Feature Articles

Dr. Brad Taylor and his research team are searching for the answers to some very important questions about pain.

Under the direction of Dr. Charles Luke, our AIPPS delivers 24-hour high-quality perioperative pain management for UPMC’s surgical/trauma patients using a multidisciplinary approach.
Greetings to all readers, including alumni; current and former faculty, staff, and trainees; and friends and colleagues of our department. With great enthusiasm, I introduce Nexus, a new e-magazine showcasing our latest news, contributions, accomplishments, and events. Nexus replaces our newsletter and the Pittsburgh Journal of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine (PJAPM). My hopes are to unite the best of both of those publications with some content and format changes. Nexus will feature some of the same sections we included in the newsletter and the journal, as well as some regular feature articles and more photos. Thank you to our readers and department members who submitted ideas for this the name of this new publication after we solicited them in the last issue of our newsletter. I liked the name Nexus because its multiple meanings simultaneously address several aspects of our mission and vision. In cell biology, “nexus” refers to a specialized area of the cell membrane involved in intercellular communication and adhesion, a reference to some of the research going on in our department. It can also mean a center or focus. But it also refers to a connection, a link – which speaks to one of the goals I want to achieve with this new publication – to strengthen the relationships and connections between current and former members of our department.

It’s been quite a long time since we’ve published an update – our last newsletter went out in May 2019 and the last issue of PJAPM went out in July 2019. After spending some time deciding on a new name and format, we, like the rest of the world, were faced with the challenges of COVID-19. In this first issue of Nexus, we include a photo feature about our experiences during the pandemic, which are still ongoing. Feature articles included in this first issue spotlight the research lab of Dr. Bradley Taylor and Dr. Charles Luke and our Acute Interventional Perioperative Pain & Regional Anesthesiology service. News in this first issue covers the Pitt fiscal year 2021 time period (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021). Going forward, we aim to publish Nexus quarterly or twice a year. We welcome photos, updates, article proposals, and submissions from all current and former members of the department. Anyone interested in submitting material for inclusion in Nexus should contact Christine Burr.

I sincerely hope you enjoy the first issue of Nexus. Thank you to all our readers for your continued interest in our work.
AT A GLANCE:

Clinical Care

300k
APPROX. TOTAL ANNUAL CASES

220
FACULTY MEMBERS

450+
CRNAs

164
OFFSITE LOCATIONS COVERED

269
OPERATING ROOMS COVERED

63
GI LABS COVERED
AT A GLANCE:

**Education**

One of the Largest Anesthesiology Residency Programs in the US

- 80 Residents
- 40 Clinical Fellows
- 9 Subspecialty Fellowship Programs

94-96% Resident 1st Time ABA Boards Pass Rate (vs. 90% National Avg.)

91% of our residents rated the program as “positive” or “very positive” in 2020
AT A GLANCE:

Research

$27 Million+
IN COMBINED CLINICAL AND BASIC ACTIVE RESEARCH FUNDING AS OF JUNE 2021

1 of only 2 ANESTHESIOLOGY DEPARTMENTS WITH MULTIPLE NIH T32 TRAINING PROGRAMS
The arrival of the pandemic launched an era like no other in the history of our department and the world. In the face of tremendous professional and personal challenges, our exceptional clinical teams continue to inspire awe as they readily learn, adapt, collaborate, innovate, and evolve to overcome the challenges.

UPMC Shadyside

CRNAs Patrick Burke & Jason Bauer, Dr. Daniel Mandell

Sarah Copanzzi, MS, CRNA received the UPMC Physician Services Division’s “You are a Star” Award for her extraordinary work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Sandy Littwin & Sarah Copanzzi

Thank you to the staff at all the below hospitals for providing photos!
LtCol Charles D. Giordano, CRNA, US Air Force Reserves, cared for patients in New York City – one of the areas hardest hit by the COVID-19 epidemic in the US.
UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh

Julianna Watenpool, CRNA & Dr. Igor Semenov

UPMC St. Margaret

CRNAs Jay Belschner & Melissa McConnell

UPMC Passavant

Dr. Charles Lin & Emily Whitco, CRNA

Dr. Chris Hodge & Emily Whitco, CRNA
UPMC Presbyterian

CRNAs Lynette Sikora, Mary Beth Czerniak, Kristy Parrish, Courtney Smith, & Michael Jordan training to intubate a COVID-positive patient.

Andrew Ho (right, with Administrative Fellow Joseph Vermilya), Director of Perioperative Operations, was appointed Operations Manager for UPMC’s COVID-19 Outpatient Collection Center in Pittsburgh’s South Side.

Dr. Theresa Gelzinis; Lynette Sikora, CRNA; Dr. Shawn Beaman

CRNAs Karl love, Haley Tougher, Courtney Smith, and Erica Yawnlis training on proper procedure to don and doff personal protective equipment for a COVID-positive patient.
Expressing Graditude

The clinical teams at our Acute Interventional Perioperative Pain & Regional Anesthesiology sites were surprised to receive lunches from the Brazilian Steakhouse Fogo de Chão.

Passavant CRNAs - Lynn Schubert, Emily Whitco, Nicole Petrusic, Chrissy Spera, Joe Kirby, Dan Seigfried, Greg Romano, Brandan Abati - enjoying “Dr. Fauci donuts” from Emily Whitco.

CRNAs Francis Feld & Brian Jobe holding boxes of chocolate that were donated to Passavant for Easter during COVID.

Kim Donaldson, CRNA & her friend Holly Johnston, who donated lunch from Pizza Grande to the Passavant Anesthesiology Dept.
 Shortly before Christmas, Allison Lewis, MBA, MSN, CRNA, Jessica Price, RN, and OR Nurse Travis Charlton administered vaccines to UPMC Passavant for Anesthesiology and Surgical Services staff who were unable to schedule vaccination appointments. The trio vaccinated over 130 workers! Above; Jessica Price preparing to vaccinate Emily Whitco, MSN, CRNA

Alumni

Our Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine Fellowship Program graduates served all over the country caring for critically ill coronavirus patients or preparing for the COVID-19 surge in their hometowns.

My Heroes

These physicians are my heroes. For the past 14 years, I have had the privilege to work with them during their Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine fellowship. Now they live and work across America, where they are caring for critically ill coronavirus patients or preparing for the COVID-19 surge in their hometown.

A. Murat Kaynar, MD, MPH
Program Director
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine
April 20, 2020

Hassan Aijazi
Seattle, WA

Justin Testi
Milwaukee, WI

Jessica Cassavaugh
Boston, MA

Joseph Shy
Charlotte, NC

Samer Melhem
NYC and now Atlanta, GA

Kathleen Tyson
Philadelphia, PA and now Baltimore, MD

Sridhar Tirunala
Shreveport, LA

Margo Short
Pittsburgh, PA

Sean DeChancie
Pittsburgh, PA

Hernando Gomez
Pittsburgh, PA

Justin Testi
Milwaukee, WI

Jessica Cassavaugh
Boston, MA

Joseph Shy
Charlotte, NC

Kathleen Tyson
Philadelphia, PA and now Baltimore, MD

Sridhar Tirunala
Shreveport, LA

Margo Short
Pittsburgh, PA

Sean DeChancie
Pittsburgh, PA
NEW CENTERS

CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN PAIN CARE

A new Center for Innovation in Pain Care has been established in our department, with Drs. Jacques Chelly and Ajay Wasan appointed as Directors. This Center regroups a number of initiatives, including the previously created Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, a Heron Therapeutics Center of Excellence that is in the works, and research related to innovative mechanisms of action, such as the use of protein transcription inhibitors, to treat acute and chronic pain.

The mission of this Center is to help place our department at the forefront of innovation in pain care by participating in the development of innovative drugs and techniques to manage acute and chronic pain, developing educational programs and workshops to familiarize everyone interested to apply these techniques in their clinical practice; serving as a platform to develop new clinical services; and providing UPMC new and cost-effective ways to manage acute and chronic pain by facilitating patient recovery, improving outcomes, optimizing hospital length of stay, and decreasing hospital readmissions after discharge.

The Center intends to position itself as a thought-leader in innovation in pain medicine and create partnerships with internal stakeholders (UPMC health system and its individual hospitals, other UPMC departments) and external stakeholders (other academic medical centers & health care systems, pharmaceutical industry, startup/joint ventures, foundations, funding agencies). For more information, please visit https://paininnovation.pitt.edu.

CENTER FOR INNOVATING HEMODYNAMIC MONITORING TECHNOLOGIES

In collaboration with the Pitt Department of Bioengineering, we are establishing a Center for Innovating Hemodynamic Monitoring Technologies with the aims to become a sustained force to unite engineers and clinicians to develop, validate, and translate novel hemodynamic monitoring technologies to broadly improve health while training the next generation of cardiovascular technology developers and users. The Center may lead to advanced technologies for monitoring blood pressures and other hemodynamic variables that could help in improving outcomes for patients with a range of cardiovascular diseases. Dr. Aman Mahajan will serve as center director. Dr. Ramakrishna Mukkamala, Professor of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine and Bioengineering, is Clinical Project PI for “Technologies for Advanced Monitoring of Blood Pressures” and Dr. Sanjeev Shroff, Distinguished Professor & Gerald E. Mcginnis Chair in Bioengineering, University of Pittsburgh will serve as the training director.
A Closer Look at the Laboratory of Dr. Bradley Taylor

On the 13th and 14th floor of Pitt’s Biomedical Science Tower (BST), Professor Bradley K. Taylor, PhD, and his research team are searching for the answers to some very important questions about pain. Questions like: How does the body control its own pain? How does short term pain develop into long-term pain? Can existing drugs be repurposed to treat pain?
Dr. Brad Taylor, who joined our department in 2018, has made a considerable impact in the field of chronic pain research. His National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded research laboratory discovers, visualizes, and manipulates pathological changes in brain and spinal circuits that develop in the setting of traumatic injury. His laboratory is closely affiliated with the Pittsburgh Center for Pain Research, a collaborative environment with core investigators in the Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine and the Department of Neurobiology.

