

Department of Medicine

Fall 2021



BROWN
Alpert Medical School

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Chairman's Message



Louis Rice, M.D.

As we enter our second Autumn of Covid-19 surge, we see all around us signs of increased stress. Internally, we are all feeling the weight of the pandemic, both at work and at home, and must take care to minimize risks for burnout in ourselves and in our colleagues. We look out on a community and a state that has a very creditable record of vaccination against Covid-19 and hope this high vaccination rate will spare us the surge intensity now being seen in less vaccinated states and states with lax rules regarding masks and

other measures to prevent spread of the virus. Our hearts break as we watch ever younger patients presenting with severe Covid-19 infection, in some cases resulting in their death. Of the many lessons we will ultimately learn from the Covid-19 pandemic, I hope one of the most durable is that we are all members of the same community and that we need to care for each other.

Teaching hospitals and hospital departments are often seen as "Ivory towers" distinct and separate from the communities in which we are located. While there is no dispute that we provide highly sophisticated care to many patients and must rely on third party payments to keep the lights on, we also provide a substantial amount of care to those in our community who are of lesser means and cannot pay for such care. We do this through our emergency room, our clinics, our operating rooms, and the variety of other facilities that exist on our different campuses. These services are essential to caring for our patients when they are sick and for maintaining their health through their lifespan. But to make a real difference in the community, it is necessary to get outside the limits of our campuses to where our patients live. All who have studied the social determinants of health are aware that for many in our

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40 Under 40 Winners Announced

For the seventeenth consecutive year, PBN, the region's weekly business news publication, recognizes 40 local professionals under the age of 40, for their career success and involvement within their communities. Several honorees are affiliated with the Department of Medicine.



Vijairam Selvaraj M.D., MPH, a hospitalist at The Miriam Hospital and assistant professor of medicine/clinician educator at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, was both surprised and humbled by the recognition. "I feel extremely happy, grateful and proud," he said. "It gives me optimism and confidence to keep doing what I am passionate about and

motivates me to do better."

Dr. Selvaraj has been with Lifespan for five years. He volunteers at the Rhode Island Free Clinic and also worked at Lifespan's field hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Sean Fine, M.D., gastroenterology physician and assistant professor of medicine, Brown Physicians Inc., is also among this year's honorees. Dr. Fine has spent time volunteering with The Crohns and Colitis Foundation to host educational programs for adult and pediatric patients in the RI community (along with **Dr. Abbas Rupawala** from the Division of Gastroenterology)

Also among this year's honorees is Brown Medicine's quality initiatives/project manager Jessica Savoca. ■

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communities, medical illness is greatly impacted by the challenges and obstacles people face at home before we even meet them. In Brown Medicine and more broadly in the Department of Medicine, we endeavor in a variety of ways to promote the health of our community through service closer to where the patients live.

The Rhode Island Free Clinic was founded in 1999 with a mission to provide free, comprehensive medical care and preventive health services to adults who have no health insurance and cannot afford those services and to serve as an educational training site for aspiring health professionals. Many prominent members of the Department of Medicine were among the founders of the free clinic, including Charles C.J. Carpenter, Charles "Bud" Kahn, Herb Rakatansky and Caroline Troise. For as long as anyone can remember, Caroline has served as the Medical Director of the clinic, volunteering countless hours of her time. One evening

several months ago while we were both at the clinic, Caroline asked if the Department of Medicine could offer some help with the medical director duties. I am happy to say that Brown Medicine has now concluded an agreement to serve the role as medical directors of the Rhode Island Free Clinic going forward as Dr. Troise steps down. I am personally grateful to Ross Hilliard, a member of our General Internal Medicine Division and an Associate Residency Director of our house staff training program, for eagerly stepping up to assume the lion's share of these responsibilities. It is my hope that this agreement will connect our Department to the RIFC more closely and in perpetuity, formalizing our commitment to offer high quality medical services out in the community as well as in the hospital. We all owe a tremendous debt to Caroline Troise for her selfless devotion to the administrative needs of the clinic for the past two decades of growth and

stability. We intend to honor and build upon that history.

The Rhode Island Free Clinic is but one example of how our physicians have and will continue to support our community. There is no shortage of need in our community, and I am honored to serve with so many faculty and residents who put their altruism into practice for those most vulnerable in Rhode Island. In this issue of the Departmental Newsletter, we have included a special section detailing many examples of the community involvement of our physicians. I invite you to read through this special section to learn about the people and the programs that exist to extend our care, our expertise, and our resources to those in our community who need us. If you see a program that is appealing, feel free to contact us to see how you may become involved. And if you cross paths with any of your colleagues who are already involved, please thank them for their commitments. ■

Division of General Internal Medicine News

The Division of General Internal Medicine has recently created Supporting Teaching and Academic Research (STAR) Grants. Our two awardees from the first cycle are **Hussain Khawaja, M.D.**. His grant title is: "A brief intervention to improve the quality and quantity of feedback to residents on the internal medicine inpatient services" and **Ross Hilliard, M.D.**. His grant title is: "Evaluation of a Symptom Checker App in an Ambulatory Primary Care Office."

