

[To view this email as a web page, go here.](#)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

Department
of Medicine



INTERNAL
DIGEST

August 2024

Chair's Message

Colleagues,

As summer comes to a close and the new academic year begins, I would like to welcome the more than 36 additional faculty members to the Department of Medicine who've started here from July 1 through September. The Department of Medicine offers state-of-the-art clinical, educational, and innovative research programs to its faculty, staff, and trainees. It is an exciting time to be a member of the Department of Medicine and I hope that this newsletter keeps you informed of the many exciting activities in our department.



James K. Liao, MD

The Robert S. and Irene Flinn Endowed Professor in Medicine
Professor and Chair, Department of Medicine
Member, Sarver Heart Center
University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson

Top Headlines



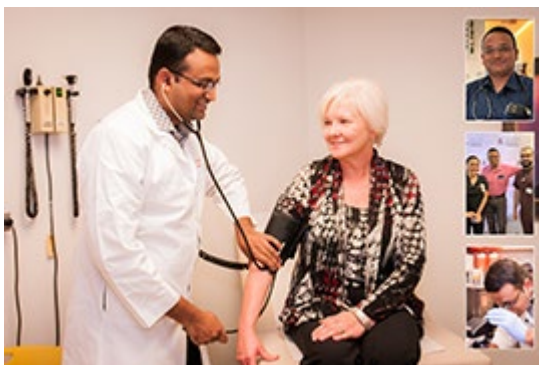
DOM faculty see big future in summer research interns, trainees

For Endocrinology's **Jennifer Stern, PhD**, one of 18 Department of Medicine faculty who offered opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to train in their labs, she finds joy in sharing her knowledge and advancing their and her studies in the process. DOM Vice Chair for Research, **Janet Funk, MD**, said about 40 students are assisting with DOM research and learning how to apply science to solving medical challenges.



Fifteen new faculty join Department of Medicine in August

Fifteen new faculty members joined the DOM this month, including three pulmonologists, two hospitalists, two infectious diseases specialists, a cardiologist, dermatologist, endocrinologist, geriatrician, oncologist, and palliative medicine specialist – and two researchers, one studying GI cancers and the other the role of cellular senescence in age-related bone loss. See who they are.



Dr. Bijin Thajudeen: What it takes to be a DEI champion

The Division of Nephrology professor was one of two original diversity, equity and inclusion champions for the Department of Medicine in 2018 and shares what that experience has been like and the rewards in showcasing inclusive excellence as a participatory process that lifts all boats.

In This Issue

- [**Honors & Awards**](#)
- [**Upcoming Events**](#)
- [**Spotlight**](#)
- [**Media Mentions**](#)
- [**Vice Chair Reports**](#)
- [**More News**](#)

Honors & Awards



Geriatrics assistant professor chosen for prestigious scholars program: A new faculty member who joined the Division of General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics & Palliative Medicine, or GGP, this August, **April Ehrlich, MD, MHS**, was chosen for the Butler-Williams Scholars Program – a weeklong symposium on aging research – at the National Institute on Aging in Bethesda, Maryland. She’s the first person from the U of A to receive this honor. [Learn more.](#)

■ Infectious Diseases division chief **Liz Connick, MD**, received \$703,000 in in bridge funding from the NIH’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for a study to identify factors in secondary lymphoid tissues that lead to continuous low-level expression of HIV in people living with HIV and receiving antiretroviral therapy, or ART. [Learn more.](#)

■ **Billie Bixby, MD**, assistant professor, Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine, or PACCS, and director, Interventional Pulmonology Program, is site principal investigator on an R44 grant from the NIH’s National Cancer Institute to study “Development of a Molecular Assay to Diagnose Malignant Pleural Effusions,” related to fluid around the lungs and lung cancer. The study is funded by a [\\$2 million Small Business Innovation Research award](#) through the NIH/NCI to the Department of Pathology’s **Mark Nelson, PhD**, through his company, Precision Epigenomics Inc., to further develop EPISEEK-MPE™, its multi-cancer detection assay, for analysis of pleural effusion fluid to detect cancer.

