

# NEXUS

SPRING 2023



Department of  
**Anesthesiology &  
Perioperative Medicine**



University of  
Pittsburgh

**UPMC**  
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

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*The Pitt/UPMC Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine follows UPMC COVID masking guidelines.*

## Feature Article

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Our Center for Perioperative Care, directed by **Stephen A. Esper, MD, MBA**, and **Jennifer M. Holder-Murray, MD, FACS, FASCRS**, achieves better outcomes, satisfaction, and cost savings for patients, their families, and the health care system.

# Chair's Message



**Aman Mahajan,  
MD, PhD, MBA**

Dear Alumni, Friends, and Department Members,

I am proud to introduce the fifth edition of *Nexus*. This Spring 2023 issue covers activities and news from winter 2022/2023 as well as upcoming events.

In February 2023, The Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research (BRIMR) released their fiscal year 2022 rankings of institutions and departments across the US by amount of grant funding from the National Institutes of Health. We were excited to learn that the latest BRIMR rankings placed us among the top five NIH-funded anesthesiology departments in the nation. We are ranked #5 this year! Also, Ajay D. Wasan, MD, MSc, was a top 10 NIH-funded investigator in anesthesiology in 2022. I am extremely proud of this success, which reflects the hard work and excellence of our research investigators! Congratulations and thank you to our research faculty and all our outstanding research support staff for achieving this honor for our department.

Another milestone was the launch of the company PIP Care and its new perioperative care app to help patients prepare for and recover from surgeries. We partnered with PIP Care to develop this app, which was piloted this past fall at our Center for Perioperative Care (CPC). PIP Care is the first company to emerge from the recent partnership between UPMC Enterprises and Redesign Health and will help our department expand our CPC services to more patients.

Considering this exciting PIP Care news, it is very fitting that we spotlight the CPC in our feature article in this issue. The CPC's remarkable work intersects with our missions of clinical care, research, innovation, and education. More importantly, the CPC is truly saving lives and money, achieving superior outcomes for surgical patients, and improving the efficiency of our healthcare system.

Our "Q and A" article series continues in this issue with profiles of Joshua Knight, MD, and Liliana Berezhna, MHS, CRNA, from UPMC Presbyterian and Cynthia Kral from our Education Office. Thank you to these brave team members for stepping into the spotlight to allow us to get to know them better.

This issue's photo spread focuses on "Winter Festivities" and features not only holiday celebrations but also community service projects coordinated by various folks in our department. Thank you to everyone who submitted photos and stories.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge a couple of our staff members in addition to *Nexus*' Managing Editor Christine Burr for their help with this e-magazine. Thank you to **Sandra Hirsch**, **April Judah**, and **Meredith Axe** for their critical review of this current issue as well as **Rory Airhart**, **Jennifer Branik**, **Emma Hohman**, and **Deanne Krugh** for their review and input on past issues. It truly takes a team effort to make this publication happen and I appreciate the contributions from all the staff mentioned here. Going forward, we will be looking at refining the content and format of *Nexus* and making improvements.

A final reminder that all alumni and department members are invited to submit photos and article proposals for potential publication in *Nexus*. Anyone interested in submitting content, please contact **Christine Burr**.

Thank you all for your continued support and readership. Wishing you all a fantastic spring.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "AM".



# Spotlight: Center for Perioperative Care



Our Center for Perioperative Care, directed by **Stephen A. Esper, MD, MBA**, and **Jennifer M. Holder-Murray, MD, FACS, FASCRS**, achieves better outcomes, satisfaction, and cost savings for patients, their families, and the health care system.

In the current healthcare landscape, reducing mortal and morbid surgical risks is important for patients, families, providers, and healthcare systems. Patients deemed “high risk” based on their underlying physical status and co-existing medical conditions are associated with considerable morbidity, mortality, and low-value care, accounting for more than 30% of ICU admissions, 70% of post-operative deaths, and 90% of the care provided during hospitalization. “Prehabilitation” of high-risk patients before surgery has been shown to help reduce hospital length of stay, hospital acquired conditions, and readmission rates, resulting in better quality care, higher patient satisfaction, and cost savings.

