

# General Internal Medicine Newsletter



## Message from Division Leadership

This spring has brought many changes to our division. A bittersweet moment came when we bid Anita Mesi, MBA, adieu as she moved on to a wonderful promotion to Chief Administrative Officer for the Department of Pediatrics. We were excited to find our next Division Administrator very quickly, and **Blake Rambo, JD, MBA**, started on June 14. Blake joins us from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine/OU Health after over a decade in administrative leadership positions in academic medicine supporting clinical, research, and educational programs. He now calls New York home after joining his husband here, who is also a member of the Weill Cornell Medicine family as a second-year fellow in Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine, following the completion of his residency in Pediatrics at WCM. Blake received his bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from the University of Oklahoma, as well as his law degree from the University of Notre Dame, and is a licensed attorney in the state of New York. His educational and professional background has included a particular emphasis on the intersection of law and business as key factors in shaping effective healthcare policy, developing strategies leading to more equitable access to care, and promoting innovative discoveries. I know he is eager to get to know all of you and learn more about how he can support you. Please introduce yourself to him when you have a chance and join me in welcoming him to GIM!



We are very much looking forward to continued reopening in the greater New York City area as summer is upon us. It has been a very long time since we could see our friends, family, and colleagues face-to-face safely. Let us hope that this current trajectory of controlling the pandemic continues as more and more of us become vaccinated. We will be moving to a hybrid

model of work from home/work in the office over the summer, another opportunity to see colleagues in person again. Thank you to all of you for your continued outstanding work, which reflects well on our Division.

**Monika Safford, MD | Chief, GIM**

## Education Updates

The **Primary Care Clerkship** is looking for NEW PRECEPTORS to work with our students one day/week in any outpatient internal medicine specialty. The clerkship is also looking for new faculty members to engage our students in “flipped classroom” didactics, or to facilitate Friday afternoon tutor groups. If you're interested in getting involved with undergraduate medical education, please reach out to [Brian Eiss, MD](#), or [Melissa Rusli, MD](#).

Congratulations to the Class of 2021! **Dr. Laura Chen** and **Dr. Nikita Rabelo-Pagan** have successfully completed the **Hospital Medicine Point of Care Ultrasound Fellowship!** We would like to welcome Drs. Nachele Aurelien, Edward Bergin, Tanveer Hassam and Angelina Voronina to our incoming Class of 2022!

## Primary Care Innovation (PCI) Program

On May 27, 2021, the PCI program hosted the **4th Annual Primary Care & Hospital Medicine Innovations Symposium** virtually with over 200 guests in attendance nationally. This year the PCI program provided \$175,000 to fund 11 innovative interdisciplinary projects across campus, consisting of 8 faculty, 1 resident, and 2 student awardees in various topics related to primary care (click [here](#) for a complete list of recipients and project titles). The half-day symposium began with opening remarks from **Dr. Fred Pelzman, Dean Augustine Choi**, and **Dr. Judy Tung**. This year the program featured a new format—two prominent keynote speakers—Andrea Cherrington, MD, Professor for Division of Preventive Medicine at the University of Alabama Birmingham, and Robert Wachter, MD, Professor and Chair of the Department of Medicine at

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the University of California, San Francisco. A panel discussion with keynote speakers was then moderated by **Dr. Monika Safford** on the subject of *Reflections on Primary Care & Hospital Medicine in the Current State*. Other event highlights included past competitive seed grant presentations, abstract presentations, and compelling poster sessions from abstracts selected during an open call for abstracts earlier this year. This year's event showcased posters from medical students, residents, fellows, and faculty from WCM, NYP, Global Health, Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, and ITS. The event concluded with closing remarks and a raffle giveaway from Dr. Monika Safford. The symposium was a forum to get to know others with similar interests and to become familiar with the ongoing innovative work on-campus and off-campus in the Primary Care arena.

