

FALL 2020

TheCHART

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE NEWS AND NOTES

Larner College of Medicine | University of Vermont Medical Center

Meet the New Vice Chairs



As we head into an uncertain winter season, I want to take a moment to acknowledge all of the incredible work we have done these last nine months as a Department of Medicine. Our faculty have been leaders in the fight against COVID-19, collaborating on important research into new treatments and therapeutics. Our physicians, nurses, and staff members have continued to provide outstanding patient care with grace and good humor. Fellows, residents and medical students have adapted to a new clinical reality while completing their studies. And we have come together to support each other as we navigate challenges with childcare, eldercare, and the disruptions to life the pandemic has caused.

And then, of course, the cyber attack the UVM Health Network experienced this fall continues to compound an already difficult situation. We even have a new term to describe what we are experiencing: A cyberdemic, a word that perfectly captures the myriad challenges facing our team. Yet, we have risen to the current moment. I am proud of how we transitioned on the fly in the hours and days after the attack, despite so many unknowns. And I am



E. L. Amidon Chair and
Professor of Medicine

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Meet the Scientist

grateful for how our department has mitigated the impact on patients and their families as much as possible. The old adage - "May you live in interesting times" - certainly rings true right now.

This issue of *The Chart* celebrates some of our success stories. Read more about research from Dr. Botten's lab focused on a new COVID-19 testing method. Dr. Libman, chief of the Division of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology, talks about their rapid and successful transition to telemedicine as well as new research collaborations. Our three new vice-chairs - Dr. Pasanen, Dr. Toth, and Dr. Cushman - are ready to hit the ground running. I feel so fortunate to have this trio of outstanding faculty members on our leadership team.

Looking ahead, I know we are going to need to maintain our strength and resolve as we face new waves of COVID-19 infection alongside the traditional flu season. Here in Vermont, we are fortunate to have a strong sense of community grounded in love and respect. This attitude will continue to serve us well. Enjoy this issue of *The Chart*!

The Chart is published by the Department of Medicine of The Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine and The University of Vermont Medical Center, Burlington, Vermont.

Submissions to the newsletter, as well as address corrections may be sent to: thechart@med.uvm.edu or
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NIH Grant Funds UVM Center for Biomedical Shared Resources

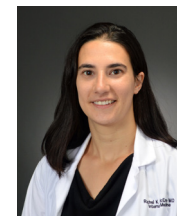


The Larner College of Medicine has received a \$5.47 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to fund the creation of the UVM Center for Biomedical Shared Resources. The new Center will be led by Professor of Gastroenterology and Hepatology and the College's Senior Associate Dean for Research **Gordon Jensen, M.D., Ph.D.**, principal investigator on the grant. The center integrates five of the leading UVM laboratory-based, shared resource core facilities, including the Vermont Integrative Genomics Resource, the Vermont Genetics Network, the Flow Cytometry and Cell Sorting Facility, the Microscopy Imaging Center, and the Mass Spectrometry Facility. The grant will fund completion of the Center's home on the first floor of the new Firestone Medical Research Building.

New Leadership Positions



Caroline Lyon, M.D., M.P.H., was appointed interim chief of the Division of Hospital Medicine on July 6, 2020. She joined the department's faculty in 2007, following residency and chief residency at UVM. From 2011 to 2012 she was the associate director of the hospitalist service and she is currently the director of the UVM CME Course in Hospital Medicine. Since 2007, she has been an investigator in the UVM Vaccine Testing Center.



Rachel McEntee, M.D., has accepted the position of UVM Medical Center Director of Medical Informatics. Since joining the faculty practice as a hospitalist in 2015, she has been a member of the clinical informatics team with an ongoing focus on EMR usability. She is an Epic physician builder and leads the Optimization Sprint. McEntee's other interests include curriculum development and teaching of communication and teamwork skills through the use of medical simulation.



Timothy Plante, M.D., M.H.S., assistant professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine, has been named the Martin E. Bloomfield '56 M.D.'60 and Judith S. Bloomfield '59 Early Career Professor in Cardiovascular Research. The professorship was established in 2017 by Martin and Judith Bloomfield, whose goal was to help young investigators combine practice and research by providing more assistance, reducing teaching loads, and offering salary support early in their careers at the Cardiovascular Research Institute of Vermont.

