

# Division of Nephrology and Hypertension Newsletter

March 2022 – Issue 6

## Are you feeling lucky this March...

Check out some of our fabulous news and important highlights!



### **Division Announcements**

- Thurs, Mar. 10** World Kidney Day
- Sun, Mar. 13** Daylight Savings Time (Spring Forward)
- Thurs, Mar. 17** St. Patrick's Day (not official VUMC Holiday)
- Sun, Mar. 20** Spring Begins
- Thurs, Mar. 24** Paul E. Teschan Lectureship, Medicine Grand Rounds at 8:00 am – Dr. Adeera Levin, Professor of Medicine from University of British Columbia will be presenting, “*Global Burden of CKD and Need for Personalized Care*”.
- Thurs, Mar. 24** Paul E. Teschan Lectureship at 12:00 - Dr. Adeera Levin, Professor of Medicine from University of British Columbia will be presenting, “New Upcoming KDIGO CKD Guidelines: 2022 How, What and Why”

### **Clinical News:**

#### **From the desk of Dr. Gould:**

**Outpatient Dialysis:** Vanderbilt Dialysis East will complete its remodel by the end of March with updated administrative office space, modernized flooring, and more inviting entry spaces.

### **Diversity News:**

#### **From the desk of Dr. Umeukeje:**

**Diversity Events:** The March diversity poster will be sent separately as soon as it becomes available.

**VOKC News:**

**From the desk of Dr. Cavanaugh:**

**VOKC Patient, Family, and Community Health Advisory Board:** The next virtual meeting is March 8<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup>. Attached is a flyer with more information regarding the group and how to get involved.

**Research News:**

**Research Publications:**

**Dr. Roy Zent** recently had a manuscript published in collaboration with colleagues in Manchester in *Elife*, titled “Kidney organoids recapitulate human basement membrane assembly in health and disease.” In this paper, they investigated the dynamics of basement (BM) assembly in human pluripotent stem cell-derived kidney organoids. They resolved their global BM composition and discovered a conserved temporal sequence in BM assembly that paralleled mammalian fetal kidneys. They identified the emergence of key BM isoforms, which were altered by pathogenic variant in *COL4A5*. Integrating organoid, fetal, and adult kidney proteomes, they found dynamic regulation of BM composition through development to adulthood, and with single-cell transcriptomic analysis and dynamic nature of kidney organoid BM assembly and provide a platform for understanding its wider relevance in human development and disease.

**Dr. Adriana Hung** recently had an article published in *JAMA Internal medicine* titled, “APOLI Risk Variants, acute Kidney Injury, and Death in Participants with African Ancestry Hospitalized With COVID-19 From the Million Veteran Program.” In this article, Dr. Hung and colleagues tested the hypothesis that the APOLI high-risk group (G2 variants of APOLI) is associated with a higher-risk of COVID-19 associated AKI and death.

**Corina Borza and Gema Bolas**, in Dr. Ambra Pozzi’s lab, share a first authorship on the paper, “The collagen receptor Discoidin Doman Receptor 1b enhances integrin  $\beta$ 1-mediated cell migration by interacting with talin and promoting Rac1 activation” in press at *Frontier Cell and Developmental Biology*.

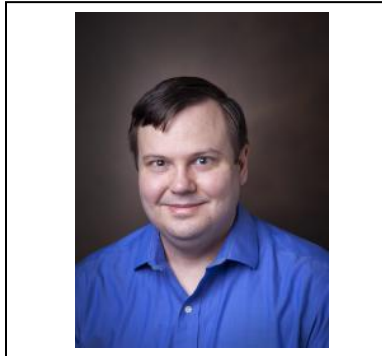
**Kudos:**

Congrats to Dr. Ray Harris on being named Senior Clinician Scientist by the Veterans Administration!

Congrats to Dr. Nair who has been selected to be 1 of 3 Feature Editors for the American Journal of Kidney Diseases - <https://www.ajkd.org/content/edboard>! Dr. Nair will be the Editor of "In A Few Words," a section of the journal that highlights submitted and invited narrative writing and perspective pieces by nephrologists, allied health professionals, and patients living with kidney disease.

# Spotlight Newsletter Recipients

## Craig Brooks, PhD



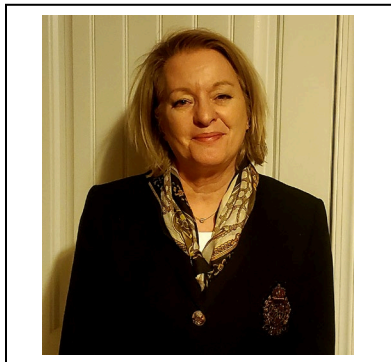
**Craig Brooks, PhD** is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension at Vanderbilt University. He completed his graduate work at the Medical College of Georgia, where he studied mitochondrial pathways of apoptosis and mitochondrial fragmentation in the lab of Zheng Dong. For his postdoc, Dr. Brooks trained at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School in the laboratory of Joseph Bonventre, where he studied the role of cell cycle regulation in chronic kidney disease progression and

how kidney epithelial cell phagocytosis protects against kidney injury through anti-inflammatory signaling.

