

General Internal Medicine Newsletter



Message from Division Leadership

Our summer ended with a quiet fall from the COVID-19 perspective, with our second surge in full swing by the holidays. The division continues to provide outstanding clinical care to our ambulatory and hospitalized patients, with and without COVID-19. Equipment shortages have abated and the clinical experience with this disease has deepened, although we continue to await more effective treatments. The arrival of the vaccines has lit the light at the end of a very long tunnel. Please continue to be beacons of reason for your patients, our staff, your friends, and family to answer questions about this vaccine and encourage people to become vaccinated. The pandemic keeps throwing us additional challenges, this time the more transmissible variant, which will likely come to New York City as it will to all corners of the globe. Continued public health practices like wearing masks, physical distancing, and liberal hand-washing and hand-sanitizing could keep this variant at bay while the vaccination campaign rolls out. Remember all the protest marches in spring and summer here in New York City – we saw virtually no upticks in cases attributable to the marches because the great majority were wearing masks and there were attempts to keep six feet apart. We are all very tired of this pandemic, but with any luck, in just a few more months life will become just a bit more normal. I am very much looking forward to seeing your beautiful faces in person rather than just on a Zoom screen. I am so impressed with your extraordinary fortitude and deep commitment to our profession. We have an incredible division – enjoy reading the updates and accomplishments of our colleagues. And thank you!

Monika Safford, MD | Chief, GIM

Research Updates

Erica Phillips, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, and Co-PI **John Leonard, MD**, were awarded from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society for their project on *BRIDGE (Blood Cancer Research Initiative Developing Greater Engagement) with Community*

Patients. The award duration is January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2022, in the amount of \$625,000.

Peggy Leung, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, received the 2020 COVID-19 Health Equity Initiative Award for her project on *Identifying and Outreaching to High Risk Ambulatory Patients during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. The award duration is September 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021, in the amount of \$10,500.



Christopher Gonzalez, MD, Fellow in Medicine, received the 2020 COVID-19 Health Equity Initiative Award to study *Social Distancing among Hispanic Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. The award duration is September 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021, in the amount of \$13,682.



Susan Daniel, PhD, Gary Whittaker, PhD, and Monika Safford, MD, were awarded a COVID-19 Fast Grant for their project on *Calcium Channel Blockers and COVID-19* in the amount of \$132,000 from December 1, 2020, through May 31, 2021. Read more [here](#).

Matthew McCarthy, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, received a one-year subaward to lead the WCM site of the *Randomized, Blinded, Controlled Trial of the Safety and Efficacy of Multiple Therapeutics for the Treatment of COVID-19 in Hospitalized Adults (ACTIV-1)*, sponsored by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute in the amount of \$89,500.

Parag Goyal, MD, Justin Choi, MD, Laura Pinheiro, PhD, and Monika Safford, MD, continued to lead the division's COVID-19 Registry, which has resulted in over a dozen reports, many in high-impact journals and led by investigators throughout the college. The registry

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was recently featured in Cornell University's *Chronicle*, see [here](#).

Primary Care Innovation (PCI) Program

The Primary Care Innovation Program of the Division of General Internal Medicine is pleased to invite submissions of one-year project applications. The primary goal of this opportunity is to support pilot novel and innovative education and research projects in the broad field of primary care that will lead to competitive extramural grant applications, or publications in high-impact journals. The PCI Program intends to commit \$100,000 to fund 3-4 faculty awards (up to \$25,000 each), 3 resident/fellow awards (up to \$5,000 each), and 4 medical student awards (up to \$2,500 each).

Proposals are due March 1, 2021, at 1:00 pm EST. The funding period is anticipated to be July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022. Please submit applications to gimipci@med.cornell.edu. For more information, visit careinnovation.weill.cornell.edu.

SAVE THE DATE! Virtual 4th Annual Primary Care & Hospital Medicine Innovations Symposium will be held on Thursday, May 27, 2021!

Education Updates

Ernie Esquivel, MD, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, was awarded by the Board of Overseers as the Gary M. Sumers Education Scholar effective January 1, 2021. This appointment recognizes Dr. Esquivel's excellence in medical education at Weill Cornell, as well as his national leadership in support of medical clerkship training. His contributions to medical education are outstanding and highly valued.



Cornell Center for Health Equity (CCHEq)

The [Cornell Center for Health Equity](#) (CCHEq) is committed to the pursuit of health equity. We host a series of Health Equity Seminars on the first Friday of

the month. Sessions are broadcast via webinar for remote attendees. These colloquia are intended for center members to share their work on various equity-focused and social justice issues and obtain multi-disciplinary input on works in progress. [Recordings of seminars](#) are now accessible on the Cornell Center for Health Equity website.

On **Friday, January 8, 2021**, Sidney Hankerson, MD, MBA, Co-Director of the Columbia University Wellness Center and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center, will be discussing "Partnering with Black Churches to Promote Mental Health Equity." To register for this Health Equity Seminar, click [here](#).

Visit the website today to [become a member](#) and learn more about [center initiatives](#).

