately these efforts will enable us to improve the quality and length of our patients' lives.

Highlights

20 New RO1
awards totaling \$13.7M

14 Active T32 Awards

6 New K
awards totaling \$1.6M

1,100+
publications

5
highly cited researchers

Jonathan Kropski, MD (left), was elected to the ASCI. Scott McCall, MD, PhD (right), received the Parker B. Francis Fellowship Award



Top New NIH Awards

Alex Bick, MD, PhD (Genetic Medicine) – R01 – “Clonal Hematopoiesis Aging Resiliency Mechanisms” – National Institute on Aging (NIA)

Marcela Brissova, PhD (Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism) – U01 – “Integrative analysis of multi-omic signatures and cellular function in human pancreas across developmental timeline at single-cell spatial resolution” – National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)

Suman Das, PhD (Infectious Diseases) – U54 – “Vanderbilt-coordinated human Virome Collaborative Center (V2C2)” – NIH Office of the Director (OD)

E. Wesley Ely, MD, MPH (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine) R01 – “REVERSE-Long COVID: A Multicenter Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial of Immunomodulation (with Baricitinib) for Long COVID Related ADRD” – NIA

MacRae Linton, MD (Cardiovascular Medicine) – P01 – “HDL Function in Human Disease” – National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

Ben Ho Park, MD, PhD (Hematology and Oncology) – P30 – “Cancer Center Support” – National Cancer Institute (NCI)

Rick Peek, MD (Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition) – P01 – “H. pylori-induced Inflammation and Gastric Cancer” – NCI

Russell Rothman, MD, MPP (General Internal Medicine and Public Health) – U01 – “CODA: COvid and Diabetes Assessment” – NIDDK

Dan Roden, MD (Clinical Pharmacology) – R01 – “Systematically mapping variant effects for cardiovascular genes” – NHLBI

Wei Zheng, MD, PhD, MPH (Epidemiology) – UH3 “Southern Environmental Health Study” – NCI

Professional Society Elections

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

- Elizabeth Phillips, MD (Infectious Diseases)
- Michael Savona, MD (Hematology and Oncology)

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL INVESTIGATION

- Alex Bick, MD, PhD (Genetic Medicine)
- Jonathan Kropski, MD (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine)

NIH Funding by Year



New R01 Awards

Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

- **Katherine Cahill, MD** - "GLP-1R agonist immune targets in lean and obesity-associated asthma" - National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
- **Cosby Stone, MD, MPH** - "Adapting and Implementing Risk-Stratified Penicillin Allergy Evaluation in Key Outpatient Settings" - Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
- **Pingsheng Wu, PhD** - "Establishing critical time windows of infant RSV infection in the causal relationship of RSV and childhood asthma" - NHLBI

Cardiovascular Medicine

- **Kathryn Lindley, MD** - "Identification of Early HFpEF after Preeclampsia by Exercise Stress Testing" - NHLBI
- **Quinn Wells, MD, PharmD, MSC** - "Leveraging Large-Scale Biobanks to Discover and Define Rare Variant Effects in Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy" - NHLBI

Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism

- **Raymond Blind, PhD** - "Liver and kidney responses to bilirubin as a nuclear receptor hormone" - NIDDK
- **Fiona Harrison, PhD** - "Manganese exposure and genetic diversity in risk mechanisms for neurodevelopmental disorders" - National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

Epidemiology

- **Jirong Long, PhD** - "Identification of proteins for breast cancer risk: an integrative epidemiologic and genomic study" - NCI

Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

- **Yash Choksi, MD** - "Defining the role of GPX3 in Eosinophilic Esophagitis" - NIDDK
- **Christopher Williams, MD, PhD** - "MTGs in Intestinal Biology and Injury Responses" - NIDDK

General Internal Medicine and Public Health

- **Lindsay Mayberry, PhD** - "Tailoring Diabetes Support to Social Contexts for Adults Living with Type 2 Diabetes" - NIDDK

Genetic Medicine

- **Alex Bick, MD, PhD** - "Clonal Hematopoiesis Aging Resiliency Mechanisms" - NIA

Hematology and Oncology

- **Paula Hurley, PhD** - "Defining Tumor Microenvironmental Mediators of Prostate Cancer Metastasis and Therapy Resistance" - NCI
- **Ben Ho Park, MD, PhD** - "Molecular Mediators of Cell-free DNA biogenesis" - NCI

Infectious Diseases

- **Jennifer Gaddy, PhD** - "Utility of human milk oligosaccharides against the perinatal pathogen, Group B Streptococcus" - National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)

- **Henrique Serezani, PhD** - "Hyperglycemia and increased severity to Staphylococcus aureus infections" - NIAID
- **Scott Smith, MD, PhD** - "Molecular details of the IgE antibody response to galactose-alpha-1,3-galactose in alpha-gal syndrome" - NIAID

Nephrology and Hypertension

- **William Fissel, MD** - "Beyond Urea Kinetics: Balancing Tradeoffs in Dialyzer Design for the Next 50 Years" - NIDDK
- **Eman Gohar, PhD** - "Unraveling the Impact of Estrogen Signaling on Postmenopausal Hypertension" - NHLBI

New K Awards

Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

- **Matthew Krantz, MD** - "A Translational Bioinformatics Approach for Phenotyping and Genetic Risk of Severe Cutaneous Adverse Drug Reactions" - NIAID

Cardiovascular Medicine

- **Megan Lancaster, MD, PhD** - "A high-throughput, multimodal strategy to improve variant classification" - National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI)

Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

- **Nathan Winn, PhD** - "Uncovering mechanisms of pancreatic adaptability to weight cycling" - NIDDK

General Internal Medicine and Public Health

- **McKenzie Roddy, PhD** - "Optimizing an Adaptive Self-care Support Intervention for Adults with Type 2 Diabetes Leveraging their Social Relationships" - NIDDK
- **Hilary Tindle, MD, MPH** - "Vanderbilt Oregon Collaborative Scholar Training in Addiction Research (COSTAR)" - National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

Infectious Diseases

- **Jeffrey Freiberg, MD** - "Understanding the role of arginine metabolism in antibiotic treatment failure during Staphylococcus aureus infections" - NIAID

T32 Awards

Department of Medicine faculty lead 14 of VUMC's 19 active T32s

Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

- **Stokes Peebles, MD** - "Interdisciplinary Training Program in Lung Research" - NHLBI
- **Lorraine Ware, MD** - "Clinical and Translational Training Program in Pulmonary Medicine" - NHLBI

Cardiovascular Medicine

- **Drs. Jane Freedman and Ravi Shah** - "Vanderbilt University Cardiovascular Medicine Training Program" - NHLBI

Clinical Pharmacology

- **Bjorn Knollmann, MD, PhD** - "Clinical Pharmacology Training Program" - National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)

Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism

- **Fiona Harrison, PhD** - "Training Program in Environmental Toxicology" - NIEHS
- **Kevin Niswender, MD, PhD** - "Research Training in Diabetes and Endocrinology" - NIDDK

Epidemiology

- **Xiao-Ou Shu, MD, PhD, MPH** - "Vanderbilt Training Program in Molecular and Genetic Epidemiology of Cancer" - NCI

Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

- **Richard Peek, MD** - "Training in Gastroenterology" - NIDDK

General Internal Medicine and Public Health

- **Christianne Roumie, MD, MPH** - "Learning Health System training program: PROGRESS—Patient/Practice Outcomes and Research in Effectiveness and Systems Science" - AHRQ

Genetic Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology

- **Drs. Nancy Cox and Dan Roden** - "VGM: Vanderbilt Genomic Medicine Training Program" - NHGRI

Hematology and Oncology

- **Douglas Johnson, MD, MSCI** - "VOLT (Vanderbilt Oncology Training Program)" - NCI

Infectious Diseases

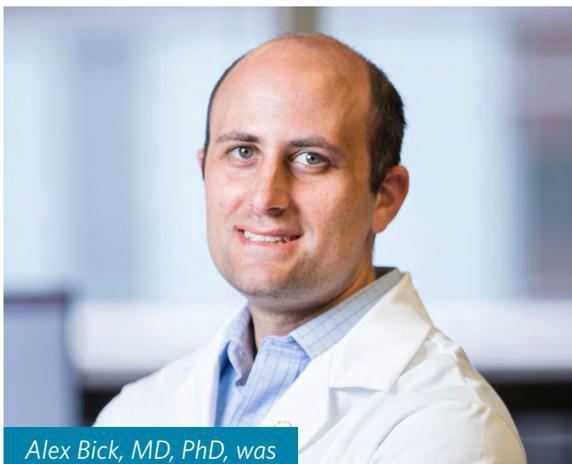
- **Spyros Kalams, MD** - "Vanderbilt Infectious Pathogenesis and Epidemiology Research Training Program" - NIAID

Nephrology and Hypertension

- **Drs. Raymond Harris and T. Alp Ikizler** - "Renal Biology and Disease Training Program" - NIDDK

Rheumatology and Immunology

- **Leslie Crofford, MD** - "Interdisciplinary Training in Rheumatic Diseases" - National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS)



Alex Bick, MD, PhD, was elected to the ASCI

Early-career Investigator Awards

Fabian Bock, MD, PhD (Nephrology and Hypertension) - 2025 Southern Society for Clinical Investigation (SSCI) Young Faculty Research Award

Danielle Dean, PhD (Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism) - Midwest Islet Club Robert L. Sorenson Young Investigator Award

Ashwin Kishtagari, MD (Hematology and Oncology) - 2024 American Society for Hematology (ASH) HONORS Award

Justin Lo, MD, PhD (Hematology and Oncology) - Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation Fellowship

ASCI

- **Juan Pablo Arroyo Ornelas, MD, PhD** (Nephrology and Hypertension) - Young Physician-Scientist Award
- **David Patrick, MD, PhD** (Clinical Pharmacology) - Young Physician-Scientist Award

PARKER B. FRANCIS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

- **Scott McCall, MD, PhD** (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine)
- **Kevin Seitz, MD, MSc** (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine)

Highly Cited Researchers

Five Department of Medicine scientists were among the 10 VUMC scientists named to the year's Highly Cited Researchers list, which highlights scientists ranked in the top 1% by citations for field of research and publication year in the Web of Science citation indexes.

Douglas Johnson, MD, MSCI (Hematology and Oncology)

Elizabeth Phillips, MD (Infectious Diseases)

Dan Roden, MD (Clinical Pharmacology)

C. Michael Stein, MD (Clinical Pharmacology)

H. Keipp Talbot, MD, MPH (Infectious Diseases)



VICE CHAIR UPDATE

Education

The Department of Medicine's residency and fellowship training programs continued to thrive in the 2024-2025 academic year. In July 2024, the Department of Medicine welcomed more than 100 new residents, clinical and postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students into our training programs. Following the expansion of the residency program, the 2024-2025 intern class was our largest in history, with 47 categorical interns and four new members of the Harrison Society/American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Research Pathway. We matched 51 new interns from a pool of more than 3,100 applicants with one of the best rank-to-fill ratios in our history. Our new interns are graduates from 39 different medical schools, five countries and three continents. With the additional residents, we have expanded outpatient training, increased nighttime hospital coverage, implemented an afternoon "swing shift," and increased resident elective time, which are all priorities to continually improve the educational and training experience. In addition, as part of our wellness program, we created three residency "houses" to serve as smaller communities for each resident clinic cohort. Approximately 30 faculty leaders have been assigned to houses to support camaraderie, mentorship and support during training.

Our Global Health program continues to grow. A record number of residents completed the Global Health Pathway in 2025, with seven trainees completing international rotations in Africa and the Americas. In addition, two of our graduating residents entered fellowship training in Global Health. Finally, through the Global Health program, we are creating a Rural Medicine elective set to open in early 2026. On this rotation, residents will practice both primary care and subspecialty medicine in one of the most rural counties in Tennessee.

Our graduates continue to enjoy successful transitions to subspecialty training or to careers in general internal medicine. This summer, several graduating residents joined our faculty in primary care and hospital medicine, with the remainder pursuing subspecialty fellowship training. As usual, approximately half are current fellows at VUMC, and the remainder are training at elite institutions across the country, including Mass General Brigham, Duke, Penn, UC San Francisco, Cleveland Clinic and Texas-Southwestern.

Also, after years of planning and preparation, we are delighted to announce the opening of the new Wilson County Primary Care-Internal Medicine Residency Program based at Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital in Lebanon, Tenn. The program will open in July 2026 and will begin

interviewing residency applicants in fall 2025. Based in a community environment, the program aims to train internists who provide excellent primary care across all settings, including regions with reduced access to care. The program has a novel design that emphasizes longitudinal outpatient training for more than 50% of the time in residency, complimented by access to state of the art resources at VUMC.

The department's training programs provide residents and fellows with a broad range of experiences in all areas of internal medicine in an environment that emphasizes bedside teaching, science and a physiology-based approach to medicine. The Department of Medicine attracts trainees from around the world, and the unique environment at Vanderbilt facilitates the development of important collaborations and close friendships among the trainees and faculty. We are proud of our training programs and are excited to see continued growth in the future. As the pace of change in medicine continues to accelerate, we look forward to meeting new challenges and reaching new heights through innovation, service and discovery.

The Wilson County Primary Care-Internal Medicine Residency Program will be led by Drs. Missy Scalise (left) and Kaylin Craig (right).



Notable Recognition

VUSM Academy for Excellence in Education

Lindsay Bischoff, MD (Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism)

Gisella Carranza Leon, MD (Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism)

Megan Dupuis, MD, PhD (Hematology and Oncology)

Harrison Society Alumni Honors

Named for Tinsley Randolph Harrison, MD, a successful teacher and clinical researcher who came to Vanderbilt as the first chief of Medicine in 1925, the Harrison Society is comprised of trainees enrolled in our Physician-Scientist Training Program.

J.P. Arroyo Ornelas, MD, PhD (Nephrology and Hypertension): ASCI Young Physician-Scientist Award

Yash Choksi, MD (Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition): Awarded first R01

Jeff Freiberg, MD, PhD (Infectious Diseases): K08; VA Career Development Award

Brian Grieb, MD, PhD (Hematology and Oncology): VA Career Development Award

Brett Heimlich, MD, PhD (Cardiovascular Medicine): VA Career Development Award

Jonathan Kropski, MD (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine): Elected to ASCI

Megan Lancaster, MD, PhD (Cardiovascular Medicine): K08

David Patrick, MD, PhD (Cardiovascular Medicine): ASCI Young Physician Scientist Award



*Tinsley Harrison, MD
- circa 1935*

Highlights

566 Total Trainees

in the 2024-2025 academic year

145 Residents

in the Internal Medicine Residency Training Program

155 Graduate Students

in Medicine labs

266 Fellows

in clinical and postdoctoral training programs across 11 Medicine divisions

55 Years of Leadership, Teaching and Lasting Legacy at Vanderbilt



John Sergent, MD

John Sergent, MD, arrived at Vanderbilt University as a freshman in 1959. By 1962, as a medical student, he witnessed the transformation of the Department of Medicine under the leadership of Dr. David Rogers, one of the country's youngest chairs of Medicine at the time. Dr. Rogers prioritized education and recruited dynamic faculty members who fostered an environment of curiosity and engagement, which further inspired Dr. Sergent's lifelong passion for teaching. Following completion of his training, Dr. Sergent embarked on what would become a remarkable 55-year career in academic medicine and leadership at Vanderbilt.

During his tenure, Dr. Sergent held key leadership roles, including the Department of Medicine's Vice Chair for Education and Program Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program, in which he played a pivotal role in shaping the careers of countless students and residents. He spent his career mirroring the lessons he learned from Dr. Rogers and those who came before him, and modeled those behaviors in his own practice so that students who would rotate through his clinic would leave inspired, saying, "That's the kind of doctor I want to be."

Despite Vanderbilt's tremendous growth over the decades, Dr. Sergent is proud of the institution's unwavering commitment to medical education and the ongoing recruitment of outstanding educators who help advance this essential pillar of its mission.

Having retired in April 2025, Dr. Sergent now reflects on the legacy he leaves behind and the profound impact Vanderbilt has had on his life, as well as the lives of students and patients he's had the opportunity to teach, mentor and care for throughout his career. To give back, he has permanently endowed a need-based scholarship at VUSM that ensures future generations of students have access to the same transformative opportunities he experienced. Though his tenure at Vanderbilt has come to an end, Dr. Sergent's contributions will endure for years to come.





The 1925-1926 Vanderbilt Medical house staff poses for a group photo outside the entrance of VUSM. Below, the 2024-2025 Department of Medicine Internal Medicine Residency Program house staff and faculty pose in the same location within the Chapman Quadrangle.



VICE CHAIR UPDATE

Veterans Affairs

The past academic year presented the Department of Medicine's Veteran's Affairs (VA) program with a number of challenges including rising patient volume as veterans continue to settle down in Tennessee, increasing pressures and external attention to clinical productivity and costs of care, as well as a change in leadership as we saw Dr. Brian Christman (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine), Chief of Medicine, retire after 22 years of dedicated service. Despite these pressures, our more than 160 VA-affiliated faculty demonstrated extraordinary resilience and, through their work, reaffirmed their commitment to education and pioneering research in service to our veterans.

Clinically, the VA program saw many great achievements. Dr. Sally York (Hematology and Oncology) has continued her work to enhance veteran care delivery by bringing cancer care to the patient through a regional expansion of the VA Close to Me initiative. The inaugural treatment under this initiative is expected to be in late 2025 and stands to significantly reduce the incredible burden our veterans face as they receive their cancer therapy. The ongoing work of our cardiology colleagues at the VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System (TVHS) has brought our new hybrid operating theater to fruition, allowing for advanced cardiac procedures for the veterans we serve.

Our educational mission has been well served over the last year as well with important changes in the support offered to our house staff by social work and discharge planning teams while rotating at the VA. These initiatives have been spearheaded by Dr. Kelly Sopko (General Internal Medicine and Public Health) over the course of several years, but have led to incredible efficiencies in the flow of inpatients, and have driven improvements in meaningful inpatient metrics, including reduced length of stay, follow-up planning, and interdisciplinary communication at the time of discharge. This work led to an important achievement this summer, with TVHS being recognized as a five-star facility by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Service (CMS); the only facility in Middle Tennessee to achieve such recognition.

We also had faculty recognized for their continued commitment to the VA. Dr. Robert Dittus (General Internal Medicine and Public Health), who leads the VA Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), received the 2024 David M. Worthen Career Development Award in Health Professions Education. Furthermore, we are thrilled to see Dr. Christianne Roumie (General Internal Medicine and Public Health) step into the role of Director of the Health

Systems Research Center of Innovation, a key position that drives national VA policy. These appointments speak volumes about our department's capacity for mentorship and cultivation of expertise.

Our program's success can be measured in so many ways, but our faculty's success in receiving funding for their pioneering research cannot be overlooked. This year, our faculty secured VA Career Development and Merit awards totaling an impressive \$15.7 million - a real testament to the quality of the investigative work being conducted in Nashville. These include projects like Dr. Vineet Agrawal's (Cardiovascular Medicine) work in heart failure, Dr. Bradley Richmond's (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine) continued work into respiratory illnesses in veterans, and Dr. Devika Nair's (Nephrology and Hypertension) work in chronic kidney disease. These are common diseases treated by our house officers rotating through the VA inpatient wards.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the incredible contributions that Dr. Christman made to our program over his long tenure. This represents a significant change at TVHS, with many faculty recalling only him as the leader of our VA clinical service. Dr. Christman's profound impact on the years of trainees that have enjoyed time at Nashville VA cannot be overstated. He will be deeply missed as he begins his next chapter in retirement.

Dr. Edward Gould (Nephrology and Hypertension) will succeed Dr. Christman in this role, and will continue to support faculty as they educate trainees, and complete innovative projects that will advance our understanding of disease, all while delivering the highest quality care to our nation's veterans.



Brian Christman, MD, retired at the end of this fiscal year as the longest-running Chief of Medicine in the VA TVHS.