## Cornell Center for Health Equity (CCHEq)

In April, the Cornell Center for Health Equity (CCHEq) sent out a request for collaborative, novel, and innovative applications for one-year project grants. We are delighted to highlight this year's 2021 CCHEq Collaborative Pilot Projects recipients. CCHEq annually sponsors collaborative pilot projects that support research to achieve health equity and, by consequence, investigates several issues pertaining to health disparities and social justice.

The 2021 recipients are **Dr. Eloise Chapman-Davis**, project entitled "Use of a Web-based Platform (Patient Activated Learning System) to Promote Knowledge, Uptake and Completion of HPV Vaccination in the Era of COVID" was funded \$50,000. **Dr. Tashara Leak** and **Dr. Marisa Censani**, project entitled "Addressing Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Disparities Among Low-Income Households with Adolescents Using a Novel Telehealth Lifestyle Intervention" was funded \$50,000. **Drs. Aditya Vashistha, David Scales** and **Antonio DeRosa**, project entitled "Supporting Community Health Workers in Fighting COVID-19 Misinformation in Low-Resource Environments" was funded \$50,000. **Dr. Onyinye Balogun** and **Dr. Amelia Greiner Safi**, project entitled

"Centering the Marginalized Voices of Black Patients with Gynecological Cancer as a First Step in Healthcare Curriculum Development" was funded \$5,000.

## Diversity Center of Excellence (DCoE)

The Diversity Center of Excellence continued the year with educational initiatives from April through June. DCoE provided administrative support to Black and Latino Men in Medicine (BLMiM), which concluded an 8-week virtual mentorship program, Science and Leadership in Medicine (SLiM), for 111 students on April 25. BLMiM also hosted its annual conference on May 1, which also concluded the college's annual Diversity Week. The Pre-Medical Initiatives led by **Dr. Andrea Card** hosted three Dialogues in Health sessions for over 60 linkage students in April. The Faculty Development Circles, an initiative co-hosted with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, welcomed 18 faculty participants for Cohort 3, including GIM faculty **Dr. Sean Pickering** and **Dr. Ugochi Nwosu**. Faculty, trainees, and medical students part of the Diversity Mentoring Cascade participated in the last virtual session on May 4 with guest presenter Dr. Kamia Sarraf, who presented a session on *Restoration and Growth: Moving Beyond the Trauma of Times Like These*. The DCoE also hosted an end-of-the-year celebration and welcome for the new interns with the Department of Medicine and the Minority Housestaff Committee (MHC) on June 14. It was a lovely in-person event with remarks from **Dr. Susana Morales, Dr. Kirana Gudi, Dr. Anthony Hollenberg**, and the co-chairs of the MHC, Dr. Aiya Aboubakr, Dr. Lindsay Clarke, Dr. Elizabeth Sanchez, and Dr. Fabian Vargas. For questions on any DCoE programs, email [dcoe@med.cornell.edu](mailto:dcoe@med.cornell.edu), visit our website at [Cornell Center for Health Equity](https://www.cornell.edu/health-equity)—which includes editorials and videos—or follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram [@WCMDiversityCtr](https://www.instagram.com/WCMDiversityCtr).

## Quality Improvement Academy (QIA)

On May 26, 2021, the Quality Improvement Academy-Weill Cornell Medicine (QIA) held a socially-distanced and fully-masked graduation celebration for the 11 faculty of the Class of 2021, with ongoing support from **Dean Augustine Choi** and **Dr. Anthony Hollenberg**. This is a landmark year marking the

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graduation of the fifth QIA class! We are honored to have had the chance to work closely with our colleagues in the Departments of Medicine, Pediatrics, Anesthesiology, Emergency Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and our NYP Nursing partners.