The New York State Department of Health Bureau of Cancer Prevention and Control has awarded two Community Cancer Prevention projects to **Erica Phillips, MD**. As proposed under these projects, **Kellie Jack, MPH**, Program Manager of Community Outreach and Engagement Core of the CCHEq, will develop a colon cancer awareness and screening event, which will take place at the end of March. **Francesse Antoine, MPH**, will be leading a series of breast health education training programs for 10 new peer health educators, who will navigate at-risk women in their social networks to mammography at NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist and NewYork-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital.

Diversity Center of Excellence (DCoE)

The Diversity Center of Excellence has hosted over 15 virtual events from October through December and has reached trainees from undergraduates to fellows and faculty. Our newest team member, **Lawrence Onyekwere, BS**, Diversity Programs Associate, worked with **Dr. Andrea Card**, faculty lead of the Pre-Medical Diversity Initiatives, to coordinate a robust

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programming series for college students affiliated with the six linkage colleges. The series reached 330 pre-medical students with the support of GIM faculty and additional partners. The Dining with Doctors series went virtual this year and we were joined by **Dr. Susana Morales**, resident **Drs. Aiya Aboubakr** and **Choumika Simonis**, and Health Equity Research Fellow **Dr. Christopher Gonzalez**. We also launched a new programming series in October called Dialogues in Health, which included participation from **Drs. Andrea Card** and **Anthony Ogedegbe**.

We also welcomed new medical and PhD students, residents, fellows, and faculty at the Diversity Mentoring Cascade. The first virtual session was held on October 6 for 73 participants. The second session on November 10 began with a presentation by **Dr. Susana Morales** entitled “Personal Journeys: Dimensions of Self and Reliance” and was attended by 60 participants. There were four additional events for medical students—a seminar on the Patient-Centered Care and Health Equity Area of Concentration on October 22, the annual Clinical Skills Series workshop hosted with the Minority Housestaff Committee on November 19, and our partner Black and Latino Men in Medicine (BLMiM) hosted a general body meeting on December 15.

Make Your Match, a diversity open house for underrepresented medical students about the residency match process, has been taking place for 20 years with the Minority Housestaff Committee and Department of Medicine. This year we had record attendance at our first virtual Make Your Match, which had 275 participants from around the world and 16 WCM-NYP residency programs. The Internal Medicine breakout session was able to connect with 58 participants in small groups led by 2 faculty and a resident, which included **Chair Anthony Hollenberg**, **Program Director Kirana Gudi**, and 34 additional faculty and residents.

General Internal Medicine faculty and trainees are invited to join us to mentor pre-medical students by

sharing their medical journey or participating in short-term mentoring. Email dcoe-premed@med.cornell.edu for upcoming dates and opportunities to volunteer and mentor the next generation of primary care doctors.

Quality Improvement Academy (QIA)

As QIA closes out the year, we are excited to announce that we are now accepting applications for the class of 2022. If you are interested in applying, [click here](#). The application deadline is **January 8, 2021**. To learn more about QIA and our initiatives, please visit us on [our website](#).

Honors & Awards

Kimberly Bloom-Feshbach, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Section of Hospital Medicine, was the recipient of a generous donation to lead initiatives to foster humanism in medicine. Her work tackles issues of culture change in academic medicine, communication, ethics, equity, and the doctor-patient relationship. The grant has fueled Dr. Bloom-Feshbach’s teaching locally and nationally as an educator with VitalTalk; she has trained hundreds of clinicians and trainees to lead difficult conversations, such as empathically sharing serious news, and exploring with patients and families what matters most at the end of life. Thanks in part to the donor’s generous support, Dr. Bloom-Feshbach has also been able to develop programming and research in group peer mentoring, a novel paradigm to promote vitality, career advancement, diversity, and equity for physicians and investigators. In this work, she facilitates faculty development in Hospital Medicine, and studies this methodology as a qualitative researcher with the NIH-funded C-Change Mentoring and Leadership Institute at Brandeis. This gift has also helped Dr. Bloom-Feshbach launch the Virtual Hospitalist Program, harnessing technology to enhance communication with seriously ill patients and their families.

Ramin Asgary, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, was awarded the status of Fellow of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene

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(ASTMH) during the 2020 annual meeting ceremony. This status is awarded to individuals with decades of excellence in and service to international health and tropical medicine and to the ASTMH. It is the highest prestigious award of the ASTMH society, which is the oldest international society in tropical medicine and hygiene, founded in 1903 with thousands of members, nationally and internationally. The overall number of members with fellow status (FASTMH) is around 200.