■ **Stefano Guerra, MD, PhD, MPH**, professor, PACCS division, epidemiology director at the Asthma & Airway Disease Research Center, and the Henry E. Dahlberg Chair in Asthma Research at the college, won an NIH/NIAID R21 grant for a study on “**Creatine Kinase in the Natural History of Asthma.**” Valued at \$402,109 for its first two years, the grant allows his research team to build on work from a [recent publication](#) in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

■ Congratulations to **Joy Bulger Beck, MD, FACP**, who was recognized in July by the Arizona Chapter of the American College of Physicians as a new fellow of the college and earning the FACP designation. Dr. Beck is a GGP division assistant professor and director of the college’s Transition to Residency Bootcamp.

■ In the Division of Hematology & Oncology, **Akshay Amaraneni, MD**, was named program director and **Alejandro Recio Boiles, MD**, was named associate program director of the Hematology & Medical Oncology Fellowship as of Aug. 1. Both are Hem-Onc assistant professors.

■ Kudos to DOM participants at the College of Medicine – Tucson’s **White Coat Ceremony on July 26** in Centennial Hall for the incoming Class of 2028 medical students. See a group photo of them all at the top of this newsletter. Faculty members present included: **Joy Bulger Beck**,

MD (GGP); Daniel Butler, MD (Dermatology); John Galgiani, MD (Infectious Diseases); Dalia Mikhael, MD (Inpatient Medicine); Kevin Moynahan, MD (GGP); Jennifer Plitt, MD (GGP), Serena Scott, MD, MBA (GGP), and Sarah Tariq, MD (Endocrinology). Some were invited onstage to assist students into their first white coats.

■ Hem-Onc assistant professor **Junaid Arshad, MD, MS**, recently earned his master's degree in clinical and translational research online from George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| SEP 3 | <u>Free AWCIM Event: 'All Arise from the Mind – The Amazing Healing Power through our Mind'</u> 2-3:30 p.m. AWCIM Iris Cantor Building, 1502 E. Mabel St. |
| SEP 4 | <u>Medicine Grand Rounds with Dr. Joshua Farr</u> Noon-1 p.m. COM-T & Virtual |
| SEP 4 | <u>DOM General Faculty Meeting – Fall 2024</u> 5:30-6:30 p.m. COM-T 8403 |
| SEP 7 | <u>Inaugural Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Symposium</u> 7 a.m.-5 p.m. COM-T Social Hall (Room 2500) |
| SEP 9 | <u>Advances in Aging Lecture: 'Introduction to the Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (AZ-GWEP)'</u> Noon-1 p.m. Virtual |
| SEP 11 | <u>Medicine Grand Rounds with Dr. Muhammad Husnain</u> Noon-1 p.m. COM-T 5403 |
| SEP 11 | <u>Internal Medicine Meet-and-Greet Event</u> 5-7 p.m. COM-T Social Hall (Room 2500) |
| SEP 12 | <u>Translational Cardiovascular Research Center Seminar with Harvard's Dr. Eugene Braunwald</u> Noon-1 p.m. COM-P - Virtual |
| SEP 18 | <u>Medicine Grand Rounds with Dr. Michel T. Corban</u> Noon-1 p.m. COM-T 5403 & Virtual |
| SEP 21 | <u>U of A Health Sciences Wellness and Wonder Day</u> 9 a.m.-2 p.m. HSIB/BIO5/COIT |
| SEP 27 | <u>2024 Falls Prevention Fair</u> (with Mindy Fain, MD, & Karen Parker, MD, PhD) |

11 a.m.-3 p.m. | Chinese Cultural Center, 1288 W. River Road

SEP
30

**Meet Your College of Medicine – Tucson TLA Faculty Innovation
Ambassador, Julie Ledford, PhD**

Noon-1 p.m. | AHSC Room 2500 (COM-T Social Hall)