A major goal of Dr. Taylor’s team is to understand our body’s endogenous (natural) pain control systems. At their best, opioid receptors can provide long-term relief from postoperative pain, but at their worst, they may contribute to the transition from acute to chronic pain after surgery. “What we believe is that surgery recruits two opposing systems in the spinal cord and perhaps the brain as well – one that promotes pain sensitization and one that promotes pain inhibition. The sensitization – referred to as latent sensitization - is kept at bay by a powerful endogenous opioid receptor system. This opioid system tunes the pain to a level that is appropriate to the situation,” explains Dr. Taylor. In other words, when pain is needed to protect us from additional tissue damage, sensitization is high and endogenous pain inhibition remains low. If we experience pain that is more than protective, then the opioid receptor system can kick in and dampen it. Remarkably, data from the Taylor lab indicates that, once turned on, these opposing systems can remain on for months, if not years. “The problem is,” continues Dr. Taylor, “any dysfunction of the opioid receptors in the ensuing weeks, months, or years after a surgery could lead to a transition to a chronic pain state.”

Currently, the Taylor lab conducts this research using mouse models. For example, an incision to the hindpaw and the underlying muscle leads to a short-lasting sensitivity of the skin to touch, just as is observed in the postoperative patient. To study latent sensitization and the vulnerability to developing chronic pain, the mice can be challenged with the drug naltrexone. Naltrexone blocks the endogenous opioid receptor system, leading to a robust reinstatement of the cutaneous hypersensitivity. Hundreds of these animals can be housed in a somewhat unique facility in the BST that provides the research team with the ability to conduct long-term studies of chronic pain using state-of-the-art live animal imaging and recording technologies, including GCaMP calcium imaging as well as behavioral pharmacology in cre-transgenic mice using optogenetics and chemogenetics – work that is not available in conventional animal facilities.

Remarkably, the Taylor laboratory reported that naltrexone not only reinstated skin hypersensitivity, but also produced behavioral signs of opioid withdrawal, analogous to what happens to an opioid drug-dependent patient who abruptly stops receiving the drug. Dr. Taylor elaborates: “We think that this endogenous opioid receptor activity not only provides analgesia that silences the latent sensitization, but also leads to dependence. Our lab is continuing to study this ‘endogenous opioid receptor dependence’ – it’s a term that we coined…we think that understanding endogenous dependence will help us understand the mechanisms of dependence to addictive narcotics. Such links between
mechanisms of chronic pain and opioid dependence are relevant to the current opioid epidemic.” Some of Dr. Taylor’s work in this area is funded by the NIH Helping to End Addiction Long-term, or the NIH HEAL Initiative, in response to Congress’ mandated expenditure of $500 million a year over at least five years to help deal with the national opioid crisis. It’s been importantly recognized that pain plays a major role in this opioid crisis. “How do people get exposed to opioids in the first place? Because they have the legitimate complaint of pain,” Dr. Taylor points out. “But problems occur when patients are prescribed more than a couple of days of opioids for postoperative pain.” These problems include opioid diversion and misuse (the latter word replacing “abuse” and “addiction”), to which some people are genetically prone.

Dr. Taylor stresses the importance of recognizing the difference between dependence and misuse/addiction. “Dependence is not necessarily bad. It just means that continued opioid use is necessary to prevent the occurrence of withdrawal symptoms. I’m not as concerned with opioid use in patients who have become dependent by achieving pain control due to terminal cancer or are in end-of-life hospice care. More importantly, misuse can lead to addictive behaviors that are devastating to life, well-being, and relationships with other people. These behaviors include stealing from family to buy more drugs. This distinction between dependence and misuse is too often lost and contributes to a damaging societal stigma attached to any form of opioid use, including beneficial uses to treat really severe acute pain or terminal chronic cancer pain.”

With a new initiative that’s in the early stages of development - the Pittsburgh Project to End Opioid Misuse (PPOM) -- the Taylor lab continues to expand its human subjects research program. The project will unite researchers from throughout Pitt, UPMC, and other and neighboring research hospitals who are interested in studying the intersection between chronic pain and opioid misuse. Collaborators will come from a wide variety of medical disciplines like psychology, psychiatry, anesthesiology, obstetrics, and internal medicine. “It’s one of the exciting aspects of the center – it will cross disciplinary boundaries and help break down silos, with researchers interacting even more” says Dr. Taylor. Dr. Taylor explains that one of the major risks for surgery is the possibility of tissue injury that can lead not only to acute pain, but also chronic post-operative pain, in double-digit percentages. “We’re interested in the mechanisms of the transition from acute pain to chronic post-operative pain.” The Taylor lab is teaming up with clinical investigators at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, including Grace Lim, MD, MS (Dept. of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine) and Emilia J. Diego, MD (Dept. of Surgery), to determine whether there’s still latent sensitization that is being masked by the opioid receptor system in human patients after mastectomy. They will test their sensory thresholds, give them naloxone to block the opioid receptor system, and then test again to see whether their sensitivity to touch or to heat or to cold increases. An increase would reveal latent sensitization and could even represent a biomarker for vulnerability for the development of chronic pain. So far, results using human experimental models of pain from Dr. Taylor’s collaborators in Denmark have been promising. “We’ve teamed up with a group led by Mads Werner at the University of Copenhagen to do clinical trials, and we look forward to continuing those studies in Pittsburgh.”

Another key goal of the lab’s research program is to develop new analgesics drugs for the treatment of chronic pain due to inflammation or in the setting of neuronal injury, diabetes, or multiple sclerosis (MS). Chronic pain is quite common, but the impact of available treatments is small to moderate at best. A new pharmacotherapy is desperately needed. One fast-track strategy is to repurpose a drug that is already FDA-approved for another disease. The first focuses on a class of drugs used to control diabetes often referred to as glitazones. The Taylor lab discovered that the receptors for these drugs (PPAR) are localized not only in the pancreas and other areas important in metabolism, but also in the dorsal horn of the spinal cord, which is important for pain modulation. When given to animals, they found that pioglitazone (trade name Actos) produced big reductions in behavioral and molecular signs of chronic pain in rat models of traumatic nerve injury or painful diabetic neuropathy. The second drug focuses on fingolimod (trade name Gilenya), a relatively new drug used to treat MS. The Taylor lab found that fingolimod acts at sphingosine-1-phosphate

Gilenya), a relatively new drug used to treat MS. The Taylor lab found that fingolimod acts at sphingosine-1-phosphate

Top: The Taylor lab utilizes modern advents in viral and genetic technology to selectively label spinal cord dorsal horn interneuron populations (shown in red mCherry labeling). This precision allows the selective activation and inhibition of distinct neural populations during naïve and pain behavioral testing to probe the neurobiological underpinnings of chronic pain.

Bottom: Another commonly utilized research method in the Taylor lab is multi-label fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH). This technology allows researchers to visualize and map the mRNA in individual cells to help define gene expression in individual neuron populations or to assess temporal and spatial gene expression changes during acute and chronic pain. Images courtesy of Tyler S. Nelson.
receptors to alleviate chronic pain-like symptoms in an animal model of MS. These studies pave the way for clinical trials to determine whether pioglitazone and fingolimod can be repurposed for the treatment of chronic pain conditions.

"Furthermore," Dr. Taylor explains, "about half of MS patients experience severe pain, and it’s about the same for patients with advanced diabetes. So not only could we repurpose these drugs for other types of pain, we could also emphasize the use of these drugs for the disease state that they were developed for." He emphasizes the advantages of using just one drug to treat two major symptoms of disease, with pioglitazone becoming the optimal choice for patients with diabetes and diabetes-related pain, and fingolimod for patients with MS and MS-related pain: the avoidance of adverse effects associated with opioids and other painkillers.

Dr. Taylor leads a research team of over 18 people, including two research assistant professors, six postdoctoral fellows, three staff associates, two PhD candidates, and five Pitt undergraduate students. He attests that working with the people in the "TLAB" is what he enjoys most about his work. "I address them as ‘colleagues,’ because we’re really in this together as a team, sharing ideas, planning and strategizing resources, troubleshooting problems, making cool discoveries. Mentoring others and watching them grow is very satisfying and rewarding," says Dr. Taylor. His mentoring philosophy includes immersion in a research-intensive environment focused on translational pain research, development of oral and written communication skills, acquisition of powerful experimental techniques, and exposure to a rich educational environment and guidance for the development and achievement of long-term goals. He has directed significant laboratory research projects of over 70 learners, including 20 early career assistant professors, anesthesiology medical residents, and postdoctoral fellows, many of whom have published in top medical research journals and received NIH funding and tenure-track positions in academia. He also asserts that he greatly enjoys working with collaborators, who in addition to interdisciplinary colleagues at Pitt, include investigators at Indiana University Medical School, University of Alberta, University of Copenhagen, Karolinska Institute, University of Glasgow, University of Heidelberg, UCLA, University of Minnesota, University of Kentucky, Emory University, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Texas Medical Branch.

**Key Publications**

Dr. Taylor’s 2013 *Science* article (Constitutive μ-opioid receptor activity leads to long-term endogenous analgesia and dependence. Science. 2013 Sep 20;341(6152):1394-9) was a landmark achievement. Not only was the work published in one of the world’s top academic journals, it was also featured on the cover of the journal and received substantial media coverage including *Businessweek*, *New Scientist*, *Nature blog*, and *Pain Research Forum*.


AIPPS treats an ever-growing number of cases - over 36,000 in FY20 – and is widely considered one of the largest acute pain services in the country. Due to our physicians’ anatomical knowledge of the body and their extensive experience in ultrasound-guided nerve blocks, they can master new techniques quickly. This agility and adjustment to new techniques positions our AIPPS physicians on the cutting edge of acute pain management and uniquely equips them to safely perform nerve blocks and procedures that might be considered difficult or exotic by others who have only seen them in textbooks or articles.

Currently, AIPPS treats patients at five hospital sites: UPMC Mercy, Passavant, Presbyterian, and Shadyside hospitals, and most recently, UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital. There is also an Acute Pediatric Interventional Pain Service at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, directed by Mihaela Visoiu, MD, that treats pediatric patients (0 days - 26 years old) undergoing various surgical procedures and requiring postoperative pain control management. Dr. Luke says he’s always considering expanding to new sites and has set a goal to open a new AIPPS site every three years. “We plan to open another site depending on the healthcare climate (hopefully post-COVID-19) in late 2022,” he says. In the meantime, AIPPS continues to expand into orthopedic trauma, transplant, ambulatory surgery, and addiction medicine.

