

# IMPACT

UAMS  
College of Medicine  
Internal Medicine

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**Edward T. Yeh, M.D.**

## Message from the Chairman

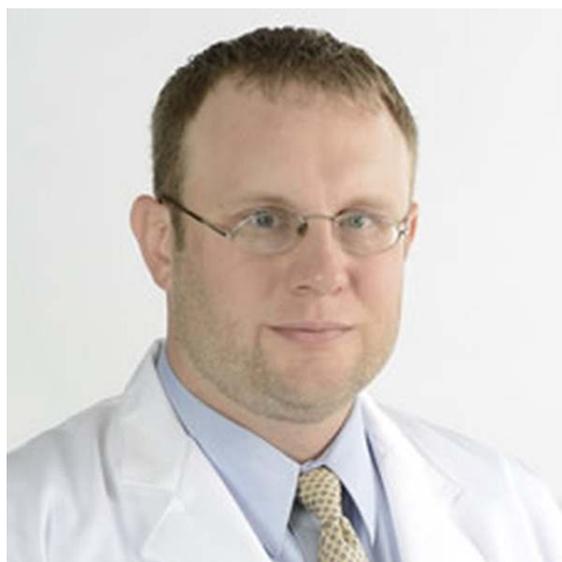
I am pleased to announce the arrival of a new leader for the Division of Gastroenterology/Hepatology. Dr. Mauricio Garcia, Associate Professor of Medicine, has returned from Washington University in St. Louis to lead the division to excel in patient care, teaching, and research. Please join me in welcoming Mauricio and his family back to Little Rock.

I would also like to recognize the tremendous contribution made by Dr. Matthew Deneke, who guided the division through a very challenging time. Dr. Deneke will continue to serve as director of the fellowship program.

## New Leadership in the Division of Gastroenterology/Hepatology



**Mauricio Garcia, M.D.**



**Matthew Deneke, M.D.**

Dr. Matthew Deneke has worked tirelessly as interim Division Director for the Division of Gastroenterology/Hepatology since July 2021. Dr. Deneke received his medical degree and completed his fellowship in gastroenterology and hepatology here at UAMS and his transplant hepatology fellowship at the Mayo Clinic. During his time as interim Division Director he has maintained his role as Program Director of the Gastroenterology/Hepatology Fellowship Program.

Prior to his time at Washington University, Dr. Mauricio Garcia was with UAMS from 2013-2020. During this time, he held the positions of Director of the Primary Liver Tumors Clinic, Hepatology Service Line Director, Gastroenterology and Hepatology Service Line Co-director, and Liver Transplant Medical Director. We are pleased to welcome back Dr. Garcia and his outstanding leadership!



## **Dr. Sushma Bhusal Receives Scholarship for the MS-CTS Program**

Dr. Sushma Bhusal, Medical Director of Kidney Transplantation, has been awarded the Scholarship of Clinical and Translational Sciences as she begins the Master's Program of Clinical and Translational Sciences (MS-CTS) through the Graduate School at UAMS. Dr. Bhusal has always been interested in research, but is looking forward to the formal training she will receive and the opportunity to further her projects and grant writing to move the field of transplantation to new heights.

Since taking on her directorial role, Dr. Bhusal has seen the Kidney Transplantation Program grow with the help of notable faculty members such as Dr. Lyle Burdine (Director of Solid Organ Transplants), Dr. Emmanouil Giorgakis, Dr. Gary Barone, and Dr. Aparna Sharma. Dr. Bhusal and her colleagues have been able to build and expand the program through changes in protocol and acceptance criteria. This has led to an increase in transplantations with over 190 kidney transplants in the past year. In the past two years, the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients has ranked the program in the top 4-5 programs in the country in best outcomes. Another achievement is the post-COVID revival of the living donor kidney program having completed two or three transplants this year.

Even with this growth, Dr. Bhusal shares that the future for the Kidney Transplantation Program is even brighter. With the policy changes in place, Dr. Bhusal and her team anticipate 20% of all kidney transplantations will be dedicated to the living donor program. Dr. Bhusal shares that the transplant service is expected to initiate a pancreas transplantation program in the near future. Lastly, Dr. Bhusal is excited that a Transplant Nephrology Fellowship is in the works with Dr. Sharma appointed to serve as Fellowship Director.

Dr. Bhusal is immensely thankful for all of the transplant faculty, administrators, coordinators, social workers, pharmacists, dieticians, finance coordinators, and every person that makes up the interdisciplinary team of transplantation. These people have been instrumental in building the program up to be prosperous. She is especially grateful to the community of nephrologists and the patients of Arkansas for trusting them with their care. Finally, she is thankful for her husband Dr. Sumant Inamdar, an Advanced Endoscopist in the division of Gastroenterology, and her entire family for their love and support.



## **Dr. Berney, Director of Rheumatology/Immunology**

Dr. Seth Berney followed his father's example becoming a second-generation academic rheumatologist. After finishing his fellowship at the University of Alabama Birmingham, he and his wife joined the faculty at LSU Health Sciences Center-Shreveport where he transitioned from basic research to education. While at LSU, Dr. Berney became the Fellowship Director and Division Chief then later adding on the position of Director of the Center of Excellence. Through the recruitment efforts of Dr. James Marsh, Dr. Berney joined the faculty at UAMS and became the Division Chief and Fellowship Director in the Division of Rheumatology.