New Hires



Dr. Ju Nyeong Park

Dr. Park (she/her) is a Research Scientist at the Division of General Internal Medicine at Rhode Island Hospital, and faculty at the COBRE on Opioids and Overdose. She joined the Department of Medicine in September 2021. Her team focuses on developing and evaluating

harm reduction based solutions to substance use and overdose, including supervised injection facilities and drug checking programs. The overarching goal of her program is to promote the health and wellbeing of people who use drugs.

Dr. Park and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, Northeastern University and the Urban Survivors Union, developed the Continuum of Overdose Risk (COR) Framework, a new conceptual framework that was designed to redirect U.S. drug policy from punitive and stigmatizing measures. Currently, Dr. Park leads several mixed-methods projects in Rhode Island and Maryland examining the implementation of novel harm reduction interventions and mentors several students and fellows. She earned her Ph.D. and M.H.S. in Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health and B.S. from the University of Sydney.

Susan Enck, Ph.D.

Dr. Enck completed an undergraduate degree in English at Boston University, subsequently pursued graduate training in psychology at New York University and completed a doctorate in clinical psychology from Suffolk University. Her publication and research interests include trauma, insomnia, clinical training and supervision and she has specialty training in these areas as well. Prior to joining Brown Medicine, Dr. Enck held various contracting positions for the Department of Defense, working as a psychologist at U.S. military bases. She has also worked in the private sector and taught psychology at the graduate and undergraduate levels. An avid skier and amateur runner, Dr. Enck is looking forward to further exploring her native RI with her two young daughters.



Lauren Conner, M.D.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

Albany Medical College

RESIDENCY

Brown University General Internal Medicine

MEDICAL INTERESTS

General internal medicine, medical education

GENERAL INTERESTS

Family, friends, trying to get outside, camp/kayak/hike,



Alma Guerrero Bready, M.D.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University

RESIDENCY

Brown/Lifespan Internal Medicine

MEDICAL INTERESTS

Medical education, physician wellness

GENERAL INTERESTS

Travel, Fiction Reading, Baking



Melissa McNeil, M.D.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of Pittsburgh

RESIDENCY

UPMC Internal Medicine Residency, Pittsburgh, PA

MEDICAL INTERESTS

Women's Health, Medical Education

GENERAL INTERESTS

Gardening, Tennis, Grandkids!



Martin Cotti, M.D.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of Massachusetts Medical School

RESIDENCY

Kent/Brown Internal Medicine Residency

MEDICAL INTERESTS

Preventive Health, Older Adults, Longevity/Healthspan

GENERAL INTERESTS

Playing with black lab, swimming, hiking & movies



Jonathan Leviss, M.D.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

NYU School of Medicine

RESIDENCY

NYU/Bellevue Hospital Internal Medicine

MEDICAL INTERESTS

High quality primary care & clinical informatics

GENERAL INTERESTS

Surfing & gardening



Edelva Williams, M.D.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

Boston University School of Medicine

RESIDENCY

Brown University, Internal Medicine

MEDICAL INTERESTS

Palliative Care

GENERAL INTERESTS

Craftmaking



Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine News

\$4.9M CDC Grant Awarded to study COVID vaccine effectiveness in seniors

To address the pressing issue of diminishing immunity among older adults to COVID-19 as well to vaccines designed to protect against the virus, a \$4.9 million award from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will fund a two-year project led by Brown University researchers and conducted by a team spanning multiple institutions.

The researchers will examine the duration of protective immunity in the context of emerging strains of COVID-19, releasing interim data to the CDC as it becomes available to inform policy decisions in real time.

“Given rising case counts of the Delta variant, we need to know as soon as possible who needs a vaccine booster shot and when they need it,” said **Stefan Gravenstein**, co-lead investigator on the project and a professor of geriatric medicine at Brown. “This information on how specific immunity to SARS-CoV-2 infection declines with aging, disease and in long-term care residents is critically important for developing a booster strategy based on real-time data in this population.”

The CDC awarded the contract to Gravenstein; Elizabeth White, a Brown assistant professor of health services, policy and practice; and David Canaday at Case Western Reserve University. The project is based at Brown’s Center for Long-Term Care Quality and Innovation, which focuses on research to improve care and quality of life for older adults living in nursing homes.

Other Faculty news in Brief

The PVMC-COIN-LTSS (Center Of Innovation - Long-Term Services and Supports for Vulnerable Veterans) awarded a Vista grant to **Yasin Abul, M.D.** to evaluate CoVID-19 infections and breakthrough cases in the long-term care setting

Yasin Abul, M.D. and **Thomas Bayer, M.D.** both won the VA’s Office of Academic Affiliation Advanced Fellow (OAAA Fellowship) in Health Services Research at the PVMC-COIN-LTSS

Richard Besdine, M.D. won The Miriam Hospital Bud Kahn Lifetime Achievement Award

Sevdener Cizginer, M.D. won The Miriam Hospital Physician of the Quarter in July 2021

New Hires In the Division of Geriatrics



Yasin Abul, M.D. graduated from Marmara Medical School in Istanbul, Turkey, where he completed his internal medicine/pulmonary medicine training. He

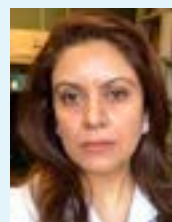
also completed an internal medicine residency and Geriatrics Fellowship at Brown, and Infectious Diseases fellowship at Stony Brook University in New York. Dr. Abul is now on faculty in the Division of Geriatrics & Palliative Medicine at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and an Office of Academic Affiliation Advanced

Fellow in Health Services Research at the Providence VA. Dr. Abul has a long-standing interest in pulmonary and infectious diseases and will use a health services research approach to evaluate these in the context of aging and immunosenescence, vaccinations.