Always striving to increase patient safety and satisfaction and quality of care, AIPPS is expanding the use of multimodal and regional anesthesia. “We believe it is our mission to find and implement ways to improve acute pain care using an evidence-based system approach with regional anesthesia as our cornerstone,” explains Dr. Luke. Through these initiatives, AIPPS has been able to decrease length of stay, perioperative opioid use, and complications related to opioid use. At all of its hospital sites, AIPPS is limiting the perioperative use of opioids through strategies such as utilizing enhanced recovery protocols and alternative pain management techniques like hypnosis and UPPMC Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine

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auricular therapy. Also, they are limiting, and sometimes eliminating completely, the use of patient-controlled analgesia (PCA). For instance, at UPMC Mercy, they reduced opiate PCAs from 1,300 in 2017 to 900 in 2019. (See page 20, “AIPPS Perioperative Opioid-limiting Strategies by Site”)

The service has proposed an AIPPS Registry, spearheaded by Dr. Charles Lin, that will collect patient-reported outcomes; included in the data will be reports on patient satisfaction, return to activities of daily living, postoperative opiate use, and peripheral nerve block (PNB) complications. The registry will serve as a platform for future acute pain outcome research studies. It will also include collaborative efforts with our Center for Perioperative Care/Enhanced Recovery Program (ERP) on Bayesian adaptive clinical trials, as well as future studies that will assess the value of using telemedicine versus phone call to evaluate post-block patients. Additionally, telemedicine will be made available in 2021 not only to reach out to our patients, but also to serve as a new platform for data collection.

AIPPS is training the next generation of acute pain specialists through our UPMC Regional Anesthesiology and Acute Pain Medicine Fellowship Program. The program is one of the largest accredited fellowships at UPMC and the largest accredited regional anesthesiology/acute pain fellowship in the nation. Jacques E. Chelly, MD, PhD, MBA founded the program in 2003 and developed it into one of the largest and most prestigious in the country. The program was initially accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in 2017 and was just recently awarded continued accreditation with no citations. This status is given to programs that are in substantial compliance with the ACGME’s program and/or institutional requirements. This year in July, Dr. Chelly stepped down from the role of Program Director and “passed the torch” to Nicholas J. Schott, MD. The fellowship program offers 15 positions per year and consists of 12 months of subspecialty training for qualified physicians who have completed an ACGME-accredited anesthesiology residency.

“The majority of our faculty are 100% clinical and still manage to receive high teaching scores,” elaborates AIPPS director Dr. Charles Luke. “We teach fellows and residents daily and maintain high academic and clinical standards. With this combination of clinical volume and academic inspiration, we have a unique mix of the best of both worlds that produces an exceptional pain team.”
AIPPS Perioperative Opioid-Limiting Strategies by Site

UPMC Shadyside/Passavant

- Use of PNBs, extending their duration with catheters when appropriate and with systemic lidocaine infusions when a catheter is not used
- No routine use of fentanyl or any other opioid as a sedative/analgesic during preoperative block performance
- Encourage surgeons to limit opioid prescribing upon their resumption of pain management for patients that AIPPS returns to their care. This includes the cessation of routine ordering of extended release opioids that had been ordered as part of a preoperative multimodal regimen
- Discourage the surgical team from postoperative prescribing of combination acetaminophen/opioid medications for patients upon discharge so that patients can continue scheduled acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) when appropriate while using opioids as the medication of last resort
- No routine use of PCA opioids and use of a nurse-administered bolus regimen to begin with for most patients. Patients must exceed scheduled opioid bolus dosing before PCA is considered.
- Attentiveness to scheduled multimodal non-opioid treatment regimens that includes, when appropriate, systemic lidocaine infusions, scheduled acetaminophen and NSAIDs, and low-dose ketamine infusions and topical cooling (ice)
- Trialing alternative techniques for pain management, including hypnosis and auricular therapy (Shadyside)

UPMC Mercy/Presbyterian

Collaboration with several service lines:

- Gynecology same day hysterectomy ERP protocol utilizing transversus abdominis plane (TAP) / quadratus lumborum (QL) / suprascapular (SS) blocks and intraoperative avoidance of opiates
- Urology robotic prostatectomy and nephrectomy protocol utilizing TAP/QL/SS blocks and intraoperative avoidance of opiates; postoperative use of opiates limited to oxycodone 2.5mg/5mg
- Low dose ketamine infusions employed at 2.5 mg/hr-5 mg/hr for 12-24 hrs. postoperatively
- Oncological urology ERP protocols with PNB catheters and minimization of perioperative opiate use
- General surgery: extensive use of PNB catheters and facial blocks and low dose ketamine infusions; avoidance of PCAs
- Trauma service: use of peripheral regional techniques and multimodal analgesics as a primary mode of pain control; no PCA use
- Burn service: multi-team approach to minimize opiate use; engage psychiatric, toxicology (i.e., addiction medicine), and social work services to understand underlying psychosocial problems that led to the injury while attempting to moderate and closely monitor opiate use; no PCA use
- Geriatric trauma: minimization of polypharmacy and opiate use by combining the use of peripheral regional analgesia and multimodal analgesia (MMA)
- Upper extremity orthopedic and plastics procedures: no intraoperative opiate use and combination of non-opiate-based postoperative pain control through outpatient PNB catheters and MMA (Mercy)
- Thoracic surgery service: PNB catheters and MMA while minimizing opiate use
- Mercy AIPPS director Dr. Vlad Shick working on system-wide Intravenous Methadone Power Plan to minimize hydromorphone use in acute trauma setting
- Management ERAS protocols including intrathecal morphine (ITM) administration (Presbyterian)

UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital

- Significant reduction in perioperative opioid use
- Management of ERP protocols
- Partnerships with ERP and surgical colleagues

Key AIPPS Publications


Team Arrivals, Departures, and Changes

NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Konstantinos Alfaras-Melainis, MD
Assistant Professor, UPMC Mercy

Elizabeth Altmeyer, DNP, CRNA
UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh

Haley Bacha, MSN, CRNA
UPMC Mercy

Justin M. Bailey, DNP, CRNA, APNP
UPMC Presbyterian

Ross Barr, DNP, CRNA
UPMC Mercy

Amanda Beckstead, DNP, CRNA
UPMC Altoona

Michael W. Best, MD, Maj, USAFR
UPMC Mercy

Adam Brandner
Research III, Brad Taylor Lab

Gaurav Chauhan, MD
Assistant Professor, Pain Medicine

Eric Cheponis, PA-C
Pain Medicine
Primary Care in Castle Shannon and Hampton

Kristen Chislow, MSN, CRNA
UPMC Altoona

Maria DiMattio, MSN, CRNA
UPMC Passavant

Aaron Douthit, DNP, CRNA
UPMC Presbyterian

Thomas Eckert, MD, MS
Clinical Assistant Professor, UPMC Altoona

Alison M. Ellis, MD, MBA
Clinical Assistant Professor, UPMC Mercy/UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh

Kathryn Finney, MHA, CRNA
UPMC Digestive Health & Endoscopy

Adam Hill, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor, UPMC Shadyside

Carol Hunn
Research Admin. Assistant, Clinical Trials Program

Brittany Leuenberger, PA-C
Pain Medicine
UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh

Eric Magda, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor, Pain Medicine

Did we miss your name or photo? If so, please let us know by emailing Christine Burr at heinerc@upmc.edu so we can include you in the next issue of Nexus!
NEW LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Ryan Ball, MD, FASE
Chief Anesthesiologist, UPMC Passavant

Bryce Bernard, MD
Clinical Director, Operating Room, UPMC Mercy

Michael Boisen, MD, FASE
Program Director, Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology Fellowship

Jacques E. Chelly, MD, PhD, MBA
Director, Acute Pain Clinical Research; Director, Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine; Director, Center for Innovation in Pain Care

Sean A. DeChancie, DO
Assistant Site Chief, UPMC Presbyterian

Melissa A. Dupilka, MSN, CRNA
Assistant CRNA Clinical Director, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh

Trent Emerick, MD, MBA
Program Director, Pain Medicine Fellowship

David S. Glover, DO
Site Director, Division of Acute Pain and Regional Anesthesia, UPMC Presbyterian

Shiv K. Goel, MD
Chief Anesthesiologist, UPMC Shadyside/ Medical Director, UPMC South Surgery Center

Wende A. Goncz, DO, MMM, CJCP
Clinical Director of Anesthesiology at UPMC Passavant

Mark E. Hudson, MD, MBA
Vice Chair for Clinical Business Development

James W. Ibinson, MD, PhD
Chief Anesthesiologist, Veterans Affairs Pittsburgh Healthcare System

Murat Kaynar, MD, MPH
Director, Anesthesiology Telemedicine Program

Danielle Meholic, DNAP, CRNA
CRNA Clinical Director, UPMC Magee- Women’s Hospital

Tammy L. Nuzzo, MHS, CRNA
CRNA Clinical Director, UPMC East/UPMC McKeesport

Milen Petkov, MD
Interim Director, UPMC West Mifflin Surgery Center

Derek Reckard, MSN, CRNA
Clinical Director, UPMC Presbyterian/Montefiore

Michael Schnetz, MD
Coordinator, Data Sciences Research

Nicholas J. Schott, MD
Program Director, Regional Anesthesiology and Acute Pain Medicine Fellowship

Lieu Tran, MD
Associate Program Director, Combined Pediatrics-Anesthesiology Residency Program

Elizabeth Ungerma, MD
Associate Program Director, Anesthesiology Residency Program

Nicole Verdecchia, MD
Associate Program Director, Regional Anesthesiology & Acute Pain Medicine Fellowship Program

Daniel Sabo, MD
Assistant Site Chief, UPMC Shadyside

Daniel F. VanRiper, MD
Assistant Site Chief for UPMC Altoona & Assistant Site Chief and Director of Anesthesia of UPMC Bedford

Ajay Wasan, MD, MSc
Director, Chronic Pain Research Program; Director, Center for Innovation in Pain Care
On September 1, 2021, Senthil Sadhasivam, MD, MPH, MBA, FASA, will join our department leadership as Executive Vice Chair for Clinical Quality, Patient Safety, and Clinical Research. He will also serve as the Director of the Perioperative Research and the Perioperative Genomics Program.