Our Center for Perioperative Care (CPC), a team-based prehabilitation clinic, identifies and screens high-risk patients before non-emergency inpatient and outpatient surgeries. The CPC tailors the surgical experience to each patient's specific needs. This “surgical pause” is a chance to mitigate risk and optimize patients' health before surgery to improve outcomes or refer patients to safer, non-surgical approaches if warranted. Each patient receives a personalized plan of care designed by a team of expert providers. Anesthesiologists specializing in perioperative medicine lead the multidisciplinary CPC team, which includes the surgeon, primary care provider, and specialists working with the patient in a shared decision-making approach. Anesthesiologist Dr. Stephen Esper and surgeon Dr. Jennifer Holder-Murray direct the CPC, which currently has four hospital-based clinics at UPMC Montefiore, Shadyside (Director: Dr. Murat Kaynar), and Horizon and Jameson (Director: Dr. Cynthia Wells), as well as one cardiac surgery-based clinic at UPMC Presbyterian (Director: Dr. Kathirvel Subramaniam).

CPC patients are evaluated for perioperative risks and optimized for surgeries as part of UPMC's Enhanced Recovery Program (ERP). The ERP involves clinical “pathways” that help standardize components like limiting pre-surgery fasting, intraoperative fluid therapy, minimizing opioid use, early ambulation and postoperative enteral nutrition, and prevention of nausea/vomiting. ERP pathways aim to reduce surgical stress and complication rates, maintain post-operative physiological function, facilitate faster in-hospital recovery and return to preoperative function, and improve patient/family satisfaction. Patients play a vital role in their care plan by increasing activity, quitting smoking, and following a carbohydrate-rich nutrition plan in the weeks leading up to their surgery.

Our CPC is a bit different from the preoperative clinics typically found at many institutions. Our center is used to optimize patients well before surgery. “We're not simply looking at the operation. We see the surgery as an important crossroads event in a patient's life to put them on the right track for care after their surgery,” explains Dr. Esper. “We utilize the surgical event to enact population health on a life scale.”

For example, the CPC measures patients' hemoglobin A1C and body mass index (BMI) prior to surgery. Patients over the age of 45 with high A1C and a BMI of over 30 meet the criteria for pre-diabetes or diabetes. In a CPC pilot study of 400 patients, 60% were found to have a pre-diabetes or diabetes diagnosis of which they were previously unaware. “This finding is important because the time from diagnosis to onset of disease is about 10 years,” says Dr. Esper. “We can guide them to make a change and possibly prevent the next episode of care. That is the point of what we do here in the Center for Perioperative Care.”

Data shows that high-risk patients who prepare for surgery with our CPC team reduce their hospital stay by about a day, have lower risk of getting another illness while in the hospital, and are less likely to end up back in the hospital.





From the CPC Montefiore clinic, left to right: Cynthia Klahre, CRNP; Tiffany Keenan, PA-C; Michelle Maurtua, RN; Michael Roos, MBA; Katie Meister; Dr. Stephen Esper; Sarah Holiday, CRNP; Jacqueline West, RN; Katrina Ruby, PA-C; Michelle Herrem, PA-C; Mary Jo Rose, RN; Patricia DiSanti, RN; Timothy Curtis, PA-C

The CPC's contributions to improving the care paradigm at UPMC are not only reflected in improved patient outcomes, but also cost savings and improved efficiency. The CPC developed Anesthesia Testing Guidelines, a matrix that factors in each patient's risk factors and pre-existing conditions to determine what testing the patient needs prior to surgery. The guidelines play a critical role in optimizing patient care, minimizing unnecessary testing, and maximizing efficiency associated with preoperative testing. The CPC has educated all of the service lines and primary care offices throughout the health system on the guidelines, which so far have resulted in approximately \$1 million in cost savings.

Many new CPC projects are underway. One project involves our MACCE/MINS clinical pathway, which screens and monitors high risk patients for major adverse cardiac and cerebrovascular events (MACCE) and minimizes myocardial injury after non-cardiac surgery (MINS). So far, data shows that patients in these pathways experience lower 30-day mortality, shorter hospital stays, and lower 30-day readmission rates. Our Enhanced Recovery after Cardiac Surgery (ERACS) program has led to a decrease in postoperative atrial fibrillation and both intra-operative and post-operative opioid consumption. An Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) Prevention clinical pathway was recently developed to decrease the incidence of AKI after elective cardiac surgery for patients in the ERACS pathway.