New Faculty

Division of Cardiovascular Medicine

Trace Barrett, M.D., assistant professor
Tracy Hagerty, M.D., assistant professor
Ahmed Harhash, M.D., assistant professor

Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

Jane Roberts, M.D., assistant professor

Division of General Internal Medicine

Elizabeth Wahlberg, M.D., assistant professor
Christopher Wargo, M.D., assistant professor

Division of Geriatric Medicine

Amelia Gennari, M.D., associate professor

Division of Hospital Medicine

Elie Donath, M.D., assistant professor
Nadia Ghallab, MBBCH, assistant professor
Shea Lambirth, M.D., assistant professor
Yao Li, M.D., assistant professor
Julia Powelson, M.D., assistant professor
Elly Riser, M.D., assistant professor

Division of Nephrology

Chidinma Enyinna, M.D., assistant professor

Division of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunobiology

Laura Paxton, M.D., assistant professor

Department of Medicine Awards

The Department of Medicine honored outstanding mentors, clinicians and researchers at Grand Rounds in October. The following faculty received awards:

Mentorship Award

Halle Sobel, M.D., associate professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine
For outstanding commitment to excellence in the education of residents and fellows

Neil Zakai, M.D., M.Sc., associate professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology
For exceptional mentorship of graduate students and/or postdoctoral fellows

Distinguished Clinician Award

Halle Sobel, M.D., associate professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine, and **Josh Farkas, M.D.**, associate professor in the Division of Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine
In recognition of faculty members who are outstanding clinicians with a reputation as a “physician’s physician,” and with exceptional contributions in education, scholarship, administration, or community service

Quality Scholarship Award

Constance O. van Eeghen, DrPH, MHSA, MBA, assistant professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine - Research
To recognize faculty members and/or faculty-led teams who have demonstrated excellence in scholarly quality improvement, patient safety, or high value care

Meet the New Vice Chairs



(L to R): Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc.; Michael Toth, Ph.D.; Mark Pasanen, M.D.

The three new vice chairs recently appointed by E.L. Amidon Professor of Medicine and Chair **Polly Parsons, M.D.**, promise to further the success of the Department of Medicine’s research and education missions. Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc., Mark Pasanen, M.D., and Michael Toth, Ph.D., bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the positions of vice chair for emerging researchers, vice chair for education and vice chair for research respectively. Learn more about the faculty members filling these leadership roles.

Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc., Vice Chair for Emerging Researchers

The new position of vice chair for emerging researchers focuses on helping individuals early in their careers explore research opportunities and succeed as investigators. With her track record of important contributions in cardiovascular medicine and hematology, as well as mentorship, **Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc.**, professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology, is the right person to fill this role, says E.L. Amidon Professor of Medicine and Chair **Polly Parsons, M.D.**

“Her scientific and mentorship expertise will be invaluable in creating opportunities for our early career and even pre career-students, trainees,

and faculty to become successful independent investigators,” she says.

Cushman’s research has been continuously funded for more than 20 years and she has more than 600 publications. She has also mentored 27 medical students, trainees and faculty, many of whom have gone on to independent careers in academic medicine. Cushman has served on NIH study sections, is editor in chief of a journal and has been the recipient of numerous

“[MARY CUSHMAN’S] SCIENTIFIC AND MENTORSHIP EXPERTISE WILL BE INVALUABLE IN CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR EARLY CAREER AND EVEN PRE CAREER-STUDENTS, TRAINEES, AND FACULTY TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATORS.”

– Polly Parsons, M.D.

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awards including, most recently, the American Heart Association's Award of Meritorious Achievement. At UVM, her many roles include University Scholar, co-principal investigator of the COBRE Vermont Center on Cardiovascular and Brain Health, and founder/mentor for the Cardiovascular Research Institute of Vermont Early Career Advisory Committee.

**Mark Pasanen, M.D.,
Vice Chair for Education**

After serving as chief of the Division of Hospital Medicine since its founding in November of 2015, **Mark Pasanen, M.D.**, has transitioned into the role of vice chair of education for the Department of Medicine. He also continues to serve as director of the internal medicine residency program.

"[DR. PASANEN] FACILITATED THE CREATION OF A SINGLE HOSPITAL MEDICINE SERVICE, AND EXPANDED OUR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND SCHOLARSHIP."

- Polly Parsons, M.D.

"Mark has truly been an extraordinary leader," says Parsons. "He has grown the division, facilitated the creation of a single Hospital Medicine service, and expanded our excellence in teaching and scholarship."