MORE EVENTS ►►►

Spotlight on Program in Medical Humanities



Submissions open for Harmony Magazine 2025: Harmony Magazine, a visual arts and literary journal published annually and featuring works by students, faculty, staff and patients of all colleges within the University of Arizona Health Sciences, showcases visual art, poetry, and prose with a focus on themes related to medicine. Part of the Program in Medical Humanities at the college, it's accepting submissions for its 2025 edition. The **deadline is Oct. 20**. "In addition, we are offering monetary **prizes of \$300 each** for the Best Visual Art, Best Poem, and Best Prose" entries, said Nadja Jones, Harmony editor-in-chief. For examples of entries, [click here](#) for the 2024 edition of

Harmony. [Learn more](#) and [submit an entry here](#).

Media Mentions

- **Jennifer Segar, MD**, Hem-Onc assistant professor and a member of the Breast Cancer clinical research team at the U of A Cancer Center, "**Good news about breast cancer,**" (Aug. 28: [Bottomline Health](#)).
- **Clara Curiel-Lewandrowski, MD**, professor and chief, Division of Dermatology, and co-director, U of A Skin Cancer Institute, "**The best sun protection shirts for shielding your skin,**" (Aug. 23: [National Geographic](#)).
- **Sairam Parthasarathy, MD**, professor and chief, PACCS division, and director, Center for Sleep, Circadian & Neuroscience Research, "**The best way to treat insomnia,**" (Aug. 16: [TIME Magazine](#)). *This was among several media mentions Dr. Parthasarathy had for the month.*
- **Lalitha Madhavan, MD, PhD**, associate professor with dual appointment in the Division of General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine and Department of Neurology, "**Arizona Science podcast: How skin cells are delivering clues to the mystery of Parkinson's**" (Aug. 15: [AZ Public Media](#)).
- **Daniel C. Butler, MD**, Dermatology associate professor and director, Inflammatory & Aging Skin Research Program, "**If it itches and itches and itches...**" (Aug. 12: [Medical Tribune – in German](#) | [PDF](#)).
- **Aaron Scott, MD**, Hem-Onc associate professor and co-leader, Clinical & Translational Oncology Program, U of A Cancer Center, "**Podcast: Management of Locally Advanced Rectal Cancer Guideline**" (Aug. 8: [ASCO Publications](#)).

- **John Galgiani, MD**, Infectious Diseases professor and director, Valley Fever Center for Excellence, “**Anivive secures funds to develop human Valley fever vaccine**” (Aug. 5: [Pharmaceutical Technology](#)). This was among several media mentions Dr. Galgiani had for the month; related content: [“Pursuit of a Valley fever vaccine passes significant milestone”](#) and [“Anivive lands \\$33M NIAID contract to advance human Valley fever vaccine.”](#)

[MORE MEDIA MENTIONS ►►►](#)

Vice Chair Reports

Faculty Affairs



■ Attend a talk on “**Influential Communications in the Everchanging World of Healthcare**” on Tuesday, **Sept. 10, 5:30 p.m.**, by Kim Faith, executive coach and trainer for leadership development company Black Sheep Global, in HSIB 306 or on Zoom. The **2024 WIMS Torchbearer Awards** also will be presented at this event, hosted by the college’s Women in Medicine and Science group. [Eleven DOM faculty members](#) were honored at last year’s awards ceremony. [Learn more & RSVP here.](#)

■ **Two opportunities with the Pima County Medical Society (PCMS):** If interested in hearing more information, please contact DOM Vice Chair of Faculty Development **Serena Scott, MD, MBA**, at serenascott@arizona.edu.

1. Be a **PCMS Career Workshop speaker/panelist** on Saturday, **Sept. 28, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**, at the Tucson Osteopathic Medical Foundation Conference Center (Swan and Camp Lowell). This workshop is an effort to help medical students, residents, fellows and young practicing physicians develop their medical careers. PCMS is looking for speakers and/or panelists on a variety of topics including what an academic medical career entails, advice on choosing a speciality, and more.
2. Join the **PCMS Board of Directors** and advocate for issues to support physicians across all of Pima County. Nominations (including self-nominations) close on **Nov. 6**. Board members serve for three years and meet monthly via Zoom for 1-hour.