From the CPC Horizon/Jameson clinics: Nicole Moore and Amy S. Reed APRN, MSN, RN



From the CPC Shadyside clinic, back, left to right: Linda Joseph, PA-C; Daniele Malagari, PA-C; Hannah Pierskalla, PA-C. Front: Ann Doran, RN, BC

ERP clinical pathways have led to technological innovations and collaborations with industry partners. The company PIP Care recently launched and released a new perioperative care app based on the ERP protocols to help patients prepare for and recover from surgeries. The app, which was piloted this fall at our CPC, features one-on-one health coach support for patients both before and after surgery and is designed to increase patient engagement/satisfaction, decrease the administrative burden on providers, and deliver personalized care plans. We aim to enroll at least 200 eligible CPC patients during the pilot.

Other CPC technologies and studies are in the pipeline. We are conducting a pilot study with the company Masimo to reduce perioperative morbidity, mortality, and transfers to a higher-level acuity of care using their Halo Ion monitoring/scoring device for early detection of subacute physiological deterioration and early prediction of acute adverse clinical events. In an innovative clinical trial using Randomized Embedded Multifactorial Adaptive Platform (REMAP) technology, the CPC is determining the best perioperative treatments to prevent postoperative nausea and vomiting and reduce postoperative pain and opioid use in abdominal surgery patients. We are also pioneering the use of the machine learning tool BrainCheck in the perioperative setting to allow us to better understand patients' cognitive health and predict fitness for surgery.



From the CPC Shadyside clinic, left to right: Dr. Andrea Gomez Sanchez, Ashley Donatucci, PA-C; Dr. Murat Kaynar; Lisa Kolonich, PA-C; Nicole D'Alessandro, PA-C; Kris Cassano, Kerry Woodward

Plans are for the CPC to continue to expand to additional UPMC hospitals, starting with UPMC Passavant, Mercy, and Magee. Our perioperative team also continues to leverage new models of care, including eConsults and telemedicine, to deliver services to outpatients distant from urban centers. With the use of these virtual tools and our current favorable data, we are poised to expand to surgical teams across the state.

## Faculty Profile: Dr. Joshua Knight

**Hometown:** Raleigh, North Carolina

**Anesthesiologist in our department since 2018,**  
working at UPMC Presbyterian/Shadyside and our Center  
for Perioperative Care Consult Service



**Joshua Knight, MD, FASE**  
Medical Director of Quality  
Assistant Professor

### **Before becoming an anesthesiologist, what was the most unusual or interesting job you ever had?**

Before and during medical school, I played bass in a nine-piece wedding band around Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

### **What inspired you to become an anesthesiologist?**

During medical school, I originally gravitated towards working in the intensive care unit. I was particularly intrigued by the skill sets of the anesthesiologists I worked with there and their ability to rescue patients swiftly in dire circumstances.

### **What attracted you to quality improvement in particular?**

During my cardiac anesthesia fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic, I was engaged in a blood conservation project that opened my eyes to the power of quality initiatives. As an attending back at Presbyterian, I took over reviewing our Difficult Airway Management Team responses and began clinical work in our Center for Perioperative Care (CPC). Being able to see the longitudinal opportunities for perioperative patient care and safety improvements inspired me to wade more into the quality arena.

### **Please tell us a bit about your first clinical experience after completing your training.**

My first case on my first day as an attending was a double lung transplant, which I managed simultaneously with a complex endovascular abdominal aortic graft insertion. It was quite the baptism by fire!

### **Who have been your most significant mentors?**

A huge part of why I returned to UPMC after fellowship are my faculty mentors here, especially in the cardiac division – Drs. Erin Sullivan, Kathirvel Subramaniam, Theresa Gelzinis, and many more. Drs. Subramaniam and Stephen Esper have been hugely inspirational towards my work in the perioperative arena.

### **What has been the biggest reward in your career?**

Although I have not been out of training very long, seeing anesthesiology residents and cardiac anesthesiology fellows go on to do great work in our institution and beyond always makes me very happy.

### **What has been the biggest challenge in your career?**

Aside from ensuring that I am always providing the best clinical care, balancing a developing academic career with my rapidly growing family has always been a challenge and a thrill. My wife Sophia is also a working professional and we both do our utmost to ensure our children's lives are prioritized, given our career ambitions. She has been nothing but an incredibly supportive wife and partner to me.

### **What advice do you have for aspiring anesthesiologists?**

Beyond mastering your clinical skills, dedicate yourself to becoming a true consultant. Your niche does not necessarily need to be specific to any subspecialty. Aim to become an expert in something within or directly related to anesthesiology about which you are passionate, and you will find your career blossoming.

