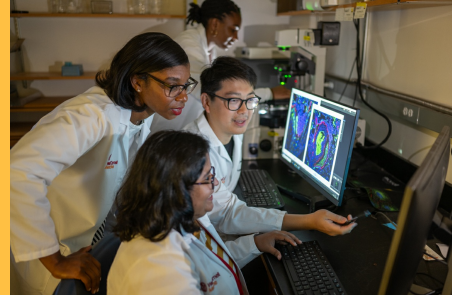




What's New In Medicine

November/December 2024

News & insights from across the Weill Department of Medicine - share your latest staff and research updates with [Larissa Breedlove](#).



Notables

9th Annual Research Retreat Day Addresses Global Health Disparities and More

In a testament to its dedication to fostering a culture of collaboration and mentorship, the Weill Department of Medicine's (WDOM) 9th annual Research Retreat Day attracted 200 faculty, residents, and postdoctoral trainees throughout its day-long schedule of lectures and poster presentations on Nov. 1.

Dr. David Meltzer, a globally renowned researcher in health economics, delivered the keynote address titled "Integrated Inpatient and Outpatient Care for Socioeconomically Diverse Medicare Patients at Increased Risk of Hospitalization: Results from Two Randomized Trials of the Comprehensive Care Program."

Dr. Sasha Fahme opened the day discussing her research on the complex health challenges of Syrian refugee women. Titled "Developing a Refugee Women's Health Research Program in a Complex Humanitarian Setting: Lessons Learned and Future Directions," Dr. Fahme shared mixed-method findings investigating the structural determinants of sexual health violence among Syrian refugee women in an urban refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon. [Read More](#)

Dr. Randy Longman Receives NIH Director's Transformative Research Award



Dr. Randy Longman recently received the [NIH Director's Transformative Research Award](#) to continue his work developing the tools needed to understand how the gut microbiome drives metabolic pathways. The award will provide about \$5.6 million over five years to Dr. Longman and his co-principal investigators, [Dr. Chun-Jun Guo](#), also in the division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology, and [Dr. Aaron Wright](#), the Schofield Endowed Chair in Biomedical Science and professor at Baylor University.

"The NIH Director's Transformative Research Award identifies areas in science where there is an unmet need and an opportunity through collaborative science to make transformative breakthroughs," Dr. Longman said. "It's an exciting opportunity for three scientists with three distinct scientific programs to come together to accelerate our understanding of the functional impact of gut microbes on human health."



Above: **Nila Uthirasamy, M.D.** (PGY2) stands with her poster presentation, "The Influence of Structural Racism on Cardiovascular Health among Black and White Americans."



Above: **Dr. Myles Wolf** (Chair), keynote speaker **Dr. David Meltzer** & **Dr. Steven Lipkin** (Vice Chair of Research.)



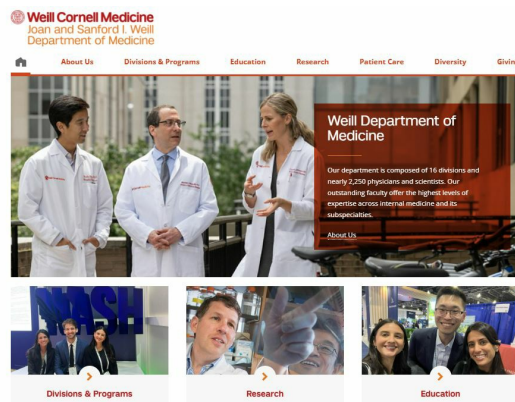
Established in 2009, the award funds innovative but inherently risky research endeavors that have the potential to overturn existing scientific paradigms or create new ones. [Read More](#)

Refreshed Homepage Features Residency Photo Contest Winner



Congratulations to **Kristen Fadel, M.D.**, a third-year resident who recently took the winning photo in our Residency Photo Contest with this selfie taken at [ACG 2024](#).

The photo is featured on our newly refreshed [Weill Department of Medicine homepage](#). Stay tuned for continued web updates in 2025!



Updated Hep B Vaccine More Effective For People with HIV



A newer vaccine against hepatitis B virus was clearly superior to an older vaccine type in inducing a protective antibody response among people living with HIV who didn't respond to prior vaccination, according to the results of an international study led by [Dr. Kristen Marks](#), an associate professor of medicine and infectious diseases specialist in the division of Infectious Diseases in the Weill Department of Medicine.

The [study](#), reported Dec. 1 in JAMA, showed that hepatitis B vaccine with a cytosine phosphoguanine adjuvant, known as HepB-CpG, (trade name Heplisav-B) induced protective levels of antibodies in up to 99.4% of the subjects who received it.

Such protection was seen in only 80.6% of subjects who received hepatitis B vaccine with an aluminum hydroxide adjuvant, known as HepB-alum, (trade name Engerix-B). [Read More](#)

Study Details Surprising Biological Mechanisms Underlying Severe COVID-19



Severe COVID-19 arises in part from the SARS-CoV-2 virus's impact on mitochondria, tiny oxygen-burning power plants in cells which can help trigger a cascade of organ- and immune system-damaging events, suggests a study by investigators at Weill Cornell Medicine, among others. Severe COVID-19 has been considered an inflammatory "cytokine storm" condition in which the immune response to a viral infection becomes excessive, flooding the bloodstream and tissues with immune signaling proteins at levels that cause lung-impairing inflammation and other signs and symptoms.