Notable Recognition

Brian Christman, MD (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine) - Longest-running Chief of Medicine in the Veterans Health Administration at Nashville/Murfreesboro TVHS

Robert Dittus, MD, MPH (General Internal Medicine and Public Health) - 2024 David M. Worthen Career Achievement Award in Health Professions Education, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Jennifer Lewis, MD, MS, MPH (Hematology and Oncology) - 2024 Department of Veterans Affairs Quality Scholars Fellowship Program Team Award

New Leaders

Christianne Roumie, MD, MPH (General Internal Medicine and Public Health) - Director, Health Systems Research Center of Innovation (COIN), Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Career Development and Merit Awards

Totaling \$15.7 million

Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

Jonathan Kropski, MD - "Mechanisms of alveolar homeostasis and repair"

Matthew Mart, MD, MSCI - "The Role of Mitochondrial Dysfunction in Physical Recovery after Critical Illness"

Bradley Richmond, MD, PhD - "Post-Deployment Respiratory Syndrome in Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan"

Cardiovascular Medicine

Vineet Agrawal, MD, PhD - "A Pathogenic Role for the Natriuretic Peptide Clearance Receptor in Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction"

Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism

Jordan Wright, MD, PhD - "In vivo mechanisms of amyloid-induced pancreatic islet dysfunction in type 2 diabetes"

Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

Lori Coburn, MD - "The Role of CCL11 in Inflammatory and Sporadic Colorectal Cancer"

Keith Wilson, MD - "BCCMA: Targeting Gut-Microbiome in Veterans Deployment Related Gastrointestinal and Liver Diseases: Dysbiosis, PTSD, and Epithelial and Immune Biology in Inflammatory Bowel Disease in Veterans"

Hematology and Oncology

Brent Ferrell, MD - "Dissecting Clonal Evolution of Myeloid Malignancies"

Jennifer Lewis, MD - "Personalizing Veteran's Lung Cancer Screening and Diagnosis"

Nephrology and Hypertension

Devika Nair, MD, MSCI - "Activation for Self-Care Needs in Older Adults with Chronic Kidney Disease: ACTIVE SENIORS with CKD"

Relevant Publications

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Yakovchenko V, Chang MF, Hernaez R, **Awad JA**, Anwar J, Nobbe A, McCurdy H, Sharma P, Spoutz P, Murugavel M, Wilson MA, Dominitz JA, Patton HM, Adams MA, Morgan TR, Rogal SS. Access to Evaluation for Liver Transplantation in the Veterans Health Administration. *Dig Dis Sci*. 2025 Feb;70(2):552-565. doi: 10.1007/s10620-024-08717-x. Epub 2024 Dec 11. PMID: 39661277.

Pfaff JL, Eden SK, Kundu S, Alcorn CW, Garry J, Greevy RA, Stewart JC, **Freiberg MS**, **Brittain EL**. Depression and Heart Failure in US Veterans. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2025 May 1;8(5):e259246. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.9246. PMID: 40338547; PMCID: PMC12062911.

Lewis JA, Stranick A, Pennings J, Samuels LR, Byerly S, Helton J, Park D, Winter R, Matheny ME, Henschke CI, Yankelevitz DF, Hendler F, **York SJ**, Callaway-Lane C, **Tindle HA**, **Dittus RS**, Moghanaki D, Spalluto LB, **Roumie CL**. National Survey of Lung Cancer Screening Eligibility in United States Veterans. *Am J Prev Med*. 2025 May;68(5):886-895. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2025.01.015. Epub 2025 Jan 27. PMID: 39880059; PMCID: PMC12033076.



VICE CHAIR UPDATE

Professional Development

Over the past year, the Department of Medicine has made substantial strides in its commitment to professional development, which is reflected in the numerous faculty promotions, prestigious awards, and impactful contributions to new initiatives and programs.

This year, the department had a particular emphasis on the Clinician Educator (CE) and Clinical Practice (CP) tracks. With more than 1,000 faculty in the department this academic year, these two pathways represent the foundational clinical facing pillars of our faculty's academic engagement, each offering a distinct set of expectations, challenges and opportunities for career advancement. Recognizing the complexity and evolving nature of these tracks, the department, through the leadership of its Mentorship Council, launched a multifaceted initiative to ensure that faculty are not only supported in their professional journeys but are also equipped with the tools and clarity necessary to navigate the pathways towards academic promotion. This initiative stems from an overarching goal to demystify the promotion process, align institutional expectations with faculty contributions, and to foster a culture of academic excellence that values multiple types of scholarly work within the context of a clinician.

To ensure sustainability and continuous improvement of these efforts, the department has embedded faculty development within its broader strategic goals. Annual reviews have been restructured to include focused conversations on academic identity, scholarly output and promotion planning.

Perhaps most importantly, the Department of Medicine's focus on professional development has included a significant investment in the education of the division directors, society liaisons, and faculty as it relates to promotion and dossier development. The department created a tangible and measurable reward structure for faculty who are successfully promoted on the CE and CP tracks, and similar work is underway for tenure track faculty. This year alone,

Highlights

1,025 Faculty

in 13 Department of Medicine divisions

599 Advanced Practice Providers

32 Promotions

4 Associates in Medicine

6 Assistant Professors

16 Associate Professors

6 Professors

53 New Faculty

19 New Leaders

across the department and institution

4 Societies

to support professional development

we had a total of 32 faculty who were successfully promoted across the department.

Another important accomplishment is the creation of a new professional development society, the Collaborative Progress in Medicine Initiative (CPMI). This society, led by Ds. Emily Brown and Dr. Ana Nobis (General Internal Medicine and Public Health), supports faculty and clinical providers across all ranks and tracks through community, leadership development, education and research. It is an intentional effort to foster an environment where all individuals, regardless of where they are in their career, can share their experiences, lift each other up and find solidarity. Current initiatives include Mentor-Mentee pairs, CPMI Grand Rounds, and community and well-being events. Participation in CPMI is strongly encouraged as programming complements the department's track-specific Miller, Neilson, and Schaffner professional development societies.

Notable Recognition

Emeritus Faculty Recognition

Thomas Aune, PhD (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Douglas Heimburger, MD (Epidemiology)

Robert Miller, MD (General Internal Medicine and Public Health)

John Sergent, MD (Rheumatology and Immunology)

New VUMC Directorships

Jennifer Below, PhD (Genetic Medicine) – Robert A. Goodwin Jr., MD, Directorship in Medicine

Evan Brittain, MD, MSc (Cardiovascular Medicine) – Rose Marie Robertson Directorship

Bryan Harris, MD, MPH, MMHC (Infectious Diseases) – Allen Kaiser, MD, Directorship for Clinical Medicine

Ambra Pozzi, PhD (Nephrology and Hypertension) – Thomas Golper Directorship

Douglas Ruderfer, PhD, MS (Genetic Medicine) – Directorship in Digital Genomic Medicine

VUSM Faculty Awards

Maie El-Sourady, MD (General Internal Medicine and Public Health) – Gerald S. Gotterer Award for Innovation in Educational Programming that has Proven to be Effective

Jill Gilbert, MD (Hematology and Oncology) – Thomas A. Hazinski Award for Effectiveness in Mentoring and Professional Development of Faculty

Gisella Carranza Leon, MD (Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism) – John S. Sergent Award for Teaching Medical or Graduate Students in the Small Group Setting

Christine Lovly, MD, PhD (Hematology and Oncology) – William J. Darby Award for Outstanding Contributions in Research

Ebele Umeukeje, MD, MPH (Nephrology and Hypertension) – 2025 Levi Watkins Jr., MD, Faculty Award

Katie White, MD, PhD (Infectious Diseases) – Gottlieb C. Freisinger II Award for Outstanding Early-career Clinician

Vanderbilt University Faculty Awards

Alex Bick, MD, PhD (Genetic Medicine) – 2025 Chancellor Faculty Fellow

Christopher Williams, MD, PhD (Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition) – Harvey Branscomb Distinguished Professor Award

Professional Society Elections

Tina Hartert, MD, MPH (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine) – Member, American Epidemiological Society (AES)

Sara Horst, MD, MPH (Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition) – Fellow, American Gastroenterological Society

Sunil Kripalani, MD, MSc (General Internal Medicine and Public Health) – Master in Hospital Medicine, Section of Hospital Medicine

Christine Lovly, MD, PhD (Hematology and Oncology) – Fellow, American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)

Abby Parish, APRN (Geriatric Medicine) – Fellow, American Association of Nurse Practitioners

Martha Shepherd, DO, MPH (General Internal Medicine and Public Health) – Fellow, American College of Lifestyle Medicine

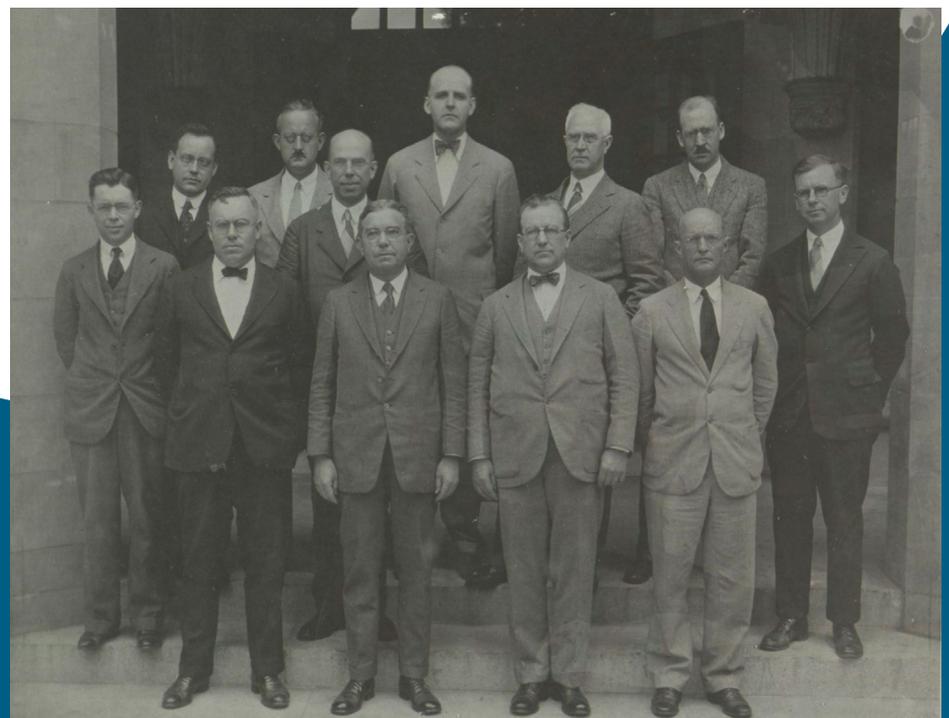
H. Keipp Talbot, MD, MPH (Infectious Diseases) – Member, AES

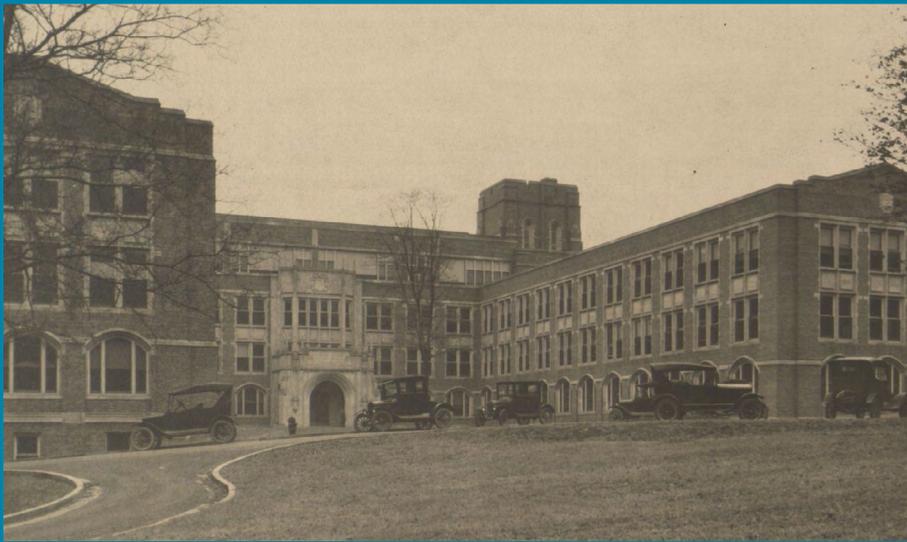
The Department of Medicine faculty has grown substantially since the first cohort of VUSM faculty, pictured, in 1925.

Front row left to right: Drs. G.E. Cullen, W.S. Leathers, G.C. Robinson and B. Brooks.

Middle row left to right: Drs. J.M. Niell, P.D. Lamson and E.W. Goodpasture.

Back row left to right: Drs. R.S. Cunningham, H. Casparis, H.J. Morgan, W.E. Garrey and C.S. Burwell





The original entrance of VUSM and the Department of Medicine, circa 1925. Today, it is preserved in a quadrangle and serves as one of the many entrances to Medical Center North, which houses administrative offices for the department and many of its divisions.



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL SCHOOL

FHD 1925

DIVISION UPDATE

Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

The Division of Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine is dedicated to providing world-class clinical care for patients with allergic diseases, pulmonary conditions and critical illness through a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach. Our mission extends to leading innovative, patient-focused research from foundational discoveries to clinical implementation, and delivering state-of-the-art education to inspire the next generation of leaders in allergy, immunology, pulmonary and critical care medicine.

This past year we achieved significant growth in research, teaching and education. A notable change to our leadership is that after 15 years of leading tremendous growth in the Allergy Section, including as the inaugural Section Chief, Dr. Stokes Peebles announced that he would be stepping down from his role, effective July 2025, with Dr. Katherine Cahill assuming the position. A distinguished physician-scientist with expertise in asthma, Dr. Cahill is set to continue and expand Dr. Peebles' legacy of excellence across our academic missions. The entire leadership team remains committed to advancing research, education and patient care in mutually synergistic ways.

Our clinical operations reached new milestones this year. Clinics at the VLI completed over 90,000 visits in in fiscal year 2025, supporting our lung transplant program, which is projected to perform 140 transplants this calendar year – another institutional record. VUMC is now one of the highest-volume lung transplant centers globally, achieving this growth with excellent outcomes and consistent innovation. In the MICU, we cared for a record 191 ECMO patients, with survival rates significantly exceeding international averages. The Lung Cancer Initiative has fostered interdisciplinary collaboration, including the development of a patient tracker to streamline diagnosis-to-treatment timelines. We've also launched specialized clinics in smoking cessation, thoracic oncology, post-pulmonary embolism care, small airways disease and mast cell disorders, further expanding our unique services.

Drs. Tina Hartert (left) and Dawn Newcomb (right)



Cosby Stone, MD, MPH

We anticipate continued success as we transition services to the Jim Ayers Tower in fall 2025.

Our fellowship programs in pulmonary and critical care, interventional pulmonary, and allergy and immunology remain highly competitive, attracting top-tier applicants nationwide. Fellows benefit from robust clinical training and impactful research opportunities, and regularly publish in top journals. To enhance learning and community building, we consolidated our pulmonary and critical care conference schedule into bi-monthly academic half-days. Increasing hospital and clinic volumes provide fellows abundant opportunities for bedside learning and procedural training. Thanks to the dedication of our fellowship leaders, faculty and administration, these programs continue to thrive.

Our faculty and fellows are advancing the field with groundbreaking research. In a study led by Drs. Robert Lentz and Fabien Maldonado, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, our interventional pulmonary team

demonstrated that navigational bronchoscopy is not inferior to transthoracic needle aspiration for lung nodule biopsy, with fewer complications. In lung transplantation research, the division's research is aligned with our clinical goals and focuses on reducing barriers to transplantation and improving post-transplant outcomes. Dr. Ciara Shaver, in collaboration with surgical colleagues, published research in the *Journal of Heart and Lung Transplantation* on the feasibility of xenogenic cross-circulation to rehabilitate human lungs, which could significantly expand the donor pool. Additionally, we recruited Dr. Michael Combs, an expert in chronic lung allograft dysfunction, to enhance research into improving long-term transplant outcomes, who will join us in the 2025-2026 academic year.

In summary, the past year has been one of remarkable growth, discovery and innovation. Through our commitment to excellence in research, education and patient care, we look forward to making even more meaningful contributions to the field in the year ahead.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Anna Hemnes, MD

Director, Division of Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, Department of Medicine

Dawn Newcomb, PhD

Associate Director, Neilson Society, Department of Medicine

Ciara Shaver, MD, PhD

Associate Director for Translational Research, VUMC

Clinical

VUMC designated Mast Cell Disorders Center of Excellence by American Initiative in Mast Cell Disorders

VUMC named ALS Associated Certified Treatment Center of Excellence

Brian Christman, MD

Longest-running Chief of Medicine, Veterans Health Administration, Nashville/Murfreesboro Tennessee Valley System

Jennifer Duke, MD

CHEST Rising Star for Thoracic Oncology Networks

E. Wes Ely, MD, MPH

American Thoracic Society 2025 John W. Walsh PAR Award for Excellence

Robert Lentz, MD

American Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology Geoffrey McLennan Award for Advances in Interventional Pulmonology

Research

Stokes Peebles, MD

2025 Vanderbilt Translational Research Forum Excellence in Mentoring to Independence

Matthew Semler, MD, MSCI

VUMC Biomedical Science Impact Award

Top 10 Clinical Research Award, Vanderbilt Translational Research Forum

Samira Shojaee, MD, MPH

NCI/Swim Across America P3 Grant

Education

Fabien Maldonado, MD, MSc

2025 CHEST Pasquale Ciaglia Memorial Lecture in Interventional Medicine Award

Samira Shojaee, MD, MPH

American College of Chest Physicians Distinguished Chest Educator

2025 American Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology Praveen Mathur Award

Professional Society Elections

Tina Hartert, MD, MPH

Member, AES

Jonathan Kropski, MD

Member, ASCI

Professional Service

Fabien Maldonado, MD, MSc

Chair-elect, CHEST Interventional Procedure Network

Ciara Shaver, MD, PhD

Chair, International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation Acute Lung Dysfunction Consensus Statement

Cosby Stone, MD, MPH

Co-chair, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) Task Force for Penicillin Allergy Delabeling Campaign

Samira Shojaee, MD, MPH

Chair, CHEST Thoracic Oncology Interventional Procedures Section

Senior Editorships

Ciara Shaver, MD, PhD

Section Editor, *Thoracic Transplantation for Current Transplantation Reports*



PHILANTHROPY HIGHLIGHT

*John H. Newman, MD, Lisa Wheeler,
John A. Phillips, III, MD, James E. Loyd, MD*

Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine announce Discovery and Innovation Fund

The physicians and scientists in the Division of Allergy, Pulmonary, and Critical Medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center are our nation's premier specialists in the field. Not only do we provide world-class health care; we also conduct cutting-edge research to benefit patients. Support from our community is a catalyst for our work, helping us discover new breakthroughs that might not otherwise be possible.

Perhaps this is best demonstrated by the amazing "bench to bedside" story of VUMC's James Loyd, MD, and John Newman, MD.

In the early 1980s, a nurse at Vanderbilt approached Dr. Loyd and Dr. Newman, both pulmonary disease researchers at VUMC, and told them of at least six members of her family who had died from pulmonary hypertension. The encounter sparked a question in the researchers' minds. Could this rare, fatal lung disorder - previously thought to be mostly a sporadic disease - run in a family's genes?

That question ignited decades of groundbreaking research. Dr. Loyd, Dr. Newman and their team identified other members of the family, traveled across the state to draw blood and ultimately developed a registry of 67 families affected with familial pulmonary hypertension.

Along the way, the team discovered through extensive DNA testing that most of these families with inherited pulmonary arterial hypertension have mutations in a gene called *BMPR2*. This breakthrough ushered in an entirely new way of thinking about the origin of pulmonary vascular disease. In 1997, in *Nature Genetics*, Dr. Loyd and the research group reported their findings. It was the "single most important discovery in my career," Dr. Loyd said at the time.

Following that foundational breakthrough, other researchers at Vanderbilt and beyond have taken up further research to develop drugs targeting *BMPR2* mutations. Now four decades later, a first-in-class medication, Sotatercept, has received FDA approval for the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension.