In his role as vice chair for education, Pasanen will oversee all of the educational programming offered by the department, including nine fellowship programs, the residency program and medical student education rotations including clerkships and acting internships. A 1992 graduate

of the Larner College of Medicine, Pasanen has been on the faculty since 1996, after completing his internal medicine residency, including a chief residency, at the University of Washington in Seattle. He then completed a Faculty Development Fellowship in General Internal Medicine at the University of North Carolina.

**Michael Toth, Ph.D.,
Vice Chair for Research**

Michael Toth, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, has been named the department's vice chair for research, bringing decades of experience to the role. An internationally recognized expert on the effects of aging and disease on skeletal muscle structure, function and metabolism, he has had continuous NIH funding for more than 20 years, has published more than 100 peer reviewed publications, has served on multiple NIH study sections, and is on the editorial boards of leading journals. Toth is also a highly regarded teacher and mentor. He has been the recipient of the Silver Stethoscope award and was named a Cardiovascular Research Institute of Vermont Distinguished Investigator.

"Dr. Toth's experience and expertise will be invaluable as we continue to expand and enhance our research programs that extend from the bench to the bedside and beyond," says Parsons.

"DR. TOTH'S EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE WILL BE INVALUABLE AS WE CONTINUE TO EXPAND AND ENHANCE OUR RESEARCH PROGRAMS"

- Polly Parsons, M.D.

Division Highlight: Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology

For the Division of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to new clinical innovations and research collaborations while care for patients with chronic conditions has continued uninterrupted.

Division Chief **Bonita Libman, M.D.**, says the team went above and beyond throughout the spring and summer to make sure their patients had the same quality healthcare they experienced before the pandemic. The division sees over 11,000 patients annually, most of whom are diagnosed with arthritis or other systemic inflammatory diseases.

"I want to give a shout-out to our staff, as well as the doctors and our nurse practitioner, who have worked tirelessly all through the pandemic to provide patient care," she says.

The division's eight faculty members have also maintained their research focus, with eight papers and one book chapter published over the past

year. Associate Professor **Chi Chi Lau, M.D.**, is working on several projects.

"She built a database and is trying to study factors that influence liver test monitoring and abnormal liver tests in patients on methotrexate," says Libman. "She also completed a project on back pain with one of the medicine residents who became our fellow."

Faculty continue to pursue quality improvement projects and collaborate with the Division of Immunobiology on research focused on the molecular physiology of rheumatoid arthritis and lupus.

Ralph Budd, M.D., has been the point person in charge of clinical consults from UVM Medical Center during the COVID-19 surge, helping to direct care that required anti-cytokine therapies. Clinicians have discovered that patients

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Top row left to right: Jeanne Gosselin, M.D. (2nd year fellow), Bonita Libman, M.D., Sanjeev Patil, M.D. Second row left to right: Brendan Thoms, M.D. (1st year fellow), Ralph Budd, M.D., Scott Legunn, M.D. Third row left to right: Laura Paxton, M.D. (our newest faculty member, just joined), Morgan Merchand, NP, Alana Nevares, M.D. Bottom row left to right: Narandira Bethina, M.D., Chi Chi Lau, M.D.

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experiencing a cytokine storm as a result of COVID-19 infection may benefit from special rheumatology drugs that reduce their systemic inflammation. Research is ongoing.



Bonita Libman, M.D.

Like many clinical services, Libman says the division rapidly implemented telemedicine to help deliver care while keeping patients and staff safe. The service began with telephone calls and then transitioned to video appointments once the division was able to get camera equipment up and running. The transition has provided unexpected benefits, especially for patients with chronic conditions who require long-term care.

“You can actually see them in their home,” says Libman. “It’s like a house call in a way.”

Division physicians have applied for a New York license so that “once the state of emergency is over, if regulations are put back in place requiring a license in the patient’s home state, then we will be able to offer that to our New York State patients,” says Libman.

She’s hopeful that telemedicine will improve access in the future, especially for patients who live in Clinton, Franklin or Essex counties across Lake Champlain.

“They have to travel, some of them, for hours. During the bad weather, it can be challenging,” she says. “It’s possible we may be able to avoid a lot of cancellations and no-shows during a period of bad weather if we can convert some of those visits to video visits.”

The adoption of video conference technology has allowed the division to continue their educational offerings – such as weekly rounds, rounds every other month with radiology, and faculty meetings – without interruption. They also conducted virtual interviews for the division’s fellowship program.

