



Robert Smith, MD
Mentor

"I think my main role has been to provide an eagle's eye view of the landscape and try to provide some direction in that regard in terms of what hypotheses to investigate, and the mechanics of how to do it in the system. Kinna is a skilled and adept clinical researcher. I serve as a sounding board along the way."

Background

- Director of the Division of Infectious Diseases at Maine Medical Center
- Director of Maine Medical Center's Virology Treatment Center
- Researcher at Maine Medical Center Research Institute Vector-borne Disease Laboratory
- Professor of Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine

NNE-CTR Participation

- Mentor for Round 1 Pilot Grant, 2017

Mentor Contribution

- Provide career development guidance and advocacy to support research time
- Facilitate connections with other infectious disease research partners
- Provide high-level feedback on grant proposals and study aims/hypotheses

Value of Mentorship

"It's very exciting to see things happen that early in your career you would likely be doing yourself. In this example, as the opioid crisis hit, if I hadn't already been doing research in other areas, I would have really liked to participate. And to have someone else in your division who can do that and you can be a part of it is very satisfying and provides growth for us as well as for the researcher. It's a very positive, renewing sort of thing and I'm really happy to continue to be involved with it."



Kathleen Fairfield, MD, DrPH
Mentor

"Kinna is an exceptional person so I'm very fortunate to have had a chance to work with her, and she will succeed with or without me [but I'm happy to help her]. The CTR has been a fantastic opportunity for our institution to help support our junior investigators."

Background

- Associate Chair, Internal Medicine at Maine Medical Center
- Physician Scientist at the Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation
- Associate Professor of Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine
- Supervises resident physicians at the International Clinic at Maine Medical Center

NNE-CTR Participation

- Co-PI, Round 1 Pilot Grant, 2017, Co-PI on CTR Supplemental Grant with UVM, 2018
- Uses Clinical Research Design Core for data storage infrastructure for storing all-payer claims data
- Serves as mentor/advisor for NNE-CTR junior investigators

Mentor Contribution

- Provides guidance and advocacy related to accessing extramural funding/other resources to support research goals, and balancing research and clinical responsibilities
- Reviews research plans and provides guidance on technical research design and methods
- Provides guidance and training to support mentee's mentorship of residents and other trainees

Value of Mentorship

"One of the fun things about mentoring is you get to learn something new in a new clinical area or new methodology. Kinna's interested in people who inject drugs with infectious comorbidities, so I've learned a lot about her clinical field in infectious disease. I've also learned a lot about qualitative methods to support her interests in this type of research."



Kinna Thakarar, DO, MPH
Mentee

"I look to Rob and Kathleen to help me formulate some of the bigger picture questions and career-wise how best to identify funding streams that balance my clinical and research work. Kathleen has also been really helpful in practical research design questions and specific study design methods and analytic plans... I've learned having a team of mentors [is really helpful]."

Background

- Board Certified Physician in Infectious Disease, Addiction Medicine, and Internal Medicine
- Affiliated Investigator at the Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation
- Assistant Professor of Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine

NNE-CTR Participation

- Received Round 2 Pilot funding, 2018
- Awarded COVID-19 CTR Grant looking at effects of physical distancing for people who inject drugs in Maine

Mentee Experience

- Receives guidance related to writing/editing grant proposals, IRB submissions, and data analyses
- Provided with supports from both clinical and non-clinical sides in relation to balancing research and clinical responsibilities

Value of Mentorship

"Besides learning to work in a team, I'm grateful to be supported to do research that I think has some practical impact... Because the whole point is to help give people of voice and to benefit the community. Just last week I shared our results with the state to help them decide how to allocate funding for harm reduction services, so it's very timely and I'm grateful for that."

Learn more

The NNE-CTR Network leverages and coordinates regional resources to conduct collaborative clinical and translation research and disseminate findings to improve both health and healthcare delivery in our region. To learn more or join the NNE-CTR Network, visit: <http://nne-ctr.net/> This work is supported by the NIH CTR grant (NNE-CTR): U54GM115516