Thanks to the foresight of VUMC researchers, along with the generosity of patients who donated their DNA, as well as critical support from our philanthropic partners, what started as a single question grew into decades of research, culminating in the development of a meaningful treatment for a deadly disease. It's a story of true collaboration - the kind that VUMC is known for.

Today, the Division of Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine continues this spirit of collaborative discovery. Our investigators are driving the field forward with impactful research - from identifying new asthma prevention and treatment strategies, to expanding knowledge in drug allergy testing and desensitization, to developing new treatments for emphysema and lung fibrosis, and more.

Philanthropy has long fueled new advances in our research, and the support of our generous partners is more important now than ever before. We are pleased to announce the establishment of a new Discovery and Innovation Fund within the Division of Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine to raise support for novel research that has the potential to improve human health. Gifts of all sizes will make a meaningful impact, empowering the next generation of scientists like Dr. Loyd and Dr. Newman to ask important questions and make discoveries that transform medicine.

Support the Discovery and Innovation Fund

Gifts of all sizes will make a meaningful impact and empower the next generation of scientists to make novel discoveries that impact human health.

For more information and to make a contribution, scan the QR code, or visit give.vanderbilthealth.org/apccm.



DIVISION UPDATE

Cardiovascular Medicine

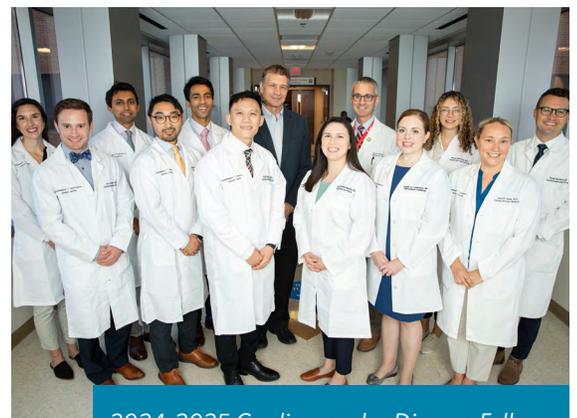
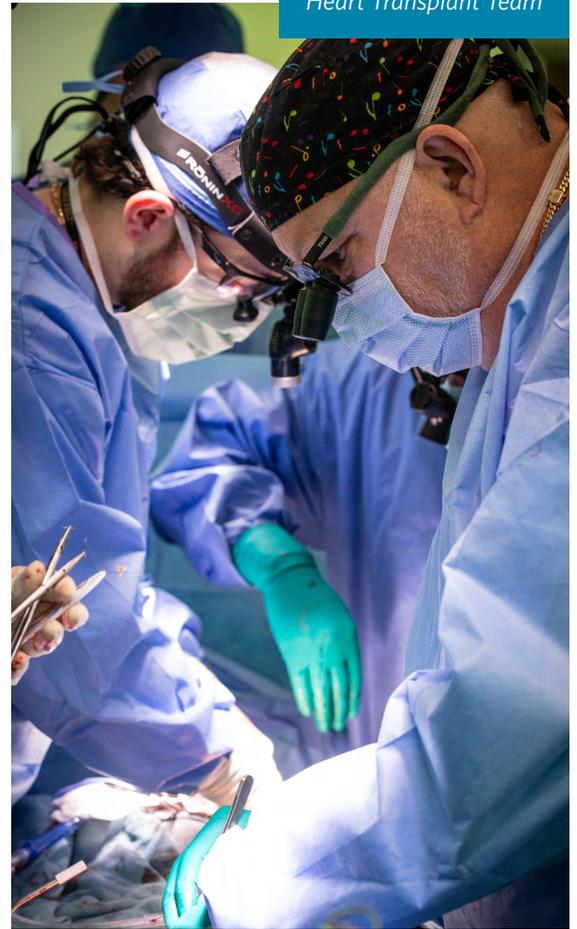
The Division of Cardiovascular Medicine remains strongly committed to its mission to improve human health through clinical excellence, compassionate care, rigorous research and high-impact education. Through inquiry, innovation and collaboration, we continue to improve patient care, expand biomedical understanding, and cultivate future leaders in cardiology. In the 2024-2025 academic year, we saw steady and meaningful growth across our clinical, academic and research initiatives, along with new interdisciplinary partnerships within the broader Vanderbilt community.

The division is comprised of more than 160 faculty members, including physician scientists, CE and CP track faculty, and PhD investigators. In anticipation of expanded inpatient capacity in the Jim Ayers Tower, driven by strong clinical demand for comprehensive cardiovascular care at VUMC, we have successfully and strategically recruited numerous new faculty members, community-based physicians, and nurse practitioners. Our regional practices continue to serve as key centers of access and high-quality care in communities throughout central Tennessee. Dr. Brian Long was named the new Medical Director of our cardiology practice in the key market of Franklin, Tenn., and in February 2025, VUMC completed a successful acquisition of a cardiology practice in the rapidly-growing city of Clarksville, Tenn.

The Transplant Center had an exceptional year in 2024, setting a world record with 174 adult and pediatric heart transplants. The number of patients whose lives were saved by Vanderbilt's heart transplant team greatly surpasses any previous total achieved by an individual transplant center. Our heart transplant team is led by Dr. Kelly Schlendorf, in close partnership with Dr. Ashish Shah in the Department of Cardiac Surgery. Dr. Mark Wigger oversees key multi-state outreach efforts to support the program.

Education remains a vital part of our mission. Across our eight subspecialty fellowship programs, nearly 45 fellows receive advanced training each year. The General Cardiology Fellowship, led by Dr. Julie Damp, continues to

Heart Transplant Team



2024-2025 Cardiovascular Disease Fellows

serve as a national model. Dr. Damp contributes to national educational efforts through her leadership in organizing the American College of Cardiology (ACC) Scientific Sessions. Our fellows continue to excel, with several earning departmental teaching and research awards.

Our research enterprise spans from basic and translational science to population health and clinical investigation. Faculty members continue to publish extensively, with over 450 peer-reviewed journal articles published in the past year, including several in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Many also present at national and international scientific meetings and serve on editorial boards and in leadership roles within professional societies. Several early-career faculty members have received mentored research awards, demonstrating ongoing commitment to research development. External funding remains strong and varied, totaling over \$49 million annually.

The division's trajectory continues to be defined by thoughtful growth and strategic investment in people and programs. We are expanding access to high-quality cardiovascular care across the region while advancing scientific knowledge and preparing the next generation of cardiovascular leaders. These efforts are sustained by the collective dedication of our faculty, staff and trainees, and by the shared commitment to excellence that defines our community.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Jane Freedman, MD

Deputy CEO and Chief System Health Officer, Vanderbilt University Hospital
(*Effective July 2025*)

Clinical

VUMC designated ACC Chest Pain Center with Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention and Resuscitation

VUMC awarded ACC 2024 Platinum Performance Achievement Award for Chest Pain/Myocardial Infarction registry

Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital received American Heart Association's Get with the Guidelines - Stroke Silver Quality Achievement Award

William Stevenson, MD

Heart Rhythm Society's Pioneer in Cardiac Pacing and Electrophysiology Award

Research

Ravi Shah, MD

2025 Vanderbilt Translational Research Forum Excellence in Mentoring Translational Scientists

Jeffrey Dendy, MD

Vanderbilt Health Brock Family Center's Innovator of the Year

Jane Freedman, MD

ACC Distinguished Scientist - Basic Domain

Professional Service

Daniel Muñoz, MD

American Heart Association (AHA) Southeast Regional Board of Directors

Member, ACC Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines

Relevant Publications

Généreux P, Schwartz A, Oldemeyer JB, Pibarot P, Cohen DJ, Blanke P, **Lindman BR**, Babaliaros V, Fearon WF, Daniels DV, Chhatriwalla AK, Kavinsky C, Gada H, Shah P, Szerlip M, Dahle T, **Goel K**, O'Neill W, Sheth T, Davidson CJ, Makkar RR, Prince H, Zhao Y, Hahn RT, Leipsic J, Redfors B, Pocock SJ, Mack M, Leon MB; EARLY TAVR Trial Investigators. Transcatheter Aortic-Valve Replacement for Asymptomatic Severe Aortic Stenosis. *N Engl J Med*. 2025 Jan 16;392(3):217-227. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa2405880. Epub 2024 Oct 28. PMID: 39466903.

Zeder K, Kundu S, Siew ED, Annis JS, Lee LY, Garry J, Birdwell KA, **Freiberg MS**, Kovacs G, **Brittain EL**, Maron BA. Longitudinal Pulmonary Arterial Pressure Trajectories Inform Clinical Outcome in Kidney Transplantation Patients. *Chest*. 2025 May 29:S0012-3692(25)00673-7. doi: 10.1016/j.chest.2025.05.024. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40449880.

El-Sabawi BR, Al-Garadi MA, Steitz BD, Perkins AM, McCoy AB, Sengstack DG, Greevy RA Jr, Burnell EH, **Schlendorf KH**, **Lindenfeld J**, **Stevenson LW**, **Gupta DK**, Spertus JA, Collins SP, Matheny ME, **Bachmann JM**. Predicting Heart Failure Outcomes Using Patient-Reported Health Status: Real-World Validation of the KCCQ-12. *J Am Coll Cardiol*. 2025 Jun 17;85(23):2253-2266. doi: 10.1016/j.jacc.2025.03.545. PMID: 40499980.

DIVISION UPDATE

Clinical Pharmacology

The Division of Clinical Pharmacology is home to an AHA Hypertension Center of Excellence, the Vanderbilt Autonomic Dysfunction Center, and the Vanderbilt Center for Bone Biology (VCBB). Faculty specialize in the research of genetic variations that alter cardiac conduction and lead to arrhythmias and use these approaches to identify new treatments of irregular heart rhythms. They are also leaders in the understanding and treatment of high blood pressure, or hypertension, which affects approximately one half of the adult population.

As an AHA Hypertension Center of Excellence, faculty discover unique causes of hypertension and why it causes damage that targets organs like the heart, kidneys, brain and blood vessels. Many of our faculty also care for patients with difficult-to-treat hypertension and evaluate patients for conditions like high aldosterone and tumors that produce excessive norepinephrine, which raises blood pressure. The AHA guidelines for treatment of hypertension were co-authored by many colleagues in the division. The division director, Dr. David Harrison, serves as the Deputy Editor of the AHA journal *Hypertension*.

The Vanderbilt Autonomic Dysfunction Center, which is the largest program of its kind in the United States, continues to care for patients that have difficult to treat fluctuations in blood pressure and heart rate. Research performed by colleagues in this program has led to the discovery of new causes of these problems, including variations in genes that regulate catecholamine transport. Four of our young faculty and trainees received the AHA Goldblatt Young Investigator Award, which is an international recognition for the most outstanding young scientists in the field of hypertension. Two of our faculty have also received the AHA Excellence in Science Award.

The VCBB, which is devoted to understanding causes of bone loss, bone deformities and bone cancer, is comprised of basic scientists and clinicians that treat adults and children with bone disease using highly sophisticated measures of bone strength and metabolism in humans and experimental models. The NIH-funded Clinical Pharmacology training grant has been funded for more

David Harrison, MD



Jean Wassenaar, MD, PhD, in the Clinical Pharmacology lab

than 50 years and continues to train young physicians and pharmacists to become clinician scientists who discover new treatments for disease. Several new NIH R01s and one Program Project Grant were also awarded to the division members in the past year.

In spring 2025, it was announced that the Division of Clinical Pharmacology would merge with the Department of Medicine's Division of Genetic Medicine. Effective July 2025, the newly formed Division of Genetic Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology will be under the direction of Dr. Alex Bick.

Notable Recognition

Research

Rachelle Johnson, PhD

American Society for Bone and Mineral Research Shirley Hohl Service Award

Katherine Murray, MD

2024 Biomedical Science Impact Award

David Patrick, MD, PhD

ASCI Young Physician-Scientist Award

Monica Santisteban, PhD

2025 BrightFocus Foundation Distinguished Investigator Award for Alzheimer's Disease Research

Professional Service

Rachelle Johnson, PhD

Board of Directors, Advances in Mineral Metabolism Meeting

Annet Kirabo, PhD, DVM

Chair, AHA National Council Operations Committee

Ginger Milne, PhD

Member, Council of the Society for Redox Biology and Medicine

Co-chair, Core Concepts in Redox Biology Committee

Dan Roden, MD

Immediate Past Chair, AHA Genomic and Precision Medicine Council

Senior Editorships

David Harrison, MD

Deputy Editor, *Hypertension*

Ginger Milne, PhD

Associate Editor, *Lipids*

Editorial Board, *Free Radical Biology and Medicine* and *Redox Biology*

Relevant Publications

O'Neill MJ, Yang T, Laudeman J, Calandranis ME, Harvey ML, Solus JF, **Roden DM, Glazer AM**. ParSE-seq: a calibrated multiplexed assay to facilitate the clinical classification of putative splice-altering variants. *Nat Commun*. 2024 Sep 27;15(1):8320. doi: 10.1038/s41467-024-52474-4. PMID: 39333091; PMCID: PMC11437130.

Saleem M, Aden LA, Mutchler AL, Basu C, Ertuglu LA, Sheng Q, Penner N, Hemnes AR, Park JH, Ishimwe JA, **Laffer CL**, Elijevich F, Wanjalla CN, de la Visitacion N, Kastner PD, Albritton CF, Ahmad T, Haynes AP, Yu J, Graber MK, Yasmin S, Wagner KU, Sayeski PP, Hatzopoulos AK, Gamazon ER, Bick AG, Kleyman TR, **Kirabo A**. Myeloid-Specific JAK2 Contributes to Inflammation and Salt Sensitivity of Blood Pressure. *Circ Res*. 2024 Oct 11;135(9):890-909. doi: 10.1161/CIRCRESAHA.124.323595. Epub 2024 Sep 12. PMID: 39263750; PMCID: PMC11466692.

Okamoto LE, Walsh E, **Diedrich A, Shibao CA, Gamboa A**, Black BK, Paranjape SY, Muldowney JA 3rd, Habermann R, Peltier A, Tarpara K, **Biaggioni I**. Clinical Correlates of Efficacy of Pyridostigmine in the Treatment of Orthostatic Hypotension. *Hypertension*. 2025 Mar;82(3):489-497. doi: 10.1161/HYPERTENSIONAHA.124.24050. Epub 2024 Dec 27. PMID: 39727053; PMCID: PMC11839338.

Patel N, Shen A, **Wada Y**, Blair M, Mitchell D, Vanags L, Woo S, Ku M, Dauda K, Morris W, Yang M, **Knollmann BC**, Salem JE, **Glazer AM, Kroncke BM**. A high-performance extracellular field potential analyzer for iPSC-derived cardiomyocytes. *Sci Rep*. 2025 Mar 15;15(1):8948. doi: 10.1038/s41598-025-88946-w. PMID: 40089568; PMCID: PMC11910505.

Thudium M, Kornilov E, Moestl S, Hoffmann F, Hoff A, Kulapatana S, Urechie V, Oremek M, Rigo S, Heusser K, **Biaggioni I**, Tank J, **Diedrich A**. Continuous wavelet based transfer function analysis of cerebral autoregulation dynamics for neuromonitoring using near-infrared spectroscopy. *Front Physiol*. 2025 Jun 18;16:1616125. doi: 10.3389/fphys.2025.1616125. PMID: 40606230; PMCID: PMC12213380.

DIVISION UPDATE

Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism

In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Division of Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism continued to have an impact on the clinical, educational and research missions of the Department of Medicine and VUMC. Our division is comprised of 38 faculty members which include physician scientists, clinician educators and PhD research scientists, as well as 17 advanced practice providers. This year we also welcomed the third glucose management service, and appointed Dr. Tiffanie Marksbury as Director of the Glucose Management Service.

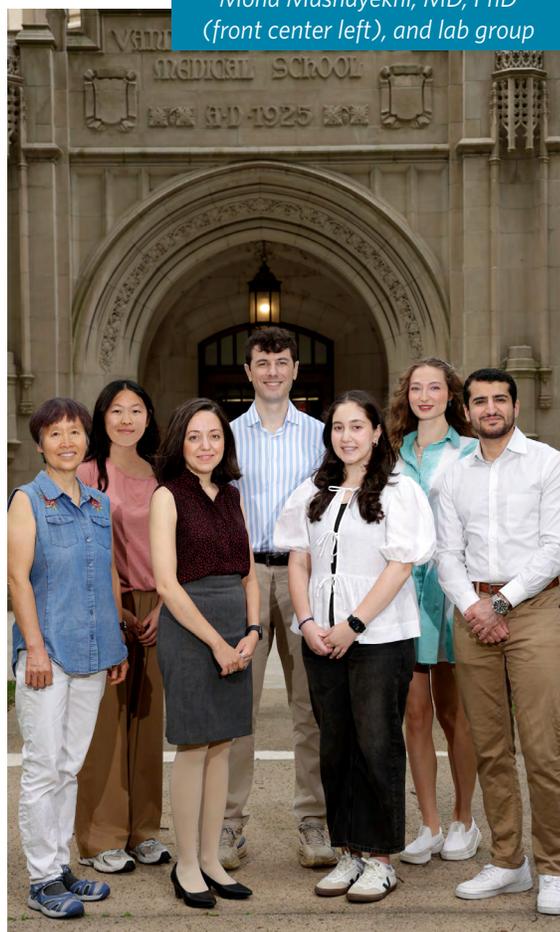
After 15 years as Division Director, Dr. Alvin Powers stepped down from his position and Dr. Freedman appointed three interim Co-directors for the division, Dr. Lindsay Bischoff, overseeing clinical affairs and education; Dr. Gisella Carranza Leon, the Senior Director overseeing clinical affairs; and Dr. Fiona Harrison, overseeing research.

The division continued its commitment and focus on training our future clinicians and scientists. Our Endocrine fellowship matched four first-year fellows to start the July 2025 academic year. Over 43% of all applicants to endocrine fellowships applied to our program. Our research fellows continue to be supported by our T32 grant, currently in its 51st continuous year. As a result of our longstanding reputation in training endocrinologists, we have been the recipient of two endowments in support of education in endocrinology: the Lawrence K. and Sarah Z. Wolfe Fellowship in Endocrinology, and the George McLean Fund.

In addition to training fellows, the endocrine clinic serves as an active site for bedside training for VUSM students and Internal Medicine residents.

Faculty from the division are also involved in teaching across the Medical Center. Dr. Ray Blind is the Director of VUSM's Quantitative & Chemical Biology Umbrella PhD program, and Dr. Fiona Harrison is Director of a T32 Training program in Environmental Toxicology which

Mona Mashayekhi, MD, PhD
(front center left), and lab group



Gisella Carranza Leon, MD (center), received the
2025 VUSM John S. Sergent Faculty Award

supports graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in VUMC and Vanderbilt University labs. Dr. Danielle Dean was recently appointed as a faculty advisor for VUSM'S Case Based Learning Program for first-year medical students.

