Weill Cornell Medicine
Joan and Sanford I. Weill Department of Medicine

Eleventh Annual Weill Department of Medicine Research Retreat

Tuesday, October 13th, 2026 | 12:30 pm–5:00 pm

Zoom Link: https://weillcornell.zoom.us/j/94554784065

Keynote Speaker

David Fajgenbaum, MD, MBA, MSc
Co-Founder and President of Every Cure,
Associate Professor of Medicine, Translational Medicine & Human Genetics at the University of Pennsylvania

Organizers

Kyu Rhee, MD, PhD
Professor and Vice Chairman of Research

Gregory Sonnenberg, PhD
Professor and Associate Vice Chairman of Research

Myles Wolf, MD
Professor and Weill Chairman of Medicine

Executive Committee

Marshall J. Glesby, MD, PhD
Professor of Medicine

Iliyan D. Iliev, PhD
Professor of Immunology in Medicine

Brad Jones, PhD
Associate Professor of Immunology in Medicine

Lisa Kern, MD
Professor of Medicine

Tatyana Kushner, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine

James C. Lo, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Medicine

Jyoti S. Mathad, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine

Thangamani Muthukumar, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine

Hasina Outtz Reed, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Cary Reid, MD, PhD
Professor of Medicine

Joseph M. Scandura, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Medicine

Martin Shapiro, MD, PhD
Professor of Medicine

Jian Ruan, MD, PhD
Professor of Clinical Medicine

Meeting Description

The Eleventh Annual Department of Medicine Research Retreat will provide a distinct forum to bring together a diverse range of established and emerging faculty and trainees and experts in complimentary fields to foster and expand our research efforts. The conference will feature a broad range of faculty with talks reflecting different career stages and research fields.

Participation by young investigators, trainees and residents is strongly encouraged. The central goals of the conference are to:

1) Highlight the various research programs within the Department— specifically to promote interaction between young and senior investigators and exchange of ideas which will shape the future direction of research within the Department

2) Foster the development of the next generation of researchers by encouraging participation of residents and post-doctoral trainees

3) Promote interactions and collaborations amongst our research faculty.

The conference will provide time for formal and informal discussions allowing for widespread participation of conference attendees at various career stages.

The full program and speaker bios are listed in the following pages below.

weillcornell.org

Program

Tuesday, October 13th, 2026

12:30 pm

Introduction | Weill Greenberg 2nd Floor

Dr. Kyu Rhee, MD, PhD
Dr. Gregory Sonnenberg, PhD
Dr. Myles Wolf, MD

12:40 pm

Junior Faculty Presentations | Weill Greenberg 2nd Floor

Norihiro Goto, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology
"Lineage Plasticity Fuels Colorectal Cancer Metastasis"

Darko Barisic, PhD
Assistant Professor of Cancer Biology Research in Medicine, Division of Hematology and Oncology
"Targeting Oncogenic Chromatin Remodeling Across Cancers"

1:10 pm

Senior Faculty Presentation | Weill Greenberg 2nd Floor

Madeline Sterling, MD, MPH, MS, FAHA
Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of General Internal Medicine
"Improving Cardiovascular Outcomes from Home Health to Primary Care: Research, Innovation, and Future Directions"

1:30 pm

Abstract Oral Presentations | Weill Greenberg 2nd Floor

Chou Chou, MD
Instructor in Medicine, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine
"The Thrombin Receptor PAR1 Regulates Immune Cell Entry Into Lung Lymphatic Vessels via Endothelial Cell Junction Permeabilization and Exocytosis of the Chemokine CCL21"

Jennifer Claytor, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology
"Bedside, Point-of-Care Intestinal Ultrasound has High Sensitivity to Detect Lower GI Acute GVHD and Enables Early Risk Stratification"

David Thomas, MD, PhD
Instructor in Medicine, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine
"Immune Mediators of Liver Injury and Mitochondrial Dysfunction in Influenza Infection"

