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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

Department
of Medicine



INTERNAL DIGEST

September 2024

Chair's Message

Colleagues,

Heading into fall, we begin a series of celebrations including Women in Medicine Month and Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15) – both represented in this newsletter. On Oct. 9, we celebrate DOM faculty who earned promotions. The COM-T **State of the College Address** will be Oct. 29, and **Founders Day** will be Nov. 13. All of this culminates with our **Winter DOM General Faculty Meeting**, Dec. 4, and the **DOM's Annual Year-End Luncheon**, Dec. 5. All faculty should've received an Outlook invite to add those last two to your calendars. It offers an excellent opportunity to close out the year on a high note and in-person, as I mentioned at our last faculty meeting. I look forward to seeing you there.



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



Three of five 2024 Torchbearer Awards go to DOM faculty

Fifteen Department of Medicine faculty and staff joined to celebrate **Drs. Lisa Alschuler**, Liz Connick and Clara Curiel-Lewandrowski, among winners recognized by the COM-T Women in Medicine & Science for Women in Medicine Month. See a mini-photo gallery.



DOM gains 11 new faculty members in September

With 15 new faculty in August and 11 more in July, the Department added 37 faculty members this summer. The most recent include five hospitalists, three internists, two cardiology researchers and an oncologist. Welcome aboard, Drs. Alsayed, Cyer, Elhalaly, Morenz, Moyna-han, Ramachandran, Saif, Sharman, Sweidan, Szweda and Villanueva!



Food, music & lectures help celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

The U of A Health Sciences Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion presents a series of activities for Hispanic Heritage Month, launched Sept. 20 with a fiesta of mariachi & salsa music, folklorico dancers and food trucks in the Hippocrates Courtyard. See who was there and more events for October, including three lectures and a Dia de los Muertos gala.

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Honors & Awards



Four DOM faculty honored at 2nd Annual U of A Cancer Center Award Dinner: Congrats to DOM faculty in the U of A Cancer Center, which presented honors to its members Sept. 4 at a dinner hosted at The Graduate. The Cancer Center is currently led by interim director **Juanita Merchant, MD, PhD**, chief of the DOM's Division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology. Among the honorees: DOM Division of Dermatology Chief **Clara Curiel-Lewandrowski, MD**, won the UACC Award for Clinical Science – nominated by **Rachna Shroff, MD, MS**, chief of the DOM's Division of Hematology & Oncology. Dr. Shroff won the UACC Award for Clinical Excellence nominated by Dr. Merchant. Hem-Onc's **Aaron Scott, MD**, won the UACC Award for Teaching and Mentoring Excellence nominated by the division's **Junaid Arshad, MD**. Hem-Onc's **Sherry Chow, PhD**, won the UACC Lifetime Achievement Award, nominated by the division's **Sara Centuori, PhD**. And the division's **Steffan Nawrocki, PhD**, nominated the College of Pharmacy's **Jianqin Lu, PhD**, for the UACC Research Award for Translational Science. [Learn more.](#)

■ **U of A, Banner redesignated as Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation:** First named a PFF Care Center in 2014, the designation serves as kudo for the Interstitial Lung Disease Program, led by **Sachin Chaudhary, MD**, associate professor in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine. The program treats a variety of disorders caused by scarring of lung tissue. The U of A, Banner – University Medicine clinic is one of 74 such centers across country. [Learn more.](#)

■ The Division of Infectious Diseases' Petersen HIV Clinics was awarded \$145,000 from HRSA's Capacity Development Program to expand behavioral health support and referral services as part of its existing comprehensive HIV program, announced **Danielle Avila, MD, MS**, assistant professor and PI for the clinic and the Arizona AIDS Education & Training Center. The funding aims to improve health outcomes and retention rates for patients with behavioral health needs by expanding its community partnerships that increase patients' access to behavioral health support, especially in rural areas. Along with the new award, the Petersen HIV Clinics receives over \$2 million a year to support needs of people with HIV, serving 1,000+ patients in southern Arizona. HRSA is a U.S. Health & Human Services Department agency.

