

# General Internal Medicine Newsletter



## Message from Division Leadership

What an intense last three months it has been. Through your heroic efforts, we've successfully emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, incredibly stronger than ever. In response to changing needs, you innovated by creating COVID programs across the entire spectrum—ICU, inpatient, palliative, recovery, post-discharge, and outpatient. You trained yourselves and your colleagues to confidently care for patients with COVID. You were fierce advocates for our patients, bringing family members virtually to the bedside. You creatively engaged our students, crafting new telemedicine electives to ensure safe learning. You supported each other in more ways than we could count as virtual team members, peer supporters, backup staff. We applaud and thank you for your incredible dedication and service. On the heels of pandemic losses, we were reminded that racism, especially in the form of police brutality, continues to threaten the lives of the people we are trying to protect. You organized and lent voice and strength to a variety of critical movements at NYP-WCM/LMH as well as around the city and the country. We pledge continued support and action. Finally, we celebrate the close of this academic year with many accolades. GIM swept in the Department of Medicine for teaching awards at convocation. Congratulations!

**Judy Tung, MD | Section Chief, Adult Internal Medicine**

## Clinical Updates

The **Cough, Cold and Fever Clinic** was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since mid-March, the program has evaluated and treated over 600 patients with suspected coronavirus, providing a vital service to New York especially during pandemic peak when hospital resources were constrained. The program teamed up with the Emergency Department to receive over 100 overflow patients and with the Department of Radiology to offer over 150 on-site chest x-rays for the accurate triaging of illness acuity. Dozens of patients were sent home with oxygen saturation devices to allow for safe monitoring of their disease course and patients were additionally closely followed

with discharge phone calls made by our nurses and medical students.

The COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges for the healthcare system, with one of the biggest burdens being the management of ICU patients with respiratory failure and post-ICU care. Hospital Medicine physicians in collaboration with other healthcare providers and NYP leadership created an innovative 30-bed **COVID-19 Recovery Unit** to provide a multidisciplinary, comprehensive treatment model for those recovering from COVID-19 critical illness, with a critical eye toward medicine, rehabilitation, and neuro-psychological needs. During the past two months, the unit has admitted 83 patients. Of those, around 80% were sent home with good recovery.

Similarly, Hospital Medicine physicians participated in the development of a **Tracheostomy Care Unit** at NYP/WCM, bringing together a multidisciplinary team and geographically localizing dedicated physical therapy, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, and respiratory therapists to facilitate medical management and rehabilitation of patients with COVID-19.

The **Best Practices for Clinical Teaching Noon Conference** series was started this year to bring faculty, residents, and chief residents together in identifying our group's best teaching practices using appreciative inquiry. To build upon the strategies discussed, we invite all faculty to join our **Peer Teaching Coach** program, where faculty have the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching in the authentic context, as well as receive feedback on their own teaching skills through peer observation. Please contact [Alice Tang, MD](#) if interested!

## Research Updates

**Parag Goyal, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, was awarded by the American Heart Association for his project *Successful Aging and Cardiovascular Disease*.

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The award duration is July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023, in the amount of \$231,000.

In a response to provide optimal care to COVID-19 positive patients amidst this healthcare crisis, a team of GIM faculty, staff, and students created the “Weill Cornell COVID-19 Observational Research Cohort,” led by **Drs. Parag Goyal, Laura Pinheiro, Justin Choi and Monika Safford**. There were over 50 WCM medical students involved in helping to abstract medical chart data. Together they created a comprehensive registry of COVID-19 cases at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine, NewYork-Presbyterian/Lower Manhattan Hospital, and NewYork-Presbyterian/Queens. The team has published “[Clinical Characteristics of Covid-19 in New York City](#),” along with two more articles, and there are several other manuscripts under review. They have over 30 projects underway using our data with investigators from across study settings NYP/WCM, NYP/LMH, NYP/Queens, NYP/BK, and Columbia University Medical Center. If interested in collaborating or accessing data, please email [Assem Jabri](#).