■ **Fitness for physician & faculty wellness:** For new and continuing DOM faculty, here’s a reminder that Banner Wellness Center memberships are open to all DOM and Banner faculty, including residents and fellows. The exercise center is in the basement of Banner – University Medical Center Tucson. The cost, \$180 a year. [Learn more & sign up.](#)



■ **Early Stage Research Career Development Support:** First up this fall in a new DOM research career development workshop series, **Franz Richard, DO**, PACCS division professor and director of the Pulmonary Hypertension Program, will provide information and advice on leveraging [CATS](#) to jump start clinical research careers and provide research infrastructure for the conduct of clinical trials. Specific information on date and time will be sent to DOM faculty who indicated an interest in career development support. If you are interested in being included, please contact [Dr. Janet Funk](#), [Dr. Liz Connick](#) or [Lisa Torres-Jones](#).

Grants and grant assistance:

■ Top notch grant writing webinars from the Atkinson Group are being offered gratis – FREE – again to U of A faculty by RII **through March 31, 2025**, via [18 modular, topic-driven, on-demand webinars](#). Please consider taking advantage of this opportunity, selecting modules based on your time and needs. Training is focused on NIH grant proposals but is applicable to all.

■ Internal U of A grant opportunity information can be sent to your email inbox by [subscribing to The Current, Limited Submissions, or International Research newsletters](#), a biweekly grant opportunities email newsletter sent by U of A Research Innovation & Impact (RII). To apply for (and monitor) current internal funding opportunities, [see Arizona Cultivate](#).

■ For individual **assistance with IRB submissions**, zoom office hours are offered by the IRB the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month. For the zoom link, and a list of other topical seminars and webinars, or in person office hours offered to researchers by the IRB, please [see this link](#).

■ **ABRC annual grant proposal submission cycle now open:** Letters of intent (LOI) for investigators who are either new (< 10 years post-doc experience @ \$75K/year X 3 years) or established (\$225K/year X 3 years) are **due Sept. 19**, with proposal submissions, by invitation after LOI review, to follow. There are two Arizona Biomedical Research Centre pre-submission web conferences to address questions as well. These awards have been extremely helpful in launching and extending DOM faculty research projects. [See this link for more information](#).

Monthly publication highlight: An article by **Joshua N. Farr, PhD**, appearing in the July edition of **Nature Medicine**, is our highlighted DOM publication of the month. Dr. Farr, who recently joined our faculty from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, is an associate professor in the Division of Rheumatology and also holds the Ethel McChesney Bilby Endowed Chair in Osteoporosis at the U of A Arthritis Center. The publication, [“Effects of intermittent senolytic therapy on bone metabolism in postmenopausal women: A phase 2 randomized controlled trial,”](#) details results of the first randomized controlled trial of intermittent senolytic treatment to mitigate adverse effects of healthy aging in women, using bone metabolism as a marker for biological efficacy. “Drugs that selectively kill senescent (or aging) cells, termed senolytics, may benefit otherwise healthy older women but are not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ remedy” was the

paper's key message, Dr. Farr said, adding that the results set the stage for further studies with a larger range of individuals.

Education



■ DOM Vice Chair for Education **Amy Sussman, MD**, reports that fellowship recruitment is in full swing. All interviews are recommended to be virtual by the AAMC and AAIM. The match for most fellowships will be released Dec. 4. In other education news:

- The Internal Medicine Residency Program will host a **Meet-and-Greet Event** on **Sept. 11, 5-7 p.m.**, in the COM-T Social Hall, that will include educational leadership from the DOM and medical students (MS1-4) who are interested in IM.
- A reminder to faculty mentoring trainees (residents/fellows) to **submit research abstracts** for Bressler-Alpert travel awards to present their work at upcoming conferences.
- About 25% of the college's student body is applying to IM this season – which continues to remain above the national mean.