2:00 – 3:30 pm

Poster Session | Griffis Faculty Club

3:30 pm

Break

4:00 pm

Keynote Lecture | Uris Auditorium

David Fajgenbaum, MD, MBA, MSc

Co-Founder and President of Every Cure; Associate Professor of Medicine, Translational Medicine & Human Genetics at the University of Pennsylvania

"From Chasing my Cure to Every Cure"

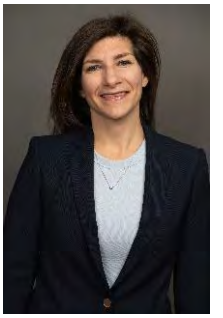
Our Speakers



Norihiro Goto, MD, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology and the Jill Roberts Institute for Research in Inflammatory Bowel Disease at Weill Cornell Medicine. He is a physician-scientist with a clinical background in gastroenterology and a research focus on stem cell and cancer biology. Dr. Goto graduated from Kyoto University and completed his residency and fellowship training in gastroenterology. He then earned his Ph.D. from the Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine, where he elucidated the distinctions between cancer stem cells and normal stem cells. Dr. Goto conducted his postdoctoral research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he identified critical niche cells that support intestinal stem cells and uncovered mechanisms by which early colorectal cancers initiate immune evasion. He is a recipient of the NIH K99/R00 Pathway to Independence Award. In 2025, Dr. Goto launched his laboratory at Weill Cornell Medicine, where he investigates the role of "niche cells"—specialized components of the tissue microenvironment that regulate the behavior of stem cells and tumor cells. To explore the dynamic interactions between niche cells and intestinal stem cells, Dr. Goto has developed a suite of innovative tools, including organoid–niche cell co-culture systems, novel reporter mouse models, and orthotopic organoid transplantation techniques. The Goto Lab aims to uncover novel mechanisms driving gastrointestinal diseases, including metastatic colorectal cancer and inflammatory bowel disease, as well as fundamental biological processes such as stem cell aging.



Darko Barisic, PhD is a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Cancer Biology at Weill Cornell Medicine, where he is a faculty member in the Departments of Medicine and Pharmacology and the Meyer Cancer Center. His research focuses on how chromatin remodeling complexes control access to the genome and how their disruption contributes to lymphoma and other cancers. His work has been published in journals including Nature and Cancer Cell, and his research has been supported by the NIH, the American Cancer Society, the Leukemia Research Foundation, and several other foundations. He established the Barisic Lab at Weill Cornell in 2024, where his group studies chromatin regulation from the level of individual regulatory elements to the organization of whole chromosomes.



Madeline R. Sterling, MD, MPH, MS is a primary care physician and health services researcher. She is an Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine. Her research aims to improve health and healthcare delivery for adults with cardiovascular disease by optimizing the care they receive at home and in primary care. To do so, she focuses on home health care, and leveraging the home care workforce to improve outcomes for adults with heart failure, and other cardiovascular diseases. In addition to observational studies, she leads several clinical and implementation trials locally and nationally. Dr. Sterling has authored more than 150 peer-reviewed publications, and her research has been supported by federal and foundation funding from the NIH-National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Science Foundation, American Heart Association (AHA), Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and others. At Cornell she holds several leadership positions including serving as the Director of the Initiative on Home Care Work at Cornell University which spans 3 cornell campuses, an Associate Chief for Faculty Development in the Division of General Internal Medicine, and the Director of Paid Caregiving for the Program of the Study and Support of Caregivers in the Division of Geriatrics. At the national level, Dr. Sterling served on the Society of General Internal Medicine's national council and as the Inaugural Chair of the AHA's Primary Care Science Committee and she is a member of their Implementation Science Committee and Outpatient Quality Advisory Committee. Through these roles, she has shaped national scientific statements and recently served on the Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic (CKM) clinical guidelines. She also serves as an Associate Editor at Circulation: Population Health and Outcomes.