■ Members of the Lung Nodule Program and Thoracic Oncology Program at Banner – University Medical Center Tucson completed more than 300 biopsies in less than 14 months using the newest technological innovation — an Ion robotic bronchoscopy by Intuitive that allows for a minimally invasive peripheral lung biopsy. Among those present for the celebration were the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine's **Billie Bixby, MD**, director, Interventional Pulmonology Program, **Madhav Chopra, MD**, and **Darius Filsoof, MD**. All are PACCS assistant professors. Cake and

balloons were shared. [Learn more](#).

■ Hem-Onc Division Chief **Rachna Shroff, MD, MS**, was interviewed in ASCO Connection, a magazine of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, in early September. In addition, she was an invited speaker at the Korean Society of Medical Oncology's joint ASCO-KSMO Symposium in Seoul, Sept. 26-27. Pictured with her for the interview are husband, **Puneet Shroff, MD**, an allergist and PACCS associate professor, and their two children. [Read the Q&A here](#).

■ The Prevent Cancer Foundation's Congressional Family Program awarded the Skin Cancer Institute at the U of A Cancer Center with the Excellence in Cancer Awareness Award at the foundation's 31st Annual Action for Cancer Awareness Awards luncheon, Sept. 19, in Washington, DC. Institute Co-Director **Clara Curiel-Lewandrowski, MD**, attended the luncheon and the institute's outreach and education coordinator **Dylan Miller, MPH**, accepted the honor. [Learn more](#).

■ The National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, an NIH unit, awarded Division of Rheumatology Chief and U of A Arthritis Center Director **C. Kent Kwoh, MD, MARC**, with the Zuckerman College of Public Health's **Xiaoxiao Sun, PhD**, and Eller College of Management's **Yong Ge, PhD**, a \$350,000, two-year R21 grant to study "Computational Tools to Predict & Understanding Knee Pain Spatial Patterns." Dr. Kwoh said they would use "deep learning" to read 3T MRIs, a method that employs AI to extract data from images to better understand knee osteoarthritis.

In addition, Dr. Kwoh authored or co-authored nine presentations at the upcoming **ACR Convergence 2024** conference, Nov. 14-19, in Washington, DC. One of five U of A presenters, he's giving an oral presentation on "Sex and Race-Specific Distributions in Medial Fixed Joint Space Width in Healthy Knees from Three Longitudinal Cohorts" and presenting a poster, "Time to Knee Replacement by Kellgren-Lawrence Grade and Presence of Frequent Knee Pain in Two Large and Diverse Longitudinal Cohorts: Data from MOST and OAI." Other U of A presenters are from the College of Nursing, Wyant College of Optical Sciences, and Eller College of Management. Two Rheumatology fellows — one current, **Samuel Cook, DO**, and a graduate, **Biana Modilevsky, DO** — will present a Thieves' Market Case Study poster.

■ PACCS Division Chief **Sairam Parthasarathy, MD**, and **Franz Rischard, DO**, Pulmonary Hypertension Program director in the division, won clinical trials contracts that started this past year as part of the [NIH's RECOVER COVID Initiative](#) studies to treat different Long COVID symptoms that may be ongoing after initial COVID infections and which are affecting millions of Americans. Dr. Parthasarathy has three contracts: RECOVER-NEURO, RECOVER-SLEEP and RECOVER-VITAL. He is also an MPI for the RECOVER-SLEEP trial with 50 sites and a ~1,000 patient enrollment target over two years. Dr. Rischard has one, RECOVER-ENERGIZE, which just began enrolling patients. Each contract is worth about \$750,000. U of A at the Tucson campus is one of about 50 sites nationwide participating in these trials.