Dr. Sadhasivam completed his medical education and his first anesthesiology residency respectively at Thanjavur Medical College and All India Institute of Medical Sciences in India, and his second anesthesiology residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School in Boston. He completed a fellowship in pediatric anesthesiology at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and earned a Master of Public Health in Clinical Effectiveness from Harvard School of Public Health, a Certificate in Business Administration from the American Society for Anesthesiologists, and an MBA in Business of Medicine from Indiana University (IU) Kelley Business School in Indianapolis.

Senthil will join us after serving as Gopal Krishna Endowed Professor of Anesthesia at Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health and Vice Chair of Research in the Department of Anesthesiology, IU School of Medicine. He also previously worked at University of Cincinnati College of Medicine/Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC), holding the positions of Director of Perioperative Pain Medicine Services and Director of Outside OR Procedural Anesthesia Services. He brings 27 years of clinical anesthesia experience in pain management and fetal, pediatric, adult, and regional anesthesia; 24 years of experience in clinical research in anesthesia and pain management; and four years of research experience in human wellbeing and spirituality research.

Dr. Sadhasivam is one of the leading NIH-funded anesthesiologists in the country and has an impressive history of research grants as PI funded by other agencies such as FAER, the Thrasher Foundation, and the CCHMC Center for Pediatric Genomics. His current NICHD-funded R01 research focuses on the effects of opioid use disorder in pregnancy on long-term maternal and child outcomes. His second R01 focuses on perioperative opioid pharmacogenetics, and his R21 focuses on developing a bedside pupillometry tool to predict postoperative opioid-induced respiratory depression.

Senthil has also served as site PI or multicenter trial PI on numerous clinical investigations funded by industry partners. Dr. Sadhasivam is an inventor on over 10 US and European patent applications. He recently founded Opalgenix, Inc., a company to empower perioperative physicians to predict and prevent costly and devastating opioid-related adverse effects by translating his opioid pharmacogenetic research into clinical practice. His inventions have also been licensed to industry for development and commercialization. Dr. Sadhasivam has mentored many anesthesiology faculty, fellows, and residents who have gone on to obtain FAER, SPA, APSF, and NIH K23 and R01 grant funding. He has authored or co-authored over 150 peer-reviewed scientific articles and scholarly book chapters.

As Executive Vice Chair for Clinical Quality, Patient Safety, and Clinical Research, Dr. Sadhasivam will direct several critical efforts in our department. He will develop and lead essential components of our quality improvement initiatives, liaising with our department’s clinical site chiefs and other key leaders. Dr. Sadhasivam will also direct the growth of our Clinical Research Program. As Director of our Perioperative Genomics Program and Director of Perioperative Research, Senthil will develop, facilitate, and coordinate clinical perioperative research projects between investigators within our department and external collaborators.

We welcome Dr. Sadhasivam to the department and look forward to his direction and experienced leadership.
Dr. Dan Sullivan Steps Down from Passavant Chief Role

Daniel R. Sullivan, MD, JD, MBA, stepped down from his role as Chief Anesthesiologist at UPMC Passavant to focus on his other roles as our department’s Patient Safety Officer and Quality Director at UPMC Passavant on July 1, 2021.

Dr. Sullivan has served impressively as a member of our faculty for over 20 years and has been Chief of Anesthesiology at Passavant since 1996.

In his roles as the department’s Patient Safety Officer and Quality Director for UPMC Passavant, Dr. Sullivan serves as a physician advisor for numerous internal and external regulatory review bodies related to quality and patient safety. He also represents our department on various physician committees, advises staff and affiliates on risk and quality issues, and supports all hospital departments for process improvement and quality initiatives. Dan will continue in these roles after stepping down from his clinical responsibilities at Passavant.

RETIREMENTS

At our 2021 summer department meeting, we honored the following retirements (years = years of service with UPMC or Pitt)

Connie L. Counsman, CRNA
UPMC Altoona
14 years, retired April 2021

Patrick Forte, MD
UPMC Presbyterian
22 years, retired June 2021

Andres Jakymec, MD
UPMC Mercy
19 years, retired June 2021

Janice E. Janik, CRNA
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital
11 years, retired May 2021

Andres Jakymec, MD
UPMC Mercy
19 years, retired June 2021

Frank W. Kaiser, Jr., CRNA
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital
27 years, retired May 2021

Michael L. Kentor, MD
UPMC East
41 years, retired Feb. 2021

Cecelia M. Lucas, CRNA
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital
34 years, retiring July 2021

Margaret Lucas, MSN, MHS, CRNA
UPMC Presbyterian
33 years, retired Sept. 2020

Cindy McGettigan, CRNA
UPMC East
29 years, retired Dec. 2020

Vito Ranieri, MSN, CRNA
UPMC Presbyterian
21 years, retired April 2021

Nancy Reteshka
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital
43 years, retired June 2021

Lynette F. Sikora, MSN, CRNA
UPMC Presbyterian
29 years, retired May 2021

Cindy McGettigan, CRNA
UPMC East
29 years, retired Dec. 2020

Not Pictured

Derek Davis, MD, UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, 31 years, retired August 2020

Robert Krohner, DO, UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, 30+ years, retired Sept. 2020

Michael Minton, MD, UPMC Mercy, 22 years, retired June 2021

Jean Schmitt, UPMC Passavant, 20 years, retired December 2020

Adrienne Scarpino, UPMC - Administration (Scalfi Hall), 22 years, retiring July 2021

Linda Szymanski, MHS, CRNA
UPMC Shadyside
21 years, retired July 2020

Corinne Waldron, DNP, CRNA
UPMC Shadyside
21 years, retired Jan. 2021

Michael R. Young, CRNA
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital
39 years, retired May 2021

Michael Zoffel, CRA
Research Administration, University of Pittsburgh
12 years, retired October 2020

Not Pictured

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Accolades

Monica Bolland, MD, Jennifer Kundick, MSN, CRNA; Jacqueline Miller, MSN, CRNA; Katie Weir, MSN, CRNA; and Emily Whitco, MSN, CRNA won UPMC’s Award for Commitment and Excellence in Service (ACES) for 2020. ACES recipients are recognized for being outstanding UPMC team members who embody the health system’s core values, exhibit excellence in and dedication to their work, and go above and beyond to serve our patients and communities.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing Cameos of Caring® Awards annually recognize exceptional bedside nurses who work at acute care hospitals and who are role models within their facility and beyond. Individuals are recognized within several specialty categories and are nominated by their facility. Kristy Parrish and Jennifer Coates (both CRNAs at UPMC Presbyterian) received awards for 2020. Kristy received the Cameos of Caring Award and Jennifer received the Advanced Practice Cameos of Caring Award.

Allison Lewis, MBA, MSN, CRNA, Clinical CRNA Director at UPMC Passavant, and Maj. William M. Pileggi, MSN, CRNA, from UPMC St. Margaret and the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System were recognized by Pittsburgh Magazine for excellence in nursing in 2020 in the advanced practitioner category. Allison was featured as an Excellence in Nursing honoree and Bill received an honorable mention. Allison also received the CRNA Preceptor of the Year Award from the UPMC Advanced Practice Providers Preceptor Academy and was appointed by the Passavant Medical Executive Committee as Vice Chair of the Passavant Advanced Practice Provider Council.

Ezeldeen Abuelkasem, MBBCh, MSc, became a National Board of Echocardiography, Inc. Diplomate of Basic Perioperative Transesophageal Echocardiography.

Michael W. Best, MD, Maj, USAFR, was selected as the April 2021 winner of the Pennsylvania Medical Society Everyday Hero award.

Deborah Blake, MBA, Project Coordinator at UPMC Presbyterian, graduated from Geneva College with her Master of Business Administration degree on September 5, 2020.

Brian Blasiole, MD, PhD was nominated for the 2020 Champion of Nursing Award for exceeding expectations in supporting direct caregivers.

Jacques E. Chelly, MD, PhD, MBA, was nominated for the prestigious American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine Distinguished Service Award.

Steven Edelstein, MD, a 1993 graduate of our residency program, was named Chair for the Loyola University Medical Center Department of Anesthesiology.
Trent D. Emerick, MD, MBA, became certified as a Six Sigma Black Belt through the American Society for Quality.

Kimberly Howard-Quijano, MD, MS, served on the November 2020 CVSA Forum Panel for Residents & Medical Students in for medical students interested in anesthesia or cardiovascular surgery.

Andrea Ibarra, MD, successfully defended her Master of Science (MS) thesis entitled “The Effect of Preeclampsia on Cognitive Function,” graduating with her MS in Clinical Research from the University of Pittsburgh Institute for Clinical Research Education.

The Charge OR team, led by Evan E. Lebovitz, MD, under the mentorship of Mark E. Hudson, MD, MBA, won the $15,000 first place award in the summer 2020 Pitt Ventures First Gear cohort to further develop an integrated anesthesia and surgical scheduling app. Then, in October 2020, the team won another $15,000 – the Kuzneski Innovation Cup top award!

Scott E. Licata, MD, received the UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh October 2020 Kid’s First Award in recognition of his hard work and kind, compassionate care for patients and families.

Grace Lim, MD, MS, was elected to the Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology (SOAP) Board of Directors as SOAP Director from Academic Practice for a three-year term starting on July 2, 2020. In May 2021, she also received the SOAP Teacher of the Year Award. In addition, as a member of the Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative Alliance for Innovation in Maternal Health team, Dr. Lim is part of a new PA state maternal safety effort focused on severe hypertension, health disparities, and depression screening and follow-up.

Annmarie Lyons, MHS, our Executive Administrator, was recognized by Wesley Family Services at their Golf Invitational at Fox Chapel Golf Club on May 24, 2021. Annmarie has worked with Wesley Family Services for many years, volunteering, fundraising, and advocating for the organization’s work.

Aman Mahajan, MD, PhD, MBA, was appointed to serve on the NIH Clinical and Integrative Cardiovascular Sciences Study Section, Center for Scientific Review, for the term beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2024.

David G. Metro, MD, FASA, was invited to serve again as Marshal for the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine graduation. The ceremony was held on Monday, May 24, 2021 at the Petersen Events Center. This was Dr. Metro’s third time serving as Marshal for the medical school graduation; the first time was in 2018 and he was invited to serve in the role again last year for a virtual ceremony.