Publications

Ramin Asgary, MD [Evaluating Smartphone Strategies for Reliability, Reproducibility, and Quality of VIA for Cervical Cancer Screening in the Shiselweni Region of Eswatini: A Cohort Study](#)

Ramin Asgary, MD [Evaluating Underpinning, Complexity and Implications of Ethical Situations in Humanitarian Operations: Qualitative Study Through the Lens of Career Humanitarian Workers](#)

Nell Eisenberg, MD [Diphtheria Antitoxin Administration, Outcomes, and Safety: Response to a Diphtheria Outbreak in Cox's Bazar Bangladesh](#)

Parag Goyal, MD [Clinical Characteristics of Covid-19 in New York City](#)

Lisa Kern, MD [Ambulatory Care Fragmentation and Subsequent Hospitalization](#)

Lisa Kern, MD [Healthcare Fragmentation and Incident Acute Coronary Heart Disease Events: A Cohort Study](#)

Lisa Kern, MD (Evgenia Makovkina, MD) [Understanding How Providers and Staff Make Decisions About Where to Refer Their Patients](#)

Fred Pelzman, MD [A Symptom-Directed Paradigm for the Evaluation and Management of Upper Respiratory Tract Infections](#)

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

Alexis Vien, MD Impact of a Novel Hospital-Based Opioid Stewardship Program on Non-Surgical Acute Pain Management in the Hospital (*JGIM link coming soon*)

Lily Yan, MD [Impact of Expanded Medicaid Eligibility on the Diabetes Continuum of Care Among Low-Income Adults: A Difference-in-Differences Analysis](#)

Appointments & Promotions

Effective December 1, 2020, the Division of General Internal Medicine is pleased to announce the promotion of **Renuka Gupta, MD**, to Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine on the pathway of clinical achievement with an area of excellence in clinical expertise and innovation.

GIM Grand Rounds

GIM Grand Rounds takes place every first Thursday of the month. **Ian Kronish, MD**, Florence Irving Associate Professor of Medicine at Columbia University, presented on October 1, 2020, on *Remote Patient Monitoring in the ACN: Is Now the Right Time?* **Mary-Ann Etiebet, MD**, Lead and Executive Director at Merck for Mothers, presented on November 5, 2020, on *Ending Preventable Maternal Deaths: Translating Evidence into Impact*. **Brita Roy, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at Yale School of Medicine, presented on *Collective Well-being: A Framework to Improve Population Health*. Visit our website [here](#) to learn more.

Spread the Word

Monika Safford, MD, was an invited panelist at the Utah Translational Hypertension Symposium *Hypertension in the COVID-19 Pandemic* on October 8, 2020. She was also invited to give a talk at the Sociedade Brasileira de Oncologia Clinica/American Association for Cancer Research Joint Congress: A Translational Approach to Clinical Oncology, titled *COVID-19 and Cancer*, on October 30, 2020. She was invited to give a talk on *COVID-19 and Obesity* during Obesity Week (November 2–6, 2020), and she also gave Grand Rounds at LMH on December 1, 2020, on *Health Disparities and COVID*.

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Laura Pinheiro, PhD and **Evgeniya Reshetnyak, PhD's** abstract *Racial Disparities in Preventable Adverse Outcomes: A National Survey of Older Adults in the U.S* was featured in the Fifth Annual Department of Medicine Research Retreat on October 5, 2020.

Judy Tung, MD, Associate Dean for Faculty Development, presented at the Weill Cornell Medicine Diversity Town Hall on *Experiences of Anti-Asian Xenophobia Amidst a Pandemic* on October 14, 2020.

Susana Morales, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, was featured on the Society of General Internal Medicine forum for her perspective on the 2020 election. To read more, click [here](#). Dr. Morales was also invited onto the Buzzsprout podcast for their *A Different Kind of Leader* episode; listen [here](#).

Matthew McCarthy, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, delivered a keynote address on October 28, 2020, at Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine Education Symposium on *Rethinking Resilience*. He gave Grand Rounds on November 9, 2020, at the University of Texas Health San Antonio on *Ethical Perspectives on COVID-19*, and was invited to lecture on *Responding to an Outbreak: Lessons from COVID-19* at New York University Stern School of Business on December 2, 2020.

Madeline Sterling, MD's study on how disease-specific training benefits home care workers was featured in the *Cornell Chronicle*. To read more, click [here](#).

Joseph Shin, MD, presented at the United Nations Human Rights Day special webinar on December 10, 2020.

Cornell statisticians **Monika Safford, MD**, **Mangala Rajan, MBA**, and **Laura Pinheiro, PhD**, team up to fight COVID-19. Read more [here](#).

Drs. Judy Tung, Pamela Charney, Harold Chin, and Lauren Acinapura received donations from patients for their compassion and skills towards patient care.

The **GIM Internship Program** application is now open! We are excited to start accepting students for 14 programs—please disseminate this information to anyone that might be interested. Click [here](#) to apply!

Eri Telegrafi, BAA, Finance Manager, was nominated and selected as a STAR Performer, and **Deanna Joa**, Administrative Coordinator, was nominated as a Bronze STAR Performer for the second year in the Weill Department of Medicine. Keep up the excellent work!

Welcome to the Team!

Academic:

Ilana Prior Redmond, MD, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at LMH/AIM

Staff:

Mary Acosta, Senior Patient Care Coordinator, IHW

Yuliana Dominguez Paez, BS, Research Assistant for Dr. Navarro-Millán

Norma Dray, Massage Therapist

Stephane Labossiere, Research Coordinator for Dr. Shapiro

Jennifer Lau, Research Data Analyst

Veronica Rivera, Patient Coordinator, IHW

Farewell!

Ryan Ahern, MD

Wesley Jacobsson, BS

Digna Thompson, Brian Jerez & Yvette Guzman