**What has been your proudest non-work accomplishment?**

Being the father of three beautiful daughters – Daphne, Penelope, and Theodora.

**What might the department be surprised to know about you?**

I play several instruments, including guitar, bass, mandolin, trumpet, and bouzouki. During my residency, I played guitar with other anesthesia residents in a band named Bropofol. I am also a certified scuba diver and a homebrewer.



Left to right - Dr. Knight's daughters, Penelope, Theodora, and Daphne

# Staff Profile: Cynthia Kral

**Hometown:** Pittsburgh, PA

**Working in medical education for over 7 years** with our department

Over 3 years in her current role

**Before working in our department, what was the most unusual or interesting job you ever had?**

I worked as an Assistant Manager in a movie theater. I got the perks of seeing the movies early and learning to fix films if there were issues.

**Tell us briefly about your job/role in the department.**

I am the Medical Student Coordinator and Grand Rounds Coordinator. I schedule and coordinate medical students in the Anesthesiology Clerkship and Elective. I also help grand rounds presenters get everything ready for their lectures.

**Who inspires you?**

Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Michelle Obama

**What has been your proudest professional accomplishment?**

I am the notary for the department.

**What has been your proudest personal (non-work) accomplishment?**

I am a certified level 1 reiki practitioner working on my level 2-3 certification.

**Who have been your most significant mentors throughout your career and/or life?**

My grandparents.

**Are there any professional or personal skills you're currently working on?**

I am learning the Dutch and Welsh languages. I have an advanced knowledge of genealogy and am currently researching my family's history.

**What might the department be surprised to know about you?**

I can read and write in Latin, I love old school Nintendo (especially Super Mario Brothers 2), and I am an 80s music and trivia queen!



**Cynthia Kral, MA**  
Medical Student Coordinator



# CRNA Profile: Liliana Berezhna

**Hometown:** Selidovo, a small town in Ukraine

**CRNA for 5+ years,** all with our department

**Before becoming a CRNA, what was the most unusual or interesting job you ever had?**

A teacher of English and Russian back in Ukraine.

**What inspired you to become a CRNA?**

After shadowing several CRNAs, I was so fascinated by their skills and the multitude of tasks they performed at the same time. I liked the challenge that this job brings.

**Please tell us a bit about your first clinical experience after completing your training.**

I started my career path at UPMC Presbyterian hospital after graduating from anesthesia school. The environment seemed very challenging and at times overwhelming. I remember being in orientation with experienced CRNAs, wondering how I would ever be able to do those kinds of cases. Now, over five years later, I am teaching students and new employees to do anesthesia for transplants and traumas. It gives me a feeling of tremendous job satisfaction.

**Who have been your most significant mentors?**

Jenny Coates, Irina Spektor, Marybeth Czerniak, Tony Chao, Kristy Parrish, and Dave Modranski, to name a few. The team members in our anesthesia department are excellent. I am still learning every day.

**What has been the biggest reward in your career?**

Our anesthesia department has teams, such as the neuro team, the trauma team, and the transplant team, and CRNAs can fill many specialized roles, such as serving as a charge CRNA. CRNAs need to meet certain requirements to be able to provide anesthesia for some of the challenging cases at UPMC Presbyterian. The biggest reward to me was realizing within the last year that I am now a part of all those "teams" and that I feel comfortable giving anesthesia in busy specialized surgical cases.

**What has been the biggest challenge in your career?**

My two years in anesthesia school were my most challenging years on this career path.

**What advice do you have for aspiring CRNAs?**

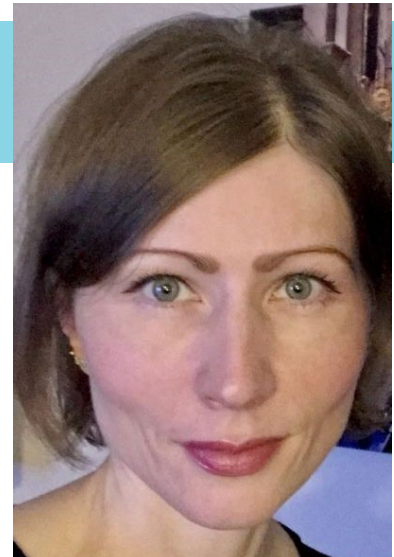
Keep learning every day and share your knowledge, skills, and support with students and orientees. This career path is not easy, but it is very rewarding, interesting, and exciting.