“I think that being able to meet virtually is a benefit in many ways,” Libman says. “We are a small group, so I don’t think we have the same problems as larger groups in trying to preserve that team spirit and keeping up with each other.”

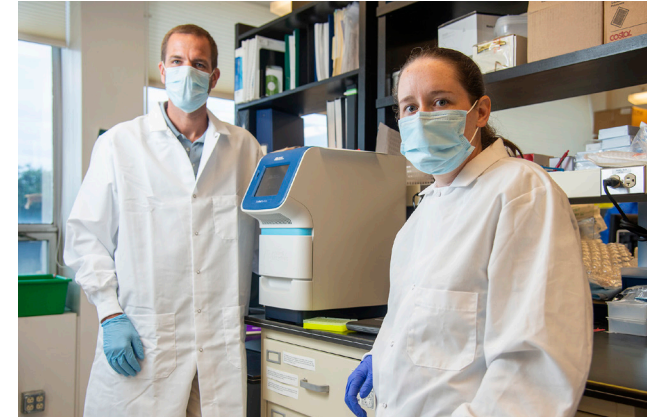
The division has welcomed several new members in recent months: **Brendan Thoms, M.D.**, arrived this summer as a new fellow, joining senior fellow **Jeanne Gosselin, M.D.** Half-time clinical faculty member **Laura Paxton, M.D.**, joined the team after completing residency and fellowship at Strong Memorial Hospital of the University of Rochester.

At UVM Medical Center, some services have changed locations. The metabolic bone clinic is now housed within the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, and the rheumatology infusion center has moved to Shepardson 4.

“We had a very small infusion room, which was a bit cramped,” she says. “It was probably for the best in terms of patient satisfaction and patient comfort.”

While the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many challenges and changes, one bright spot has been the ability to continue to participate in advocacy on behalf of colleagues and patients. In May and September, Libman attended virtual advocacy days sponsored by the American College of Rheumatology’s political action committee.

“I have virtually met with Washington D.C. legislators and legislative assistants to promote legislation that would benefit rheumatology patients and physicians,” she says. “That has been very rewarding.”



Jason Botten, Ph.D., and Emily Bruce, Ph.D.

Botten & Bruce Study Streamline COVID-19 Test

Jason Botten, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Immunobiology, is senior author of a paper published in *PLOS Biology* that details a new method of testing for the COVID-19 virus that delivers an accurate result while sidestepping the need for a reagent that is in short supply. Developed and tested by Botten, first author **Emily Bruce, Ph.D.**, faculty scientist in the Division of Immunobiology, and collaborators at the University of Washington, the method omits the step in the

widely used reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test, considered the gold standard of COVID-19 diagnostics, where the scarce reagents are needed to extract the virus’s RNA. The accuracy of the new test was evaluated using 215 COVID-19 samples that RT-PCR tests had shown were positive, with a range of viral loads, and 30 that were negative. It correctly identified 92 percent of the positive samples and 100 percent of the negatives.

New National Service Roles

Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc., professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology, is a member of the Protocol Development Committee for the Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines (ACTIV) 4 Inpatient Trial and is a network leader for the RAPID Network. She is a steering committee member of the body overseeing the ACTIV program, NHLBI’s Collaborating Network of Networks for Evaluating COVID-19 and Therapeutic Strategies (CONNECTS).

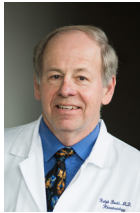
Anne Dixon, M.A., BM BCh, professor and chief of the Division of Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine, is serving on the data and safety monitoring board for a COVID-19 treatment trial sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease.

Amanda Kennedy, Pharm.D., BCPS, professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine, served on an Agency for Health Research and Quality study section: Novel, High-Impact Studies Evaluating Health System and Healthcare Professional Responsiveness to COVID-19 (R01) Special Emphasis Panel (RFA-HS-20-003).

Charlotte Teneback, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine, was elected to the Protocol Review Committee of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Therapeutic Development Network.

Marie Wood, M.D., professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology, was named deputy director of the Cancer Control Program Alliance for Clinical Trials.

Research Notes



Ralph Budd, M.D., professor and chief of the Division of Immunobiology, served on three study sections, including 2020 NIH Immunity and Host Defense, 2020 ZGM1 RCB-9 COBRE Phase I Grant Review NIGMS, and T32 Grant Reviews AITC NIAID.