**Arnab Ghosh, MD** was awarded the Dean’s Diversity and Healthcare Disparity Research Award in the amount of \$50,000 for one year, to investigate the influence of value-based payment models on racial and socioeconomic disparities in hospitalized patients. The Affordable Care Act of 2011 created new models called Value-Based Payment Models (VBPMs) to manage healthcare costs while maintaining quality. The project’s long-term objective is to illuminate the unknown but manifold effects of VBPMs on healthcare disparities. The project’s specific aim seeks to explore VBPMs in the hospital setting, through the examination of large datasets to detect differences in healthcare outcomes between patients of different races/ethnicities and income levels.



## Education Updates

While the **Primary Care Clerkship** has been paused due to COVID-19, the Primary Care Clerkship leadership team created a new 4-week elective, “Telehealth in the Age of COVID-19,” which allowed medical students to take part in the pandemic efforts remotely. During this time, 25 students rose to the challenge and made follow-up calls to patients that presented to Weill Cornell Internal Medicine Associates’ Cough, Cold and Fever Clinic and/or the Emergency Department’s OnDemand video visit service. They played a vital role in patient education, reassurance, and occasionally escalation of care for acutely ill patients. In addition, a few selected students rotated through the Center on Aging and made frequent phone calls to help the geriatric community manage their anxiety and loneliness during isolation.

We are excited to **welcome our students back** into the outpatient practices on July 6<sup>th</sup>. Our newly revamped clerkship will adapt to the “new normal” of clinical practice. On top of in-person clinical sessions, students will participate in more telemedicine/video visits and will continue to play an important role in follow-up care for our patients after COVID-19.

We would like to thank **Dr. Pamela Eliach**, Senior Clerkship Advisor, for all she has done for the Primary Care Clerkship this past year. She will be greatly missed. We wish her a fun and happy retirement!

The **Hospital Medicine Clinical Scholars** program graduates its third class of scholars. Congratulations to Drs. Laura Kolbe, Michael Wagner, William Levine, and Devin Worster!

The **Hospital Medicine Point of Care Ultrasound Clinical Fellowship** is graduating its first class of fellows! Congratulations to Dr. Alberto Rojas and Dr. Rajiv Bhagat! We are looking forward to our next class of

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fellows who are starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>! Welcome Dr. Nikita Rabelo-Pagan and Dr. Laura Chen!

The **Integrative Health Clinical Fellowship** is graduating its first fellow, Jillian Cohen, MD. Dr. Cohen will be joining our faculty in the Integrative Health and Wellbeing program, effective July 1, 2020.

## Cornell Center for Health Equity (CCHEq)

The **Health Equity Seminar Series** takes place every first Friday of the month and is currently presented remotely via Zoom due to COVID-19. On May 1, 2020, **Robert White, MD** gave a talk on *Identification of Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Maternal Morbidity and Mortality: Measurement Issues*. For more information on the Health Equity Seminar Series or if you would like to give a talk at one of the seminars, please email [Grace Figueroa](mailto:Grace.Figueroa).

## Diversity Center of Excellence (DCoE)

The **Diversity Center of Excellence** of the Cornell Center for Health Equity has received a grant of \$150,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support increased health professions workforce training with a focus on telehealth and distance learning capabilities in response to COVID-19.

## Quality Improvement Academy (QIA)

The annual Weill Cornell Medicine Quality Improvement Poster Session, originally scheduled for May, has been postponed. The new date is **Tuesday, September 15, from 5PM-7PM**. Registration for this free virtual event will begin in early September. Interactive poster viewing and presentations will be incorporated into the format. More information will be included in the August newsletter. Stay tuned!

## Honors & Awards

The following faculty received awards at the Weill Cornell commencement ceremony on May 28, 2020. To view a full list of awards, click [here](#). Congratulations!

**Dr. Susana Morales** was awarded the Leonard Tow Humanism Award.

**Dr. Ernie Esquivel** was awarded the Elliot Hochstein Teaching Award.

**Drs. Brian Eiss, Ernie Esquivel, Sydney Katz, Michael Torres Lizardi, Anthony Ogedegbe, Amanda Ramsdell, Melissa Rusli, and Alice Tang** were named to the Senior List.

At the residency graduation ceremony, **Dr. Adrian Majid** was awarded the J. James Smith teaching award. **Dr. Gregory Mints** was awarded as the Hospital Medicine Attending of the Year and **Dr. Peggy Leung** was awarded as the WCIMA Attending of the Year.