The [new study](#), published Nov. 27 in PNAS, extends the scientific understanding of the molecular pathways driving this storm. Weill Cornell Medicine researchers led by [Dr. Robert Schwartz](#) provided much of the deidentified patient material, including nasopharyngeal swabs and autopsied organ samples, as well as COVID-19 animal models, and contributed to their analysis. [Read More](#)

Quick Takes

The division of Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine held its first-ever [summit on advanced lung disease and transplantation](#).

In November 2024, numerous pulmonary faculty attended the [American College of Chest Physicians' \(CHEST\) Annual Meeting](#) in Boston.



Congratulations to **Dr. Meredith Turetz**, above, who received a Distinguished Educator Award at the event.



A diverse team of clinicians and support staff in the division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism's **EndoMet Racial Justice Taskforce** participated this past fall in Weill Cornell Medicine's Third Annual Fair, an annual street fair on Third Avenue and 74th Street on the Upper East Side. The event featured hands-on activities, health screenings giveaways, and more.

The EndoMet Racial Justice Taskforce, including, from left, Weill Cornell Medicine medical student **Hanix Daniel**, Medical Assistant **John Ochigbo**, **Dr. Anyanate Gwendolyne Jack**, **Marieka McLeod, LPN**, and **Regina Hanna, RN**, provided information on healthy eating and clinical outreach initiatives. (Not pictured: **DeaLana Woods, LPN** and Weill Cornell Medicine medical student **Tania Pena Ortiz**.)

Through a collaboration with **Dr. Orli Etingin** and a grant from the **Friedman Center for Clinical Nutrition and Inflammation**, visitors received Weill Cornell Medicine totes and notepads. Weill Department of Medicine faculty and staff interested in participating in community events in 2025 can contact **Dr. Jack**.

Cheers to our Honorees

Dr. Shahin Raffi was recently selected as the Research Honoree at the **Breakthrough**

T1D (formerly JDRF) Greater New York Metro 51st Promise Gala, held Nov. 14. Dr. Raffi is working to develop an alternative method for delivering insulin-producing cells to replace the islets lost in Type 1 diabetes. [Read More](#)

Dr. Laura Pinheiro has been named a **Cancer Moonshot Scholar** by the National Cancer Institute. Dr. Pinheiro's research program is focused on reducing health inequities for adults with cancer. [Read More](#)

Dr. Anyanate Gwendolyne Jack is among eight emerging health equity changemakers from across New York City recently selected to join **the inaugural cohort** for the **Health Equity Fellowship**. The program provides fellows with the opportunity to deepen their leadership capacities while developing and implementing Action Learning Projects that tackle pressing health equity challenges. Each fellow will partner with a community-based organization and collaborate on an initiative to advance care and improve health outcomes within their served community.

Numerous Weill Department of Medicine clinicians were honored during National Advanced Practice Provider (APP) Week this fall with Weill Cornell Medicine's third annual **APP Grand Rounds and Award Ceremony**, hosted by Quality and Patient Safety. Congratulations to **Morgan Burrell, NP** (Cardiology - Teamwork Award), **Emily Finkelman, NP** (Pulmonary - Rising Star Award), **Andrea Herr, NP** (Gastroenterology - Nurse Practitioner of the Year) and **Dr. Carl Crawford** (Gastroenterology - Best Physician Partner to Nurse Practitioners).

Congratulations to our 2024 Star Performers!

Congratulations to our **2024 Star Performers**! Last month, the Weill Department of Medicine held its first reception for the **Star Performer employee recognition program** since 2019. In recognizing clinical, non-faculty providers and administrative staff from our central administration and physician practices, the Star Performer program celebrates the core of our institution. Our Department is fortunate to have a diverse team of administrators, office support staff, and providers with the grit, talent, and commitment necessary to deliver critical support to our patients, physicians, and Department.

A special presentation honoring our recipients is below:

2024 Star Performers [CWID required]

All winners received honorary medallions and gift cards. To recognize someone in your area, please **submit a nomination** for 2025, which restarts in January.

Cheers for Peers is a peer recognition program to help doctors recognize their colleagues for going the extra mile.

Send a big "thank you" to your colleague, fellow or resident for brightening your day by completing our **short survey**.

Sponsored Research Awards

Dr. Leandro Cerchietti, division of Hematology and Medical Oncology, has received funding from the National Cancer Institute for a project titled "Epigenetic basis and therapeutic targeting of the unique lymphoma immunological niche" in the amount of **\$12.4 million**.

Dr. Lisa Kern, division of General Internal Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute on Aging for a project titled "Understanding Ambulatory Care Utilization in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ACUA)" in the amount of **\$4.1 million**.

Dr. Shashi Kapadia, division of Infectious Diseases, has received funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse for a project titled "Universal HCV screening in pregnancy: Examining testing uptake and HCV Care," in the amount of **\$3.4 million**.

Dr. Nicholas Collins, division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, has received funding

from the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases for a project titled "Harnessing nutrition to enhance vaccine responses" in the amount of **\$3.2 million**.

Dr. Vered Stearns, division of Hematology & Medical Oncology, has received funding from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) for a project titled "Bridging Gaps and Transforming CARE for Young Breast Cancer Survivors and those with Metastatic Disease" in the amount of **\$2.3 million**.

Dr. Daniel Shalev, division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute on Aging for a project titled "CoCM-PAL: Adapting Collaborative Care for Older Adults with Serious Illness and Comorbid Depression or Anxiety Receiving Ambulatory Palliative Care" in the amount of **\$1.2 million**.

Research Highlights

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