Peter Spector, M.D., professor in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, received a \$225,000 Small Innovation Business Research Award from the National Science Foundation. He also raised \$10,500,000 in series A funding for development of an ultra-high resolution multi-electrode array catheter and new mapping software that tracks catheter location in 3D space, builds a 3D surface of the heart chamber and projects electrical data onto the surface.

Publication Highlights

- Fortner KA, Blanco LP, Buskiewicz I, Huang N, Gibson PC, **Cook DL**, Pederson HL, Yuen PST, Murphy MP, Perl A, Kaplan MJ, and **Budd RC**. Targeting Mitochondrial Oxidative Stress with MitoQ Reduces NET Formation and Kidney Disease in Lupus-Prone MRL-lpr Mice. *Lupus Sci and Med*. 2020;7:e000387. doi:10.1136/lupus-2020-000387.
- Huston, CD**. The Clofazimine for Treatment of Cryptosporidiosis in HIV-Infected Adults (CRYPTOFAZ) and Lessons Learned for Anticryptosporidial Drug Development. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. Aug 2020
- Lahoud R, Dauerman H**. Fall and Rise of Coronary Intervention. *J Am Heart Assoc*. 2020 Jun 2;9(11):e016853.
- Plante TB**, Koh I, Judd SE, Howard G, Howard VJ, **Zakai NA**, Booth JN 3rd, Safford M, Muntner P, **Cushman M**. Life's Simple 7 and Incident Hypertension: The Reasons for Geographic and

The funding covers the project up to the stage of FDA submission. In addition, Spector and his team have developed novel algorithms for mapping atrial fibrillation.



Renee Stapleton, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Division of Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine, is one of four principal investigators for a roughly \$15.5 million grant from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. The grant funds a seven-year, 20-site, phase 3 randomized controlled trial of ganciclovir to prevent reactivation of cytomegalovirus (CMV) in patients with sepsis-associated acute respiratory failure. Stapleton and colleagues will be working to demonstrate that if CMV reactivation in critically ill patients can be prevented, patients will experience more ventilator-free-days, as well as other positive secondary outcomes at six months.

Racial Differences in Stroke (REGARDS) Study. *J Am Heart Assoc*. 2020; in press. <https://doi.org/10.1161/JAHA.120.016482>

- Stenmetz-Wood S, Gilbert MP, Menson K**. A Case of Diabetic Ketoacidosis in a Patient on an SGLT2 Inhibitor and a Ketogenic Diet: A Critical Trio Not to be Missed. *Case Rep Endocrinol*. 2020 Aug 13;2020:
- Tarleton EK, Kennedy AG**, Rose GL, **Littenberg B**. Relationship Between Magnesium Intake and Chronic Pain in U.S. Adults. *Nutrients*. 2020 Jul 16;12(7):E2104. doi: 10.3390/nu12072104. PMID: 32708577
- Cuthbertson L., Walker A, Oliver A, Rogers G, Rivett D, Hampton T, Ashare A, Elborn S; De Soyza A, Carroll A, Hoffman L, Lanyon C, Moskowitz S, O'Toole G, Parkhill J, Planet P, **Teneback C**, Tunney M, Zuckerman J, Bruce K, van der Gast C. Lung Function and Microbiota in Cystic Fibrosis. *Microbiome*. 2;8(1):45.



Awards and Recognition

The Department of Medicine is proud of the following internal medicine residents who were honored for their exemplary achievements:

The Harriet P. Dustan, M.D. Award

In recognition of acquisition of new knowledge through research performed during residency

Elly Riser, M.D.

The Frank L. Babbott, M.D. Memorial Award

For idealism and integrity, dedication to patient care, and commitment to the educational mission of the Department of Medicine

Elly Riser, M.D.

Richard E. Bouchard, M.D. Excellence in Primary Care Award

For providing high quality comprehensive care, for dedication as an educator of patients, medical learners and support staff, and for sincere and genuine concern for patients

Daniel Krakauer, M.D.

Brendan Thoms, M.D.

The Department of Medicine is proud of the following internal medicine residents who were honored for their exemplary achievements:

E.L. Amidon, M.D. Award

Outstanding Teacher of the Year, Subspecialty Medicine

William Hopkins, M.D.