## Publications

**Todd Cutler, MD** [Inpatient Management of COVID-19 Pneumonia: A Practical Approach from the Hospitalist Perspective](#)

**Christopher Gonzalez, MD** [Preparing Telemedicine for the Frontlines of Healthcare Equity](#)

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

**Renuka Gupta, MD** [A Paradigm for the Pandemic: A Covid-19 Recovery Unit](#)

**Dhruv Khullar, MD** [The Patient-Driven Payment Model: Addressing Perverse Incentives, Creating New Ones](#)

**Justin Kingery, MD** [HIV-Associated Myocardial Diastolic Dysfunction and Soluble ST2 Concentration in Tanzanian Adults: A Cross-Sectional Study](#)

**Matthew McCarthy, MD** [Harnessing the Potential of CRISPR-Based Platforms to Advance the Field of Hospital Medicine](#)

**Iris Navarro-Millán, MD** [Barriers and Facilitators for Screening and Treatment of Hyperlipidemia among Patients with Inflammatory Arthritis](#)

**Fred Pelzman, MD** [Social Justice: Yes, It's a Medical Issue](#)

**Erica Phillips, MD** [Protocol for the Trial to Establish a Causal Linkage between Mycotoxin Exposure and Child Stunting: A Cluster Randomized Trial](#)

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**Laura Pinheiro, PhD** [Differences in Ambulatory Care Fragmentation Between Cancer Survivors and Noncancer Controls](#)

**Laura Pinheiro, PhD** [Diabetes Care Management Patterns Before and After a Cancer Diagnosis: A SEER-Medicare Matched Cohort Study](#)

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

**Joseph Shin, MD** [Gender-Based Violence Experienced by Women Seeking Asylum in the United State: A Lifetime of Multiple Traumas Inflicted by Multiple Perpetrators](#)

**Joseph Shin, MD** [Medical and Mental Health Implications of Gestational Surrogacy and Trends in State Regulations on Compensated Gestational Surrogacy](#)

**Madeline Sterling, MD** [They Are Essential Workers Now, and Should Continue to Be: Social Workers and Home Health Care Workers during COVID-19 and Beyond](#)

**Madeline Sterling, MD** [Social Determinants of Health and 90-Day Mortality After Hospitalization for Heart Failure in the REGARDS Study](#)

**Madeline Sterling, MD** [Hearing Loss and Physical Functioning Among Adults with Heart Failure: Data from NHANES](#)

## Appointments & Promotions

**Renuka Gupta, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, has been appointed as Chief of Medicine at NewYork-Presbyterian/Lower Manhattan Hospital. Dr. Gupta will begin her role in July 2020 and will be succeeding Dr. Judy Tung, who had served in this role since 2016. In addition to her roles as a clinician and educator, Dr. Gupta is an expert on hospital operational efficiency, hospital systems, healthcare policy, and quality improvement. She is also a leader in the academic domain of discrimination against physicians. In her role



at LMH, Dr. Gupta will oversee and coordinate the outpatient and inpatient activities of WDOM faculty at LMH, serving an important role as liaison for the faculty, Division Chiefs, Chair of Medicine, and hospital leadership.

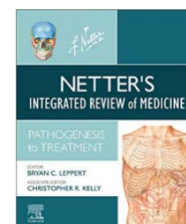
**Katelyn Zingg, BA**, Program Assistant for PALS, has been promoted to Administrative Specialist to Dr. Monika Safford effective May 1, 2020.

## GIM Grand Rounds

GIM Grand Rounds takes place every first Thursday of the month via Zoom. The following speakers gave grand rounds: **Kimberly Bloom-Feshbach, MD**, on *COVID Talk: Communication in Crisis*; and **Henry Wei, MD**, on *Machine Learning and AI in Medicine: It's Not About the Technology*. For speaker recommendations, please email [Fred Pelzman, MD](#) or [Jigar Contractor, MD](#).

## Spread the Word

**Bryan Leppert, MD**, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, published a textbook, *Netter's Integrated Review of Medicine: Pathogenesis to Treatment*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition. The textbook is available for sale on [Amazon](#) and [Elsevier](#).