**What has been your proudest non-work accomplishment?**

Coming back to my school of anesthesia to present as a guest speaker.

**What might the department be surprised to know about you?**

I've been a cat person all my life. Three weeks ago, I adopted a beautiful rescue – a 12-week old puppy. She is amazing! My cats get along very well with her. Can't wait to take her to her first vacation on the beach!



Liliana Berezhna, MHS, CRNA  
UPMC Presbyterian



Liliana with her new  
rescue puppy



Liliana (center) with her anesthesia  
colleagues at UPMC Presbyterian

# Quality Improvement Project Incentive Program

Since the launch of our Quality Improvement (QI) Project Incentive Program in 2021, we have had remarkable success with physician and CRNA collaboration on QI projects that have enhanced patient experience, clinical outcomes, clinical care coordination, clinical team safety, and clinical education and training. We are looking to continue this trend.

Teams in our department can submit projects for consideration by sending a completed QI Project Proposal Form to their local site clinical leadership (faculty chief/CRNA director) for review. Site leaders will identify viable projects for further consideration and approval by our executive leadership and QI Project Committee. Deadlines for submission will be determined by each site's leadership and a finite number of projects will be approved for each site. The full guidelines and project proposal form can be found on our [Sharepoint site](#)<sup>\*</sup>. Guidelines for proposals are summarized below.

## Guidelines Summary

- Each project team will consist of one physician anesthesiologist and one CRNA (ideally from the same site)
- Projects should be meaningful and achievable without much outside assistance **and should be completed/require approximately 20 hours of work for the team.**
- Upon approval, the team members will meet with site leadership to create a timeline for project completion.
- After the timeline has been created, team members can begin work.
- Projects must be applicable to the team members' home facility, with the potential for implementation at other sites if deemed appropriate by the site chief(s).
- Upon completion of the project, if deemed appropriate, the project can be shared with other facilities and continued.
- Each member of the team will receive \$1,500 in continuing education funds reimbursable after expense submission.

*\*Our Sharepoint is an intranet website residing behind the UPMC firewall accessible only to individuals with a department UPMC network account. Please visit our website for additional guidance.*

## RECENT PROJECTS

### UPMC Presbyterian

- Liliana Berezhna, MHS, CRNA, and Erin A. Sullivan, MD, D.ABA, FASA: Clinical education of anesthesia providers on current ventilatory guidelines and management during general anesthesia with training in perioperative use of ICU ventilator
- Julia Dixon-Ernst, MSN, CRNA: Clinical education with development and implementation of malignant hyperthermia training for ambulatory surgery centers

### UPMC Shadyside

- Jessica E. Kridler, MSN, CRNA, and Adam Hill, MD: Enhanced patient care with development and implementation of post-operative nausea and vomiting reduction pathway for ambulatory surgery patients

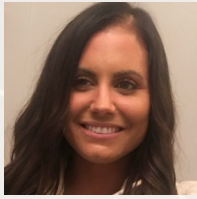
### UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

- Jennifer R. Kundick, MSN, CRNA, and Brian Blasiolo, MD, PhD: Clinical care coordination with implementation of scheduling tracking list to promote communication between non-surgical care teams and anesthesiology for radiology exams requiring anesthesia services



# New Team Members

Did we miss your name or photo?  
If so, please email Christine Burr  
([heinerc@upmc.edu](mailto:heinerc@upmc.edu)) and let us  
know so we can include  
you in the next issue  
of Nexus!



**Christina Anthony,**  
DNAP, CRNA  
UPMC Passavant



**Jasmin Brown**  
Administrative  
Assistant, Clinical  
Research Program



**Elizabeth Chang,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Magee-  
Womens Hospital



**Kelsey Dimond,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Shadyside



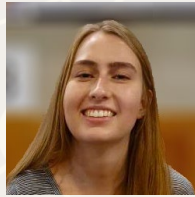
**Adam Frederick,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Altoona



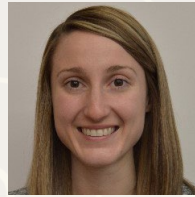
**Jennifer Brothers  
Gallion, MS, CRNA**  
UPMC Magee-  
Womens Hospital