Thomas Bayer, M.D. is currently an Office of Academic Affiliation Advanced Fellow in Health Services Research at the Providence VA, and junior faculty at

Brown Medicine. He graduated from SUNY Downstate College of Medicine in Brooklyn, NY, completed internal medicine residency at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He practiced primary care medicine in the St. Louis area before completing a geriatrics fellowship at Brown University. Dr. Bayer’s interests relate to Alzheimer’s disease and policy considerations relating to care quality, payment reform and clinical practice.



Mriganka Singh, M.D. graduated from Assam Medical College in India. She completed her Internal Medicine residency at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center, NY and fellowship in

Geriatric Medicine from Brown University’s program based at Rhode Island Hospital. Dr. Singh comes to us from University Hospitals, Case Western Reserve University, OH where she was serving as the Division Director, Division of Geriatrics & Palliative Care in an interim role. She has extensive experience in the Geriatrics and specialties Co-management model of care.

News From the Infectious Diseases Division

She has developed and led Orthopedics, Trauma and Geriatrics Heart Failure co-management programs at RIH and UH. She also has experience in hospital and system QI initiatives and will be teaching the "Measuring and Improving the Quality of Health Care" course at the Brown University Program in Public Health. She will also be serving as the Chief Geriatrics consultant for nursing at TMH on their Quality Improvement initiatives.



Mitchell Wice, M.D.

graduated from Boston University School of Medicine and subsequently did an internal medicine residency at Boston Medical

Center/ Boston University. He then completed an integrated geriatric and palliative medicine fellowship at Mount Sinai Health Systems where he then stayed on after graduation as an assistant professor of geriatrics and palliative medicine along with being a geriatric primary care attending at New York City Health & Hospital/Elmhurst before coming to Brown University. His interest is in multimorbidity/complex patients and specifically how to improve hospitalizations of these patients to reduce complications. He is also interested in how to best to teach medical students about multimorbidity. At Brown he is the co-director of the surgical oncology co-management service, a cooperative service between geriatrics and surgical oncology. ■



Mermel Receives Scholarship Award

Leonard A. Mermel, DO was selected as the recipient of the prestigious 2021 SHEA Senior Scholarship Award. This award is a recognition of the breadth and quality of Dr. Mermel's contributions to infection prevention/ healthcare epidemiology over the last several years. He was recognized during IDWeek 2021 in the SHEA Virtual Booth, as well as during the SHEA Virtual Business Meeting.

Resident Project Receives Award at IDWeek; Kantor Serves as Guest Editor

The research project: "Use of anti-spike monoclonal antibodies in kidney transplant recipients with COVID-19", led by Internal Medicine Resident **Anna Hardesty, M.D.** and Brown Medical Student **Elizabeth (Lizzie) Klein**, under the mentorship of PI **Dimitrios Farmakiotis, M.D.**, was awarded the Kass Award as one of the top trainee abstracts and was an oral presentation at IDWeek 2021. The resultant article was accepted for publication in the prestigious American Journal of Transplantation.

Rami Kantor, M.D. was a Special Issue Editor for the Journal 'Viruses', titled Next Generation Sequencing for HIV Drug Resistance Testing. This Special Issue, of 10 papers and an Editorial, was assembled and designed to highlight discussions on the importance, relevance, feasibility, and challenges related to using next generation sequencing for HIV drug resistance testing, and includes an overview of the topic, lessons from the past, unique considerations, preliminary actual data, and logistical concerns towards the future.

Dr. Kantor's laboratory supported the RI Department of Health Stage Laboratories on sequencing and analyses of state-wide SARS-CoV-2 variants. Some results of this work were published in the RI Medical Journal. ■

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Community Engagement

Whether it's part of the job, or work done on a volunteer basis, many members of the department are invested in and committed to our local community. Why? Because now more than ever, as we respond to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and work to address inequities in care and outcomes, physicians are in a privileged and powerful position to effect change. The important work highlighted below exemplifies our values of equity and integration in the Rhode Island community.

Trimbur and Vanjani Receive Engagement award

Catherine Trimbur, M.D. and **Rahul Vanjani, M.D.**, both of Brown Medicine, received the 2021 Howard R. Swearer Engaged Faculty Awards for Research and Teaching from the Swearer Center at Brown University. They were nominated by medical students for their contributions to engaged pedagogy. Their work was commended for the range of community-engaged courses they offer, covering such subjects as incarceration, race, disability, substance use, and homelessness.

These courses contribute not only to the students enrolled in them but have a wider impact on the curriculum of AMS. Catherine and Rahul work with House of Hope to oversee the Social Medicine elective, a four-week clinical elective for medical students that centers on the Housing Assistance Collaborative model. Catherine also serves as course co-leader for the Psychosocial Aspects of Care, a longitudinal curriculum for Brown primary care residents emphasizing social determinants and community health. The curriculum includes an experiential component allowing residents to do outreach with House of Hope.