■ **Your input sought for instructional needs assessment:** The Vice Chair of Education Office in the Department of Medicine at the University of Arizona is conducting a short needs assessment to assist in planning for upcoming faculty instructional development programming. The timeframe to complete the survey has been extended. **The new deadline is Tuesday, Sept. 3.** Your input will be used to ensure that we meet your needs for faculty instructional development. **Take the survey here.**

■ **New Teaching Tip:** This video describes how to use a learning objective to plan for a teaching activity
– **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfBR8gggpY0>**

*Also look for updates to **Teaching Resources** available online.*

More News

■ **“Rheumatology, Arthritis Center add ‘Joint Space’ podcast to community outreach”** (Aug. 20): **C. Kent Kwoh, MD, MACR**, Rheumatology division chief and U of A Arthritis Center director, kicks off the podcast – offered on multiple platforms – on the topic of **“Joint Pain Explained.”** Also in this news item are the Living Healthy With Arthritis fall calendar, including lectures by GGP's **Julie Jernberg, MD**, and Rheumatology's **Joshua Farr, PhD**, and the Bear Down Celebration, Oct. 10.

■ **“Circadian rhythm disruption linked to lung inflammation”** (Aug. 15): Researchers at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center for Sleep, Circadian and Neuroscience Research, led by **Sairam Parthasarathy, MD**, center director and PACCS division chief, are studying the effects of circadian rhythm disruption on the lungs.

■ **“U of A infectious diseases faculty headline federal workshop on human vaccine for**

Valley fever (Aug. 14): Shortly after the award of \$33 million in National Institutes of Health contracts to develop a human vaccine for the debilitating if not deadly respiratory illness, the Valley Fever Center team – including **John Galgiani, MD**, and **Fariba Donovan, MD, PhD**, – presented on its prospects at a national workshop near Washington, DC.

■ **“Pursuit of a Valley fever vaccine passes significant milestone”** (Aug. 6): A human Valley fever vaccine candidate will proceed toward Phase 1 clinical trials thanks to a major investment from the National Institutes of Health, with a portion of the \$33 million going to the U of A through the Valley Fever Center for Excellence, led by Infectious Diseases professor **John Galgiani, MD**.

■ **“Anivive lands \$33M NIAID contract to advance human Valley fever vaccine”** (Aug. 5): The pet pharmaceutical firm, which licensed research on a vaccine for dogs developed by a U of A Valley Fever Center for Excellence research team, including **John Galgiani, MD**, **Marc Orbach, PhD**, and **Lisa Shubitz, DVM**, in 2017 and has worked closely with the center, has enlisted partners to move forward on a human vaccine for the respiratory illness caused by fungal spores endemic to soils of the U.S. Southwest.

■ **“New study highlights scale and impact of long COVID”** (Aug. 2): A new review published in The Lancet, with Immunobiology department head **Janko Nikolich, MD, PhD**, as co-author, highlights the global scale and impact of long COVID. It explains biological mechanisms behind the condition and suggests priority areas for future research. U of A Center on Aging co-director with GGP chief **Mindy Fain, MD**, Dr. Zugich also is a PI with PACCS division chief **Sairam Parthasarathy, MD**, on the NIH-funded **AAPLS R25 training program**, which now addresses pandemic prevention.

■ **“Program launches to engage faculty leaders, increase impact from innovative research”** (July 29): Faculty Innovation Ambassadors, a new program of U of A commercialization arm, Tech Launch Arizona, creates envoys to serve as mentors and information resources for colleagues across campus. Pulmonary division’s **Julie Ledford, PhD**, is in inaugural cohort and headlines a luncheon Sept. 30, Noon-1 p.m., in COM-T Social Hall.

[MORE NEWS ►►►](#)

Submit items to be considered for publication in the newsletter to **[David Mogollon](#)**.



You are receiving this email from the **University of Arizona's** mailing list.
College of Medicine – Tucson, 1501 N Campbell Ave., Tucson, AZ 85724, US
© Copyright 2024 The University of Arizona. All rights reserved.

Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O’odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.