**Nicholas Guyan,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Mercy



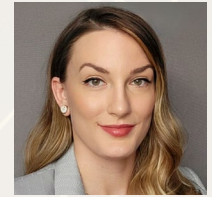
**Mary Heberling,**  
Administrative Assistant,  
Research Administration



**Ashley Hileman,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Children's  
Hospital of  
Pittsburgh



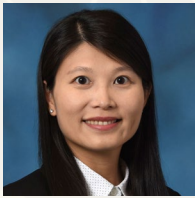
**Roxann Huemme**  
Senior Administrative  
Assistant,  
Education Office



**April Judah**  
Administrative  
Coordinator, Center for  
Perioperative Care



**Dani Lavage, MA**  
Senior Statistician



**Hsing-Hua Sylvia  
Lin, MS, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Clinical and Translational  
Research Center



**Noah Lohman**  
Extended  
Administrative  
Resident



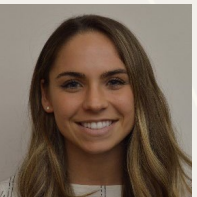
**Deepa Mathew,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Magee-  
Womens Hospital



**Kimberly McWilliams**  
Financial Assistant  
Research  
Administration



**Benjamin Miller,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Magee-  
Womens Hospital



**Kristen Miskinis,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Magee-  
Womens Hospital



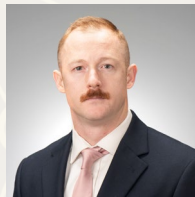
**Lu'ay Nubani, MD**  
Clinical Assistant  
Professor  
UPMC Children's  
Hospital of Pittsburgh



**Marissa Palmer,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Passavant



**Hannah  
Pierskalla, PA-C**  
Center for  
Perioperative Care



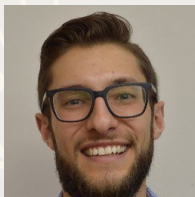
**Eric Robertson,**  
DNP, MSN, CRNP  
Division of Chronic  
Pain Medicine



**Sydney Rohrbaugh,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Magee-  
Womens Hospital



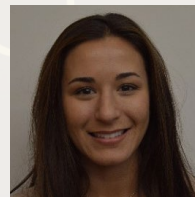
**Meredith Scheier,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Passavant



**Tyler Schultz,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Passavant



**Christina Singleton,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Shadyside



**Antalya Sunseri,**  
DNP, CRNA  
UPMC Magee-  
Womens Hospital



**Minhnoi C.  
Wroble Biglan**  
Clinical Research  
Manager, OB and  
Women's Health



## New Team Members, Not Pictured

**Alexandra Anderson**  
Research Coordinator  
OB and Women's Health

**Erin Galya, DNP, CRNA**  
UPMC East

**Mauricio Ruben Gil-Silva**  
Research Technician, Taylor Lab

**Zain Hasan, DO**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
UPMC Mercy

**Laura Lazzaro**  
Administrative Liaison  
Scheduling Team

**Kunal Lohana**  
Pain Research Program  
Coordinator

**Elizabeth Markey,**  
**MSN, CRNA**  
UPMC Presbyterian

**Mel Mendez**  
Research Associate  
Clinical Research Program

**Gia Pittet, AuD, PhD**  
Research Assistant Professor

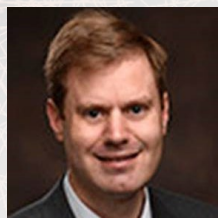
**Andrea Sanchez**  
Clinical Research Assistant  
Clinical Research Program

**Dana Weiss, MSN, CRNA**  
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital

# New Leadership Appointments



**Ezeldeen Abuelkasem,**  
**MBBCh, MSc, FASE**  
Director for Perioperative  
Echocardiography  
Education



**Michael W. Best, MD,**  
**FASA, Maj, USAFR**  
Chair, Residency  
Competence Committee



**Kimberly Cantees,**  
**MD, MBA**  
Vice Chair for Equity,  
Diversity, and Inclusion,  
UPMC/Pitt Department  
of Anesthesiology and  
Perioperative Medicine



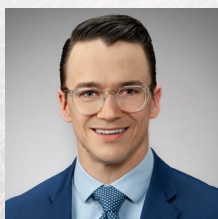
**Joseph S.**  
**DeRenzo, MD**  
Chief of Anesthesiology,  
UPMC Magee-  
Womens Hospital