The division was well published this year including at least 21 manuscripts in which division faculty were first or senior author, and 28 as co-authors. There were at least 16 instances of these in which division faculty were publishing together, which indicates the collaborative nature of the group. Our faculty have presented data at, been invited as keynote speakers for, or led organizing groups as part of multiple national and international conferences including serving as

keynote speakers. Dr. Maureen Gannon presented at the Breakthrough T1D East Tennessee chapter with the "Message of Hope." Dr. Dean served as the American Diabetes Association Islet Interest Group Chair and the Diabetes and Vascular Team Lead for the Endocrine Society Annual Meeting Steering Committee. Dr. Fiona Harrison was an Executive Board member for the Nutrition and Metabolism Professional Interest Area group within the Alzheimer's Association, and co-hosted the first Animal Models pre-conference workshop through the American Delirium Society with the support of the Vanderbilt Critical Illness, Brain Dysfunction and Survivorship (CIBS) Center.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Drs. Gisella Carranza Leon, Lindsay Bischoff and Fiona Harrison

Interim Co-directors, Division of Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism, Department of Medicine

Research

Danielle Dean, PhD

Midwest Islet Club Robert L. Sorenson Young Investigator Award

Education

Raymond Blind, PhD

Director, VUSM Quantitative & Chemical Biology Umbrella Program

Professional Service

Lindsay Bischoff, MD

Board of Directors, World Congress on Thyroid Cancer

Board of Directors, International Thyroid Oncology Group

Kathryn Dahir, MD

Member, Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation Medical Advisory Committee

Danielle Dean, PhD

Chair, American Diabetes Association Islet Interest Group

Endocrine Society Annual Meeting Steering Committee - Diabetes and Vascular Team Lead

Gisella Carranza Leon, MD

Clinical Practice Chair, ENDO 2025 Planning Committee

Fiona Harrison, PhD

Executive Board Member, Nutrition and Metabolism Professional Interest Area, Alzheimer's Association International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment

Member, NIH Chronic Dysfunction and Integrative Neurodegeneration Study Section

Craig Sussman, MD

Member, National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Guidelines Group for Adrenal and Neuroendocrine Tumors

Senior Editorships

Ray Blind, PhD

Editorial Board, *Journal of Biological Chemistry*

Editorial Board, *The Journal of Lipid Research*

Anna Beth Bradley, MD

Editorial Board, *Diabetes, Technology and Obesity Medicine*

Gisella Carranza Leon, MD

Editorial Board, *Diabetes, Technology and Obesity Medicine*

Shivani Jani, MD

Editorial Board, *Diabetes, Technology and Obesity Medicine*

Gitanjali Srivastava, MD

Editor-in-Chief, *Diabetes, Technology and Obesity Medicine*

Editorial Board, *Pediatric Clinics of North America*

PHILANTHROPY HIGHLIGHT

Bequest from Wolfe Family establishes endowed endocrinology fellowship

A lifelong passion for mentoring generations of endocrinologists has culminated in an endowment to support a new endocrinology fellowship in the Department of Medicine's Division of Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism.

This is the result of an estate gift from the late Lawrence (Larry) Wolfe, MD, and his wife, Sarah (Sally) Wolfe.

"Nationally, the number of fellows being trained in clinical endocrinology is much less than needed, especially with the increasing rates of diabetes and obesity," said Alvin C. Powers, MD, Joe C. Davis Professor of Biomedical Science and professor of Medicine and of Molecular Physiology and Biophysics.

"This gift is so important as it will allow Vanderbilt to enroll an additional fellow each year, for a total of four. Dr. Wolfe mentored many fellows during his career, and this gift will continue his impact on training clinical endocrinologists."

Dr. Wolfe, BA'57, MD'60, was the first board-certified clinical endocrinologist in private practice in Nashville.

Following his retirement from full-time practice at Saint Thomas Hospital in 2005, Dr. Wolfe returned to Vanderbilt, where he dedicated his time to seeing patients and training medical students, residents and endocrinology fellows at the Vanderbilt Eskind Diabetes Clinic.

Sally Wolfe was an active community leader for many organizations, including Senior Citizens Inc., the Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee and the National Council of Jewish Women, Nashville Section. The Wolfes were also active members of the Canby Robinson Society, the VUSM Alumni Association and the Thomas E. Brittingham Society.

The Wolfes' children, Lynne Wolfe and Kevin Wolfe, are glad to see their parents' wishes realized in a manner that



Dr. Larry Wolfe and Sally Wolfe

honors both their father's dedication to the mentorship of young physicians, and their mother's altruistic spirit of giving.

"The bulk of my father's medical career was spent as a practitioner at Saint Thomas Hospital, but in the later part of his career, he came home again and spent a lot of time working and teaching in the endocrinology program at Vanderbilt," said Kevin Wolfe.

Lynne Wolfe expressed gratitude to the Division for honoring their parents' desire to support endocrinologists in training.

"We are delighted that this endowment will fulfill our parents' plan for this money to not go for a 'thing,' but rather toward people," Lynne Wolfe said. "That's what Mom and Dad really wanted, for this money to bring another human up — to add to endocrinology education and to support people who reach out and touch other human beings."

Lawrence Wolfe died in April 2024, and Sarah Wolfe died in March 2021.

Department of Medicine Giving

Generous donors like the Wolfe family help strengthen the Department of Medicine's educational, research and patient care programs.

For more information and to make a contribution, scan the QR code, or visit medicine.vumc.org/dom-giving.



Vanderbilt

DIVISION UPDATE

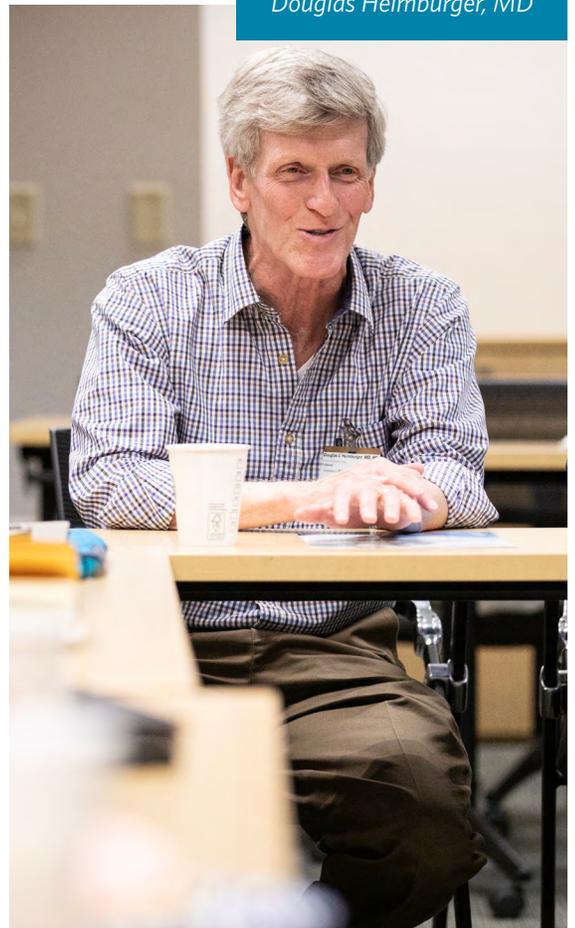
Epidemiology

It has been a productive year for the Division of Epidemiology as our faculty continue impactful scientific research to enhance our understanding of the underlying causes of disease in all populations. Faculty lead more than 50 externally funded research projects and training programs, including four large ongoing population-based prospective studies with more than 225,000 study participants. Over the past year, division faculty have obtained multiple large NIH-funded research grants, including the first proteogenomics study and the first prospective breast tissue-based nested case-control proteomics study to discover and validate breast cancer risk proteins, which was led by Drs. Jirong Long and Xiao-Ou Shu. In addition, division faculty are key collaborators or site leaders on many important studies of chronic disease risk, including work on discovery of disease risk genes, behavioral and biological risk factors for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, the role of viruses in human disease, health effects including cognitive impairment of low-dose radiation among one million U.S. radiation workers and veterans, and short- and long-term health outcomes among recipients of solid organ transplants.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, faculty successfully continued recruitment for the Southern Environmental Health Study (SEHS), led by Drs. Wei Zheng and Martha Shrubsole, that, through a framework of community-engagement, aims to recruit 35,000 individuals from across 18 states in the Southern U.S. Over 15,000 people have already joined the study which will integrate environmental exposure data from multiple sources, including survey, biospecimen and geospatial data, to address critical issues in the environmental etiology of cancer. Recently, the study team received funding from the VoLo Foundation to conduct an exposome-wide association study to identify potential environmental carcinogens using data and samples collected in the SEHS.

The division is deeply committed to mentoring and training the next generation of epidemiologists. The Vanderbilt Training Program in Molecular and Genetic Epidemiology of Cancer, under the direction of Dr. Shu, aims to equip postdoctoral fellows with the methodological tools and hands-on research and grant writing experience necessary to launch an independent career in cancer epidemiology.

Douglas Heimburger, MD



Todd Edwards, PhD (front center right), and lab group

Drs. Shu and Douglas Heimbarger continue to lead an NCI-funded international cancer epidemiology training grant with University of Zambia, Vanderbilt-Zambia Cancer Research Training Program (VZCARE). The goal of VZCARE is to develop a cadre of researchers and educators equipped with expertise to lead cancer epidemiology research and training in Zambia and to encourage U.S.-based researchers to engage in cancer research in low- and middle-income countries. Finally, the ongoing international training grant from the NIH Fogarty International Center, Vanderbilt-Vietnam Genetic Epidemiology Training Program (V2-GENE) is being led by Drs. Digna Velez Edwards and Shu in collaboration with Hanoi Medical University and the Vietnam National Cancer Institute. The goal of the V2-GENE is to develop a team of researchers and educators with the necessary training and expertise to lead genetic epidemiology research of non-communicable diseases across the lifespan in Vietnam.

The division continues to host biweekly, in-person Epidemiology Seminar Series, and makes an effort to host regular networking opportunities to enhance social interaction and encourage collaboration among faculty, trainees and staff.

Notable Recognition

Research

Ghadeer Dawwas, PhD

Hemostasis and Thrombosis Research Society Research Colloquium Scholar

Kelsie Full, PhD, MPH

Alzheimer's Association HPE-ADRD Award

Professional Service

John Boice, ScD

Co-chair, National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements Annual Meeting

Member, International Radiation Protection Association Organizing Committee Task Force

Ghadeer Dawwas, PhD

Co-chair, International Society of Pharmacoepidemiology PEER Mentoring Program

Member, AHA 2025 Career Development Award Population Sciences Review Committee

Jirong Long, PhD

Member, American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Breast Cancer Research Grants Committee

Kelsie Full, PhD, MPH

Member, AHA EPI Council Communications Committee

Xiao-Ou Shu, MD, PhD, MPH

Member, American Association of Epidemiology Membership Committee

Staci Sudenga, PhD

Chair, International Papillomavirus Society (IPVS) Early Career Researchers Committee

Member, IPVS Meeting Program Organizing Committee

Senior Editorships

Ghadeer Dawwas, PhD

Section Editor, *Journal for Thrombosis and Thrombolysis*

Methodology Editor, *Journal for Thrombosis and Haemostasis*

Kelsie Full, PhD, MPH

Associate Editor, *Sleep Health Journal*

Relevant Publications

Yang Y, Chen Y, Xu S, **Guo X**, Jia G, **Ping J**, Shu X, Zhao T, Yuan F, Wang G, Xie Y, Ci H, Liu H, Qi Y, Liu Y, Liu D, Li W, Ye F, **Shu XO**, **Zheng W**, Li L, **Cai Q**, **Long J**. Integrating multi-omics data to identify tissue-specific DNA methylation biomarkers for cancer risk. *Nat Commun*. 2024 Jul 18;15(1):6071. doi: 10.1038/s41467-024-50404-y. PMID: 39025880; PMCID: PMC11258330.

Zhao L, Zhang X, **Yu D**, Wang L, **Shrubsole MJ**, **Zheng W**, **Sudenga SL**, Zhang X. Ultra-processed products and risk of liver cancer: A prospective cohort study. *Clin Nutr*. 2024 Oct;43(10):2298-2304. doi: 10.1016/j.clnu.2024.08.011. Epub 2024 Aug 17. PMID: 39226717; PMCID: PMC11479389.

Khankari NK, Su T, **Cai Q**, Liu L, Jasper EA, Hellwege JN, Murff HJ, **Shrubsole MJ**, **Long J**, **Edwards TL**, **Zheng W**. Genetically Predicted Gene Expression Effects on Changes in Red Blood Cell and Plasma Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids. *Genet Epidemiol*. 2025 Jan;49(1):e22613. doi: 10.1002/gepi.22613. PMID: 39812514; PMCID: PMC11734643.

DIVISION UPDATE

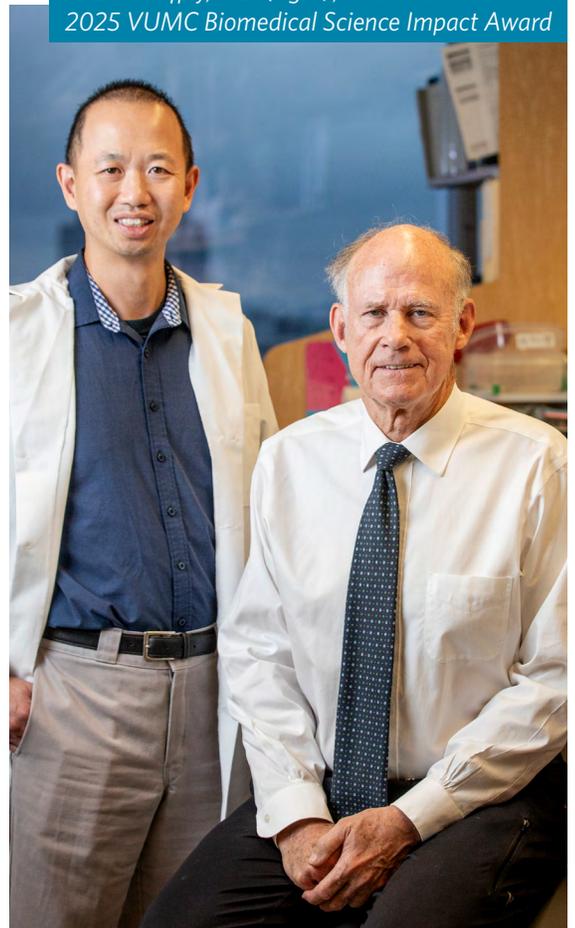
Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

The Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at VUMC achieved significant benchmarks in the last year within the domains of patient care, research and biomedical education. Specifically, the division provided personalized, multi-disciplinary care for patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), motility disorders, pancreaticobiliary and liver diseases, and nutritional disorders at eight different locations across Middle Tennessee in Davidson, Williamson and Wilson counties. This care delivery system was underpinned by an emphasis on aligning clinical care with translational science and providing access to cutting-edge clinical trials.

Research focused on basic, translational and clinical aspects of digestive diseases flourished within the division over the last year as supported by continued funding of the Vanderbilt-NIH Digestive Diseases Research Center and a large NIH-funded Program Project Grant centered on *Helicobacter pylori* and gastric cancer. Further, Dr. Robert Coffey, an expert in colorectal carcinogenesis, spearheaded the acquisition of a new GI SPORE grant funded by the NCI, which coalesces leading cancer investigators drawn from four different departments at Vanderbilt. Our portfolio of research topics also expanded considerably with the recruitment of Dr. Nathan Winn, whose research is dedicated to investigating molecular mechanisms that drive obesity.

The division fellowship program expanded this year and currently includes 16 fellows in general Gastroenterology (GI) and Hepatology and one in Liver Transplantation. The general GI fellowship program remains in the top tier in the country, receiving more than 600 applications annually. Importantly, our program has achieved a 70% matriculation rate for graduating fellows into academic faculty positions over the last five years. Several of our current fellows applied for, and were accepted into, a highly competitive NIH T32 GI training program and are focusing their research on the critical role of the microbiome in IBD and liver disease.

Bob Coffey, MD (right), was awarded the 2025 VUMC Biomedical Science Impact Award



Christopher Williams, MD, PhD (front center), and lab group

In terms of subspecialty care and accomplishments in the last year, the Vanderbilt IBD Center completed over 17,000 clinic visits, over half of which were conducted via telehealth. The Center broadened its comprehensive services by adding a new point-of-care ultrasound program, which saw over 400 patients. The Functional Medicine Program expanded to treat patients in our division as well as the Department of Medicine Division of Rheumatology and Immunology. Faculty in the GI Motility Program continued to excel in educational efforts and clinical care. Two providers, Drs. Rishi Naik and Dan Patel, were also elected to VUSM's Academy for Excellence in Clinical Care. The Vanderbilt Pancreaticobiliary Center offered several new state-of-the-art endoscopic procedures including endobiliary radio frequency ablation, confocal endomicroscopy, endoscopic

ultrasound-guided molecular stratification of patients and, in a cross disciplinary partnership with the Motility Center, peroral endoscopic myotomy. The Center for Human Nutrition initiated novel genetic marker studies to develop a new predictive model for the diagnosis of Celiac Disease which was supported by a \$10 million philanthropic Innovation Award, and hosted the second annual Celiac Disease Gala to support food assistance programs that benefit patients with celiac disease. The Section of Hepatology substantially broadened its clinical portfolio by hiring two new faculty who will develop a conjoined Hepatology-Palliative Care Program and a Women's Center of Liver Diseases, respectively. Finally, our liver transplant program is on an unprecedented pace to perform over 200 transplants in 2025, which includes living donor procedures.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Suzanne Sharpton, MD

Medical Director, VUMC Living Donor Liver Transplant Program

Ashley Spann, MD, MSACI

Associate Director of Transplant Research Informatics, Vanderbilt Center for Transplant Science

Clinical

Kimberly Currier, MSN, RN, ACNP

2024 APRN of the Year, Middle Tennessee Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

Research

Robert Coffey, MD

2025 VUMC Biomedical Science Impact Award

Professional Society Elections

Sara Horst, MD, MPH

Fellow, American Gastroenterological Society

Professional Service

Lori Coburn, MD

Member, Chron's and Colitis Foundation National Scientific Advisory Council

Robert Coffey, MD

Reviewer, NCI Outstanding Investigator Award Initiative Study Section

Robin Dalal, MD

Member, National Scientific Advisory Committee for the Chron's and Colitis Foundation

Manhal Izzy, MD

Member, American Association for the Study of Liver Disease National Clinical Practice Guidelines for Post Transplant Care Working Group

Dan Patel, MD

Chair, Internal Society for Diseases of the Esophagus Communications Committee

Vice-chair, American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) Esophagogastric Duodenal Disorders Council

Rick Peek, MD

Vice President, AGA

Christopher Williams, MD, PhD

President-elect, National MD/PhD Directors Association

Board of Directors, American Physician Scientist Association

Chair, Association of American Medical Colleges Training Opportunities for Physician Scientists Committee

Senior Editorships

Sara Horst, MD, MPH

Associate Editor, *American Journal of Gastroenterology*

Lori Coburn, MD

Editorial Board, *Inflammatory Bowel Diseases*

Manhal Izzy, MD

Associate Editor, *Liver Transplantation*

Dan Patel, MD

Editorial Board, *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*

Nathan Winn, MD

Editorial Board, *Obesity*

Relevant Publications

Spann A, Lopez C, Izzy M. Disparities in Outcomes of Liver-Related Waiting List for Transplant-Is There an End in Sight? *JAMA Netw Open.* 2024 Oct 1;7(10):e2439836. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.39836. PMID: 39422913.

Theiss AL, **Williams CS.** Burn the Fat: Colon Cancer Tumors Are Skilled at Lipid Storage During Obesity. *Gastroenterology.* 2025 Feb;168(2):215-217. doi: 10.1053/j.gastro.2024.10.021. Epub 2024 Oct 23. PMID: 39454894; PMCID: PMC12036317.

Olson J, **Beaulieu D, Bennett A, Dalal R, Pabla B, Schwartz DA, Scoville E, McCoy A, Horst S.** Telecare enhances the retention of patients with inflammatory bowel disease within a tertiary care inflammatory bowel disease center. *J Telemed Telecare.* 2025 Jun 23;1357633X251349383. doi: 10.1177/1357633X251349383. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40551537.

DIVISION UPDATE

General Internal Medicine and Public Health

The Division of General Internal Medicine and Public Health continues in an unprecedented season of growth and excellence across the clinical, educational and research enterprises. Our Section of Hospital Medicine is seeing the largest one-year increase in our size, with over 20 new faculty, as we prepare to staff the new Jim Ayers Tower in fall 2025. With nearly 200 beds added to our hospital, the scope of work for our Hospitalist group is ever expanding. With the expansion, we've also achieved enhanced efficiencies as our geographical localization efforts have resulted in enhanced quality and staff satisfaction. As part of this expansion, we've further fortified our leadership team with the appointment of Dr. Derek Pae as Associate Director of Clinical Affairs.

Our outpatient group, spanning both primary and urgent care, saw nearly 500,000 visits, by far the largest number in our history. Our primary care group continues to achieve exceptional quality and patient satisfaction metrics. After a nationwide search, Dr. Katelyn Atwater assumed leadership of our Student Health group. She leads a team that provides exceptional care to both our undergraduate and graduate students at Vanderbilt University.