The event recognized the accomplishments of the QIA graduates and their ongoing commitment to improving patient care across the institution. Despite the many setbacks due to COVID-19, 10 projects were completed this year. Four projects were presented at WDOM Grand Rounds on May 26, 2021. The WDOM graduates included **Dr. Andrea Betesh** (Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology), **Dr. Pamela Tieu** (Division of General Internal Medicine/Section of Hospital Medicine), and **Dr. Ozan Unlu** (Chief Resident/Residency Program). **Dr. Jennifer Lee**, Vice Chair for Quality and Safety, WDOM, expressed thanks to department chairs Dr. Sallie Permar of Pediatrics, Dr. Hugh Hemmings of Anesthesiology, Dr. Rahul Sharma of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Laura Riley of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Rosanne Raso, VP/Chief Nursing Officer at NewYork-Presbyterian, for supporting their faculty in the program.

We are also excited to announce the **Annual Weill Cornell Medicine Quality Improvement & Patient Safety Poster Symposium** will be held on Tuesday, September 21 from 5–7:30 PM via Zoom. Registration for this free virtual event will begin mid-August. If you would like to learn more about QIA initiatives, please visit us on the [QIA website!](#)

## Honors & Awards

**Esther Wei, NP**, received CDC Full Recognition for her diabetes prevention program by the Department of Health & Human Services. This designation is reserved for programs that have effectively delivered a quality, evidence-based program that meets all of the

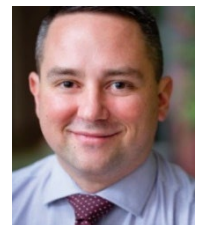


standards for CDC recognition. The sustained success of this program makes an invaluable contribution to the prevention of type 2 diabetes, both in our community and nationally.

**Michael Torres Lizardi, MD, Ernie Esquivel, MD, and Amanda Ramsdell, MD**, received the 2021 Excellence in Medical Education Award. A virtual ceremony will be held to recognize educators who have made outstanding contributions to the education mission and for making the WCM experience exceptional for our students. Click [here](#) to read more.

**Matthew McCarthy, MD**, Associate Professor of Medicine, has been named to the NIH Executive Leadership Committee and Protocol Oversight Committee for ACTIV-6, a therapeutic drug trial for mild-to-moderate COVID-19. In addition, he has been elected co-chair of the ACTIV-6 Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

**Justin Kingery, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, was selected as one of the finalists for the 2021 Young Investigators Award. He presented his work at Medicine Grand Rounds on Wednesday, June 30, 2021.



The following faculty received awards at the Weill Cornell commencement ceremony on May 28, 2021. To view a full list of awards, click [here](#).

**Ernie Esquivel, MD**, was awarded the Charles L. Bardes, MD, Teaching Prize

**Amanda Ramsdell, MD**, was awarded the Leonard Tow Humanism Teacher Award

**Lauren Balkan, MD**, was awarded the House Staff Teaching Award

**Ashita Batavia, MD**, was awarded the Volunteer Clinical Faculty Award of Alpha Omega Alpha

**Pamela Charney, MD, Justin Choi, MD, Ernie Esquivel, MD, Sydney Katz, MD, Bryan Leppert, MD, William Levine, MD, Anthony Ogedegbe, MD, Amanda**

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**Ramsdell, MD, and Michael Torres Lizardi, MD,** were named to the Senior List.

The Weill Cornell Office of Diversity & Inclusion presented the 2021 Pioneers in Diversity Awards to **Erica Phillips, MD,** Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, the Marie Metoyer Award for Excellence in Community Service, and **Margaret McNairy, MD,** Associate Professor of Medicine, the Jessica M. & Nathan Bibliowicz for Excellence in Mentoring Women Faculty Award.



**Erica Phillips, MD,** was recognized for her accomplishments in Brooklyn, by increasing access for patients with cancer and addressing the issues of health equity in the Borough. The Department of Medicine at NYP Brooklyn Methodist Hospital is extremely grateful for what Dr. Phillips has done, and she was presented with the Health Equity Award at the resident graduation ceremony on June 18, 2021, for her service.

**Devin Worster, MD,** Assistant Professor of Medicine, and his Partners in Health – Mexico team (Compañeros en Salud) were awarded a one-time LINKS grant for hypertension management. Their program focuses on task-shifting for hypertension management to clinical nurses and screening to auxiliary staff in the clinic and community health workers in the community in Chiapas, Mexico.