Their institution-building efforts continue beyond the curriculum as well, establishing both a Transitions Clinic and Recovery Clinic. Both clinics incorporate multidisciplinary team members, most notably community health workers who share the experiences of their patients in the respective clinics. In these two clinics, residents learn from Dr. Vanjani and Dr. Trimbur how to care for people with a history of incarceration and/or substance use with compassion.

They have also created a Community Health Worker Initiative within the hospital system and worked with students on the construction of Docs for Health (a provider advocacy website). The attention given to serving vulnerable populations or those



Rahul Vanjani, M.D.

who may feel unwelcome in institutional settings, has provided hands-on experience for medical students engaging with community members. This pedagogy is epitomized by the creation of “street medicine” teams that bring together staff from across the hospital, case managers, and medical students to deliver patient care that meets the community where they are most needed.

These efforts at and training in engaging with the community proved vital with the advent of COVID-19, as their nomination letter states, “People experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to COVID19 and often have no safe place to isolate when infected. Working with the RI Department of Health, Rahul, Catherine, HoH, and other community partners created an innovative isolation facility in a former hotel.” Social services were integrated into the infrastructure of this facility, giving the dozens of medical students working alongside Vanjani and Trimbur an engaged training experience in understanding the social determinants of health. As a community partner explains, “it was clear that Dr. Vanjani and Dr. Trimbur were collaborative partners, focused on coordinating with the state to mobilize resources to have the greatest impact for the homeless community while simultaneously educating and mentoring countless Brown University medical students and residents in community-based care.”

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Cineas Honored by Rhode Island Free Clinic



Sybil Cineas, M.D., FAAP, FACP was recently awarded the Dr. Steven Brin Physician of the Year Award by the Rhode Island Free Clinic. Dr. Cineas is the Associate Program Director for the

Medicine/Pediatrics Residency Program at Brown Medicine and Associate Professor of Medicine, Pediatrics, and Medical Science at Lifespan/Brown University. She is a graduate of Georgetown University and Harvard Medical School and a recipient of multiple teaching awards for her work mentoring medical students.

Since 1999, Dr. Cineas has volunteered at the Rhode Island Free Clinic, serving on The Clinic's Medical Advisory Committee, and actively recruiting physician volunteers. She has a special connection to the late Dr. Steven Brin, having worked together at their Thursday night Primary Care session. It was a special Clinic session that forged a bond between these physicians and many others. When Steven died unexpectedly in 2014, Sybil continued to work the Thursday night session and made a commitment to the Clinic to continue to volunteer and support the primary care needs of our patients.

Marie Ghazal, the Chief Executive Officer of the Rhode Island Free Clinic,

spoke of Dr. Cineas' contributions and dedication: "Not only has Dr. Cineas dedicated over 20 years of volunteer service to the RI Free Clinic, she has been a major contributor to our performance improvement activities and fundraising. We are honored to recognize her with this distinguished award."

The Rhode Island Free Clinic provides free, comprehensive medical care and preventive health services and resources to Rhode Island's uninsured, working poor and low-income adults; and serves as an educational training site for aspiring health care professionals.

Open Door Health Focuses on LGBTQ+ Healthcare



Open Door Health (ODH) is a clinical initiative of The Rhode Island Public Health Institute (RIPHI). ODH opened in March 2020 as the first primary care center in Rhode Island dedicated to serving the LGBTQ+ community as a core function of its mission. Services at ODH include comprehensive primary care and preventative healthcare; gender affirming care; HIV and HCV screening, treatment, and prevention; and express STI screening and treatment. We are committed to serving all patients without regard to their insurance status or ability to pay. ODH is located between the West End and Southside neighborhoods of Providence. This neighborhood is a medically

underserved community with among the highest rates of substance use, mental health disorders, HIV, Hepatitis C and STDs, and housing and food insecurity in Rhode Island. ODH is in a federally designated Low Income Population

Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for Primary Care and Mental Health. Open Door Health operates under the supervision of Medical Director **Dr. Matthew Murphy**, Assistant Professor of Medicine/Assistant Professor of Behavioral Social Sciences at Brown University, Chief Medical Officer **Dr. Philip Chan**, Associate Professor of Medicine/Associated Professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences at Brown University, and Executive Director **Dr. Amy Nunn**, Professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences/Professor of Medicine at Brown University.

Researchers Listening to the Community We Serve

It is more important than ever to build and increase the public's trust of clinical research. The COBRE for Opioids and Overdose Community Advisory Board (CAB) is a group of community members most impacted by the opioid epidemic who offer unique perspectives on research-related questions of COBRE-supported investigators and other members of the broader research community may have. The CAB provides insight on both research direction and focus that may not be otherwise appreciated by investigators by sharing issues that are important to the community and providing guidance on recruitment, retention, and communication with participants, as well as dissemination of research results to the community. In addition to supporting investigators, the CAB helps the community to understand the importance of their role in research thereby increasing trust in researchers and research overall. Members include persons actively struggling with OUD or who are in recovery, as well as their families and friends, and community advocates and providers for people with OUD.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Providers Speaking to the Community We Serve

Clínica Esperanza has provided no-cost, linguistically-appropriate, culturally-attuned medical care to uninsured adults living in Rhode Island since 2010. The clinic has served more than 10,000 patients, 80% of whom are Spanish-speaking, through clinical care and health education programs provided by a team of multi-lingual volunteers and core staff.