**Fred Pelzman, MD** was featured in WCM's newsroom with "[COVID-19 Treatment Depends upon Disease Severity](#)" and "[COVID-19: Why Is It Mild for Some, Deadly for Others?](#)"

**Laura Pinheiro, PhD** presented on *Optimizing the Delivery of Diabetes Management during Breast Cancer Care* at the Department of Medicine Research-in-Progress Seminar Series on June 8, 2020.

**Monika Safford, MD** found that obesity is linked to more serious complications from COVID-19, including in younger people. Read more from NYP Health Matters [here](#) or on WCM's Newsroom [here](#).

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**Monika Safford, MD** was featured in *The Cornell Daily Sun* for her interview on “Race as a Social Determinant of Health: Why Black Populations Are Disproportionately Affected by COVID-19.” Click [here](#) to read more.

**Monika Safford, MD** led discussions on the emerging disparities in COVID care and outcomes, as well as the ongoing research initiatives that are taking place at the Cornell Center for Health Equity during the Diversity COVID-19 Town Hall meeting on April 22, 2020.

**Joseph Shin, MD** presented at the 2020 TEDMED Conference in Boston, March 2020 (pre-COVID), discussing research and advocacy related to child asylum seekers. Some of the preliminary work was presented last year; click [here](#) to read more. The TEDMED talk is scheduled to be released in July 2020; learn more [here](#).

**Joseph Shin, MD** has been working with a network of physicians alongside legal aid and human rights organizations engaged in medical-legal advocacy for people in jails, prisons, and immigration detention centers who are in heightened jeopardy due to unsafe conditions exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are a list of news articles:

1. [“Impending Public Health Disaster”: Leading U.S. Medical and Constitutional Law Experts File Milestone Amicus Brief to Release Detained Immigrants from ICE Detention Facility](#)
2. [Corey Stoughton Lauded for Helping to Free Hundreds of Incarcerated New Yorkers](#)
3. [Doctor Warns of Risks in ICE Detainee Transfers](#)
4. [ICE Ignores Coronavirus Guidelines in Detention, Federal Lawsuit Says. ‘Many will die’](#)
5. [Will ICE Detainees Testify Virtually? Federal Judge Asks Agency ‘to Work Something Out’](#)

**Madeline Sterling, MD** gave a virtual talk on April 22, 2020, at the University of North Carolina’s Center for

Health session entitled “Equity Behind the Scenes and In the Shadows: Essential Employees in COVID-19.” Click [here](#) to read more.

**Madeline Sterling, MD** was featured in the American Heart Association newsroom for her article on “Health Disparities in Rural US: Higher Coronary Artery Disease Death in Women Under 65 and People with Heart Failure.” Click [here](#) to read more.

**Judy Tung, MD** shares tips with NYP Health Matters on how to treat yourself at home if you have COVID-19. Read more [here](#).

[#WhiteCoatsforBlackLives](#) moments of solidarity with Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital teams standing against racism and injustice in our community.



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## The Department of Medicine [#HairstylesForHeroes](#)

initiative raised \$81,025. The funds raised through this effort will be an immediate accelerant to support the academic efforts of trainees and junior faculty, whose work has been impacted, and often delayed, by the need to join the COVID-19 response. This will help support their careers and amplify their work during this next recovery phase. Check out some cool hairstyles from our **GIM faculty!**



## Farewell!

**Benedict Harvey, BS**, Diversity Programs Specialist  
**Geyanne Lui, BS**, Research Assistant  
**Daniela Nilo, BA**, Patient Navigator  
**Caleigh Smith, BS**, Research Assistant

## Congratulations!

**Dr. Deborah Fung** welcomed baby girl Katelyn Leia Fung to the family!



## Welcome to the Team!

### Academic:

**Juveria Abdullah, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine  
**Josef Brejt, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine  
**Laura Chen, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Joshua Heisler, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Alexandra King, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Zachary Mulvihill, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Lily Yan, MD**, Instructor in Medicine  
**Kristina Fernandez, MD**, Chief Resident  
**Ariel Schaap, MD**, Chief Resident  
**Mark Sonnicks, MD**, Chief Resident

### Staff:

**Mackenzie Brown, MPH**, Research Assistant for Dr. Navarro-Millán  
**Noel Higgason, BA**, Research Assistant for Dr. Pinheiro  
**Miranda Metz, BS**, Research Assistant for Dr. McNairy