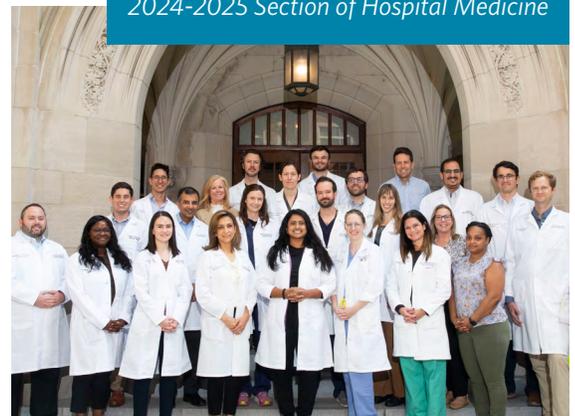
The division's educational portfolio is robust as we support a Palliative Care fellowship and a Medicine-Pediatrics (Med-Peds) residency. Both training programs are incredibly competitive and the Med-Peds program consistently ranks in the top 5 nationally. We also successfully submitted a new Wilson County Primary Care-Internal Medicine Residency Program, and will begin recruiting for the first cohort of residents in fall 2025.

Our research portfolio has enjoyed both new grants as well as renewals this past year from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), NIH, the VA and AHRQ. These include new R01s, a MERIT award, and multiple new PCORI awards. Research fellowship training in Health Services Research and Implementation Science at both Vanderbilt and the Nashville VA Medical Center

Sunil Kripalani, MD, MSc, was named Vice President for VUMC Health System Sciences



2024-2025 Section of Hospital Medicine



continues to attract exceptional candidates from within Vanderbilt and around the country.

Throughout this period of growth across our tripartite mission, we continue to be grateful for the ability to attract and retain exceptional faculty. It is the faculty's unwavering commitment to excellence that allows us to be good stewards of the trust patients place in us, the privilege to train the next generation, and the opportunity to ask and answer questions that improve the health of our community.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Julia Anderson, MD

Co-director, Miller Society, Department of Medicine

Emily Brown, MD

Medical Director, VUMC Discharge Care Center

Sunil Kripalani, MD, MSc

Vice President for Health System Sciences, VUMC

Jodi Robbe, MPAS

Director of VUMC Advanced Practice, Medicine Segment

Christianne Roumie, MD, MPH

Director, Health Systems Research COIN, Department of Veterans Affairs

Clinical

Paul Parisot, MD

May 2025 VUMC Credo Award

Research

Martha Shepherd, DO, MPH

Best of 2024 List of Health Promotion Researchers, *American Journal of Health Promotion*

Education

Charlene Dewey, MD, MEd

2025 American Medical Women's Association Presidential Award

Robert Dittus, MD, MPH

2024 Department of Veterans Affairs David M. Worthen Award for Career Achievement in Health Professions Education

Professional Society Elections

Sunil Kripalani, MD, MSc

Master in Hospital Medicine, Section of Hospital Medicine

Martha Shepherd, DO, MPH

Fellow, American College of Lifestyle Medicine

Professional Service

Christopher Terndrup, MD

Member-at-Large, Society for General Internal Medicine Council

Senior Editorships

Sunil Kripalani, MD, MSc

Editorial Board, *Journal of Hospice Medicine*

Relevant Publications

Goldin MR, Petry R, **Goyal P**. Doxycycline-associated acute pancreatitis: a rare adverse effect of a commonly prescribed antibiotic. *BMJ Case Rep*. 2024 Sep 10;17(9):e261364. doi: 10.1136/bcr-2024-261364. PMID: 39256179.

Roddy MK, Spieker AJ, Greevy RA Jr, **Nelson LA**, Berg C, **Mayberry LS**. Diabetes-specific family functioning typology associated with intervention engagement and effects: secondary analyses from a randomized controlled trial. *Ann Behav Med*. 2025 Jan 4;59(1):kaae070. doi: 10.1093/abm/kaae070. PMID: 39661957; PMCID: PMC11783318.

Bailey SR, Lucas JA, Holderness H, Lyon-Scott K, Erroba J, Flocke SA, Overholser A, **Tindle HA**. Smoking Assessment by Visit Modality Among Community-based Primary Care Clinics. *Am J Prev Med*. 2025 Mar;68(3):607-610. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2024.11.020. Epub 2024 Dec 4. PMID: 39643095; PMCID: PMC11830536.

Donohue C, Raye K, Pandharipande P, **Dittus RS**, Ely EW. A Systematic Review of the Prevalence and Characteristics of Oropharyngeal Dysphagia in Critically Ill Patients During the Acute and Postacute Recovery Phase. *Crit Care Med*. 2025 Jun 1;53(6):e1292-e1302. doi: 10.1097/CCM.0000000000006669. Epub 2025 Mar 27. PMID: 40145810.

Schnipper JL, **Kripalani S**. The future of hospital medicine research: Three next steps. *J Hosp Med*. 2025 Jun 20. doi: 10.1002/jhm.70103. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40539842.

DIVISION UPDATE

Genetic Medicine

The Division of Genetic Medicine is deeply committed to making health care personal. In the past academic year, the division has continued to advance this mission across research, clinical and education domains in ways that are uniquely possible at VUMC.

Twenty years ago, leaders in our division, in collaboration with many across the medical center, launched VUMC's BioVU Biobank – the first resource of its kind in the world to collect DNA from patients at scale and link to electronic health records. BioVU currently contains more than 350,000 DNA samples with each sample linked to approximately 10 years of longitudinal health record data. This past spring marked another milestone in the BioVU program with the completion of whole genome sequencing of 250,000 BioVU samples. More than 100 faculty, staff and trainees from genetic medicine, led by Dr. Doug Ruderfer, Director of the Center for Digital Genomic Medicine, joined forces in an unprecedented effort to collaboratively perform the first set of analyses of this data. The analysis identified many novel genetic variants associated with both drug adverse events and diagnostic codes. They also found that genetic variants known to disproportionately cause disease in minority populations were under-documented in the medical record, including treatable genetic conditions such as G6PD deficiency and transthyretin amyloidosis.

Based on these results, new clinical efforts are underway to leverage VUMC's Learning Health System infrastructure to identify patients with these undiagnosed genetic conditions and ensure that they are receiving personalized care. In recognition of our leadership in this space, Vanderbilt was selected as both a clinical site and as a coordinating center for the NIH National Human Genome Research Institute's Genomic Learning Health System program in collaboration with five other leading academic health systems.

The Division of Genetic Medicine is also training the next generation of leaders within genetic medicine through predoctoral and postdoctoral training programs. The Vanderbilt Human Genetics PhD program graduated eight PhD students in the 2024-2025 year, which was a record for us. We continue to have exceptional postdoctoral

Piper Below, PhD, was named Director of the Vanderbilt Genetics Institute



Master of Genetic Counseling class of 2025



trainees on our Genomic Medicine T32 – two of whom received NIH K career development awards in this past year. The Vanderbilt Masters in Genetic Counseling program continues to thrive, graduating seven genetic counselors this past year.

Genetic Medicine has also celebrated several leadership transitions. Dr. Nancy Cox, who led the division through a period of unprecedented growth over the past decade, handed off her role as Division Director to Dr. Alex Bick. She also handed off leadership of the Vanderbilt Genetics Institute to Dr. Piper Below.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Jennifer (Piper) Below, PhD
Director, Vanderbilt Genetics Institute

Alex Bick, MD, PhD
Director, Division of Genetic Medicine,
Department of Medicine

Douglas Ruderfer, PhD
Director, Vanderbilt Center for Digital
Genomic Medicine

Professional Society Elections

Alex Bick, MD, PhD
Member, ASCI

Professional Service

Melinda Aldrich, PhD, MPH
Board of Directors, American Society of
Human Genetics

Eric Gamazon, PhD

Co-chair, Genetics Task Force,
Environmental Influences on Child Health
Outcomes (ECHO) Program

Member, NIH Analytics and Statistics
for Population Research Panel A Study
Section

Michelle Southard Smith, PhD

Vice President, International Mammalian
Genome Society

Senior Editorships

Eric Gamazon, PhD
Genome Medicine

PLOS Computational Biology

Relevant Publications

Lancaster MC, Chen HH, Shoemaker MB, Fleming MR, Strickland TL, Baker JT, Evans GF, Polikowsky HG, Samuels DC, Huff CD, Roden DM, **Below JE**. Detection of distant relatedness in biobanks to identify undiagnosed cases of Mendelian disease as applied to Long QT syndrome. *Nat Commun*. 2024 Aug 29;15(1):7507. doi: 10.1038/s41467-024-51977-4. PMID: 39209900; PMCID: PMC11362435.

Zheng NS, Annis J, Master H, Han L, Gleichauf K, Ching JH, Nasser M, Coleman P, Desine S, **Ruderfer DM**, Hernandez J, Schneider LD, Brittain EL. Sleep patterns and risk of chronic disease as measured by long-term monitoring with commercial wearable devices in the All of Us Research Program. *Nat Med*. 2024 Sep;30(9):2648-2656. doi: 10.1038/s41591-024-03155-8. Epub 2024 Jul 19. PMID: 39030265; PMCID: PMC11405268.

Alagöz G, Eising E, Mekki Y, Bignardi G, Fontanillas P; 23andMe Research Team; Nivard MG, Luciano M, **Cox NJ**, Fisher SE, Gordon RL. The shared genetic architecture and evolution of human language and musical rhythm. *Nat Hum Behav*. 2025 Feb;9(2):376-390. doi: 10.1038/s41562-024-02051-y. Epub 2024 Nov 21. PMID: 39572686; PMCID: PMC11860242.

Chen HH, Highland HM, Frankel EG, Scartozzi AC, Zhang X, Roshani R, Sharma P, Kar A, Buchanan VL, Polikowsky HG, Petty LE, Seo J, Anwar MY, Kim D, Graff M, Young KL, Zhu W, Karastergiou K, Shaw DM, Justice AE, Fernández-Rhodes L, Krishnan M, Gutierrez A, McCormick PJ, Aguilar-Salinas CA, Tusié-Luna MT, Muñoz-Hernandez LL, Herrera-Hernandez M, Lee M, **Gamazon ER**, **Cox NJ**, Pajukanta P, Fried SK, Gordon-Larsen P, Shah RV, Fisher-Hoch SP, McCormick JB, North KE, **Below JE**. Multiomics reveal key inflammatory drivers of severe obesity: IL4R, LILRA5, and OSM. *Cell Genom*. 2025 Mar 12;5(3):100784. doi: 10.1016/j.xgen.2025.100784. Epub 2025 Mar 4. PMID: 40043711; PMCID: PMC11960538.

Betti MJ, Lin P, **Aldrich MC**, **Gamazon ER**. Genetically regulated eRNA expression predicts chromatin contact frequency and reveals genetic mechanisms at GWAS loci. *Nat Commun*. 2025 Apr 3;16(1):3193. doi: 10.1038/s41467-025-58023-x. PMID: 40180945; PMCID: PMC11968980.

DIVISION UPDATE

Geriatric Medicine

This year has been one of accomplishments and growth for the Division of Geriatric Medicine. We have worked tirelessly to further our mission of promoting healthy aging through patient care, medical education and research, and have experienced success in all three of domains in the most recent academic year.

We have worked to grow our outpatient capacity and recruited Dr. Stacy Smith, a former VUMC Geriatric Medicine Fellow, to join us in the 2025-2026 year. With the addition of Michael McClellan, NP, we have enhanced our ability to provide care for homebound older adults and provide home-based end-of-life care. Dr. Tara Horr has led the development of our home-based programs and through her work, we have expanded access to care for some of the most challenging patients to reach. Over the past year, we developed and launched a novel VUMC clinic physically located within the Blakeford Senior Living Community. This care model allows us to provide on-site care to an entirely new population of older adults. For this upcoming year, we will expand our Transitions of Care consultation service, led by Dr. Kimberly Beiting and Shelley Ross, APRN. This service is designed to improve the transfer of hospitalized VUMC patients to community skilled nursing homes and reduce problems related to communication.

This past year we also recruited four new fellows to our geriatric-medicine fellowship training program. Our fellowship program, directed by Dr. Mariu Duggan, has continued to have recruitment success despite a very competitive environment. This past year, Dr. Duggan was joined by Dr. Anne Gifford who will assume the role of Assistant Program Director. In addition to our fellowship activities, Drs. Gifford and Beiting lead the Integrated Science Course on Healthy Aging & Quality Dying for VUSM students. This immersive course helps to prepare future physicians in how best to care for older adults.

Our division faculty continue to have success in obtaining support for their important research. Dr. Corey Bolton was awarded a K23 grant from the NIA to study the impact of sociodemographic factors on plasma p-tau217 performance. Dr. Leslie Gaynor received an Alzheimer's Association Clinical Scientist Fellowship Award to study

Consuelo Wilkins, MD, MSCI, received the ASCI Louis W. Sullivan, MD, Award



Leslie Gaynor, PhD (right), attended the Annual Alzheimer's Disease Research Day



limbic-predominant age-related TDP-43 encephalopathy in Alzheimer's Disease. Our faculty have also been very active in professional societies and national organizations. Most notable is Dr. Consuelo Wilkins's service on the advisory committee to the Deputy Directory for Intramural Research at NIH. Our faculty are very active in disseminating their work. Dr. Leslie Gaynor chaired a scientific session on unraveling neurodegenerative pathways across Alzheimer's and related disorders as part of the Alzheimer's Association International Conference. Dr. Bolton presented his work at the International Neuropsychological Society conference, and Dr. Beiting was an invited speaker on opioid use disorder in older adults at Geriatric Advanced Practice Nurses

Association annual conference.

Finally, we celebrated the accomplishments of Dr. Wilkins, who was awarded the Louis W. Sullivan, MD, Award from the ASCI and was the inaugural appointment for the Mildred Thorton Stahlman Endowed Chair from Vanderbilt University. In addition, we congratulate Dr. Jim Powers, who was awarded the Tennessee Caregiver Coalition's Caregiver Support Award for 2025.

We eagerly anticipate continued growth in our clinical, educational, and research mission for the upcoming year.

Notable Recognition

Clinical

James Powers, MD

2025 Tennessee Caregiver Coalition
Caregiver Support Group

Research

Consuelo Wilkins, MD, MSCI

ASCI Louis W. Sullivan, MD, Award

Professional Society Elections

Abby Parish, APRN

Fellow, American Association of Nurse
Practitioners

Professional Service

Corey Bolton, PsyD

Co-leader, Symptomatic Subcommittee,
AGREEDementia International Working
Group

Leslie Gaynor, PhD

Program Chair, Dementia SIG,
International Neuropsychological Society

James Powers, MD

Member, ABIM Hospice and Palliative
Care Exam Question Writing Committee

Consuelo Wilkins, MD, MSCI

Advisory Committee Member, NIH
Deputy Director for Intramural Research

Relevant Publications

Lee JW, Hollingsworth EK, Shah AS, Szanton SL, Perrin N, Mixon AS, Vasilevskis EE, Boyd CM, Han HR, Green AR, Taylor JL, **Simmons SF**. Emergency department visits and hospital readmissions after a deprescribing intervention among hospitalized older adults. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2024 Jul;72(7):2038-2047. doi: 10.1111/jgs.18945. Epub 2024 May 9. PMID: 38725307; PMCID: PMC11226369.

Huang SS, Song Q, **Beiting KJ**, **Duggan MC**, Hines K, **Murff H**, Leung V, **Powers J**, Harvey TS, Malin B, Yin Z. Fact Check: Assessing the Response of ChatGPT to Alzheimer's Disease Myths. *J Am Med Dir Assoc*. 2024 Oct;25(10):105178. doi: 10.1016/j.jamda.2024.105178. Epub 2024 Aug 3. PMID: 39106968.

Jordano JO, Vasilevskis EE, **Simmons SF**, Taylor WD, Monte AA, **Duggan MC**, Han JH. Selective serotonin/serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor serum concentrations' association with delirium duration. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2024 Nov;72(11):3594-3597. doi: 10.1111/jgs.19107. Epub 2024 Jul 29. PMID: 39073750; PMCID: PMC11560737.

Bolton CJ, Kim N, Yu L, Wilson RS, Boyle PA. Longer time horizons are associated with reduced risk of mortality and disability in older adults. *Aging Ment Health*. 2025 Jan;29(1):36-42. doi: 10.1080/13607863.2024.2354339. Epub 2024 Jun 13. PMID: 38869165.

Niehoff KM, Hanlotxomphou A, **Brady M**, Bartoo C, Gallion AH, Schlotterbeck IT, Gaudette AF, **Horr TB**, **Simmons SF**, Kripalani S. Mentored Quality Improvement Strategies to Enhance Deprescribing During COVID-19: A Case Series of Three Nursing Homes. *Sr Care Pharm*. 2025 Jun 1;40(6):237-246. doi: 10.4140/TCP.n.2025.237. PMID: 40514780.

Silverman ARC, Chung PJ, Gould MK, Ngo-Metzger Q, Tauali'i MM, Mosen DM, **Duggan MC**, Nocon RS. Health-Related Social Needs and Total Healthcare Cost: A Cross-Sectional Study in a Large Integrated Health System. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2025 Jun 25. doi: 10.1007/s11606-025-09647-8. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40562891.

DIVISION UPDATE

Hematology and Oncology

The Division of Hematology and Oncology continues to succeed in improving outcomes for patients with blood disorders and cancer.

Our investigators are leaders in the understanding of clonal hematopoiesis, the expansion of a single subpopulation of hematopoietic stem cells arising from somatic mutations, now implicated in a growing number of diseases in addition to cancers. We previously were the first to publish our methods to perform CAR-T therapy as an outpatient and have now submitted our results of doing the same with bispecific antibodies, both therapies previously thought to be inpatient medications only. Under the direction of Dr. Ola Oluwole, we continue to lead the innovation of cellular therapies, the newest forms of immune therapy.

This year, ensartinib, an inhibitor of aberrant anaplastic lymphoma kinase signaling was approved for use in non-small cell lung cancer. Dr. Christine Lovly helped develop this agent before it reached the clinic through the phase III approval trial, which resulted in the VUMC William J. Darby Award for Translational Research that Changed the Practice of Medicine Worldwide.

Our faculty continue to lead trials that have changed the treatment of multiple cancers, including anal cancer, colorectal cancer, renal cancer, neuroendocrine tumors, chronic myelomonocytic leukemia and myelodysplastic syndrome.

We have also led the nation in studying and treating young adults with cancer with one of the first dedicated young adult programs co-led by Drs. Cathy Eng, Bhagi Dholaria and Libby Davis. Together they have been identifying the rise of many cancers including colorectal and pancreas cancers in young adults under the age of 40, and are working to identify the root causes of these increases. In November 2025, Vanderbilt will host the first Young Adults with Cancer Symposium in Nashville, which will feature leading speakers from around the country.

New additions to our division include Dr. Andrea Holowatyj who joined us from the Department of Medicine's Division

Heather Jackson, MSN, BSN, PhD, was named America's Top NP for Pain Management



2024-2025 Hematology and Oncology fellows



of Epidemiology, and has been identifying the changing epidemiology of appendiceal cancers, including a rise in the incidence in young adults. Drs. Rachele Johnson and Julie Rhoades also joined us from the department's Division of Clinical Pharmacology. Dr. Johnson's focus is on tumor cell dormancy in the bone marrow, and Dr. Rhoades' focus is on the interaction of tumors and the bone micro-environment. Dr. Margaret Coplin joined the faculty earlier this year, providing care to patients in our Cool Springs and Spring Hill clinics. We also recruited Dr. Jessica Sharpe from our fellowship program to join faculty in the 2025-2026 academic year. She will conduct clinical research and treat our patients with breast cancer. An additional four new clinicians are scheduled to join our faculty the upcoming year.

We continue to focus on mentorship and career development. Dr. Brian Rini continues to lead our career development council to ensure our junior faculty are progressing towards promotion. Dr. Jill Gilbert won the VUMC Thomas A. Hazinski Award for Effectiveness in Mentoring and

Professional Development of Faculty.

Our Advanced Practice Providers, led by Heather Jackson, MSN, BSN, PhD, continue their academic productivity. In addition to multiple publications and national leadership roles, they continue to receive accolades within VUMC. Four APPs received DAISY awards last year, and Olivia West, MSN, RN, AGACNP-BC, won the Vice Chair Award for Outstanding Contributions by an Advanced Practice Provider.