Dr. Berney's primary focus of the fellowship program is to make superb clinical rheumatologists. The faculty and patients at UAMS create an ideal environment for fellows to learn. One of the most rewarding aspects of this position for Dr. Berney is teaching fellows who do not know much about clinical rheumatology and watching them develop into outstanding clinicians.

In the future, Dr. Berney hopes to recruit and hire more faculty enabling the creation of interdivision and department subspecialty clinics such as an interstitial lung disease clinic with pulmonary, a rheumatology-dermatology clinic, a nephritis clinic with nephrology or an autoimmune eye disease clinic with ophthalmology. Ultimately, he would love to see centers of excellence created within these specialties. We are thankful for Dr. Berney and the vision and ideas he brings to our department and trainees.



## **Dr. Paydak, Director of Electrophysiology Fellowship**

Dr. Hakan Paydak serves as the Director of the Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology Fellowship Program. Dr. Paydak began his career in electrophysiology after seeing an ad for a cardiology fellowship in the Netherlands. He knew this would open doors for him in his career in his home country of Turkey. Since then, he has brought his knowledge to Arkansas to provide the only electrophysiology fellowship training in the state.

The Division of Cardiology and electrophysiology have seen immense growth that has benefitted fellows as well. The expansion of the electrophysiology faculty has allowed the program to accept an additional fellow in the upcoming year.

Dr. Paydak acknowledges the exceptional faculty that provide excellent teaching skills including Division Director, Dr. Paul Mounsey, who has brought with him some of the top electrophysiology talent in the state and region as well as Dr. Subodh Devabhaktuni who he credits to be the new generation of clinical electrophysiology.

Dr. Paydak aims to train his fellows in all aspects of electrophysiology such as device therapies, ablation therapies, and the use of state of the art technology like laser extractions, a technique that is not offered at every program. When teaching his fellows, Dr. Paydak uses the motto of "see one, do one, teach one" to provide trainees a unique hands-on learning experience.

## Translational Research Institute's Research Day 2022

The Translational Research Institute (TRI) hosted their first in person event in over two years at the Heifer International Headquarters on April 5. The Showcase highlighted TRI-supported projects, six oral presentations, and a poster presentation competition. We are proud to have two Internal Medicine faculty members included with two oral presentations and a poster presentation winner.

### Oral Presentations

Britni Ayers, Ph.D. - KL2 Mentored Research Career Development Program

Emily Kocurek, M.D. - Pilot Award Program

### Poster Session Award Winner - People's Choice Award

Nishank Jain, M.D. (with assistance from medical student Layth Al-Hindi) - *Event Rates and Risk Factors for Intracranial Bleeds Among Dialysis Patients on P2Y12 Inhibitors*



**Britni Ayers, Ph.D.**  
Community Health &  
Research



**Emily Kocurek, M.D.**  
Pulmonary & Critical Care



**Nishank Jain, M.D.**  
Nephrology

## Cultural Day - India

This month, the Internal Medicine residents held their third Cultural Day to celebrate and partake in each other's diverse backgrounds.

Residents Tanmay Gandhi (PGY-1) and Prachi Saluja (PGY-2) presented their home country of India. The presentation included interesting facts about India, how their country has contributed to medicine, and a map of where each resident from India is from. The event included a meal from local restaurant Saffron Indian Cuisine.





## **Dr. Jennifer Andersen Receives Mini-Grant from TRI**

The Translational Research Institute and the UAMS Division for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion began the STARS Program last year to offer grant-writing assistance, mentoring, and grants.

Dr. Jennifer Andersen, Assistant Professor in the Division of Community Health and Research, received a mini-grant for her project "Feasibility and Acceptability of a Wearable Device for Research with Marshallese Adults with Type 2 Diabetes."

Congratulations, Dr. Andersen!

## **System Based Practice Elective Appreciation Luncheon**

Under the leadership of Dr. Ahmed Abuabdou, the System Based Practice Elective is a two week course for second and third year internal medicine residents covering the basic building blocks of the US healthcare system including coding and billing, healthcare quality, and clinical documentation. The luncheon took place on May 24 honoring the course instructors and course administrator Sheryl Young. Internal Medicine Chairmen Dr. Edward Yeh and faculty members, Dr. Michelle Krause, Dr. Aaron Wenger, Dr. Keyur Vyas, and Dr. Alice Alexander attended and presented awards to facilitators. Chief Residents Dr. Lauren Taylor and Dr. Zachary Tilley shared with the group about their experience throughout the course. Click [here](#) for a list of instructors and to read more.



## **Godspeed: Celebration of Transition**

Last month, the Internal Medicine and Med-Peds residents celebrated with a transitioning from training dinner. We wish the IM PGY3s and MP PGY4s the best of luck as they continue on with their careers in medicine!



The Department of Internal Medicine is the largest department in the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. The department is home to approximately 150 full-time faculty members, 81 residents, and 68 fellows serving two residency programs and twelve fellowship programs. Dr. Edward T.H. Yeh, a cardiologist and physician/scientist, is a pioneer in the field of onco-cardiology.

**Questions, comments, or suggestions for future newsletters? Email Shelby Shields at [SMS Shields@uams.edu](mailto:SMS Shields@uams.edu) or Natalie Moore at [NMoore@uams.edu](mailto:NMoore@uams.edu).**

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