Toni Orsino, MBA, CRNA was selected to receive the 2021 University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing Honorary Alumni Award for 2021 in recognition of her dedication to the mission of Pitt Nursing and the intellectual, scientific, and economic enrichment of health care in Pennsylvania, the nation, and throughout the world.
In the Press

Brett M. Fadgen, MSN, CFRN, CRNA was spotlighted in the Alumni Profile section of Duquesne University School of Nursing Magazine (Vol. 5, 2020), pp. 18-19 and in the WPXI TV news segment, “Proud to be from Pittsburgh: UPMC nurse overcoming obstacles to help others.”

The article “A Legacy Through Leadership,” (pages 9-10) in the May 2021 issue of Northern Connection Magazine spotlighted the healthcare, wellness, and volunteer efforts of UPMC Passavant leaders, including Wende A. Goncz, DO, MMM, who is currently President-elect of the UPMC Passavant Medical Staff.

Two news articles featured interviews with Ajay D. Wasan, MD, MSc:
• 1 in 10 Americans Uses a Prescription Painkiller
• Ouch, My Right Side Hurts! Here’s What That Might Mean, According to Experts

The article “Safety of Peripheral Nerve Blockade Improved with Ultrasound” in the April 2021 issue of Anesthesiology News featured an interview with Steven L. Orebaugh, MD, and Anahi Perlas, MD, (University of Toronto).

Tetsuro Sakai, MD, PhD, MHA, FASA, was selected as a member of the Association of University Anesthesiologists inaugural Leadership Advisory Board. Each appointment is for a two-year term.

Nicholas J. Schott, MD, was invited to present the Grand Rounds lecture “Combination Intrathecal Morphine and Bilateral Paravertebral Nerve Blocks for ERAS Open Gynecologic-Oncologic Surgery” at the University of Rochester on August 20, 2020.

William Simmons, MD, was selected as one of New Pittsburgh Courier’s “Men of Excellence” for 2021. The newspaper bestows this honor annually to local African American men who have exemplified extraordinary strength and commitment to their profession and to the community.

Ajay D. Wasan, MD, MSc was named in the specialty of pain medicine in Pittsburgh Magazine’s 2021 “Top Doctors” list.

The contributions of Yan Xu, PhD, in mentoring students underrepresented in medicine were recognized by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. This recognition is a reflection of our department and our T32 program’s commitment and contribution to the university’s diversity efforts.
NEW CLINICAL PROGRAMS AT UPMC PASSAVANT

A Cardiac Services / Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR) Program was started at UPMC Passavant in July 2020. In its first year, the service helped provide anesthesia for 58 TAVRs, exceeding their goal of 50, and their cardiac/STS extubation and overall outcome data was the best in the UPMC health system. Additionally, their TAVR outcome data showed a less than 2% stroke rate. The Passavant cardiology and surgical teams were extremely pleased with the anesthesia team's services in these cases. A huge shout-out to our TAVR resource CRNAs Nikki Petrusic, Lynne Schubert, and Kim Donaldson and physicians Drs. Ryan Ball, Christopher Hodge, Carl Daltner, and Stuart Law.

A MONARCH® Program is now underway at Passavant with Pulmonary Partners, Ltd. and UPMC Thoracic Surgery and became the first site in Pittsburgh to perform robotic bronchoscopies! Pulmonary Partners reported that 78% of MONARCH® cases have yielded a diagnosis (which allows the patient to avoid much riskier procedures for diagnosis). Thank you to our MONARCH® resource CRNAs Francis Feld, Nicole Kuchta, and Kathy Knez and physicians Drs. Dan Sullivan, Wende Goncz, Ryan Ball, Christopher Hodge, Carl Daltner, and Stuart Law for helping to get this program underway!

New Robotic Liver Resection and MAKO Robotic Joint Replacement Programs were launched at Passavant. Passavant is a UPMC Health Plan Hip and Knee Joint Replacement Surgery Center of Excellence facility due to its amazing patient outcomes!

NEW FASAs

Becoming a Fellow of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (FASA™) is the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ (ASA’s) highest acknowledgment that recognizes years of dedication to exceptional education, leadership and commitment to the specialty. The FASA designation identifies and promotes ASA members exhibiting the highest standards in professionalism/leadership, advocacy for the profession and patient safety, and education. Becoming a FASA is a prestigious honor in the specialty, setting its designees apart from their peers. The criteria required for earning the FASA designation demonstrates a candidate’s commitment to advancing the practice and securing the future of anesthesiology.

Congratulations to Stephen M. McHugh, MD, who received the FASA designation in the July 2020 - June 2021 time period.

Currently, 12 faculty members from our department have earned the prestigious FASA designation and can be viewed on our website.

NEW FASEs

The distinguished FASE designation (Fellow of the American Society of Echocardiography) is a peer-review process that recognizes dedicated American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) members with an extraordinary commitment to the field of cardiovascular ultrasonography, designating those with proven professional contributions, a diverse skill set, and knowledge of all aspects of cardiovascular ultrasound. FASEs are recognized on the ASE’s website See My Heart among other highly-certified practitioners who have received this designation.

Congratulations to the following faculty members who received the FASE designation in the July 2020 - June 2021 time period:

- Michael Boisen, MD, FASE
- Kimberly Howard-Quijano, MD, MS, FASE
- Joshua Knight, MD, FASE

Drs. Boisen, Howard-Quijano, and Knight join our other department faculty members Drs. Kathirvel Subramaniam, Stephen Strelec, and Ryan Ball who have received this designation.
New Grants

Benedict Alter, MD, PhD, UPMC Competitive Medical Research Fund (CMRF) grant, "Integrating Brain and Behavioral Measures of Endogenous Analgesia to Personalize Treatment in Chronic Pain Management."

Jacques E. Chelly, MD, PhD, MBA, Beekley Medical, "Aromatherapy for Perioperative Management of Anxiety"; Shadyside Hospital Foundation, "Auriculotherapy in the Treatment of Pre-Operative Anxiety" (collaboration between Departments of Urology and Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine at UPMC Shadyside.

The Vanish Biodegradable Stimulator team led by Trent D. Emerick, MD, MBA, won $50,000 in funding from the Virginia Kaufman Pain Research Challenge and finished in second place to win $35,000 in services in the LifeX Labs/Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse Life Sciences Accelerator business pitch competition.

Daniel Huettner, MD, UPMC Anesthesiology Educational Grant (July 2020 Funding Cycle), "Regional Anesthesia Course for Residents Utilizing Cadaver Limbs."

Kimberly Howard-Quijano, MD, MS, and Marta Kelava, MD, (Cleveland Clinic, Dept. of Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology), inaugural SCA Multi-Institutional Collaborative Clinical/Translational Research Grant, "The Effect of Continuous Low Tidal Volume Ventilation and Hyperoxia Avoidance during Cardiopulmonary Bypass."

Sarah J. Kroh, MD (OB Anesthesiology Fellow, faculty mentor: Grace Lim, MD, MS), project to improve patient support after traumatic birth, UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital Medical Staff Fund.

"A Bundled Care Approach to Chronic Pelvic Pain" also won $50,000 in funding from the Virginia Kaufman Pain Research Challenge. The project team is led by Dr. Jocelyn Fitzgerald in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences and includes team member Grace Lim, MD, MS.

Steve McHugh, MD, UPMC Anesthesiology Educational Grant (July 2020 Funding Cycle), "Using VR training modules to prepare trainees for their cardiac anesthesiology rotation."

Tyler Nelson (PhD candidate, Bradley Taylor lab), F31 fellowship, NIH National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, "Neuropeptide Y1 Receptor-Expressing Neurons in the Dorsal Horn and Neuropathic Pain."

Siamak Salavatian, PhD, UPMC CMRF, "Therapeutic Effect of Vagus Nerve Stimulation on Adverse Cardiospinal Neural Network Signaling Induced by Premature Ventricular Contractions."

Fei Zhang, MSN, PhD, CRNA, NIH K08 grant funding, "Synthesizing Intraoperative Multivariate Time Series with Conditional Generative Adversarial Networks."
Authors from our department produced an impressive number of publications - **123** - from July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021! Below are some highlights. All department publications can always be viewed on our website at [www.anesthesiology.pitt.edu/publications](http://www.anesthesiology.pitt.edu/publications)

**PUBLICATIONS IN HIGH IMPACT FACTOR JOURNALS (>10)**


**PUBLICATIONS IN THE NEWS**

The article “Morphine acts on spinal dynorphin neurons to cause itch through disinhibition” by Eileen Nguy (MD/PhD candidate in the University of Pittsburgh/Carnegie Mellon Medical Scientist Training Program) and coauthors was published in *Science Translational Medicine* and was featured on the news websites *News Medical Life Sciences*, *News wise*, *Medical Xpress*, and *Sciencenewsnet.in*. Eileen’s mentors are Sarah E. Ross, PhD, and Grace Lim, MD, MS.
Tetsuro Sakai, MD, PhD, MHA, FASA, and Kathirvel Subramaniam, MD, MPH, FASE, were invited to serve as Associate Editors of Clinical Transplantation: The Journal of Clinical and Translational Research. Additionally, Dr. Subramaniam joined the editorial boards of Journal of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia, as well as Seminars in Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia as Associate Editor of the Thoracic Transplant Anesthesia section.
Resident & Fellow Achievements

On behalf of our Resident Recruitment and Selection Committee, congratulations to our 2021-2022 chief residents!

Mike Desciak, MD  
Chief Resident  
Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University

Amanda Deis, MD  
Associate Chief Resident  
University of Kansas School of Medicine

Simer Bains, MD  
Associate Chief Resident  
Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine

Our resident graduates, Drs. Jonah Abraham and Phil Carullo (class of 2019), and Maciej Z. Klosowski, Sean McDermott, and Kevin Pardo (class of 2020) (below, L to R), passed the basic transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) exam (Basic PTEeXAM®) conducted by the National Board of Echocardiography (NBE). They also went through required clinical training and will be applying for NBE certification.

Our adult cardiothoracic anesthesiology fellow graduates (class of 2020), Drs. Amanda Cole Bernardi, Adam Hill, Alexandra Nicholas, and Harikesh Subramanian (below, clockwise) passed the advanced perioperative TEE examination.

The ACGME Anesthesiology Review Committee awarded our Regional Anesthesiology and Acute Pain Medicine Fellowship Program continued accreditation with no citations. This status is given to programs that are in substantial compliance with the ACGME’s program requirements and/or institutional requirements. By awarding this status, the ACGME is indicating that our program meets or exceeds all standards set for the education of our fellows.