## Publications

**Justin Choi, MD** [COVID-19-Related Circumstances for Hospital Readmissions: A Case Series From 2 New York City Hospitals](#)

**Justin Choi, MD** [What We Cannot See in Virtual Diagnosis: The Potential Pitfalls of Telediagnosis Related to Teamwork](#)

**Parag Goyal, MD** [Physiochemical and Functional Characterization of MYL-1501D, a Proposed Biosimilar to Insulin Glargine](#)

**Parag Goyal, MD** [Polypharmacy in Heart Failure: Progress, But Also Problem](#)

**Lisa Kern, MD** [Ambulatory Care Fragmentation and Incident Stroke](#)

**Justin Kingery, MD** [Thirty-Day Post-Discharge Outcomes Following COVID-19 Infection](#)

**Laura Kolbe, MD** [Use of Virtual Reality in the Inpatient Rehabilitation of COVID-19 Patients](#)

**Laura Pinheiro, PhD** [Racial Disparities in Diabetes Care Among Incident Breast, Prostate, and Colorectal Cancer Survivors: A SEER Medicare Study](#)

**Laura Pinheiro, PhD** [Eliciting Primary Care and Oncology Provider Perspectives on Diabetes Management During Active Cancer Treatment](#)

**Mangala Rajan, MBA** [Ambulatory Care Fragmentation and Hospitalization Among Veterans with Diabetes](#)

**Monika Safford, MD,** had several publications during this period; click [here](#).

**David Scales, MD** [The Covid-19 Infodemic—Applying the Epidemiologic Model to Counter Misinformation](#)

**Joseph Shin, MD** [Re-Imagining the Asylum System: Recommendations From Asylum Medicine Experts](#)

**Joseph Shin, MD** [Medical and Mental Health Implications of Gestational Surrogacy](#)

## Appointments & Promotions

**Anita Mesi, MBA, GIM** Division Administrator, accepted an offer with the WCM Department of Pediatrics as Chief Administrative Officer effective June 1, 2021.



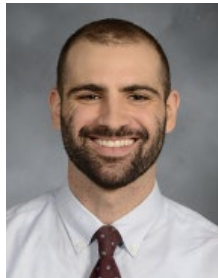
We thank Anita Mesi for her years of outstanding service, commitment, and dedication to the Division of General Internal Medicine during her tenure. The division experienced substantial growth and success

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under Anita's exceptional management and leadership. We wish her all the best in her new role!

**Christopher Gonzalez, MD**, Fellow in Medicine, has been promoted to Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Department of Medicine effective July 1, 2021. Dr. Gonzalez will continue to build his research program as an independent investigator with extramurally funded research. He will also hold the role of Assistant Director of Medical Student Research under the Weill Diversity Center of Excellence, working closely with underrepresented minority students and research mentors across the institution to identify research opportunities that align with students' interests and that would enrich their medical school experience.



**Laura Chen, MD, Alexandra King, MD, Joshua Heisler, MD, Alexander Ajeto, MD, and Puja Chebrolu, MD**, have been promoted to Assistant Professors of Medicine.

## GIM Grand Rounds

GIM Grand Rounds takes place every first Thursday of the month. Margot Kushel, MD, Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, presented on May 6, 2021, on *Aging Among Homeless Populations: Causes, Consequences and Solutions*, and Eloho Ufomata, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, presented on June 3, 2021, on *Disrupting Racism in Medical Education*. To learn more about upcoming grand rounds, click [here](#).

## Spread the Word

The University of California, Los Angeles, held its Annual Health Services Research Symposium in honor of the leadership, inspiration, and scholarship of **Martin Shapiro, MD**, on June 18, 2021. View program [here](#).

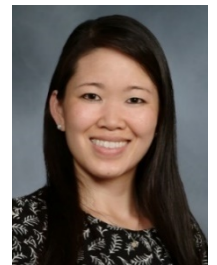
**Christopher Gonzalez, MD, and Laura Pinheiro, PhD**, gave a keynote talk on June 7, 2021, on *Contextualizing Inequity: A Discussion on Health Equity and the Social Determinants of Health*. Approximately 2000 people across New York State registered for this event. Click [here](#) to read more.