Despite the current competitive environment for federal grants, our division continues to obtain new grants including VA Career Development Awards, Department of Defense Awards and NCI grants. We anticipate continued success from these and other agencies with several applications already submitted.

Overall, the Division of Hematology and Oncology is continuing as a leader in research and treatment of diseases of the blood and cancers.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Cathy Eng, MD

Associate Director of Strategic Relations and Research Partnerships, Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center (VICC)

Reena Jayani, MD

Quality Director, VUMC Stem Cell Transplant Program

Natalie Spradlin, MD

Co-director, Miller Society, Department of Medicine

Clinical

VICC became sole provider of care at Cookeville Regional Medical Cancer Center

DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses

- Jeneth Aquino, MSN, APRN
- Angela Fitzpatrick, APRN
- Kathryn Kennedy, APRN
- Krista Kuhert-Gainer, ACNP

Jordan Berlin, MD

2025 VUMC Advanced Practice Ambassador Award

Heather Jackson, MSN, BSN, PhD

America's Top NP for Pain Management, Point of Care Network

Bipin Savani, MD

American Society for Transplantation Cellular Therapy Distinguished Service Award

Research

Justin Balko, PharmD, PhD

Waddell Walker Hancock Cancer Discovery Fund Scholar

Tae Kon Kim, MD, PhD

V Foundation for Cancer Research V Scholar Program Award

Ashwin Kistagari, MD

2024 ASH HONORS Award

Justin Lo, MD, PhD

Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation Fellowship

Sandra Zinkel, MD, PhD

VA Clinician-Scientist Investigator Award

Professional Society Elections

Christine Lovly, MD, PhD

Fellow, ASCO

Michael Savona, MD

Fellow, AAAS

Professional Service

Kimberly Dahlman, PhD

Board of Directors, International Association of Medical Science Educators

Cathy Eng, MD

Co-chair, NCI Gastrointestinal Steering Committee

Heather Jackson, MSN, BSN, PhD

Founding Member and Board of Directors, Pain Medicine Academy of Advanced Practice Providers

Christine Lovly, MD, PhD

Member, AACR Board of Directors

Olalekan Oluwole, MD, MPH

Board of Directors, American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy

Bipin Savani, MD

Vice Chair, International Academy for Clinical Hematology

Brian Rini, MD

Member, NCCN Panel for Renal Cell Carcinoma

Michael Savona, MD

Board of Directors, Myelodysplastic Syndromes Foundation

Member, ASH Committee on Audit and Investment

DIVISION UPDATE

Infectious Diseases

Infectious diseases, if not treated or prevented, threaten all medical progress. The VUMC Division of Infectious Diseases (ID) employs cutting-edge discovery science and clinical research to address infectious disease threats, while also providing top-notch clinical care to our patients and mentoring trainees to become the next generation of leaders. The division's mission is enhanced by interdisciplinary collaboration, scientific curiosity, service, and professionalism, with dedication to fostering a culture of community.

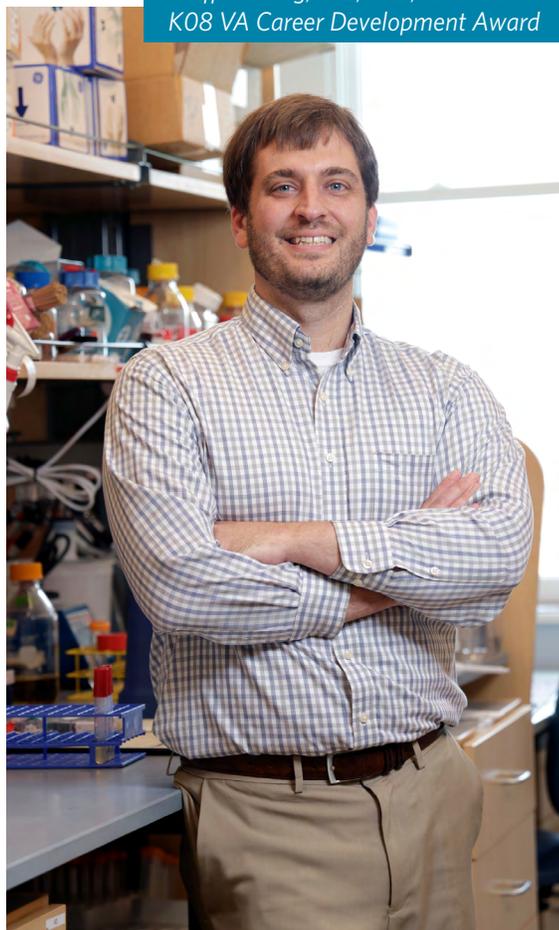
In 2024, Dr. Maricar Malinis assumed the role of Director of Transplant ID. With six faculty and one advanced practice provider, the transplant ID group staffs two inpatient consult teams, has organ-specific liaisons for heart, lung, kidney and other organs for our medical and surgical colleagues, and has embedded Dr. Augusto Dulanto-Chiang, in the stem cell clinic.

Dr. Ryan Khodadadi joined our faculty in 2024, launching a new Musculoskeletal ID subspecialty service in January 2025, which provides both inpatient and outpatient consultative services. Dr. Titus Daniels took over as the Ambulatory Medical Director, while simultaneously leading our telemedicine services. In one regional hospital, ID consultation by telemedicine last year was found to provide a mortality benefit among patients with *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteremia.

The Nontuberculous Mycobacteria (NTM) and Bronchiectasis Center, co-led by Drs. Christina Fiske and James Tolle (Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine), received distinction as a regional center of excellence by the COPD Foundation and was invited to join the national NTM Care Center Network. The Center for Drug Safety and Immunology, founded by Dr. Elizabeth Phillips, continues to be a home for state-of-the-art research in drug allergies, leveraging the rich clinical environment of the Drug Allergy Clinic, which celebrated its 10-year anniversary this year. Our outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy services now includes two pharmacists, who oversee the safe administration of intravenous antibiotics to patients in their homes.

Our large research portfolio exceeded \$77.5 million

Jeff Freiberg, MD, PhD, received a K08 VA Career Development Award



Katie White, MD, PhD (center), receives the 2025 VUSM Gottlieb C. Freisinger II Award

in the NIH 2024 fiscal year, spanning multiple domains with strengths in HIV, bacterial pathogenesis, virology, mycobacterial diseases, drug allergy, healthcare epidemiology and antimicrobial stewardship, tick-borne diseases, sepsis, host-pathogen interactions, and emerging infections. New awards to highlight include Burroughs Wellcome and March of Dimes discovery awards to Dr. Jennifer Gaddy for her work on perinatal infections and adverse pregnancy outcomes; a R37 MERIT award to Dr. Kelly Dooley for tuberculosis therapeutics work; a large U54 award to Dr. Suman Das to fund the Vanderbilt-coordinated Virus Characterization Center (V2C2); a first R01 to Dr. Milner Staub for a trial to assess strategies for antimicrobial stewardship in the ED and outpatient environments; a VA award to Dr. John Koethe for a trial aimed at strategies to improve muscle strength and reduce adiposity in veterans with HIV; and an R01 to Dr. Henrique Serezani to study the links between hyperglycemia and sepsis risk. Dr. Jeffrey Freiberg received a K08 award to explore mechanisms for antibiotic failure in *Staphylococcus aureus* infections. Additionally, the division saw philanthropic successes in HIV prevention (Drs. Cristian Chandler and Krystn Wagner), HIV care (Ruby Gala, Dr. Sean Kelly), Drug Safety and Immunology (Dr. Phillips and colleagues), and international health (Dr. John Koethe).

Many faculty represent Vanderbilt nationally and internationally with formal leadership roles, including Dr. Thomas Talbot as President of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA); Dr. Anna Person as Chair-Elect of the HIV Medicine Association; Dr. Elizabeth Phillips as Chair of Research for the American Academy

of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) Foundation; and Dr. Maricar Malinis is Chair of the American Society of Transplantation HIV Working Group. Dr. Henrique Serezani has been named the Director of the Vanderbilt Center for Immunobiology starting in fall 2025.

We congratulate Dr. Person who received the 2024 Clinical Teacher Award from the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA); Dr. Ban Allos who was chosen by medical students for the prestigious Shovel Teaching Award; and Dr. Katie White, the recipient of VUSM's 2025 Gottlieb C. Friesinger II Award for extraordinary clinical service. Dr. Bryan Harris received the Allen Kaiser, MD, Directorship for Clinical Excellence, and Dr. Keipp Talbot was celebrated with a Vaccinology Research Directorship. Dr. Phillips was elected a Fellow of the AAAS.

Our three fellowship programs in general ID, transplant ID and addiction medicine remain strong. This year, we welcomed Dr. Fionna Feller as Assistant Program Director of the Transplant ID fellowship.

In 2025-2026, a key focus will be on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). We have developed an AMR Task Force, and over 30 faculty members across Vanderbilt University and the Medical Center joined us for an inaugural retreat. As we navigate uncertain waters over the months to come, we remain confident in our division's ingenuity, place at the forefront of cutting-edge science, clinical and educational excellence, fortitude, and collaborative spirit, which are strengths that have been developed with care and intentionality.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Henrique Serezani, PhD

Director, Vanderbilt Center for Immunobiology (*Starting fall 2025*)

Associate Director, Vanderbilt Institute for Infection, Immunology and Infection (VI4)

Clinical

VUMC Drug Allergy Clinic celebrated 10 years of personalized care and diagnosis for drug allergies

VUMC named Regional Center of Excellence by the COPD Foundation

Education

Ban Allos, MD

2025 VUSM Shovel Teaching Award

Anna Person, MD

2024 IDSA Clinical Teacher Award

Rebecca Stern, MD

2024 IDSA Rising Leaders Program

Professional Society Elections

Elizabeth Phillips, MD

Fellow, AAAS

H. Keipp Talbot, MD, MPH

Member, AES

Professional Service

Karen Bloch, MD, MPH

Member, IDSA 2025 Histoplasmosa Treatment Guidelines Committee

Kelly Dooley, MD, PhD, MPH

Board of Directors, American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics

Augusto Dulanto Chiang, MD

Member, NCCN Guidelines Infection Prevention Panel

Maricar Malinis, MD

Chair, American Society of Transplantation HIV Working Group
Member, IDSA Practice and Quality Committee

Elizabeth Phillips, MD

Chair, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology Foundation Research and Long-range Planning Council

Rebecca Stern, MD

Member, Tennessee Department of Health Ambulatory Surgical Center Hospital Associate Infection Advisory Committee

H. Keipp Talbot, MD, MPH

Chair, CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

Thomas Talbot, MD, MPH

President, SHEA

Vice Chair, SHEA Foundation Board



PHILANTHROPY HIGHLIGHT



Charlie, Kevin, Katie and Fred Crumbo

Donor Spotlight: Katie and Kevin Crumbo

Katie and Kevin Crumbo have been involved with Vanderbilt University Medical Center, inside and out, since they moved to Nashville from San Francisco in 1994.

That year, Katie began her VUMC career as a nurse practitioner working in the HIV Vaccine Trials Unit. She worked in HIV vaccine research for over 20 years and retired for the first time in 2018. In 2020, she returned to assist with the Moderna COVID vaccine trial. She officially retired in 2023 when the study ended.

Even their children “grew up” on the Medical Center’s campus. Both were born at VUMC (Fred in 1998 and Charlie in 2003) and attended VUMC childcare.

Over the years, the Crumbos have also supported the Medical Center through philanthropy. They contributed to the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt’s expansion project in 2015, and in 2020 they established the Crumbo Fellowship Fund in Pediatric Infectious Diseases. The fund provided research and conference travel support for Cara Charnogursky, MD, in her final year as a pediatric infectious disease fellow.

In 2024, they made another gift to establish the Crumbo Family Innovation Fund, which will propel the work of Krystn Wagner, MD, PhD, and Cristian Chandler, PhD, MPH, as they aim to improve HIV diagnosis and care in rural Tennessee and increase access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (or PrEP) medication. It’s an area very close to Katie’s heart.

“We were so compelled by this proposal to improve access and care to a population that is not being served,” Katie said. “The success rate of PrEP is phenomenal. In a perfect world, everybody would be well-educated about the benefits of PrEP. So, when you tell me there is a group that we’re not reaching, I’m ‘all in’ to help support.”

Supporting the Division of Infectious Diseases through philanthropy is important for their family, especially because it recognizes the often “unsung heroes” of health care, Katie said.

“I have nothing but enormous admiration for those who dedicate their careers to Infectious Diseases,” she said. “They are the silent partners in a patient’s care, but they are so critical. They are saving people’s lives every single day, and yet they aren’t often acknowledged for how they helped change someone’s life.”

Both Katie and Kevin, who serves as finance director for Metro Nashville, agree that investing their resources at VUMC is money well-invested.

“Vanderbilt University Medical Center is a treasure in our local community,” they said. “We’ve known that since our arrival in 1994. It was certainly impressive then, and it grows more impressive all the time. All you have to do is walk the hallways of the hospital to realize that VUMC is serving this part of the country and beyond as a beacon of hope and expertise.”

Department of Medicine Giving

Generous donors like the Crumbo family help strengthen the Department of Medicine’s educational, research and patient care programs.

For more information and to make a contribution, scan the QR code, or visit medicine.vumc.org/dom-giving.



DIVISION UPDATE

Nephrology and Hypertension

The Division of Nephrology and Hypertension accomplished significant growth and achievements the past academic year. Our clinical program is highlighted by a record breaking 330 kidney transplants, which is an almost 20% increase in volume over the last three years. This remarkable accomplishment is accompanied by one of the largest academic home dialysis programs with 120 patients. Our outpatient program has grown with three additional outreach programs covering a substantial geographic area in Tennessee. The specialty clinics are enriched with newly launched Onco-Nephrology and Kidney Stone clinics. We performed over 9,000 acute treatments for various conditions requiring extracorporeal therapies in the inpatient setting.

Under the direction of Dr. Anna Burgner, our clinical fellowship training program continues to thrive with 15 general nephrology and two transplant fellowship slots. In recognition of this highly successful program, Dr. Burgner has been awarded a Distinguished Educator Award from the American Society of Nephrology (ASN). Dr. Raymond Harris received the 2024 Edge for Scholars Excellence in Mentoring Award for Excellence in Mentoring Early Career Faculty to Research Independence.

Our faculty continued to excel in research this past academic year. Dr. Eman Gohar received funding from the NIH to study impact of estrogen signaling on postmenopausal hypertension. She was also appointed as the Co-chair of ASN's Clinical Guidance Committee. Dr. Roy Zent was awarded the Keck Foundation grant for groundbreaking genetic research. Dr. Lauren Woodard is the also Chair of Nonviral Therapeutic Delivery Committee for the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy.

The Division of Nephrology and Hypertension continues to be a nationally and internationally recognized leader in the care of individuals living with kidney disease.

Eman Gohar, PhD, received a new R01 from the NHLBI



Roy Zent, MD, PhD, was awarded a Keck Foundation grant

Notable Recognition

Research

Juan Pablo Arroyo Ornelas, MD, PhD

ASCI Young Physician-Scientist Award

Fabian Bock, MD, PhD

2025 SSCI Young Faculty Research Award

Education

Anna Burgner, MD, MEHP

Society of Excellence Alumni Award in the Master of Education in the Health Professions (MEHP), Johns Hopkins School of Education

Professional Service

Edward Gould, MD

Chair, ASN Home Dialysis Center of Excellence Development Committee

Senior Editorships

T. Alp Ikizler, MD

Associate Editor, *Kidney International*

Ambra Pozzi, PhD

Associate Editor, *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*

Relevant Publications

Zeder K, **Siew ED**, Kovacs G, Brittain EL, Maron BA. Pulmonary hypertension and chronic kidney disease: prevalence, pathophysiology and outcomes. *Nat Rev Nephrol*. 2024 Nov;20(11):742-754. doi: 10.1038/s41581-024-00857-7. Epub 2024 Jun 18. PMID: 38890546.

Takasu M, Kishi S, Nagasu H, Kidokoro K, **Brooks CR**, Kashihara N. The Role of Mitochondria in Diabetic Kidney Disease and Potential Therapeutic Targets. *Kidney Int Rep*. 2024 Nov 9;10(2):328-342. doi: 10.1016/j.ekir.2024.10.035. PMID: 39990900; PMCID: PMC11843125.

Katagiri D, Nagasaka S, Takahashi K, Wang S, **Pozzi A, Zent R**, Shimizu A, **Zhang MZ**, Göthert JR, van Kuppevelt TH, **Harris RC, Takahashi T**. Endothelial eNOS deficiency causes podocyte injury through NFAT2 and heparanase in diabetic mice. *Sci Rep*. 2024 Nov 25;14(1):29179. doi: 10.1038/s41598-024-79501-0. PMID: 39587144; PMCID: PMC11589149.

Vanichapol T, Gonzalez A, Delgado R, Brewer M, Clouthier KA, Menshikh AA, Snyder WE, Rahman T, Sander V, Yang H, Davidson AJ, **de Caestecker MP**. Permanent defects in renal medullary structure and function after reversal of urinary obstruction. *JCI Insight*. 2025 Jan 23;10(5):e187008. doi: 10.1172/jci.insight.187008. PMID: 39847447; PMCID: PMC11949033.

Bock F, Li S, **Pozzi A, Zent R**. Integrins in the kidney - beyond the matrix. *Nat Rev Nephrol*. 2025 Mar;21(3):157-174. doi: 10.1038/s41581-024-00906-1. Epub 2024 Dec 6. PMID: 39643697.

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Vlasschaert C, Pan Y, Chen J, Akwo E, Rao V, Hixson JE, Chong M, Uddin MM, Yu Z, Jiang M, Peng F, Cao S, Wang Y, Kim DK, **Hung AM**, He J, Tamura MK, Cohen DL, He J, Li C, Bhat Z, Rao P, Xie D, Bick AG, Kestenbaum B, Paré G, Rauh MJ, Levin A, Natarajan P, Lash JP, **Zhang MZ, Harris RC Jr, Robinson-Cohen C**, Lanktree MB, Kelly TN; Chronic Renal Insufficiency Cohort (CRIC) Study Investigators. Clonal Hematopoiesis of Indeterminate Potential and Progression of CKD. *J Am Soc Nephrol*. 2025 Apr 9;36(9):1764-1774. doi: 10.1681/ASN.0000000680. PMID: 40202794; PMCID: PMC12416945.

Singh R, Kulthinee S, Nasci VL, Akwo EA, Umunna CJ, Almutlaq RN, Pochynyuk OM, **Robinson-Cohen C, Gohar EY**. G-Protein-Coupled Estrogen Receptor 1 and Pregnancy Confer Protection Against Hypertension in Older Females. *Circulation*. 2025 Apr 15;151(15):1126-1129. doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.124.073693. Epub 2025 Apr 14. PMID: 40228067; PMCID: PMC11999251.

Demirci M, Dilaver RG, Roshanravan B, **Ikizler TA**, Gamboa JL. Intermuscular Adipose Tissue in CKD: A Window into Muscle Quality and Health? *Clin J Am Soc Nephrol*. 2025 Apr 30;20(7):1014-1027. doi: 10.2215/CJN.0000000745. PMID: 40305132; PMCID: PMC12262915.

Pan Y, **Cao S, Wang Y**, Tang J, Niu A, Kar SA, Jiang M, Peng F, Siew GM, **Lu W**, Wang S, **Wilson M, Brooks C**, Fogo AB, **Terker AS, Ornelas JPA**, Chen J, **Zhang MZ, Harris RC**. Myeloid EGFR deficiency accelerates recovery from AKI via macrophage efferocytosis and neutrophil apoptosis. *Nat Commun*. 2025 May 16;16(1):4563. doi: 10.1038/s41467-025-59393-y. PMID: 40379634; PMCID: PMC12084582.