Alexander Stavros received the Dr. Robert L. Willenkin Award for 2021. This award is given annually to the best University of Pittsburgh medical student in the field of anesthesia and is named in honor of Robert L. Willenkin, MD, who served as a member of our faculty from 1982 until retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1996. During his career, Dr. Willenkin was a local and national leader in anesthesiology education. He served as Vice Chair for Education in our department and presented more than 60 invited national lectures during his career and beyond. In 1984, he became one of the founding members of the Society for Education in Anesthesia.
Congratulations to our residents who won awards at the 15th Annual Pennsylvania Anesthesiology Resident Research Conference (PARRC) on Saturday, May 22, 2021, which took place virtually and was hosted by the University of Pennsylvania Department of Anesthesiology & Critical Care.

**Featured Presentations - Original Research**

**2nd place - Sergio Hickey, MD:** “Development of a Novel Supraglottic High Flow Oxygen Device: From Idea to in Vitro Testing” (faculty mentor: Tetsuro Sakai, MD, PhD, MHA, FASA)

**3rd place - Ryan Holden, MD:** “Can Intrathecal Ziconotide be Used for Migraines?” (faculty mentor: Trent Emerick, MD, MBA)

**Featured Presentations - Case Reports**

**2nd place - Dustin Elswick, MD:** “Severe Bradycardia in a Patient Undergoing Arthroscopic Shoulder Surgery with Interscalene Nerve Block in the Beach Chair Position” (faculty mentor: Mario I. Montoya, MD)

**3rd place - Mariusz Ligocki, MD:** “A Case Report of a Prenatally Diagnosed Full Term Patient with a Complex Congenitally Corrected Transposition of the Great Arteries (ccTGA), who Underwent Nikaidoh/Senning Combined Procedure at the Age of 12 Months” (faculty mentor: Phillip Adams, DO)

**Brief Presentations – Case Reports**

**2nd place - Michael Desciak, MD:** “High Peak Inspiratory Pressures After a Change of Heat and Moisture Exchangers (HMEs): A Case Series” (faculty mentor: Stephen M. McHugh, MD, FASA)

**3rd place - Ryan Holden, MD:** “Can Intrathecal Ziconotide be Used for Migraines?” (faculty mentor: Trent Emerick, MD, MBA)

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**GRADUATING RESIDENTS**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RESIDENT AND FELLOW CLASS OF 2021!**

**Graduation 2021**

**GRADUATING RESIDENTS**

- **Leath Abdullah, MD**
  - Post-graduation position: Faculty, UPMC East

- **Jose Cabrera, MD**
  - Post-graduation position: Anesthesiologist, UCF Lake Nona Orlando

- **Dustin S. Elswick, MD**
  - Post-graduation position: Anesthesiologist, Advent Health Palm Coast, Florida

- **Melissa Giraldo Duque, MD**
  - Plans after graduation: Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine Fellowship, UPMC

- **Sergio Hickey, MD**
  - Plans after graduation: Pain Medicine Fellowship, UPMC

- **Daniel P. Huettner, MD**
  - Post-graduation position: Anesthesiologist, US Anesthesia Partners

- **Melissa Giraldo Duque, MD**
  - Plans after graduation: Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine Fellowship, UPMC

- **Samuel J. Goldstein, MD**
  - Associate Chief Resident
  - Plans after graduation: Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology Fellowship, UPMC

- **Alejandra Hernandez, MD**
  - Plans after graduation: Fellowship, Boston Children’s Hospital

- **George J. Karam, MD**
  - Plans after graduation: Regional Anesthesiology Fellowship, UPMC

- **Andrew J. McNicol, MD**
  - Plans after graduation: Pain Medicine Fellowship, UPMC
Our resident class of 2021 at our graduation ceremony on June 11th at the Mariott Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh.

**Pitt/UPMC Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine**

**35** Summer 2021 • Nexus

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**Constantin N. Robles, MD**

Plans after graduation: Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology Fellowship, UPMC

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**Christian M. Molzahn, MD**

Associate Chief Resident

Post-graduation position: Anesthesiologist, Ohio Health Grant Medical Center

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**Kylie V. Muraski, MD**

Plans after graduation: Pediatric Anesthesiology Fellowship, Children’s Hospital, Colorado

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**Juan Rango, MD**

Plans after graduation: Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology Fellowship, UPMC

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**Christopher A. McNulty, MD**

Plans after graduation: Regional Anesthesiology Fellowship, UPMC

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**Neal Shah, MD**

Chief Resident

Plans after graduation: Interventional Pain Management Fellowship, Rush University Medical Center

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**Aisha P. Ullah, MD**

Post-graduation position: Faculty, UPMC Presbyterian

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**David Wang, MD**

Plans after graduation: Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine Fellowship, UPMC

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**Michelle A. Yanik, MD**

Plans after graduation: Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine Fellowship, UPMC

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**Edgar Zamora, MD**

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**GRADUATING FELLOWS**

**Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology**

- **Michael Gemma, MD**
  Post-graduation position: Faculty, UPMC Presbyterian

- **Luca LaColla, MD**
  Post-graduation position: Faculty, UPMC

- **Joshua McAnulty, MD**

- **Adam McIntyre-Smith, MD**
  Post-graduation position: Anesthesiologist, Vancouver General Hospital

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**Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine**

- **Douglas Adams, MD**
  Post-graduation position: Faculty, UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital

- **Kate Petty, MD**

- **Ashan Waqas, MBBS**

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GRADUATING FELLOWS

OB Anesthesiology

Sarah J. Kroh, MD
Post-graduation position: Associate Anesthesiologist, Providence Anchorage Anesthesia Medical Group

Anne Wanaselja, MD

Pain Medicine

Willy Gama, MD
Post-graduation position: Physician, AA Pain and Spine

Brent Harkrider, MD
Post-graduation position: Pain Medicine Physician, Johnston Pain Management

William Lane, MD
Post-graduation position: Physician, Texas Pain Consultants

Pediatric Anesthesiology

Musa Bilal, MD
Post-graduation position: Clinical Instructor, Stanford - Lucile Packard Children's Hospital

Paul Hoffmann, DO
Post-graduation position: Faculty, UPMC Presbyterian

Jenna Meriggi, DO
Post-graduation position: Chronic Pain Medicine Physician, Orthopaedics Northeast (private practice)

Rohit Navlani, DO
Post-graduation position: Pain Management Physician, Crystal Run Healthcare

Dylan Phillips, MD
Post-graduation position: Interventional Pain Management Physician, Rochester Regional Health System

Michael Nicolay, MD

Kevin Pardo, MD
Post-graduation position: Faculty, UPMC

Max Shilling, MBBCh

Cathy Zhang, MD
Post-graduation position: Pain Physician, Private Practice/Self Employed

Michael Roegner, MD
Post-graduation position: Physician, Bellin Health and self-owned private practice

Xiaoxiao Wang, MD

Rebecca Wong, MBBS
Our Regional Anesthesiology & Acute Pain Fellows celebrated their graduation on June 12. This was the first year for Drs. Nicholas Schott (far right) and Nicole Verdecchia (far left) in their respective roles as the program’s Director and Associate Director and they did a fantastic job!
CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME TO ALL OUR NEW RESIDENTS AND CLINICAL FELLOWS BEGINNING THEIR TRAINING IN SUMMER 2021!

New Residents & Fellows

RESIDENTS

New PGY-1 Residents – Beginning June 14, 2021

Dylan Bard, MD
Med School: Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

Kyle Bevers, MD
Med School: Medical College of Wisconsin

Fernando Brea Parrilla, MD
Med School: Universidad Santiago de Compostela Facultade de Medicina e Odontologia

Madeline Bireley, MD
Med School: Medical College of Wisconsin (Combined Pediatrics/Anesthesiology Resident)

Erin Bundock, MD
Med School: McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Zachary Fuller, MD
Med School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Song Kim, MD
Med School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Samuel Kosinski, MD
Med School: University of Michigan Medical School

Brett Marshall, MD
Med School: University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

Rebecca Minorini, MD
Med School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Lauren Nahouraii, MD
Med School: Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine

Tetyana Osadchuk, MD
Med School: University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

Wesley Ramirez, MD
Med School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Lorena Tagle, MD
Med School: University of Michigan Medical School

Aaron Tarnasky, MD, MPH
Med School: Duke University School of Medicine

Taylor Thompson, MD
Med School: Louisiana State University School of Medicine in Shreveport

Joseph Vitale, MD
Med School: Northeast Ohio Medical University

Zhongheng Yin, MD
Med School: Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth
**FELLOWS**

**Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesia**

- **Ezeldeen Abuelkasem, MBBC, MSc**
  - Med School: Faculty of Medicine, Assiut University
  - Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

- **Samuel Goldstein, MD**
  - Med School: Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University
  - Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

- **Juan Rango, MD**
  - Med School: Michigan State University College of Human Medicine
  - Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

- **Chad Spencer, MD**
  - Med School: Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
  - Residency: Univ. of North Carolina, Anesthesiology

**Obstetric Anesthesiology**

- **Adam P. Dunmore, MD**
  - Med School: American University of the Caribbean
  - Residency: Anesthesiology, Baystate Medical Center

**Pediatric Anesthesiology**

- **Bushra Abdul Aleem, MBBS**
  - Med School: M.S. Ramaiah Medical College
  - Residency: University of Massachusetts

- **Cristen Cain, MD**
  - Med School: Emory University School of Medicine
  - Residency: Emory University

**Anesthesia Critical Care Medicine**

- **Alessandra Cardi, MD**
  - Med School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
  - Residency: Anesthesiology & Critical Care, University of Pennsylvania

**Critical Care Medicine**

- **Melissa Giraldo Duque, MD**
  - Med School: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
  - Residency: Anesthesiology, UPMC

- **Christopher Ogbuah, MD**
  - Med School: Saba University
  - Residency: University of Buffalo

- **David Wang, MD**
  - Med School: Harvard Medical School
  - Residency: Anesthesiology, UPMC

**Adult Critical Care Medicine**

- **Alyssa Fazi, MD**
  - Med School: West Virginia University School of Medicine
  - Residency: West Virginia University

- **Robert Gitman, DO**
  - Med School: Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
  - Residency: Kaweah Delta Medical Center

- **Jay Kamdar, MD**
  - Med School: University of Central Florida College of Medicine
  - Residency: University of Oklahoma