**Matthew McCarthy, MD**, Associate Professor of Medicine, presented at the Weill Cornell Medicine David Rogers Health Policy Colloquium on May 26, 2021, on *Superbugs: Lessons from the Pandemic*.

**Matthew McCarthy, MD**, was invited to give talks at the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society Visiting Professor's Lecture Set, on *The Transition: Becoming a Real Doctor* at Saint Louis University School of Medicine on April 9, 2021. He also gave Medicine Grand Rounds on *COVID-19 in New York* at the Staten Island University Hospital on May 7, 2021.

The **Society of General Internal Medicine Annual Meeting** was held virtually this year from April 20-23, 2021, and many of our leaders and faculty members were featured in the program. To view the booklet, click [here](#).

**Alice Tang, MD**, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, was invited to present at the national Society of Hospital Medicine meetings on several talks. On May 6, 2021, she presented on *From Introduction to Integration: Clinical Reasoning Strategies to Reduce Diagnostic Error*; on April 12, 2021, Drs. Tang and Shira Sachs presented on *Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine Beyond Lectures & Workshops: Peer Observation for Faculty Development of Teaching Skills*, and on April 13, 2021, on *Promoting a Growth Mindset - Creating a Universal Culture of Coaching*.



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**Christopher Gonzalez, MD**, presented at the Research Methodology Conference on April 30, 2021, on *Assessing the Social Determinants of Adverse Outcomes of COVID-19 and Exploring Mechanisms by which they Impact Mitigating Behaviors*.

**Laura Pinheiro, PhD**, gave an oral presentation at the annual AcademyHealth meeting on the study *Social Determinants of Health and Cancer Mortality in the REasons for Geographic and Racial Differences in Stroke (REGARDS) Cohort Study*.



**Iris Navarro-Millan, MD**, presented at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute on April 9, 2021, on *The Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in Patients with Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis: Bridging the Evidence to Practice Gap for Statins*.

**Martin Shapiro, MD**, Professor of Medicine, presented at the Weill Cornell Medicine David Rogers Health Policy Colloquium on April 7, 2021, on *The Essence of Medicine*.

**Susana Morales, MD**, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, was featured on Cornell Chronicles addressing vaccine hesitancy access; to read more, click [here](#). She was also invited onto The Back Story with J. Ricky Singh, MD, to explore why some people are reluctant to get vaccinated; listen to the podcast [here](#).



**Lisa Kern, MD**, Associate Professor of Medicine, discussed *Balancing Care Access and Fragmentation for Better Outcomes in Veterans With Diabetes* on the American Journal of Managed Care podcast; listen to the podcast [here](#).

**Daisy Torres-Baez, MS**, Diversity Programs Coordinator, was nominated and selected as a STAR Performer in the Weill Department of Medicine. Keep up the excellent work!

### Welcome to the Team!

#### Faculty:

**Sarita Mahtani, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Integrative Health & Wellbeing  
**Stephanie Sirna, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine  
**Franklyn Fenton, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine  
**Ankur Chaudhury, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine  
**Tanveer-E-Fatema Hassam, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine  
**Dan Benenson, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Asia Gobourne, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Ro-Jay Reid, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Cecilia Nicol, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Angelina Voronina, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Edward Bergin, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Nachelle Aurelien, MD**, Instructor in Medicine

#### Staff:

**Joselyne Aucapina**, Research Assistant for Dr. Lisa Kern

### Farewell!

**Mushfeqa Hoque, MHA**, Research Financial Manager, has accepted an offer with Signify Health as a Project Manager.  
**Mina Redzematovic, MA**, Financial & Grants Coordinator, is transferring to the WCM Department of Pediatrics as a Project Coordinator.  
**Noel Higgason, BS**, Research Assistant for Laura Pinheiro, has been accepted into medical school.