In addition, Dr. Parthasarathy won a 4-year renewal this past spring as PI on the [Arizona Community Engagement Alliance \(AZ-CEAL\)](#) effort to address health disparities from COVID-19 through community health worker interventions. That is worth \$5.9 million. He

had been named an [All of Us Arizona Health Champion in August 2022](#) for his work related to this effort.

He also won a 4-year, \$2.1 million grant from the National Institute on Aging to study the effect of treatment of obstructive sleep apnea on Alzheimer's disease biomarkers.

And Dr. Parthasarathy recently received funding for the 2nd year of a 4-year CDC-American Thoracic Society study focused on improving vaccinations in adult pulmonary patients. That funding is valued at \$600,000 locally through Banner – University Medical Group.

Upcoming Events

OCT

1

[Arizona Arthritis Center/Rheumatology Joint Space Podcast, Episode 2: 'Q and RA' with Ernest Vina, MD](#)

Drop Date | Virtual

OCT

2

[Medicine Grand Rounds/Spark DEI Lecture with UTSW's Dr. Joshua Liao](#)

Noon-1 p.m. | COM-T 5403 & Virtual

OCT

3

[DOM Spark DEI Lecture with Wake Forest's Dr. Ruben Mesa](#)

Noon-1 p.m. | Virtual

OCT

8

[BIO5 Research & Innovation Showcase 2024](#)

2:30-4 p.m. | Keating BioResearch Building, Lobby & Room 103

OCT

9

[Medicine Grand Rounds with Stanford's Dr. Mark Hlatky](#)

Noon-1 p.m. | COM-T 5403 & Virtual

OCT

9

[2024 DOM Faculty Promotion Celebration](#)

5:30-8:30 p.m. | Arizona Inn (by invitation only)

OCT

12

[Tucson Transplant Symposium](#) – Division of Nephrology/Department of Surgery

8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | HSIB 305

OCT

14

[Advances in Aging Research Lecture: 'The Medicare Annual Wellness Visit and the 4Ms'](#)

Noon-1 p.m. | Virtual

OCT
16

Medicine Grand Rounds with UofA's Dr. Edward Gelmann

Noon-1 p.m. | COM-T 5403 & Virtual

OCT
18

Reunion CME: Innovative Medicine – New Approaches to Old Challenges 2024

11 a.m.-1 p.m. | COM-T Social Hall (Room 2500)

OCT
23

Medicine Grand Rounds with UofA's Dr. Tara Carr

Noon-1 p.m. | COM-T 5403 & Virtual

OCT
24

Dia de los Muertos – A Celebration of Life, UofA Health Sciences Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Noon-1 p.m. | COM-T Hippocrates Courtyard (space between Sarver Heart Center & College of Pharmacy)

OCT
26

Desert Lung CME (with Drs. Billie Bixby, Madhav Chopra, Darius Filsoof, Ricklie Julian & James Knepler)
8 a.m.-Noon | Arizona Inn, 2200 E. Elm St.

OCT
29

2024 State of the College Address, College of Medicine – Tucson
11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. | HSIB Forum

OCT
30

Medicine Grand Rounds with UofA's Dr. Marvin Slepian
Noon-1 p.m. | COM-T 5403 & Virtual

MORE EVENTS ►►►

Spotlight on U of A, Community & Wellness



Getting out, community connections & staying healthy: Connecting with Tucson culture gets a lot easier as fall brings cooler temperatures and multiple festivals, other events and activities to the area. Many involve food and music. A lot offer ways to stay healthy. See a few here with U of A connections. See brief stories behind the events below and other October activity suggestions for the whole family at [this link](#).

- Oct. 4-6: **Tucson Meet Yourself Folklife Festival**, Joel D.