- **Audesho Shlimun, MD**
  - Med School: St. George’s University School of Medicine
  - Residency: SUNY Upstate Medical University

- **Cameron Sutton, MD**
  - Med School: University of South Carolina School of Medicine
  - Residency: Wake Forest Baptist Medical

**Obstetric Anesthesiology**

- **Adrienne Lazer, MD**
  - Med School: George Washington University School of Medicine
  - Residency: Virginia Commonwealth University
Pain Medicine

Roozbeh Ahmadi, MD, MS
Medical School: Case Western Reserve University
Residency: Cleveland Clinic, Anesthesiology

Michael Farrell, MD
Medical School: Ross University
Residency: MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital

Sergio Hickey, MD
Medical School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

Richa Lamba, MD
Medical School: Rutgers University
Residency: Temple University, PM&R

Sean McDermott, MD
Medical School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

Patrick Polsunas, MD
Medical School: University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Residency: UPMC, PM&R

Joseph Staszl, MD
Medical School: The University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences
Residency: UPMC, PM&R

Andrew McNicol, MD
Medical School: Northeast Ohio Medical University
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

Gerges Azer, MD
Med School: Alexandria University School of Medicine, Egypt
Residency: Alexandria University Hospitals, Egypt

Lloyd Barrera Allen, MD
Med School: State University of New York
Residency: University of Maryland Medical Center

Jauhleene Chamu, MD
Med School: Florida Atlantic University
Residency: University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center

Niyant Jain, MD
Med School: Virginia Commonwealth University
Residency: University of Texas Medical Branch

Paul Johnson, MD
Med School: Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine
Residency: McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University

George Karam, MD
Med School: West Virginia University
Residency: Morgantown Medical Center, Anesthesiology, UPMC

Benjamin Kenny, DO
Med School: Midwestern University Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine
Residency: Loyola University Medical Center

Regional Anesthesiology
Updated 12/2021

Some match results for academic year 2022-2023 are already in!

Please visit our website (links below) to view match results for our Obstetric and Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology Fellowship Programs, as well as new PGY-2 residents beginning on July 1, 2022:

- OB Fellowship
- ACTA Fellowship
- Residency Program

Regional Anesthesiology

Adnan Khan, MD
Med School: St. George’s University School of Medicine
Residency: Albany Medical Center

Christopher McNulty, MD
Med School: Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University
Residency: Anesthesiology, UPMC

Emmanuel Perez, MD
Med School: St. George’s University School of Medicine
Residency: St. Joseph’s University Medical Center

Andrew Phan, MD
Med School: Jagiellonian University Medical College, Krakow, Poland
Residency: Case Western Reserve University/Metro Health Medical Center

Kathryn Ticehurst, MD
Med School: University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
Residency: Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

Majeed Zahraa, MB ChB
Med School: University of Al-Mustansiriya College of Medicine, Baghdad, Iraq
Residency: University of Rochester School of Medicine

Our Regional Anesthesiology Fellowship Program has one remaining spot for the 2021-2022 academic year!

We are accepting applications from anesthesiology residents trained in an ACGME-accredited program. For details concerning the program and to submit an on-line application, please visit the fellowship page of our website. Selected candidates will be contacted for interviews after review of the completed application and all required documentation.
Meeting Highlights

LOCAL EVENTS

2020 Inaugural MidState Society for the Advancement of Transplantation Anesthesia Scientific Meeting, September 19, 2020, Virtual

Drs. Tetsuro Sakai and Kathirvel Subramaniam, along with Drs. Sathish Kumar and Amy Young from the University of Michigan, organized the meeting via Zoom. In addition to Drs. Sakai, Subramaniam, Kumar, and Young, meeting presenters included Drs. Nick Douville, (University of Michigan Medical Center); Manoj Iyer (The Ohio State University-Wexner Medical Center); Mariya Geube (Anesthesiology Institute, Cleveland Clinic); David J. Kaczorowski (University of Maryland Medical Center); Daniel Corman (Allegheny Health Network); and from our department, Drs. Erin Sullivan, Joshua Knight, and Daniel Mandell.

CRNA Virtual Education Conference, April 17, 2021

This multidisciplinary educational event featured lectures from anesthesia techs and both student nurse anesthetists CRNAs. The conference had a fantastic turnout with 158 attendees and received very positive reviews. Presenting CRNAs from our department were Toni Orsino, Marc Wicker, Sarah Whiteford, Anne Rivero, Jennifer Coates, Mary Beth Czerniak, and Paige Tejera. Please visit our website for a full list of presentations and presenters.

2021 Safar Symposium and Multi-Departmental Trainees’ Research Day

The 18th annual Safar Symposium and 11th annual Multi-Departmental Trainees’ Research Day was held on May 19-20, 2021. Building upon the Peter and Eva Safar Lectureship established in 1980 by Peter M. Winter, MD, (former chair of the Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine), this yearly event honors the late Dr. Peter Safar and his wife Eva for their contributions to the scientific community and highlights current research in areas spanning Dr. Safar’s scientific career and interests. The theme of the 2021 event was Future Visions for Neuroprotection, Neuroanesthesia, and Neurorehabilitation. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year’s event was held virtually but attracted a broad national and international audience. A total of 362 people from the USA (including Hawaii) and 19 other countries registered for the symposium.

Dr. Ed Boyden, Professor of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Media Arts and Sciences, and Biological Engineering and Y. Eva Tan Professor in Neurotechnology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology delivered the 40th Peter and Eva Safar Annual Lecture in Medical Sciences and Humanities, “Tools for Analyzing and Repairing the Brain.”

The Trainees’ Research Day is a collaboration between the Departments of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, Critical Care Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Neurological Surgery, and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R), as well as the Peter M. Winter Institute for Simulation Education and Research (WISER). Forty-two posters from trainees in the collaborating departments were presented in seven breakout rooms, two dedicated to the Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine. Award winners from our department included Andrea Ibarra, MD, MS, a T32 postdoctoral scholar working with mentors Aman Mahajan, MD, PhD, MBA, and Kimberly Howard-Quijano, MD, MS. Dr. Ibarra won the Best Abstract award in the Clinical/Health Services category for her presentation “The Impact of Socioeconomic Status in Patients with Left Ventricular Assist Devices.” Ruby Holland, a graduate student in the University of Pittsburgh’s Medical Scientist (MD, PhD) Training Program won the Best Abstract award in the Basic Science category for her presentation “Activation of Kappa Opioid Receptor-Expressing Neurons in the Ventral Tegmental Area Attenuates Opioid Withdrawal.” Ruby has been working with mentor Sarah Ross, PhD. Please visit our website for additional information about the event.
NATIONAL EVENTS - SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

ANESTHESIOLOGY, October 2-5, 2020, Virtual
Department members delivered 39 presentations, and 13 faculty members, three residents, and one Pitt medical student served on ASA and ASA-related committees. Additionally, we had a team running/walking to raise funds for the 2020 ASA-sponsored "Run for the Warriors."

2020 ASA Meeting Companion (PDF)

ASA Practice Management Meeting, Jan 29 - 31, 2021, Virtual
Our Practice Management Research Team presented four abstracts at the meeting, one of which was a top award winner (presenting author names bolded):

- “The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Operating Room Utilization and Anesthesia Group Productivity in Academic Medical Centers, Community Hospitals, Pediatric Hospital, and Ambulatory Surgery Centers” (authors: Drs. Sheri Wang, Neal Shah, Evan Lebovitz, Mark Hudson) – 2nd Place Winner in the FAER Best of Meeting Competition
- “A Study of an Academic Chronic Pain Clinic Workflow Using Value-Added Versus Non Value-Added Analysis” (authors: Drs. Sheri Wang, Trent Emerick)
- “The Effect of Modular Clinical Staffing Assignments on Augmenting Increased COVID Clinical Demand” (authors: Drs. Harry Burke, Evan Lebovitz, Ryan Ball)
- “Refining Business Strategy through the Development of a Chronic Pain Division Activity System Map” (authors: Dr. Harry Burke, Shannon Morrissey, Dr. Trent Emerick)

DSRP Summer Research Symposium & Poster Session, September 30, 2020
Medical student Austin Smith, who conducted summer research in our department as part of the Dean’s Summer Research Program (DSRP) under the mentorship of Dr. Kathirvel Subramaniam, won a Certificate of Merit Award for his abstract “Predicting Postoperative Pain Using Perioperative Characteristics.”

Association of University Anesthesiologists (AUA) 2021 Annual Meeting, May 13-14, 2021, Virtual
An abstract by Pei Tang, PhD, and Yan Xu, PhD, “Preclinical Evaluation of a Novel Glycinergic Analgesic for Treatment of Chronic Pain in Rodents,” was accepted with the distinction of Best of Meeting Research Award for presentation at the meeting. The Best of Meeting Research Award is awarded to one high scoring abstract submitted for the meeting regardless of years in practice or serving as a scientist. The abstract’s co-authors include Joel Caporoso, PhD; Qiang Chen, PhD; Lingling Jiang, PhD; and Tommy Tillman, PhD. The award-winning abstract was presented at the AUA Scientific Advisory Board Oral Session II.

Keith M. Vogt, MD, PhD, received the Clinical Research Award for his abstract “Whole-Brain Network Connectivity Changes with Midazolam Sedation During Task Performance and Periodic Pain: A Functional MRI Study in Healthy Young Adults” at the Kosaka Best Abstracts Awards Session at the meeting. Dr. Vogt and his work were featured in the IARS newsletter The Daily Dose.

International Consensus Conference on Enhanced Recovery After Surgery for Liver Transplantation, January 2022, Valencia, Spain
Raymond M. Planinsic, MD, FASA, was invited to participate in an Expert Working Group at the conference. Over 500 participants from around the world are expected to participate, including surgeons, anesthesiologists, intensivists, hepatologists, representatives of patient associations, statisticians, and ethicists. Dr. Planinsic’s working group, which will focus on living donors, will prepare statements on specific questions, and debates with the experts and audience will take place during the conference. An independent non-expert jury will review the statements and make final recommendations. After the conference, the guidelines and statements will be published in a high impact journal.
Our residents raised a total of $10,125 from 84 donors for Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Half of the donors were residents in our program and most of the other donations came from faculty and other members of our department.