Mark A. Levine, M.D. Award

Outstanding Teacher of the Year, General Internal Medicine

Lee-Anna Burgess, M.D.

News and Notes

Patricia King, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine, was a panelist and contributor for a discussion titled "Ensuring Professionalism from the Perspective of the Public and Regulatory Bodies" during the American Board of Medical Specialties-National Board of Medical Examiners Symposium on Professionalism: Advancing Assessment of Professionalism in Continuing Certification.

Halle Sobel, M.D., associate professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine, is president of the New England Region Society of General Internal Medicine. Their annual meeting this fall, which had been planned for Burlington, was successfully transitioned to a virtual format.

With the challenges that COVID-19 has created for scientific and educational meetings, **Peter Spector, M.D.**, professor in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, has developed two online interactive courses titled "Understanding Electrophysiology" and "Understanding Atrial Fibrillation." The classes incorporate lectures, hands-on workshops and

exercises in a virtual EP lab. The courses have been given in the U.S. and in December of this year will be done in China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Continuing Medical and Interprofessional Education Upcoming Conference Schedule

**UVM MEDICAL CENTER
CARDIOVASCULAR/VASCULAR FORUM**
December 7, 2020 • Virtual Conference

**32ND ANNUAL EASTERN WINTER
DERMATOLOGY**
February 5-8, 2021 • Virtual Conference

**26TH ANNUAL VERMONT
PERSPECTIVES IN ANESTHESIA**
March 1-4, 2021

VERMONT GERIATRICS CONFERENCE
April 1, 2021

For more information, visit:
www.med.uvm.edu/cmie

Fellowship Directors Education Committee Spotlight

Q&A with David Kaminsky, M.D., professor in the Division of Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine and chair of the Fellowship Directors Education Committee

Q: What is the mission of the Fellowship Directors Education Committee?

A: The Department of Medicine Fellowship Program Directors Committee meets quarterly to discuss issues related to fellowship training in all the subspecialties of medicine.

The primary mission is to provide a forum and improve the training, education and overall experience for all fellows and to develop the potential of each fellow.

Q: How has COVID-19 impacted the work of the committee?

A: Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all candidate interviews are being conducted remotely, and, as expected, many programs are experiencing a large increase in number of applications since potential travel time and costs are not an issue. This has created more work for fellowship applicant review committees, but at the same time we hope to expand knowledge of our programs among medical residents throughout the country. A unique issue for our programs related to COVID-19 is the low prevalence of disease in our



David Kaminsky, M.D.

state. On the one hand this is good for public health and hospital practice, but on the other hand our trainees may not see as much disease as many of their colleagues would in other communities with a higher prevalence of disease. We are sharing our views on this with candidates openly so they can decide whether UVM Medical Center will work for them.

Q: What is one unique resource the committee provides and how can

faculty get involved?

A: The Summer Didactic Series provides education in areas common to all fellowship programs, such as clinical research, ethics, quality improvement, and physician wellness. It was typically held during the usual Medical Grand Rounds time in July and August when it takes a summer break. However, due to the current virtual environment, Medical Grand Rounds continued this year through the summer. This made it hard to find a common time for the Summer Didactic Series. The committee is exploring ways to schedule this next year and is also continually reviewing content. We invite any faculty members to attend these sessions and/or consider contributing their knowledge or experience.

In the Media



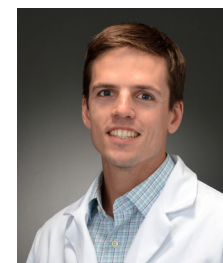
Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc.

Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc., professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology, was quoted in a story in *U.S. News and World Report* published August 17, 2020, titled “AHA News: After Years of Decline, Death Rates from Blood Clots on the Rise.”



Anne Dixon, M.A., BM BCh

Anne Dixon, M.A., BM BCh, professor and chief of the Division of Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine, was quoted in a September 29, 2020, story in the *New York Times* titled “Studies Begin to Untangle Obesity’s Role in Covid-19.”



Michael Latreille, M.D.

Michael Latreille, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine, was interviewed for a story in *Seven Days* titled “Gardening for Health Program Grows Connections Between Food and Wellness.” A collaboration between Latreille, the Division of General Internal Medicine, UVM Medical Center Nutrition Services and the Vermont Community Garden Network, the Gardening for Health Program wrapped up its pilot season in September and is planning another program for the summer of 2021.