Valdez Main Library

- Oct. 6 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.): **12th Annual Arizona Insect Festival**, U of A ENR2 Building
- Oct. 9 (6 p.m.): **Tucson Humanities Festival – Well-Being with Dr. Andrew Weil**,

HSIB Forum (*click on Andy's photo at link*)

- **Oct. 17 (7 p.m.): Tucson Humanities Festival – Well-Being with Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Brandon Som**, U of A Poetry Center
- **Oct. 18 (2-5:30 p.m.): TEDxUofA: ‘Desert Genius’**, U of A Centennial Hall
- **Oct. 23 (10 a.m.): Tucson Humanities Festival – Well-Being and the ‘Health Humanities Fair & Café’**, U of A Mall
- **Oct. 27 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.): Cyclovia Fall 2024 Route**, from Banner – University Medical Center Tucson to Mission View Elementary
- **Oct. 29 (5:30 p.m.): Tucson Humanities Festival – Well-Being and the ‘Health Humanities Hub’**, Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine

Media Mentions



New Apple Watch apps & Valley fever vaccine progress: By far, the lion’s share of news media coverage for September went to **Sairam Parthasarathy, MD**, professor and PACCS Division chief, and director, Center for Sleep, Circadian & Neuroscience Research, and **John Galgiani, MD**, professor, Division of Infectious Diseases, and director, Valley Fever Center for Excellence.

Dr. Parthasarathy’s mentions relate mostly to stories on new Apple Watch features for sleep apnea and Apple air pods with built-in hearing aids (Sept. 17: [Fortune](#), [MSN](#), [Inkl](#);

Sept. 10: [HealthDay](#), [Sleep Review](#), [Killer Startups](#) & [Body+Soul](#); Sept. 9: [Mass Device](#), [TechGirl](#) | [PDF](#) – *over 15 media pickups on this date*). He also scored continuing coverage for a story on “Circadian rhythm disruption linked to lung inflammation” (Sept. 27: [Medical Xpress](#) – [related content](#)).

Dr. Galgiani’s mentions focus on recent continuing coverage of the Valley Fever Center’s pursuit of a vaccine for humans and dogs (Sept. 6: [Arizona Republic](#); [KTVK-TV Phoenix](#); Sept. 2: [KJZZ-Radio NPR Phoenix](#), [KOLD-TV 13News Tucson](#) – [related content](#)), as well as a rise in Valley Fever cases in California (Sept. 16: [TimesNow](#), [India](#); Sept. 11: [Verywell Health](#)). He shared two mentions on the California story with **Fariba Donovan, MD, PhD**, professor and colleague in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Valley Fever Center (Sept. 17: [Medscape](#), [ExBulletin](#)).

Others earning airtime or digital print in September include:

- **Ricklie Julian, MD**, assistant professor, Division of Hematology & Oncology, and U of A Cancer Center member, got multiple indirect mentions for a [news release](#) from Kiromic BioPharma on greenlighting expansion of its Deltacel clinical trial as therapy to treat non-small cell lung cancers (Sept. 24: [CGTLive](#)). She’s the Cancer Center site PI.
- **Aaron J. Scott, MD**, Hem-Onc associate professor, quoted in “ASCO issues first guideline specific to locally advanced rectal cancer” (Sept. 25: [The ASCO Post](#));

- **Daniel C. Butler, MD**, associate professor, Division of Dermatology, in “What to do about chronic itching?” (Sept. 22: [Medical Tribune, Switzerland](#) – in German | [PDF](#) – English).
- **Rachna T. Shroff, MD, MS**, professor and chief, Division of Hematology & Oncology, and interim U of A Cancer Center clinical affairs director, discusses (in a video) a phase III trial presented at the ESMO Congress 2024, Sept. 13-17, in Barcelona, Spain, to evaluate anlotinib plus penpulimab vs sorafenib as first-line therapy for advanced hepatocellular carcinoma (Sept. 17: [The ASCO Post](#)).