Dr. Brooks established his lab in Vanderbilt University Medical Center in 2016. His lab focuses on understanding how acute kidney injury transitions to chronic kidney disease. He has identified components of the DNA damage response that promote acute injury as well as regulate the differentiation status of kidney epithelial cells in chronic kidney disease. He is hopeful these studies will identify novel therapeutics to prevent chronic kidney disease progression.

When he is not at work, Dr. Brooks spends time with his family as well as DIY projects, photography, and cooking.

## Brigitta Brannon, CCRC



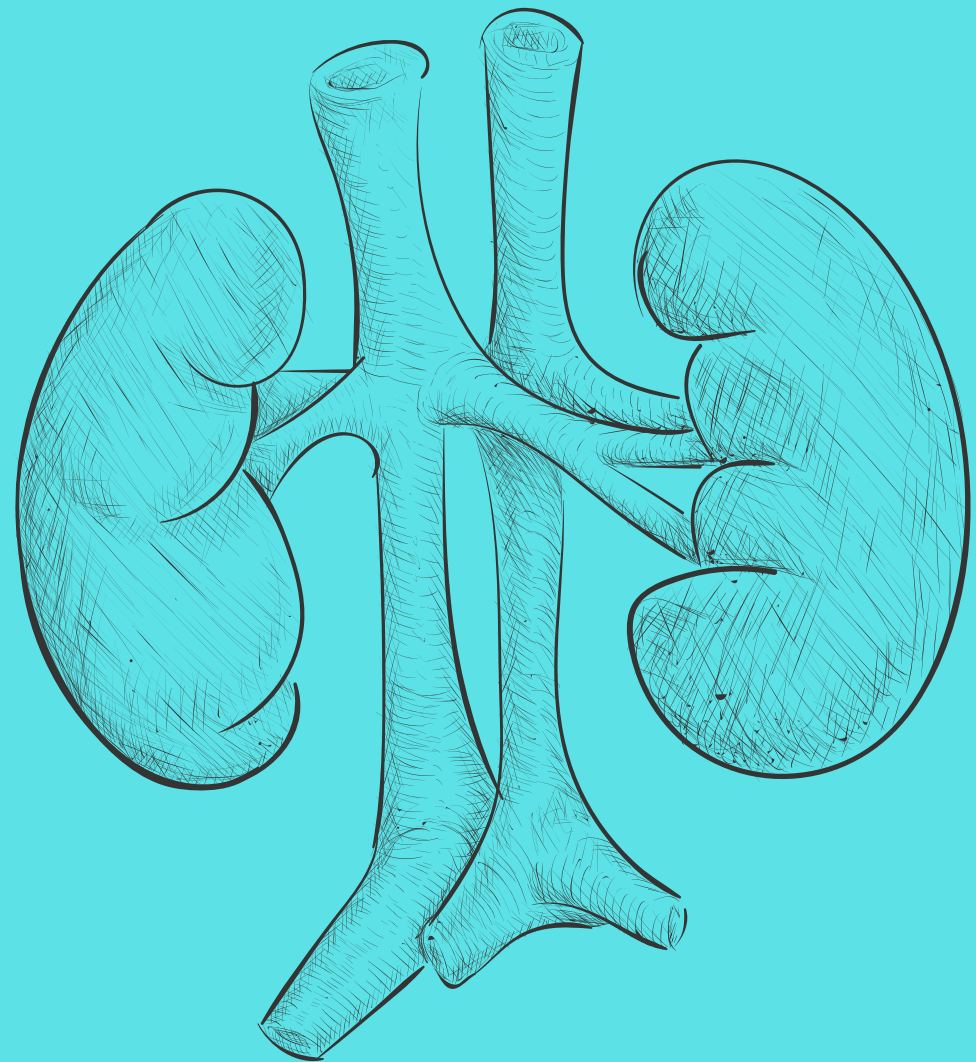
**Brigitta Brannon, CCRC** is the Clinical Trials Specialist within the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension at Vanderbilt University Medical Center working in the Ikizler lab. She also is WOC at the Tennessee Valley Veterans Affairs Healthcare System where she has worked on several clinical research trials over the years.

Brigitta chose a career in research as a result of her interest in cutting edge research and working directly with renowned doctors at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She was hired at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in March 1986 and recently celebrated 35 years of service.

She has been in Nephrology since 2016 and is currently working with Transplant Nephrologist & Associate Professor of Medicine, Kelly A. Birdwell, MD MCSI on a nation-wide study titled: APOLI Long-Term Kidney Transplantation Outcomes Network. APOLLO is an observational study whose purpose is to improve outcomes for kidney transplant recipients and living donors by testing their blood and looking at kidney transplant outcomes based on the APOLI\* gene.

Outside of work, Brigitta enjoys decorating, gardening, cooking, baking, and spending quality time with her family.

# VOKC PATIENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY KIDNEY HEALTH ADVISORY GROUP



- ENGAGE PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS IN YOUR RESEARCH, PROJECT, FORMS, OR DOCUMENTS
- EFFECTIVELY INCORPORATE PATIENT AND CAREGIVER PERSPECTIVES THROUGH COLLABORATION AND REAL TIME FEEDBACK

## Contact us

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VIRTUAL MEETINGS  
VIA ZOOM

March 8, 2022 and May 10, 2022

SPONSORED IN PART BY:  
VANDERBILT OBRIEN KIDNEY  
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