Joseph Garland, M.D. from the **Division of Infectious Diseases** has been one of the physician volunteers for the past 6 years, and is also faculty advisor for the medical student clinic there, which operates on Tuesday evenings. **Eric Kerns, M.D.**, of the **Division of Kidney Diseases and Hypertension** has also volunteered his time with the clinic in the past.

Alumni in Action: Zimmerman Meeting our Community Where They're At

Cara Zimmerman M.D., MBA, Internal Medicine Class of 2021, has become an integral part of **Project Weber Renew**, one of the leading harm reduction and advocacy organizations in the state. Project Weber Renew (PWR) provides harm reduction (needle exchange, naran, fentanyl test strips, condoms), counseling, and case management to those struggling with homelessness and active addiction. By volunteering and participating in street outreach since residency, she has brought a clinical perspective and process improvement approach to the organization. She has met people directly where they're at, helping some of the most vulnerable populations in the state. Her systems improvement project

has helped to streamline PWR's grant funding. She won first place as a podium presentation at RI ACP 2021 and will present her findings at the national ACP conference in 2022 to represent Rhode Island and Brown.

Since completing residency earlier this year, she has started a low barrier drop-in primary care clinic one day a week at PWR. Along with **Caroline Wunsch M.D.**, from the **Division of General Internal Medicine**, they provide physical exams, HIV and Hepatitis C testing and coordination of care, and Suboxone induction. She has partnered with team members at The Warren Alpert Medical School and internal medicine residency to coordinate continued opportunities to help the learners engage with the community.

Other work in the Community

This past summer, Internal Medicine residents **Dylan Bennett, M.D.**, **Yiyun Shi, M.D.**, and Chief Resident **Jaclyn McKenna, M.D.** volunteered to do free pre-participation exams for local middle school and high school athletes. The students came from a variety of schools including Lasalle Academy, East Providence High School, St. Raphael's Academy, Bishop Hendricken High School, Central High School, and Shea High School (Pawtucket)

Kelley Sanzen, Pharm.D in the Division of Kidney Disease and Hypertension, has been busy! Last year she joined the RI Medical Reserve Corp as a volunteer immunizer during the (ongoing) COVID pandemic. She has a long and broad commitment to the community- for which she was awarded the 2018 APHA foundation award for civic leadership and community service. Kelley models how we can use our professional skills to the

benefit of our Rhode Island community, evidenced by the grant she received from the RI Pharmacy Foundation Grant for a project aimed at increasing patient home monitoring and self-management of hypertension to improve BP, optimizing medication regimens, and decreasing cardiovascular risk and other target end organ damage.

Martha Sanchez, M.D. of the Division of Infectious Diseases, oversees the Immunology Center Adherence and Retention Team (ICARE) which focuses on re-engaging and maintaining HIV patients in care, through engagement with local ACOS's (AIDS Care Organizations), and the RIDOH. The team monitors equality in outreach efforts and encourages medical providers to be active participants of outreach activities particularly those geared towards minority and disproportionately affected populations in RI.

Ross Hilliard, M.D. has recently assumed the role of Medical Director for the Rhode Island Free Clinic. He takes the reins from Dr. Caroline Troise, who held the position since the clinic's founding in 1999. This role is part of a larger investment by Brown Medicine to support physician time in the RI Free Clinic over the coming years, providing important primary care and clinic management for some of Rhode Island's most vulnerable patients. In this role, Dr. Hilliard will be providing primary care as well as administrative oversight of the clinic and the large number of volunteer physicians, APPs and trainees that rotate through the clinic. Having started precepting medical students at the clinic in 2014, Ross is excited for this new challenge, and he expresses his sincere gratitude to Dr. Troise and the incredible staff at the RI Free Clinic for their guidance, support, and patience.

CARDIOLOGY UPDATES

New Hires



Estelle Torbey, M.D. is a board-certified cardiologist with expertise in clinical cardiac electrophysiology at the Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute. She received

her medical degree from Lebanese University, Faculty of Medicine, in Beirut, Lebanon. She completed her residency and Cardiology fellowship at Staten Island University Hospital, Northwell System, in Staten Island, New York; Electrophysiology fellowship at NYU medical center, in New York, New York; and an advanced Cardiac Electrophysiology fellowship at Brown University in Providence, RI.



Marwan S. Saad, M.D. is the Director of Interventional Structural Heart Research at Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute. He is a board-certified cardiologist with expertise in cardiac

catheterization, coronary intervention, and transcatheter structural and valvular heart disease intervention. He received his medical degree and Ph.D. in clinical research from Ain Shams Medical School, in Cairo, Egypt. He completed his residency at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School/TRMC in Elizabeth, NJ; Cardiology fellowship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, AR; and Interventional and Structural heart disease fellowship at Brown University in Providence, RI.

Faculty News and Honors

Brian Abbott, M.D. has been named Programme Chair for the International Conference of Nuclear Cardiology and Cardiac CT.

J. Dawn Abbott, M.D. was invited to serve as a member of the Women as One Education Committee from 2021-2022 and appointed to a three-year term on the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions Scientific Sessions Program Committee.

Herbert D. Aronow, M.D. has been appointed vice chair, 2022 AHA/ACC Peripheral Artery Disease Guideline; Chair, Society For Vascular Medicine 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting; and Vascular Medicine Section Editor, Journal of the American College of Cardiology. He was also elected president of the Society for Vascular Medicine for the 2021-2023 term.