[MORE MEDIA MENTIONS ►►►](#)

Vice Chair Reports

Faculty Affairs



- Friendly reminders for the month:
 - The location of the [DOM Faculty Promotion Celebration](#) (*by invitation only*) has changed to the **Arizona Inn**, 2200 E. Elm St., 5:30-8:30 p.m., Wed., Oct. 9. Nine DOM faculty members will be recognized: **Mohanad Al-Obaidi, MD, MPH; Tara Carr, MD; Michel Corban, MD; Sima Ehsani, MD; Justin Hayes, MD; Olivia Hung, MD; Nehal Jaswal, MD; Elizabeth Juneman, MD; and Bijin Thajudeen, MD.** [Learn more about them here.](#)
 - **Cultivating Happiness in Medicine (CHIM)** funds are available from Banner Health for a multitude of ways to improve physician and APP wellbeing. It’s part of the Clinician Experience Project by Practicing Excellence. [Learn more & apply.](#)
 - **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.](#)

Education



- DOM Vice Chair for Education **Amy Sussman, MD**, that at least 25 students (23% of graduating U of A med students) from the College of Medicine – Tucson this year are Internal Medicine-bound (applying as we speak). In addition:

- Residency applications opened for review by programs officially Sept. 25 (for Dermatology & IM);
- Fellowship interviews are ongoing across IM specialties with their “match day” Dec. 4;
- The IM Residency Program hosted its **best-ever Meet & Greet, Sept. 11**, with attendance by 44 M1-M4 students and 77 folks overall (*click link for mini-photo gallery*). A big thank you to attending physician-faculty: **J.P. Ferreira, MD; Joshua Malo, MD; Laura Meinke, MD; Kevin F. Moynahan, MD; Kevin J. Moynahan, MD; Puneet Shroff, MD; Dr. Sussman; Bekir Tanriover, MD; and Tirdad Zangeneh, MD.**

■ **New Clinical Educator Track:** Six PGY2s IM residents have been selected for the first cohort of the IM Residency Program’s Clinician Educator Track (CET) — **Grant Collins, MD; Andy Lee, DO; Tom Marco, DO; Rosie Turk, MD; William Waidelich, MD; and Nate Walton, MD.** Seven PGY1 IM residents have been selected for the second cohort of CET: **Jackie Maltagliati, DO; Will Matloff, MD; Kathryn Pulling, MD; Drew Rasmussen, DO; Faissal Stipho, MD; Emily Tishkoff, DO; and Ryan Weyker, DO** . Cohort 1 will complete a two-year accelerated CET program while Cohort 2 will complete the three-year CET program. Faculty are still being sought to observe PGY2s delivering lectures to medicine clerkship students. Those interested should email the CET Co-Directors, **Dalia Mikhael, MD**, and **Breanna Sherrow-Serrano, PhD**, about available dates on select Wednesday and Thursday afternoons (3-5 p.m.).

■ **Faculty Instructional Development:** FID Sessions restart Oct. 18, with four Zoom sessions between then and Thanksgiving, according to Dr. Sherrow-Serrano. **Click here for the flyer** and links to register for the 30- and 60-minute sessions.

■ **New Teaching Tip:** This video describes the do’s and don’ts of bedside teaching – **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiqB-eQcbT8>**

DEI



■ **Save the Date for DOM DEI Mixer 2024:** The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee at the Department of Medicine will host a DOM DEI Mixer on Nov. 4. We have commitments by **Francisco Moreno, MD**, U of A Health Sciences associate vice president over the UAHS Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, and **Celia Valenzuela, MD**, DEI vice dean for the College of Medicine – Tucson, have committed to attending. Look for a full program to be announced in October.