Notable

Gilman Allen, M.D., professor in the Division of Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine, completed the examination of special competency in critical care echocardiography from the National Board of Echocardiography.

Michael Latreille, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine, was interviewed for a story in *Seven Days* titled “Gardening for Health Program Grows Connections Between Food and Wellness.” A collaboration between Latreille, the Division of General Internal Medicine, UVM Medical Center Nutrition Services and the Vermont Community Garden Network, the Gardening for Health Program wrapped up its pilot season in September and is planning another program for the summer of 2021.

Kim Dittus, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology, participated in Dragonheart Vermont, an annual community dragon boat festival held on Lake Champlain that raises money to support local cancer survivors. The virtual event took place on August 2, 2020.

Stephen DeVoe, M.P.H., M.S., quality program project director, began a three-year term as a Larner College of Medicine representative on the UVM Staff Council starting July 1, 2020.

Bonita Libman, M.D., professor, chief, and fellowship program director for the Division of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology, is quoted in a July 15, 2020, article in *The Rheumatologist*, titled “COVID-19 Poses Training Challenges for Rheumatology Fellows.”

In the
CommunityDepartment Members Support
VT Kidney Association

Several members of the Division of Nephrology, alongside staff from UVM Medical Center and Vermont dialysis units, participated in a virtual walk hosted by the Vermont Kidney Association in September of 2020. A total of 25 participants raised \$3,000 for Vermonters living with kidney disease. The division members who participated in the Vermont Kidney Association Annual Walk included:

Richard Solomon, M.D.; Virginia Hood, M.D.; Katharine Cheung, M.D.; Macaulay Onuigbo, M.D.; Margaret Butler, APRN; and Marios Prikis, M.D.

Who Knew?



Peter Spector, M.D., professor in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, has been building a wooden kayak. “As an intern 30 years ago I decided to build a sailboat,” he says. “When I looked into the cost...I built a canoe. I subsequently realized I don’t like canoes and paddled an orange plastic kayak for years. Then I decided I should make a wooden one. Been chipping away at it for a decade.”

Awards and Accolades



Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc., was elected as a fellow of the Vermont Academy of Arts & Sciences. Fellows are chosen for their “meaningful contributions in the fields of the arts, humanities, and sciences in the state of Vermont.”



Muriel Helene Nathan, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Division of Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism, was recently honored for her exceptional career at UVM Medical Center. In remarks, **Joel Schnure, M.D.**, professor and division

director, said: “For 30 years, Dr. Nathan has been the epitome of the word ‘physician’ and everything that it entails. She has given exquisite care to her patients, both from an empathetic point of view and from a medical point of view...Her ability to be a role model is not limited to her patient care but also extends to her mentoring. She cares about students, residents and fellows and spends an inordinate amount of time counseling them and teaching them. If we had to describe a role model for future physicians, Muriel Helene Nathan, M.D., Ph.D., would fit that description.”



MARIE WOOD, M.D.

Marie Wood, M.D., professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology, wants to make genetic testing more accessible and efficient for patients with cancer. Typically, the process has involved multiple referrals and appointments, counseling before testing is administered and then more scheduling to follow-up.

“We want to test first, and then counsel,” she says. “We’re taking the model and flipping it 180 degrees.”

The goal is to help patients and their medical team access accurate information as quickly as possible, while still providing important support to patients. Test results received early in the course of disease can inform clinical decision-making – helping to tailor treatment options – and help family members understand more about their risk.

Wood and colleagues recently applied for a R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health to apply this new model of administering genetic testing to a cohort of over 700 adolescent and young adults who have had cancer. They plan to follow the cohort over time and study how removing barriers to genetic testing impacts their

cancer screening behavior compared to members of the cohort who do not receive the intervention. The team also plans to look at how the genetic testing results inform family members’ decisions related to their own health care.

In a related project, Dr. Wood is working with an internal medicine resident to conduct a survey of oncologists in northern New England to understand more about their attitudes towards genetic testing and what resources they need to help their patients access testing.

Wood, who is founder and principal investigator of UVM’s High Risk Breast Program, has for decades been a leading researcher in the field, with particular expertise in breast cancer biomarkers and genetics. As director of UVM Cancer Center’s Familial Cancer Program and associate director for cancer control, she’s at the front lines of work to improve screening and prevention, with her newest research poised to lead to important innovations in care delivery.

“We want to figure out how to make testing more efficient for the patients who would benefit the most,” she says.



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