Gaurav Choudhary, M.D., was appointed as the Director of Cardiovascular Research in the Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute. He also assumed the role of contact-PI of NIGMS funded Cardiopulmonary Vascular Biology COBRE at the Ocean State Research Institute and Providence VA Medical Center, and will also be serving as the Director of Pilot Projects Program Core in the Advance Clinical and Translational Research (Advance-CTR) grant awarded to Brown University.

Paul Gordon, M.D. has been named director of the Interventional Structural Heart Disease Fellowship Program.

Athena Poppas, M.D., MACC has been selected to serve on the Steering Group of a WHO Noncommunicable Disease Lab, an initiative focused on identifying innovative solutions to improving the health of women and girls worldwide. The 13-member Steering Group, which also includes experts from the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations, will help to inform research and public health initiatives that promote gender equity and address the role of gender in the determinants and impacts of noncommunicable diseases worldwide

Nishant Shah, M.D. was selected to serve on the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology's Board of Directors from January 2022 through December 2025.

Wen-Chi Wu, M.D. MPH was appointed as the Chief, Medical Service at the Providence VA Medical Center.

Peng Zhang, M.D. MS was appointed as the Director of Respiratory Core in the Cardiopulmonary Vascular Biology COBRE at the Ocean State Research Institute and Providence VA Medical Center. ■

Division of Hospital Medicine News

RI Chapter of SHM Established

The Rhode Island Chapter of SHM (Society of Hospital Medicine) was established in April of 2021. The RI chapter joins over 60 chapters nationwide and 6 international chapters. SHM's robust chapter program offers hospitalists many opportunities to connect with colleagues in the hospital medicine community. All SHM chapters located within the United States are grouped into 12 geographical districts and 4 regions (East, South, Midwest and West). RI Chapter which has over 33 members, held its first inaugural meeting in September of 2021.

The chapter leadership includes: Dr. Brad Collins - President, Dr. Arkadiy Finn - Secretary and Dr. Jenn O'Brien - Treasurer

Other faculty News in Brief

Kwame Dapaah-Afryie, M.D. has been selected as a member of ABIM - Hospital Medicine Certification & Traditional MOC Item-Writing Task force.

Arkadiy Finn, M.D., Bradley Collins, M.D. and **Kwame Dapaah-Afryie, M.D.** served as members of the abstracts review committee for the 2021 Society of Hospital Medicine national meeting. ■



New Faculty in the Division of Hematology-Oncology



Galina Lagos, M.D. recently completed her fellowship training in hematology/oncology at Columbia University Irving Medical Center and will be joining Brown

Medicine's Division of Oncology with a focus in sarcoma and bladder cancer. She received her undergraduate degree in bioengineering from the University of Pennsylvania followed by her M.D. from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. She stayed at Columbia University Medical Center to complete her residency training in internal medicine. As a hematology/oncology fellow, she received specialized

training in the management of sarcoma and genitourinary malignancies, while also pursuing her research interests in mechanisms of immunotherapy response and resistance.



Eric T. Wong, M.D. is a senior neuro-oncologist recruited from Boston to direct the medical neuro-oncology clinical service and research at Rhode Island Hospital. He

obtained his undergraduate degree in electrical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania, followed by medical study at Rutgers Medical School, neurology residency at Washington

University Medical Center in St. Louis and subspecialized neuro-oncology fellowships at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. While in Boston, he served on the Neuro-Oncology Protocol Committee at the Harvard/Dana-Farber Cancer Center and established a renowned neuro-oncology fellowship training program at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Dr. Wong is nationally and internationally recognized for his research on the anti-tumor effect of Tumor Treating Fields on glioblastoma and the translation of this technology to other disease sites in neuro-oncology and oncology. He is also investigating cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers that can predict response of brain tumor patients to treatments. ■

Peter Hollmann Named AGS President



Peter Hollmann, M.D., FACP, AGSF has been named 2021-22 president of the American Geriatrics Society (AGS).

Dr. Hollmann assumes responsibility to lead this national nonprofit organization representing more than 6,000 geriatrics healthcare professionals across the country.

In addition to his role as chief medical officer at Brown Medicine, Dr. Hollmann continues to practice medicine locally and as part of Brown Medicine's Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine.

An AGS member since 1983, Dr. Hollmann is a fellow with the Society and has been instrumental in the organization's efforts to promote payment policies that address the needs of Medicare beneficiaries, particularly those with complex and chronic conditions. He founded the AGS Practice Management Advisory Group, and was a founding member of the AGS Quality Committee. He has served as a member and chair of the Public Policy Committee, a member of its quality advisory group, and a member of the AGS Board of Directors for more than eight years.

Statewide, Dr. Hollmann co-chairs the multi-payer Patient-Centered Medical Home demonstration project (Care Transformation Collaborative of Rhode Island) Data and Evaluation Committee and is a delegate to the American Medical Association House of Delegates from the Rhode Island Medical Society where he serves on the Executive Committee.