In other news:

- The DOM DEI Committee has gotten two **Spark DEI Lectures** approved for October, including the Medicine Grand Rounds with [UTSW's Joshua Liao, MD \(Oct. 2, Noon-1 p.m., COM-T 5403\)](#) and a DOM Spark DEI Lecture with [Wake Forest's Ruben Mesa, MD \(Oct. 3, Noon-1 p.m., via Zoom\)](#). Both are dynamic speakers. Each talk is good for 1 DEI credit.
- The UAHS Office of EDI is hosting a **Hispanic Heritage Speaker Series** with three speakers presenting virtually: **Hector Rico, MPH**, clinical director, Clinica Amistad (Oct. 1, 9-10 a.m.) on ["Inspiration to Action: Building Health Equity in Our Community"](#); **Natalie Lárez, PhD**, a pediatric postdoctoral psychology fellow (Oct. 3, 11 a.m.-Noon) on ["Intersection of Youth Mental Health & Chronic Illness through a Social Determinants of Health Framework"](#); and COM-T DEI Vice Dean **Dr. Celia Valenzuela** (Oct. 8, 1-2 p.m.) on ["Latinas in Medicine: Why Representation Matters."](#) Click links to register to view via Zoom.

Research



■ **Research career development for early-stage faculty:** Our first [DOM Research Career Development Workshop](#) (Sept. 26) featured advice and insights from **Franz Rischard, DO**, professor, PACCS Division, director, Adult Pulmonary Hypertension Program, and an active clinical researcher. Dr. Rischard's talk on various approaches to jumpstart a clinical research career was well attended. Many junior faculty in attendance elected to form a Whatsapp peer group. If interested in joining, please contact DOM Vice Chair for Research [Janet Funk, MD](#), for more information. Additional events will be planned quarterly.

■ **Grant proposal writing support:** Feedback is always helpful when preparing a grant proposal. DOM will be piloting a new program to provide support in reviewing "Specific Aims" sections. Please contact [Dr. Funk](#) to request review of your Specific Aims page for your grant application. She will then reach out to other faculty members to identify one or preferably two readers to provide feedback on this very short, but key section. We encourage faculty at any stage to take advantage of this peer service, and to volunteer if contacted about serving as a reader. The goal is to create a community where everyone will have the opportunity to both provide and obtain feedback. To be most effective and also respectful of readers' time, please allow a reasonable lead time prior to submission deadlines when requesting this feedback. [More advice on Specific Aims preparation can be found here.](#)

In other research news this month:

Biostatistical support: DOM has a full-time biostatistician, **Maryam Emami Neyestanak, PhD**, available to support DOM faculty in their preparation of grant proposals or manuscript submissions. Email Dr. Emami to discuss your biostatistical needs at: maryame@arizona.edu

Nuts & bolts of submitting an NIH proposal: The National Institutes of Health is hosting an online two-part event Nov 13 and 14, from 11 a.m.- 2 p.m. MST, explaining the NIH grant submission process for investigators new to the process or wishing to understand more. [Register here for either or both days.](#)

Become a member today!:

- Involved in cancer research? Take advantage of **U of A Cancer Center** resources and become a UACC member today. [Apply here.](#)
- Interested in joining the **BIO5 Institute**? Take advantage of research cores and other research resources, including internal funding opportunities to jump start projects. Become a BIO5 member. [Apply here.](#)

More News

- [“U of A, Banner redesignated as Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Care Center”](#) (Sept. 16): First named a PFF Care Center in 2014, the designation serves as kudo for Interstitial Lung Disease Program in Department of Medicine’s Pulmonary division, treating a variety of disorders caused by scarring of lung tissue. University of Arizona, Banner clinic is one of 74 such centers across country.
- [“Full house for Internal Medicine Medical Student Meet-and-Greet”](#) (Sept. 12): Faculty, fellows, residents and students – 77 in all – mingled and gnoshed together at a social mixer designed for medical students to learn more about internal medicine, its specialties and the people dedicating their careers to the field. See the mini-photo gallery.
- [“All the world’s a stage for prolific playwrighting professor”](#) (Sept. 3): The Division of General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine’s **Melvin “Mel” Hector, MD**, is recognized as a prolific author of local theatrical works who finds inspiration all around him in this feature profile of the geriatrician.

[MORE NEWS ►►►](#)

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



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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.