DIVISION UPDATE

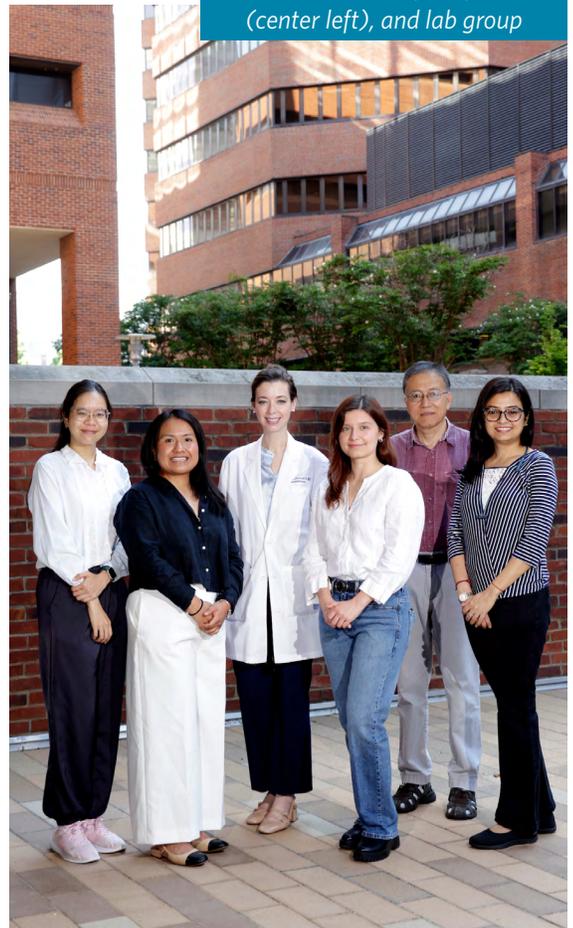
Rheumatology and Immunology

The Division of Rheumatology and Immunology is dedicated to the goal of excellence in integrated teaching, research and clinical care. The exceptional education of our next generation of rheumatologists is a major highlight of the 2024-2025 academic year. Our fellowship includes unique continuity learning opportunities at The Vanderbilt Clinic (TVC), Nashville General Hospital, and the VA TVHS, which is coordinated by Drs. Narender Annapureddy, Tyler Reese and Sarah Homann. This year, Dr. Erin Chew further developed diagnostic and therapeutic ultrasound curriculum, which supplements the outstanding work of Dr. Susan Kroop for our medicine residents, as well as our medical student rheumatology curriculum developed by Dr. Sallaya Chinratanalab.

We also saw the continued excellence of our immunology curriculum provided by our incredibly strong team of basic scientists, Drs. Rachel Bonami, Jin Chin, Deanna Edwards, Amy Major and Denis Mogilenko, who each published with trainees in high impact journals and submitted over a dozen grant applications to various foundation and government agencies. It should be noted that their original work in T and B cell interactions, tumor immunity, cardiovascular immune dysfunction and immunometabolism are critical for the mechanistic understanding of rheumatic disease, and their work places VUMC at the forefront of discovery.

Under the leadership of Dr. Michelle Ormseth, our new Director of Clinical Research, our basic and clinical science has become more closely integrated with focuses on systemic lupus erythematosus, vasculitis, inflammatory myositis and rheumatic hand complaints. The excellence of our dedicated care programs is further exemplified by the Patient Choice Award awarded to Dr. Bobo Tanner for his exceptional osteoporosis care. This past year, we welcomed two additional faculty members. Dr. Dilli Poudel will help build the seronegative spondylarthritis clinical research program, and Dr. Rashmi Dhital will create a research program dedicated to rheumatic disease pregnancy outcomes. Dr. Leslie Crofford continues in her role as a lead mentor to several of our physician scientists and helped submit the renewal of our T32, which is an interdisciplinary training program for rheumatology and

*Michelle Ormseth, MD, MSCI
(center left), and lab group*



*Drs. Tracy Frech (left) and Erin Chew (right)
are members of VUMC's multidisciplinary
Systemic Sclerosis Hand Team*

immunology. Dr. Jason Springer was selected for the VUMC Mid-Career Leadership Program and as the division's Schaffner Society liaison to help to align our clinical research program advancements with faculty promotion.

Access to the quality care provided by VUMC rheumatologists remains a priority for the 2025-2026 year. Drs. Kevin Meyers and Kevin Byram are innovatively incorporating e-consults, infusion prioritization and APP utilization in our TVC practice. Our Cool Springs Clinical Practice Group, under the leadership of Dr. Eli Steigelfest, and our new Vanderbilt Integrated Providers practice in Lebanon, Tenn., under the direction of Dr. Archana Srinivas,

are critical to our division mission of timely access to infusion medication and specialty care research opportunities.

Our commitment to the greater rheumatology community is now under the leadership of Dr. Adenrele Olajide. We celebrated several events this past year, including the retirement of our beloved Dr. John Sergent and the Emeritus status of Dr. Thomas Aune. In summary, despite the challenges that the year presented, the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology remains committed to education, research and clinical care, which is not only a major strength of the institution, but a superb example of the best in academia.

Notable Recognition

Leadership

Tracy Frech, MD, MSCI

Director, Division of Rheumatology and Immunology, Department of Medicine

Clinical

VUMC named designated Scleroderma Research and Treatment Center by the National Scleroderma Foundation

Education

Bobo Tanner, MD

2024 Santa Fe Bone Symposium Paul Miller Outstanding Educator of the Year Award

Professional Service

Rachel Bonami, MD

Chair, Breakthrough T1D FY25 Training Review Board

Kevin Byram, MD

President and Board of Directors, Vasculitis Foundation

Jin Chen, MD, PhD

Member, NCI U01 Metastasis Network Study Section

Leslie Crofford, MD

Member, NIAMS Career Development Study Section

Member, Arthritis Foundation National Medical and Scientific Committee

Tracy Frech, MD, MSCI

Vice President, Scleroderma Clinical Trials Consortium

Clinical Chair, American College of Rheumatology (ACR)

Paras Karmacharya, MBBS

Member, Rheumatology Research Foundation Early Career Investigator Subcommittee

Bobo Tanner, MD

Board of Directors, International Society for Clinical Densitometry

Erin Wilfong, MD, PhD

Vice Co-chair, Myositis Clinical Trials Consortium ILD Working Group

Senior Editorships

Tracy Frech, MD, MSCI

ACR Open

Journal of Scleroderma and Related Disorders

Jason Springer, MD, MS

Associate Editor, *Arthritis Research & Therapy*

Bobo Tanner, MD

Editorial Board, *Journal of Clinical Densitometry*

Editorial Board, *Therapeutic Advances in Musculoskeletal Disease*

Relevant Publications

Ramirez-Becerra C, Oeser AM, Pridmore M, Crescenzi R, Titze JM, Stein CM, **Ormseth MJ**. Tissue sodium in patients with rheumatoid arthritis: a novel potential driver of hypertension in autoimmunity. *Sci Rep*. 2024 Dec 30;14(1):32105. doi: 10.1038/s41598-024-83873-8. PMID: 39738798; PMCID: PMC11685933.

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2024-2025

Department of Medicine Faculty and Advanced Practice Providers

Allergy, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

Professors

Gordon Bernard, MD
Brian Christman, MD *
Joao de Andrade, MD
Ryszard Dworski, MD, PhD
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Tina Hartert, MD
Jacek Hawiger, MD, PhD *
Anna Hemnes, MD
James Jackson, PsyD *
Lisa Lancaster, MD
Fabien Maldonado, MD, MSc
Ray Stokes Peebles, MD *
Vasiliy Polosukhin, MD, PhD
Jill Pulley, MBA
Todd Rice, MD, MSc
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Jozef Zienkiewicz, PhD *

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Yan Liu, MD
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Meredith Pugh, MD, MSCI
Matthew Semler, MD, MSCI
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James Tolle, MD
Anil Trindade, MD
Weisong Zhou, PhD

Sr. Associates in Medicine

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Shinji Toki, PhD
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Lynn Clement, MSN, RN

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Olivia Kirkpatrick, MSN
Karen McCarty, MSN, RN
Christy Noblit, MSN, RN
Christy Sparkman, MSN
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Cynthia Wasden, MSN, RN
Dana Wirth, MSN, RN

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Kevin Seitz, MD †‡
Ujjal Singha, PhD, MS

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Susan Clendenen, NP
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Brian Dixon, APRN
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Wren Sherrill, APRN
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Cardiovascular Medicine

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William Stevenson, MD
Yan Ru Su, MD
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Assistants in Medicine

Rachel Allison, MSN, RN
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Ashley Blye, MSN, RN
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Margaret Chotard, DNP, MSN
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Christi Locklear, MSN, RN
Melissa Long, MSN
Ashley Lord, MSN, RN
Jamie McCord, MSN
Deborah Payne, MSN, RN
Cassady Pelphrey, MSc
Jennifer Pendergrast, MSN, RN
Holly Pierce, MSN, RN
Ashlee Piercey, MSN
John Schuerlein, MS
Angelique Shapman, MSN, RN
Barbara Simpson, MSN
Douglas West, MSN, RN
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Meghann Wilson, MSN
Molly Woods, MSN

Instructors

Ryan Ceddia, PhD
Giovanni Davogustto, MD, MSCI
Debra Dixon, MD, MS
Matthew Fleming, MD, PhD
Jonathan Heimlich, MD, PhD †
Megan Lancaster, MD, PhD †
Andrew Perry, MD
Jean Wassenaar, MD † *

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Alexandra Bucheli, APRN
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Arden Clark, APRN
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Theresa Davies, APRN

Brittany Dickey, PA-C
Emma Dorand, APRN
Randi Dossey, PA
Madison Duncan, APRN
Monica Dunwoodie, PA-C
Briyanna Evans, APRN
Courtney Foulk, APRN
Elizabeth Gager, APRN
Tiffani Gray, APRN
Amber Green, APRN
Ashley Gwynn, APRN
Kathryn Hayes (Smith), DNP
Susan Hellervik, APRN
Lindsey Holland, APRN
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Rachel Horrell, PA-C
Peyton Jackson, APRN
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Barbara Kiasatpour, APRN
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Susan Mason- Parker, APRN
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Andrea McFarlane, APRN
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Kyle Miler, NP
Lorna Morris, APRN
Martin Munn, APRN
Melissa Murphy, APRN
Flannery Nicholson, APRN
Rashundra Oggs, NP
Sabina Palmeri, APRN
Anna Peek, APRN
Desiree Perillo, PA-C
Roathipoun Po, APRN
Rachel Schreier, APRN
Ashley Sears, APRN
Pagie Sellers, APRN
Carra Smith, PA
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Sandy Soliman, PA-C
Samantha Sternhagen, PA-C
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Alexandria Torres, APRN
Bobby Tosh, APRN
Ashley Turner, APRN
Kelsie White, PA-C

Amanda Whiteman- Baker, APRN
Hollie Williams, APRN
Celeste Woolum, NP
Carolyn Youngman, APRN
Jessica Yurkovich, PA-C

Clinical Pharmacology

Professors

Italo Biaggioni, MD
Andre Diedrich, MD, PhD
Sergey Dikalov, PhD
David Harrison, MD
Bjorn Knollmann, MD, PhD
Cheryl Laffer, MD, PhD
Ginger Milne, PhD
Katherine Murray, MD
Julie Sterling Rhoades, PhD ‡ *
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C. Michael Stein, MD
Tao Yang, PhD

Associate Professors

Wei Chen, MD, PhD
Anna Dikalova, PhD
QiPing Feng, PhD
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Annet Kirabo, PhD
James Luther, MD, MSCI
Luis Okamoto, MD

Assistant Professors

Matt Alexander, MD, PhD
Rebecca Bruccoleri, MD
Daniel Carranza, MD †
Swati Dey, PhD
Andrew Glazer, PhD
Brett Kroncke, PhD
Dmytro Kryshtal, PhD
David Patrick, MD, PhD *
Sun Peck, PhD *
Dungeng Peng, PhD
Elizabeth Rendina-Ruedy, PhD
Monica Santisteban Calvo, PhD

Assistants in Medicine

Lan Jiang, MS

Instructors

Daniel Blackwell, PhD
Christian Egly, PharmD †
Kyungsoo Kim, PhD
Ashley Mutchler, PhD
Pedro Ortiz, MD †
Mohammad Saleem, PhD
Jeffrey Schmeckpeper, MD, PhD
Yuko Wada, MD, PhD
Lili Wang, PhD

Advanced Practice Providers

Lisa Blair, APRN
Morgane Giesecke, NP
Yuliya Vance, APRN

Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism

Professors

Shichun Bao, MD, PhD ‡
Lindsay Bischoff, MD
Marcela Brissova, PhD
Kathryn McCrystal Dahir, MD
Maureen Gannon, PhD *
James May, MD *
Alvin Powers, MD *
Gitanjali Srivastava, MD
Craig Sussman, MD

Associate Professors

Raymond Blind, PhD ‡
Barbara Gisella Carranza Leon, MD
Chunhua Dai, MD
Fiona Harrison, PhD
Chase Hendrickson, MD, MPH
Kevin Niswender, MD, PhD *
Omolola Olajide, MD
John Stafford, MD, PhD *
Melissa Wellons, MD

Associates in Medicine

Tiffanie Marksbury, DNP

Assistant Professors

Anna Beth Bradley, MD *
Jeeyeon Cha, MD, PhD *
E. Danielle Dean, PhD
Paul Epstein, MD
Sally Friedman, MD
Erica Dillon Garner, MD, MSCI
Shivani Jani, MD †
Eduardo Lopez Martinez, MD
Mona Mashayekhi, MD, PhD *
Leslee Matheny, MD
Michael May, MD, PhD
Richard Printz, PhD
Andrea Ramirez, MD, MSCI
Gurcharan Singh, MD †
Sahar Takkouche, MD
Andrea Utz, MD, PhD
Jordan Wright, MD, PhD *
S. Sadia Zaidi, MD
Lin Zhu, MD, PhD

Assistants in Medicine

Jennifer Bradley, MSN
Brannan Cole, MSN
Norma Edwards, MSN
Ann Hackett, MSN
Regina Hamlet, MSN
Brett Kinzig, MSN, RN
James Mills, MSN
Blake Salmony, MSN

Advanced Practice Providers

Kelly Daley, ACNP
Anna Dervishi, APRN
Debra Greenspan, NP
LaToya Hannah, NP
Lucinda Henry, PA-C
Kristin Jean, NP
Isabela Kuroyama, NP
Tiffanie Marksbury, NP
Mallory Newkirk, APRN
Mallory Newton, PA
Coadylynn Ostrowski, NP
Megan Smith, NP

Epidemiology

Professors

John Boice, ScD

Qiuyin Cai, MD, PhD
Qi Dai, MD, PhD
Douglas Heimburger, MD
Loren Lipworth, ScD
Jirong Long, PhD
Martha Shrubsole, PhD
Xiao-Ou Shu, MD, PHD, MPH
Wanqing Wen, MD, MPH
Gong Yang, MD, MPH
Wei Zheng, MD, PhD, MPH

Associate Professors

Hui Cai, MD, PhD
Todd Edwards, PhD
Xingyi Guo, PhD
Danxia Yu, PhD

Assistant Professors

Ghadeer Dawwas, PhD
Daniel Escudero, PhD, MPH
Kelsie Full, PhD, MPH
Andreana Holowatyj, PhD, MSCI
Jie Ping, PhD
Timothy Su, MD, PhD
Staci Sudenga, PhD
Yacob Tedla, PhD
Xiangzhu Zhu, MD, MPH

Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

Professors

Joseph Awad, MD *
Dawn Beaulieu, MD
Robert Coffey, MD
Alain Gobert, PhD
Sara Horst, MD, MPH
Keith Obstein, MD, MPH *
Richard Peek, MD *
David Schwartz, MD
Heidi Silver, PhD *
Walter Smalley, MD *
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Christopher Williams, MD, PhD *
Keith Wilson, MD *
Patrick Yachimski, MD, MPH

Associate Professors

Dawn Adams, MD, MS *
Lori Coburn, MD *
Robin Ligler Dalal, MD
Dawn Israel, PhD
Manhal Izzy, MD
Diana Neely, MD, PhD
Reid Ness, MD, MPH *
Jennifer Noto, PhD
Dhyanesh Patel, MD
Maria Blanca Piazuelo, MD
Alexandra Shingina, MD, MSc
Lydia Wroblewski, PhD
Qin Zhang, PhD

Assistant Professors

Muhammad Aslam, MBBS
Miles Basil, MD *
Audrey Bennett, MD
Sara Brown, MD
Zheng Cao, MD, PhD
Yash Choksi, MD *
Thomas Finn, MD
William Fiske, MD, MPH *
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Curtis Gabriel, MD, PhD *
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Dennis Jeppesen, PhD
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Baldeep Pabla, MD, MSCI
Roman Perri, MD
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Andrew Scanga, MD
Elizabeth Scoville, MD, MSCI
Suzanne Sharpton, MD
Bhuminder Singh, PhD
Ankita Munjal Sisselman, MD
Ashley Spann, MD
Nathan Winn, PhD †

Assistants in Medicine

Kimberly Akinyele, MSN
Kim Annis, MS
Sarah Campbell, MS
Laura Craddock, MSN
Maria Cruz, MSN
Kimberly Currier, MSNB, RN, ACNP
Caroline Duley, MSN, RN
Sara Hedrich, MSN, RN
Jennifer Pollice-Meservy, MSN, RN
Ashley Singleton, MSN
Julianne Wagnon, MSN

Instructors

Matthew Bechard, PhD
James Higginbotham, PhD
Neeraj Joshi, PhD

Advanced Practice Providers

Kristi Albergo, PA
Katherine Andrews, APRN
Josephine Bahn, APRN
Anna Beacham, PA-C
Alexandra Biro, APRN
Laura Craddock, APRN
Dustin Cross, APRN
Thomas Engle, PA
Lisa Everhart, APRN
Rachel Fox, APRN
Alyssa Hatfill, PA-C
Grace Kretschmar, APRN
Megan Lehman, APRN
Tammy Loyd, PA
Brittany Mathews, PA
Alexis Purdom, APRN
Jennifer Rutledge, APRN
Nicole Rybak, PA-C
Emily Smith, PA
Emily Spring, PA
Candice Vaden, APRN
Rachel Wagner, APRN

General Internal Medicine and Public Health

Professors

Donald Brady, MD

Robert Dittus, MD, MPH
Tom Elasy, MD, MPH *
G. Waldon Garriss, MD, MS
Sunil Kripalani, MD, MSc
Robert Miller, MD
Neeraja Peterson, MD
Russell Rothman, MD, MPP
Christianne Rومية, MD, MPH *

Associate Professors

Rachel Apple, MD, MPH
Emily Brown, MD ‡
Ryan Buckley, MD
Neesha Choma, MD, MPH
Kelly Cunningham, MD
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Maie El-Sourady, MD
Joseph Fanning, PhD
Parul Mani Goyal, MD
Jennifer K. Green, MD, MPH
Katherine Hanson, MD
Lawrence Heller, MD
Angela Horton, MD, MPH ‡
Mohana Karlekar, MD
Ashley Karpinos, MD, MPH
Sapna Kripalani, MD, MSc
Emily Kurtz, MD
Russell Ledford, MD ‡
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Lindsay Mayberry, PhD
Sumathi Misra, MD, MPH *
Amanda Mixon, MD, MPH *
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Sandra Moutsios, MD
Lyndsay Nelson, PhD
Derek Pae, MD ‡ *
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Tony Ross, MD
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Claude Shackelford, MD
Martha Shepherd, DO, MPH
Kelly Sopko, MD *
Christopher Terndrup, MD
Cecelia Theobald, MD, MPH
Hilary Tindle, MD, MPH *
Chase Webber, DO
Thomas Whitfield, MD
Benjamin Womack, MD ‡

Elizabeth Yakes, MD
Mary Yarbrough, MD, MPH

Associates in Medicine

Jane Case, DNP ‡
Jill Cash, MSN ‡

Assistant Professors

Matthew Abbate, MD
Ahad Abid, MD
Allison Lott Adams, MD
Amanda Allen, MD
Steven Allon, MD
Abiemwense Amadin, MD, MPH
Julia Anderson, MD
Rebecca Anderson, MD
Jordan Anderson, MD
Federica Angel, MD
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Ashlee Arteaga, MD
Adam Aston, MD †
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Spurthi Bhatt, MD, MPH
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Eve Bowers, MD
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Michael Chin, MD, MPH
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Eli Cohen, MD
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Michael Davidson, MD, PhD