"I consider myself incredibly lucky to have not only found the field of geriatrics, but a supportive and encouraging professional home with the AGS," Dr. Hollmann states. "Like good geriatrics care, the AGS recognizes the value of teams and diverse expertise, and the importance of making the older adults we serve our number one priority. Over the past year, I have been collaborating with an incredible team of AGS colleagues on our important endeavor to eradicate discrimination in healthcare and research with an initial focus on the intersection of structural racism and ageism. I look forward to continuing to work alongside our outgoing AGS President and others. I know it will take all of us working together to achieve meaningful and lasting change." ■

Recently Awarded Grants

Bum-Rak Choi, Ph.D., Kareen Coulombe, Ph.D. and Ulrike Mende, M.D., the Cardiac Microtissue Team from the Cardiovascular Research Center, received the Brown Biomedical Innovations to Impact (BBII) award for their project “Making therapeutic drugs safer for the heart.”

Laura Sanapo, M.D., Women’s Medicine Collaborative, received \$25,000 for “Maternal Sleep Disordered Breathing as Risk Factor for Childhood Obesity in Rhode Island” from the Rhode Island Foundation. Co-investigators are: Ghada Bourjeily; Margaret Bublitz; Amy Salisbury; Patricia Risica; and Katherine Sharkey.

Philip Chan, M.D., Infectious Diseases, received \$285,649 for “Mobile Health Platform for Providing Real-Time Follow-up after Home-Based HIV Self-testing for High-Risk Men who Have Sex with Men.” The grant is a subaward through Brown University from NIMH.

Patrycja Dubielecka-Szczerba, Ph.D., Hematology/ Oncology, received \$30,750 for “Identifying new genetic determinants in the pathogenesis of myeloproliferative neoplasms” from the Lura Cook Hull Trust.

Natasha Rybak, M.D., Infectious Diseases, received \$352,357 for “A5401: Adaptive Platform Treatment Trial for Outpatients with COVID-19 (ACTIV-2).” The grant is

a subaward through the University of California, Los Angeles from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)

Elizabeth O. Harrington, Ph.D., Providence VA Medical Center, received \$28,670, a personnel award for postdoctoral research associate Natalie D’Silva.

Sharon Rounds, M.D., Providence VA Medical Center, received \$19,926,106 for the Phase II renewal of Advance Clinical and Translational Research (Advance-CTR) from NIGMS

Dimitrios Farmakiotis, M.D., Infectious Diseases, received \$72,872 for the project “Clinical Impact of COVID-19 in Immunocompromised Patients”, as a subaward through Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

Marwan Saad, M.D., Cardiovascular Institute, received an award from CVI for his project entitled “Cardiovascular Predictors of In-Hospital Outcomes in Patients with COVID-19 Using Machine Learning”.

Wen-Chi Wu, M.D. MPH, was awarded a multi-PI R01 grant “Magnesium supplement and vascular health: Machine learning from the longitudinal medical record” from the NHLBI.

Note to Lifespan community members

Are you planning a research, operations, or quality assurance project? The Lifespan Biostatistics Epidemiology and Research Design (BERD) Core is here to help! Our faculty and staff come with a range of expertise to support you in defining your research question(s), designing your study, collecting, managing, and analyzing your data, and even dissemination. While the best time to start talking with our team is early in your research process, our team is here for you whether you are just starting to think about your research question or have already collected data for analysis. Have a grant, abstract, or manuscript deadline on the horizon? It’s never too early to reach out! We do our best work if you contact us well before your deadline. You can schedule an appointment with our faculty and staff here. If you would like to learn more about us, the services we offer, and/or review additional resources on the Lifespan instance of REDCap, gaining access to the CITRIX Biostat Desktop, or general research resources, check us out at lifespanbiostatisticscore.org.

Faculty Honored with Beckwith Family Award for Outstanding Teaching

The Beckwith Family Research and Education Fund has been established at The Alpert Medical School through generous gifts to the endowment from the Beckwith Family Foundation. The endowment Fund is used to support the education and research mission of the Department of Medicine, with an emphasis on the education and training of medical residents.

Each year the Fund supports the presentation of the Annual Brown Medical School Department of Medicine Beckwith Family Award for Outstanding Teaching. This award is to recognize superb teaching by its faculty. This year’s recipients were honored in a virtual ceremony that featured guest lecturer Yul Ejnes, M.D.

The recipients are nominated and chosen by students, residents, physicians, program and course directors in the Brown Medical School Department of Medicine. Each winner is presented with a plaque and a cash prize.

J. Dawn Abbott, M.D.
Professor of Medicine

Debasree Banerjee, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Stefan Gravenstein, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Professor of Health Services, Policy & Practice

Hussain R. Khawaja, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Medicine,
Clinician Educator

Srilakshmi Mitta, M.D.
Assistant Professor Medicine,
Clinician Educator

Nishant R. Shah, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Assistant Professor of Health Services,
Policy & Practice

Meet the Internal Medicine Chief Residents



Amy Mathew, M.D.

Hometown

Plymouth, MI

Undergraduate

University of Michigan

Medical School

Medical College of Wisconsin

Why I came to Brown

What really stood out to me on my interview day was the camaraderie between everyone in the program. From morning report to rounds, all of the residents and attendings seemed genuinely happy to work and learn with each other. Brown's training program strikes a great balance between strong clinical exposure, advocacy, and research, and allows its trainees to work side by side with excellent mentors and experts in the field. My time at Brown has been true to my initial impression—in addition to gaining a strong clinical training, I have enjoyed coming to work every day with people who have become my closest friends.