The residents’ Food Bank fundraiser inspired Dr. Kristin Ondecko Ligda to donate $1,000 in honor of our residency program to her hometown’s community food pantry, Good Samaritan Food Pantry in Northern Cambria, to help the large rural community in Western Pennsylvania outside the city of Pittsburgh.

In honor of National CRNA Week and National Physician Anesthesiologists Week in 2021, the anesthesiologists, nurse anesthetists, and anesthesia technologists from UPMC Mercy joined forces to raise $3,775 for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, which will provide 18,875 meals to the Pittsburgh community and will support our neighbors struggling with food insecurity.

Pitt Cardiac Anesthesiology and Surgery teamed up to participate in UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute’s 9th annual “Race to No Place” on Friday, June 18, 2021, with proceeds benefiting the American Heart Association (AHA). The event was a two hour relay on Cybex Upright Stationary Bikes at UPMC Presbyterian, Shadyside, Passavant, Williamsport, and Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh. The Pitt Cardiac Team came in 3rd place at the event.

For many years, our CRNAs and physician anesthesiologists have united to help their communities as part of National CRNA Week and National Physician Anesthesiologists Week, held the last week of January and the first week of February. These celebrations are also a time when different groups of department clinicians (physicians, nurses, surgical staff) express their appreciation for one another. In 2021, our clinical staff raised funds for organizations including Family House, Beverly’s Birthdays, and Greater Pittsburgh Foodbank and organized appreciation events like Donut Day and breakfast and lunch receptions.

• 2021 CRNA Week Summary
Career Opportunities

FACULTY POSITIONS

We are seeking highly motivated physicians and researchers with demonstrated track records for excellence and the ability to work with a highly productive team. Clinically, we offer opportunities throughout a 18-hospital system in numerous anesthesiology subspecialties. We offer exceptional career growth opportunities and stability as part of a financially strong and thriving world-class health system. Our highly competitive compensation and benefits package includes occurrence-based malpractice, an employer-funded retirement plan, health insurance, CME allowance, and more.

We are currently recruiting for the following faculty positions. Please visit the career opportunities page on our website for full information:

- Clinical Leadership Positions
- Physician Investigators
- Medical Director, UPMC West Mifflin Outpatient Center
- Physician, UPMC Mercy
- Acute Pain Physician, UPMC Mercy
- Physicians - UPMC Presbyterian
- Physician - UPMC East
- Physicians - UPMC Altoona
- Physicians - UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital

Interested candidates should send their CV and three letters of recommendation via e-mail to David G. Metro, MD, FASA, or Aman Mahajan, MD, PhD, MBA, at gallascj@upmc.edu.

NIH T32 POSTDOC FELLOW POSITIONS

We are actively recruiting physicians who are committed to both excellence in clinical care and research for an NIH-funded research training program. Most trainees are recruited from anesthesiology residency programs, but individuals from other clinical specialties may be considered if their research interest is focused on problems in anesthesiology. Trainees are expected to spend at least two years in the program and devote a minimum of 80% effort toward their research.

More information on the program and eligibility requirements can be found on our website’s Postdoctoral Research Training page. Applications will be accepted until positions are filled.

NURSE ANESTHETISTS

Physician Services Division is seeking full-time CRNAs for the Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine at various UPMC facilities/hospitals. We are hosting a series of virtual recruitment events via Microsoft Teams where attendees can get the inside scoop on building a CRNA career at UPMC, hear from our directors and recruiter, learn about our culture and get a taste for a typical day in the lives of CRNAs at UPMC, and participate in a live Q & A session. Sessions will be held at 5pm EST on the following dates:

- August 26, 2021
- December 9, 2021

To register, please contact Rise’ Porter-Wolf at wolfx@upmc.edu at least 24 hours prior to the event to receive the MS Teams event sign-on information. Teams links will be sent on the days of the events.
Giving

Please help us continue our tradition of excellence by supporting our department with your tax-deductible gift. Whether you choose to contribute toward our research initiatives, educational programs, or other area of need, your generosity is sincerely appreciated at any level. Philanthropic giving to our department plays an important role in helping us improve the lives of patients throughout Western Pennsylvania and all over the world by giving us more opportunities to train the best and brightest clinicians and discover new and better treatment plans.

How to Give
For information on how to make a contribution to the University of Pittsburgh Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, please contact Laura Latini at Pitt’s Division of Philanthropic and Alumni Engagement at 412-398-0786. Types of gifts accepted include:

• gifts of cash, check, or credit card;
• gifts of stock;
• gifts of other assets;
• memorial gifts;
• unrestricted gifts;
• and bequests and planned gifts.

To make your gift by check: Checks should be made payable to University of Pittsburgh Physicians. If you wish to give to a specific department initiative or would like your gift to honor or memorialize an individual, please designate this information on the memo line. Please mail checks to Barb Novak Chismar, Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, 3471 Fifth Avenue, Suite 402 Kaufmann Building, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

To make your gift by credit card: Your gift can be made online. If you’d like to make a credit card gift to another area, please contact Laura Latini at 412-398-0786.

Honorary or Memorial Gifts
A gift made in honor or memory of an individual is a thoughtful way to recognize the accomplishments of or remember a loved one, friend, or colleague.

Matching Gifts
Your gift may be increased if you work for a company with a matching gift program. Spouse and retiree gifts may also be matched. Contact your company’s human resources department to get more information on the options they offer.

Tax Concerns
Your contribution may be tax-deductible. Contributions to the University of Pittsburgh and UPMC are tax-deductible as provided by law. Official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free at 1-800-732-0999. Please consult with your tax advisor before making any contribution or taking any tax deduction.
In Memoriam
July 2020–June 2021

Colleen Dunwoody
Colleen Jane Dunwoody, who was an instrumental force in our acute pain service for over 18 years, passed away on July 7, 2020. Colleen’s nursing career began at UPMC Presbyterian Hospital and she continued at UPMC for over 45 years. Beginning as a staff nurse, her career moves included positions as a Head Nurse on orthopaedic and arthritis units, Clinical Instructor for orthopaedic units, and as an Advanced Practice Nurse in Pain Management. Pain Management was a developing field at the time and continued to be her life-long passion. Unable to remain retired, she was a Research Associate at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing at the time of her death.

• Obituary Link

Catherine Hladio, CRNA
Catherine Hladio, CRNA, a retired member of our UPMC Shadyside family and a longtime member of the Pittsburgh anesthesia community, passed suddenly on December 8, 2020 at the age of 70. After graduating from Montifiore Hospital School of Nursing, Kate worked as a registered nurse at UPMC Presbyterian and continued her studies to become a nurse anesthetist at Allegheny General Hospital. She worked most recently on the UPMC Shadyside Ambulatory Surgery Center before her retirement in 2015.

• Obituary Link

Stanley Dale MacMurdo, MD
Dr. Stanley MacMurdo, who retired from our department in 2018, passed away suddenly on June 10, 2021. Dr. MacMurdo was a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and completed his anesthesiology residency training with us in 1979. After his fellowship training in regional anesthesiology at the University of Washington, he began his career with our department in 1981 initially as a faculty member and staff anesthesiologist at UPMC Eye and Ear Hospital. He served as Associate Director of our Pain Clinic from 1981–83, Director of Regional Anesthesia from 1982–84, and Director of Post-Anesthesia Recovery from 1983–1984. He worked at UPMC Presbyterian/Montefiore for many years, as well as at Butler Memorial Hospital (where he served as President of the Medical Staff), St. Clair Hospital, St. Francis Medical Center, and Mercy Hospital (prior to its incorporation into UPMC). Throughout his career, Dr. MacMurdo was engaged in educational efforts both at UPMC and Butler Health System. He was a clinical teacher for SRNAs and residents and taught airway management techniques to Butler County Paramedics for 12 years.

Please visit our website for additional information.
David Hunt Wilks, MD

Dr. David Wilks, a former faculty member of our department who played a critical role in shaping our educational programs, passed away on April 14, 2021. Dr. Wilks graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in 1976 after completing his undergraduate degree in Biochemistry at the University of Pittsburgh. He joined the anesthesiology residency at the University Health Center of Pittsburgh in 1976 and graduated in 1979. David had a love for Pittsburgh and upon graduation from residency, joined the faculty here at Montefiore Hospital as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Wilks remained on the faculty, always educationally active and innovative, and was promoted to Associate Professor. He was actively involved in curriculum development, evaluation and competence, and residency recruitment and selection, even prior to serving as our Residency Program Director from 1986 through 1997. David was instrumental in the collaborative efforts that brought the first human simulator model to Anesthesiology here at UPMC. During these simulation infancy years, he assisted with crisis leadership training curriculum for residents, SRNAs, and other anesthesiology and critical care medicine personnel in the two room simulation area located in Montefiore Hospital, which grew and ultimately transformed over the years into the Winter Institute for Simulation, Education, and Research (WISER). Dr. Wilks also served as Montefiore’s Medical Director of Respiratory Therapy and Director of Cardiovascular Anesthesia.

Please visit our website for additional information.

David Ryan Cook, MD, MBA

Dr. D. Ryan Cook, an accomplished pediatric anesthesiologist who served in numerous key roles in our department, passed away on June 20, 2021. Dr. Cook completed his anesthesiology residency with us in 1969. After completing a fellowship at Yale and spending a few years in San Antonio and serving in the US Air Force, he returned to Pittsburgh and joined the faculty of our department in 1972. He was the Chief Anesthesiologist at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh from 1977-1999 and served as our Interim Department Chair for 15 months between the time that Dr. Peter Safar stepped down and Dr. Peter Winter took on the role in 1979. He also served for a brief time as Interim Director of our Residency Program. Dr. Cook earned a secondary faculty appointment in Pharmacology in 1985 and completed the University of Pittsburgh MBA program in 1989. He left Pittsburgh in the early 2000s to work at Duke University Medical Center and returned to Pittsburgh a few years later.

Please visit our website for additional information.
Keep Up-to-Date on Our Latest News!

You can keep up to date with news shortly after it happens as well as upcoming events on our website and on social media!

www.anesthesiology.pitt.edu

Videos, Virtual Interviews, and Tours

Our website features several videos providing virtual tours and virtual interviews for potential applicants to our residency and fellowship programs, as well as videos from UPMC Graduate Medical Education giving virtual tours of our various hospitals. More videos are planned for release in the upcoming academic year. Check them out on our website!