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Sharon Green, MD
Megan Gunn, MD
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Kevin Hageman, DO *
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Katherine Heckman, MD, MS †
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Richard Hock, MD
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Gwendolyn Howard, MD
Amrita Hundal, MD †
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Michelle Izmaylov, MD
Kaitlin Jeffries, MD
Taylor Jensen, MD
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Alyssa Kahl, MD
Lauren Kathary, DO
Emily Kobin, MD
Nathan Krishnan, MD *
Derek Kruse, MD *
Zeynep Kubilay, MD
Andrea Lack, MD
Robin Lapre, MD
Jessie Lawrence, DO

Shalacia LeBlanc, MD
Scott Lee, MD, PhD
Martha Leonard, MD *
Shannon Lester, MD
Michelle Lewis, MD
Helen Lin, MD *
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Kevin Liu, MD
Peter Liu, MD
Harrison Luttrell, MD †
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Bhavish Manwani, MD *
Mary Marschner, MD
Sara Martin, MD
Concepcion Martinez, MD
Elizabeth Maxwell, MD
Michael McCann, MD
Brian McMurray, MD
Tamera Means, MD, MHS
P. Bennett Milner, MD †
Richa Misra, MD
Kevin Mitchell, MD
Jennifer Montague, MD
Cecily Montgomery-Imani, MD
Leo Moody, MD †
Emily Morrow, PhD
James Mosley, MD
Padma Narra, MD ‡
Deborah Newitz, MD
Ana Nobis, MD, MPH
Abigail Nolen, MD †
Alexander Nourse, DO *
Harley Odom, MD
Amanda Olson, MD
Daniel Ontenient, MD
Joshua Onyango, MD, MEd
Peter Paik, MD *
Paul Parisot, MD
Scott Parker, MD
Ilaben Patel, MD
John Peach, MD
Matthew Peachey, MD
Samuel Perry, MD
Matthew Potter, MD *
Laura Price, MD †
Vian Pulous, MD
Angela Qian, MD
Elizabeth Rice, MD
McKenzie Roddy, PhD
Kyle Roter, MD †

Ben Rowan, MD
Kristin Rutterer, MD
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John Scott, MD
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Hayden Shafer, MD
Donna Shell, MD
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Catherine Stober, MD
Kathleen Sullivan, MD
William Sullivan, MD
Matthew Sweeney, MD *
Emily Tarvin, MD
Kristine Tatosyan-Jones, MD
Kellee Taylor, DO
Stacey Tillman, MD
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Kendall Waddey, MD
Eleanor Weaver, MD
Ryan White, MD, MSc
Bobby White, MD
Jonna Whitman, MD
Rachel Wolf, MD
Andrew Wooldridge, MD
Kathleene Wooldridge, MD, MPH
Teresa Zoffuto, MD, MPH

Assistants in Medicine

Deborah Baker, MPAS
Christy Claiborne, MS
Lindsey Dalton, MSN
Melissa Doyle, MSN
Sandra Ermini, MSN
Sarah Garrand, MSN
Barbara Grimm, MSN
Merritt Hambrick, MS
Linda Johnson, MSN
Fatmata Kamara, MSN
Kristin Kight, MSN
Margaret Laxton, MPH
Melissa Lehmann, MPAS
Candice Lewis, MSN
Jeanne Madden, MS
Robert McKenzie, MS
Gordon Melton, MSN
Emily Nardone, MSN
Jill Nelson, MSN
Laurie Omohundro, DNP, MSN
Taina Ovchinnikov, MSN, RN

Christopher Parker, MS
Amanda Phelps, MHS
Mohammad Rassekhi, MSN
Kathryn Reese, MSN
Rone Russell, MS
Morgan Stine, MPAS
Victoria Taylor, MSN
Retha Thomas, MSN
Jason Tillman, MSN
Gina Vaughn, MSN
Megan Vickers, MS
Bethany Wagner, MSN
Elisa Walker, MSN
Gamini Wiyathunge, MSN

Instructors

Sarah Anderson, MD
Aleksandra Frye, MD
Laura Heller, MD
Sharon Katuin, DO
Qutina Watson, EdD

Advanced Practice Providers

Hodan Abdi, APRN
Amed Abdullah, APRN
Dilmon Abdullah, APRN
Carla Adams, APRN
Christina Agee, APRN
Negest Alemu, APRN
Candance Alexander, APRN
Sarah Allen, PA-C
Lisa Allen, NP
Diane Allen, APRN
Louisa Altman,
Krystle Ames, APRN
Robert Anderson, DNP
Kristen Anton, NP
Amber Archer, APRN
Amy Armstrong, APRN
Ramy Aziz, PA-C
Nicholas Ballinger, PA
John Baltz, APRN
Engy Bandary, PA
Jody Barnwell-Smith, APRN
Lajerica Bates, APRN
Tamara Batson, APRN
Babanzadeh Bawan,
Aleshia Beene, APRN
Megan Beggs, PA
Megan Beggs, APRN

Veronica Bernaba, APRN
Sara Best, APRN
Seyum Beyene, APRN
Alexandra Bivens, APRN
Amanda Blassl, APRN
Aisha Bond, APRN
Jessica Borrenpohl, PA
Carol Bowling, APRN
Tiffany Bradley, PA-C
LaRica Brady, APRN
Junyang Brand, APRN
Sarah Bridge, APRN
Lori Brister, APRN
Daniel Burke, APRN
Keith Caldwell, APRN
Ariel Campbell, APRN
Candice Campbell, APRN
Nicole Campbell, PA
Elizabeth Card, APRN
Joseph Carter, APRN
Jorge Celedonio Colquicocha, NP
Rodney Chenault, DNP
Anita Chew, NP
Courtney Clardy, APRN
Jennifer Cochrane, PA-C
Shanita Coleman-Dockery, APRN
Jorge Colquicocha- Celedonio, APRN
Sarah Connor, APRN
Tobias Cooper, RN
Kate Corbin, PA
Matthew Corey, PA-C
Lori Crews, APRN
Kristina Crocker, NP
Lacey Cross, APRN
Dorothy Crowder, APRN
Marco Cuellar, APRN
Amy Cutsinger, APRN
Carine D'Angelo, APRN
Christiana Daas, PA-C
Tina Darks, NP
Jennifer Davey, PA
Kelvisha Davis, APRN
Claire Davis, APRN
Velinda DeForge, APRN
Christina DeLeo, PA
Nicolo Dini, PA
Jeffrey Dinizio, PA
Alison Dodd, APRN
Katherine Dowdall, APRN
Christina Dozier, APRN

Donna Dubois, APRN
John Dunlap, APRN
Patience Echem, APRN
Cassidee Eddings, APRN
Erika Erickson, APRN
Catherine Evans, APRN
Shaina Farfel, APRN
Anne Farr, APRN
Rachel Faulkner, APRN
Amy Fortner, APRN
Daniel Fox, APRN
Katherine Furmanski, APRN
Anna Gallion, NP
Christine Galluzzi, APRN
Jennifer Gartman, PA
Monique George, APRN
Katherine Gilliland, NP
Bethany Gillin, APRN
Jesi Girton, APRN
Melissa Glassford, DNP
Tracey Goddard, NP
Spencer Goudeau, PA
Jennifer Green, APRN
Elisabeth Groves, APRN
Mackenzie Haas, APRN
Rachel Hahn, PA
Elaini Hall, PA-C
Caleb Hancock, APRN
April Hanlotxomphou, APRN
Madison Hardison, PA
Chandler Harmon, APRN
Laura Hassen, APRN
Megan Hatley, PA
Casea Hayes, APRN
Mary Henderson, APRN
Alexandra Hendrickson, PA-C
Ashley Hoadley, APRN
Brenna Hoffman, PA-C
Cindy Hogg, APRN
Rhonda Hollins-Dortch, APRN
Andrea Honeycutt, APRN
Leslie Hopkins, APRN
Kyli Hoskins, PA
William Howard, PA
Candace Humes, NP
Katherine Hunt, APRN
Karen Hypnarowski, PA-C
Janell Jayamohan, APRN
Jason Jean, APRN
Nora Jewell, APRN

Shelby Johnson, PA-C
Melinda Johnson, APRN
Susan Johnson, APRN
Karyn Jones, APRN
Stephanie Kaelin, DNP, APRN
Aminda Kim, APRN
Leslie King, APRN
Andrea Kinzer, APRN
Brittany Kirby, APRN
Dena Kommer, APRN
Zoe Kurtz, APRN
Morgan Leatherman, PA-C
Kristin Leonard, APRN
Lori Liggan, APRN
Charles Lindsey, PA
Giles Lippard, NP
Rebecca Iomax, PA
Paige Luttrell, PA-C
Lindsay Mackey, APRN
Kristen Maida, NP
Aureata Majors, APRN
Julie Malkowski, PA-C
Bethany Malone, APRN
Dana Manning, APRN
Lorianne Marsh, APRN
Lisa Martin, APRN
Rebekah Mattox, NP
Molly McCain, APRN
Catherine McCarty, PA
Stacey McClain, APRN
Teri McClain-Watson, APRN
Jennifer McCord, APRN
Jacqueline McFadden, APRN
Mary McLaughlin, APRN
Jennifer McNaught, NP
Yuree Meneses, APRN
Nakeisha Micheaux, APRN
Jennifer Mitchell, APRN
Audrey Morgan-Cline, APRN
Celia Morse, NP
Lucy Mothershead, APRN
Erin Mulcahy, PA
Sherry Murray, APRN
Nicole Nde, APRN
Lori Netti, APRN
Amanda Noblett, APRN
Meredith Nolan, APRN
Allison O'Leary, PA
Amy O'Steen, APRN
Chelsea O'Toole, APRN

Shovan Ortiz, APRN
Natalie Patterson, APRN
Cynthia Peterson, APRN
Jessica Phillips, APRN
Sierra Pickney, APRN
Lindsey Pitsek, APRN
Joseph Prewitt, PA-C
Michele Pruet, APRN
Keqin Qian, APRN
Katherine Rainey, APRN
Daniel Rasbach, APRN
Jillian Ratton, NP
Katie Reiff, APRN
Danielle Riddle, PA-C
McKenzie Riggs, APRN
Jennifer Riley, APRN
Shelza Rivas, APRN
Jodi Robbe, PA
Heather Robbins, APRN
Stacy Robertson, APRN
Karen Runyon-Delice, APRN
Kesha Rushing, APRN
Lori Russell, APRN
Jennifer Salamone, APRN
Brittany San Miguel, NP
Deborah Sanders, NP
Margaret Sanford (Coffman), APRN
Sharon-Lee Santos, APRN
Anne Saunders, APRN
Sandra Savage, APRN
Olivia Schapker, APRN
Hannah Scheitel, APRN
Ashley Schmidt, APRN
Aaron Scott, APRN
Jessica Searcy, APRN
Michael Serio, PA-C
Shanna Sharpe, APRN
Tanya Smith, NP
Evan Smith, APRN
Grahm Smith, PA
Kennedy Smith, APRN
Randall Smith, APRN
Hailey Smith, APRN
Deborah Snedegar, NP
Caroline Solomon, APRN
Leslie Stark, PA-C
Charlotte Stephenson, APRN
Kate Stewart, PA
Allison Sullivan, APRN
Martha Sutherland, APRN

Mariah Sutton, APRN
Katrina Swift, APRN
Leslie Taylor, APRN
Amy Thien, PA-C
Andrew Tidwell, PA-C
Latasha Todd, APRN
Ashley Tomlinson, APRN
Kristina Toscano, PA
Maria Troche-perez, APRN
Erica Truka, APRN
Christina Turner, PA
Susan Van Hook, PA-C
Sarah Vann, NP
Kathryn Voigt, APRN
Mary Walden, APRN
Kathryn Waller, APRN
Amy Walters, APRN
Sara Warren, APRN
Tania Washington, APRN
Kathryn Wayne, APRN
Robert Weber, APRN
Catherine Weiss, APRN
Gwyn Welch, APRN
Angela Wells, APRN
Marion Werner, APRN
Neressa White, APRN
Stephanie White, NP
Angela Wiggins, APRN
Allison Williams, APRN
Inas Winchester, APRN
Joshua Witt, APRN
Barbara Wolff, APRN
Jeannie Wood, APRN
Michael Woods, APRN
Lynda Woolley, APRN
David Workman, APRN
Syra York, APRN
Jessica Zehring, APRN
Kristen Zeigler, APRN
Angela Zuill, APRN

Genetic Medicine

Professors

Jennifer Below, PhD
Nancy Cox, PhD
Ela Knapik, MD
Tuya Pal, MD
Vivian Siegel, PhD

E. Michelle Southard-Smith, PhD
Georgia Wiesner, MD

Associate Professors

Melinda Aldrich, PhD, MPH ‡
Alexander Bick, MD, PhD
Eric Gamazon, PhD
Yingchang (Kevin) Lu, MD, PhD
Chor Yin Ng, PhD
Douglas Ruderfer, PhD
Jeffrey Smith, MD, PhD *

Assistant Professors

Ruben Barricarte, PhD
Claudia Gonzalez-Hunt, PhD †
Jacklyn Hellwege, PhD
Jibril Hirbo, PhD
Garrett Kaas, PhD
Nikhil Khankari, PhD
Maria Niarchou, PhD
Megan Shuey-Henthorn, PhD, MS
Sarah Stallings, PhD
Xue Zhong, PhD

Assistants in Medicine

Kyle Davis, MSc
Kelsey Hazelberg, MS
Lucas Richter, MS

Instructors

Patrick Evans, PhD
Joohyun Kim, PhD
Tyne Miller-Fleming, PhD

Geriatric Medicine

Professors

Laura Dugan, MD
Harvey Murff, MD, MPH *
James Powers, MD *
John Schnelle, PhD
Sandra Simmons, PhD *
Consuelo Wilkins, MD, MSCI

Associate Professors

Mariu Duggan, MD, MPH *
Tara Horr, MD ‡
Victor Legner, MD, MSc

Assistant Professors

Kimberly Beiting, MD
Corey Bolton, PsyD
Leslie Gaynor, PhD
Anne Gifford, MD, MPH
Ralf Habermann, MD *
Sean Huang, MD
Mariam Mufti, MD
Kiffany Peggs, MD
Rachael Petry, MD *
Maureen Seitz, MD
Hannah Stewart, DO

Assistants in Medicine

Elizabeth Coughlin, MSN
Alison Davis, MSN
Julia McDaniel, MSN

Instructors

Chelsea Rick, DO
Grace Tipps, MD †

Advanced Practice Providers

Mattie Brady, NP
Barbara Grimm, APRN
Kannah Lewallen, NP
Alice Lowe, APRN
Kannah May, APRN
Paul McClellan, APRN
Abigail Parish, NP
Shelley Ross, NP
Kristin Sisemore,
Hannah Stephens, NP
Victoria Taylor, APRN
Carole Vaden, APRN
Alexis Wohner, APRN

Hematology and Oncology

Professors

Vandana Gupta Abramson, MD
Justin Balko, PhD
Jordan Berlin, MD
Cathy Eng, MD
Jill Gilbert, MD
Laura Goff, MD, MSCI
Douglas Johnson, MD, MSCI ‡

Adetola Kassim, MBBS *
Barbara Murphy, MD
Ben Ho Park, MD, PhD
Nishitha M Reddy, MBBS
Brian Rini, MD
Bipin Savani, MD *
Michael Savona, MD

Associate Professors

Muhammed Baljevic, MD
Dana Cardin, MD, MSCI
Kristen Ciombor, MD, MSCI
Sarah Croessmann, PhD ‡
Kimberly Dahlman, PhD
Elizabeth Davis, MD
Bhagirathbhai Dholaria, MBBS *
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Patrick Hu, MD, PhD *
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Robert Ramirez, DO
Salyka Sengsayadeth, MD *
Alan Tan, MD
Katherine Walsh, MD
Sandra Zinkel, MD, PhD *

Sr. Associates in Medicine

Katie Lang, MS
Kelly Taylor, MS

Associates in Medicine

Jeneth Aquino, DNP
Whitney Chase, MSN
Meredith Gerhart, MS
Emily Skotte, DNP

Assistant Professors

Rajiv Agarwal, MD ‡
Suneetha Amara, MD
Jennifer Whisenant Amundson, PhD
Kristen Ansell, MD *
Somedeb Ball, MBBS
Kathryn Beckermann, MD, PhD
Shakthi Bhaskar, MD
Eden Biltibo, MD

Michelle Chi, MD
Wichai Chinratanalab, MD *
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Thatcher Heumann, MD, MPH
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Vivek Patel, MD *
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Kerry Schaffer, MD
Shannon Serie, MD
Sonali Shah, MD
Natalie Spradlin, MD
Benjamin Tillman, MD *
Hong Yuen Wong, PhD
Sally York, MD, PhD *

Assistants in Medicine

Matthew Bumbalough, MSN, RN
Shelton Harrell, MSN
Deborah Hawkins, MSN
Mryia Hubert, MS
Virginia Quinn, MSN
Sherlyn Umayam, MSN

Karina Wilkerson, MSN
Brenda Zuniga, MS

Instructors

Brian Grieb, MD, PhD *
Justin Lo, MD, PhD
Shannon Stockton, MD †

Advanced Practice Providers

Ashley Allington, NP
Anne Austin, APRN
Elizabeth Baca, APRN
Alexandria Barton, NP
Brennan Broadway, APRN
Jennifer Brown, NP
Carey Clifton, APRN
Bethany Cones, NP
Mary Cooper, APRN
Lauren Coppens, NP
Shemeka Davis, NP
Holly Erickson, APRN
Holly Erickson, PA
Angela Fitzpatrick, NP
Jennifer Flake, APRN
Paige Follett, PA
Anne Galloway, NP
Leslie Goebel, NP
Karen Hande, APRN
Rebekah Hix, PA-C
Meghan Hoffman, NP
Deanna Hopkins, NP
Hayley House-McPhedran, PA-C
Joshua Humphrey, APRN
Heather Jackson, APRN
Kathryn Kennedy, NP
Krista Kuhnert-Gainer, APRN
Morgan Lambrecht, DNP
Melissa Logue, APRN
Nancy Long, APRN
Morgen McCreedy, APRN
Mary McDowell, NP
Hayley McPhedran, PA
Marybeth Meador, APRN
Stephanie Mehr, NP
Amy Messimore, APRN
Erica Mittlebeeler, APRN
Sarah Murawski, PA-C
Danielle Murphy, APRN
Rachel Noser, PA-C
Samantha Osborne, PA

Lauren Popp, NP
Cynthia Roach, APRN
Elizabeth Ryan, NP
Tina Sasso, NP
Lisa Scholl, NP
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Jennifer Young-Glazer, MD, MSCI

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“ I cannot think of a better place, and I cannot thank my doctors enough. I’ve depended on them for so much information and so much guidance. We wanted to honor them with a gift because of what they meant to me and my quality of life. ”

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Scott Hamilton CARES Foundation

The mission of the Scott Hamilton CARES Foundation is to fund innovative, patient-centered, targeted treatments that fight cancer while preserving quality of life. The foundation has made gifts to VUMC that have significantly boosted our research program in gliomas, the most frequent primary brain cancer in adults. They have also supported research in other brain disorders, including intracranial aneurysms. In these recent studies, teams discovered 20 significant risk genes linked to aneurysms, which could help us understand how these aneurysms form and function.



EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Shade Tree Benefit

At the annual Shade Tree Benefit, more than 350 guests, including Vanderbilt University School of Medicine students, VUMC physicians, other members of the Medical Center community and supporters of Shade Tree Clinic, enjoy dinner and a silent auction in support of the clinic. This year’s event on February 13 also honored the contributions of Catherine Fuchs, MD, to the clinic. The Shade Tree Clinic provides comprehensive, patient-centered health care and social services free of charge for uninsured individuals in the Nashville metropolitan area.



Vanderbilt University School of Medicine event co-chairs Kimberly Bress, Joy Justice and James Bathon

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