Chou Chou, MD is an Instructor in Medicine in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. He received his undergraduate degree from Princeton University. He completed his medical training, residency training, and fellowship training at Weill Cornell, where he served as Chief Fellow. His experience as a frontline provider in NYC at Weill Cornell during the COVID19 epidemic galvanized him to become physician-scientist focused on the mechanisms of acute lung injury. He joined the lab of Dr. Hasina Outtz Reed in 2023 and studies the role of the lung lymphatics in regulating the host response to acute lung

injury. His current research investigates how the thrombin receptor Protease Activated Receptor 1 (PAR1) regulates immune cell trafficking in mouse and human lung lymphatics. His long-term goal is to become a leader in the immunomodulatory functions of the lung lymphatics and find new treatments for patients with severe lung injury.



Jennifer Claytor, MD is a gastroenterologist and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine, where she specializes in inflammatory bowel disease and gastrointestinal complications of cancer therapy. She received her undergraduate degree in literature from Yale University and her medical degree from the University of North Carolina. She then completed internal medicine residency at the University of California, San Francisco and fellowship in gastroenterology and inflammatory bowel disease at Mount Sinai Hospital, including a T32 research fellowship. Her research focuses on improving the diagnosis, risk stratification, and treatment of gastrointestinal graft-versus-host disease and other immune-mediated intestinal disorders, with particular interests in intestinal ultrasound, biomarkers, and translational tissue-based approaches.



David G. Thomas, MD, PhD is an Instructor in Medicine in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. He graduated from the Medical Scientist Training Program at Columbia University and trained in Internal Medicine and Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine. His research concerns mechanisms of multiorgan injury and metabolic dysfunction in severe respiratory viral infections. This area of investigation is informed by time spent caring for patients with acute and chronic pulmonary infections, whose experience is shaped by the metabolic burden of systemic inflammation. His current work aims to define cellular and molecular mediators that transfer inflammatory signaling from the lung to extrapulmonary organs such as the liver during influenza infection. His long-term goal is to support the development of therapeutic interventions targeting systemic generalization of inflammatory signaling to prevent multiorgan injury in severe respiratory infections.



Keynote Speaker: David Fajgenbaum, MD, MBA, MSc is Co-Founder and President of Every Cure and a physician-scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is one of the youngest faculty members ever to receive tenure at Penn Medicine. A patient battling a rare and life-threatening disease, Dr. Fajgenbaum discovered a repurposed treatment that saved his own life—a story he chronicled in his national bestselling memoir 'Chasing My Cure', which is being adapted into a film by Forrest Gump producer Wendy Finerman. He has since advanced 13 more repurposed treatments for cancer and rare diseases and co-founded Every Cure to unlock more hidden cures from existing medicines. Every Cure has received over $100M from ARPA-H and TED's Audacious Project. Earlier in his career, Dr. Fajgenbaum co-founded the Castleman Disease Collaborative Network (CDCN), which has transformed the research and treatment of Castleman disease and serves as a model for accelerating progress against other rare conditions.

One of the youngest recipients of multiple top NIH and FDA grants, Dr. Fajgenbaum has authored over 100 scientific papers in leading journals, including The New England Journal of Medicine, The Lancet, and The Journal of Clinical Investigation. He has been profiled by The New York Times, Good Morning America, TODAY, and Forbes 30 Under 30 and has received numerous honors, including the 2016 Atlas Award alongside then VP Joe Biden, 2022 NDRI Service to Science Award alongside Nobel Laureates Katalin Kariko and Drew Weissman, 2023 Philadelphia Citizen of the Year Award, and selection to the 2025 TIME100 Health list of the world's most influential people in health. Dr. Fajgenbaum earned a BS from Georgetown University, MSc from the University of Oxford, MD from the University of Pennsylvania, and MBA from The Wharton School. While in college, David was a Division I quarterback and founded and led a national support network for grieving college students.