Beyond my time at work, I have loved living in Providence. Rhode Island is a unique state with endless beaches, restaurants, and parks. I still have a long list of things to try, despite having lived here for three years, and am looking forward to exploring more this upcoming year!

Medical Interests

Pulmonary-Critical Care Medicine, Medical Education, End of Life Care

General Interests

Traveling and learning new languages, biking, painting, trying (and failing) to keep my indoor plants alive.



Jaclyn McKenna, M.D.

Hometown

Huntington, NY

Undergraduate

The College of William and Mary

Medical School

Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook

Why I came to Brown

It was clear from my interview day that the culture at Brown was one of support and enthusiasm, creating an ideal environment for residency training. When I reflect on my experience here, I know that I was challenged as a doctor, but also nourished by my mentors and colleagues in a way that made learning and practicing medicine fun. I was specifically drawn to Brown by the General Internal Medicine track and the opportunity to have additional clinical opportunities and didactics geared toward a career in primary care. You will see our graduates go on to different specialties and practice settings, but I am glad that a good percentage also continue with careers in general internal medicine. I think this reflects our program's priority to craft exceptional general interest who will go on to use those foundational skills in a variety of ways. Finally, I wanted to check out the New England beaches!

Medical Interests

Primary Care/ General Internal Medicine. Sports medicine. Medical Education.

General Interests

Beach Volleyball. Basketball. Paddle boarding.



Gerry Ovide, M.D.

Hometown

Queens, NY

Undergraduate

Temple University

Medical School

Eastern Virginia Medical School

Why I came to Brown

It was immediately clear while interviewing that the residency exuded a collaborative, uplifting and supportive environment among the residents. My experience was later in the interview season, but I was happy to see that what I witnessed was truly the case during my first few months in intern year. That feeling extended to the subspecialty services and unit months. I always felt supported and encouraged to ask, do, and learn. Looking back on my experience, I couldn't have asked for a better balance of enjoyment in my workplace and opportunity for clinical growth in medicine. Brown will be a part of me always.

Medical Interests

Cardiology with interest in electrophysiology vs advanced imaging, Medical Education in critical care.

General Interests

If I could afford it, I would travel far more frequently. My dream vacation would be island hopping in Japan.



Christopher Ward, M.D.

Hometown

Melbourne, Australia

Medical School

Monash University

Why I came to Brown

I was fortunate enough to do a medical observership at Brown whilst visiting from Australia. I was very impressed with the balance between clinical education and patient care. It was very clear to me that Brown residents were dedicated to their patients and provided excellent

care. I was also captured by the quality of morning reports and noon conferences, and the rapid development of strong clinical reasoning skills. Moreover, I could see that the residents worked extremely well together and most importantly were great friends. By the time my interview came around I knew this was the only place I wanted to do my residency. The 3 years that followed exceeded my expectations, with an abundance of procedural, research and clinician educator opportunities. I am eager to give back to the program over the next 12 months as chief resident.

Medical Interests

Gastroenterology, with a focus on Inflammatory Bowel Disease

General Interests

I love outdoor rock climbing and hiking. I met my wife whilst traveling in Vietnam and we can't wait to continue exploring the world.



Dan Yee, M.D.

Hometown

Davis, CA

Undergraduate

University of California, San Diego

Medical School

New York Medical College

Why I came to Brown

When I was looking at residency programs, Brown stood on its own in terms of philosophy and values. There is a culture of learning and support that extends from the leadership down through the program that I think is uncommon to find at other places.

The three years I've spent here so far have been some of the best of my life. I've made lifelong friendships and have grown professionally more than I ever could have imagined. Residency can be tough, but Brown has made that transition from medical student to doctor as fulfilling and as seamless possible—If I had to do it all over again, there is no question in my mind that I would pick Brown all over again.

Medical Interests

Pulmonary and critical care, Pulmonary vascular disease, Acute lung injury/Sepsis.

General Interests

Tennis and Surfing (Yes, I'm one of those crazy people that goes out in the snow to go catch some waves).





Faculty Appointments

January 1 to June 30, 2021

Care New England Hospitals

Dr. Chester Hedgepeth, Adjunct Instructor, Cardiology

Dr. James Higgs, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, Infectious Diseases

Dr. Brian Honeyman, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine

Dr. Mark Salmon, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, General Internal Medicine

Dr. John James Sullivan, Clinical Assistant Professor, General Internal Medicine

Lifespan Hospitals

Dr. Shreeyukta Bhattarai, Clinical Assistant Professor, General Internal Medicine

Dr. Russell Bratman, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, Endocrinology

Dr. Tushar Kulkarni, Clinical Assistant Professor, General Internal Medicine

Dr. Jisoo Lee, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep

Dr. Parijat Mathur, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, General Internal Medicine

Dr. Abhinav Misra, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep

Dr. Syed Naqvi, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, General Internal Medicine

Dr. Ibrahim Salloum, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, General Internal Medicine

Dr. Saul Weingart, Professor, Clinician Educator, General Internal Medicine

Providence VAMC

Dr. Hassan Qadir, Assistant Professor, Clinician Educator, General Internal Medicine

Dr. Jose Polanco, Clinical Assistant Professor, General Internal Medicine



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