**Trent D. Emerick,**  
**MD, MBA, FASA**  
Associate Chief,  
Chronic Pain  
Service Division



**Jennifer Fleegle-Vistas,**  
**MSN, CRNA**  
Assistant CRNA  
Clinical Director,  
UPMC Presbyterian/  
Montefiore Hospitals



**Jeffrey Knorr, MHA**  
Executive Administrator,  
Department of  
Anesthesiology &  
Perioperative Medicine;  
Vice President,  
Anesthesia Services,  
UPMC



**Nicole Kuchta,**  
**MHS, CRNA**  
Assistant CRNA  
Clinical Director,  
UPMC Passavant



**Lindsay Stollings, MD**  
Chair, Residency  
Recruitment and  
Selection Committee;  
Associate Program  
Director, Pediatric  
Anesthesiology  
Fellowship



**William Thomson,**  
**MHA, MBA**  
Executive Administrator,  
Faculty Affairs and  
Research Operations



**Sara Straesser, MD**  
Medical Director,  
UPMC Altoona  
Surgery Center



**Kathirvel Subramaniam,**  
**MD, MPH, FASE**  
Chief of Cardiothoracic  
Anesthesiology



**Erin A. Sullivan, MD,**  
**D.ABA, FASA**  
Associate Vice Chair for  
Non-Operating Room  
Anesthesia (NORA)  
Clinical Services



**Cynthia M. Wells, MD**  
Director of Operating  
Room Management,  
UPMC Health System



# Accolades

## NIH RANKING RISES

In February 2023, the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research released their fiscal year 2022 rankings of institutions and departments across the United States by amount of grant funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The latest rankings place us among **the top five NIH-funded anesthesiology departments in the nation**. Our department is ranked #5 this year.



Ajay D. Wasan,  
MD, MSc

In addition, **Ajay D. Wasan, MD, MSc**, was a top 10 NIH-funded investigator in anesthesiology in 2022.

The tremendous success of our research investigators this past year has us beaming with pride! Congratulations and thank you to our research faculty, as well as all the outstanding staff who support them, for achieving this honor for our department.



## PIP CARE LAUNCHED



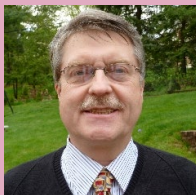
PIP Care and its new perioperative care app to help patients prepare for and recover from surgeries was announced in October 2022. The app, which we partnered with PIP Care to develop, was piloted this fall at our Centers for Perioperative Care (CPCs) at UPMC Presbyterian, UPMC Shadyside, and UPMC Horizon.

After an October 20 news release from Business Wire about the PIP Care launch, the program was publicized in several media outlets. Please see **the announcement** on our website for links to the stories.

## FACULTY PASS NBE EXAMS



Ezeldeen  
Abuelkasem,  
MBBCh, MSc,  
FASE  
passed  
ASCeXAM®



Charles D.  
Boucek, MD,  
FASA  
passed Basic  
PTEeXAM®



Joshua Knight,  
MD, FASE  
passed  
ASCeXAM®



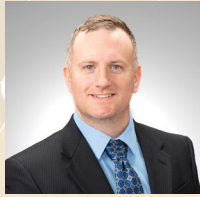
Harikesh  
Subramanian,  
MBBS  
passed  
ASCeXAM®



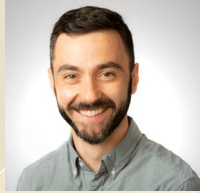
Alice Whyte, MD  
passed  
CCEeXAM®

**Drs. Ezeldeen Abuelkasem, Charles Boucek, Joshua Knight, Harikesh Subramanian, Quratulain Samoon** (not pictured, passed Advanced PTEeXAM®), and **Alice Whyte** passed key exams administered by the National Board of Echocardiography (NBE). Please read the **announcement** on our website for additional information.

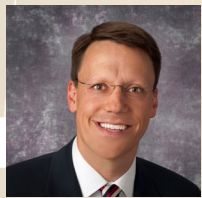
# Accolades



**Michael Jordan, MSN, CRNA, and Emily M. Whitco, MSN, CRNA,** received Cameos of Caring awards.



**Scott E. Licata, MD, and Michael Schnetz, MD, PhD,** earned board certification in Clinical Informatics through the American Board of Preventive Medicine.



**Shawn T. Beaman, MD, FASA,** was promoted to Full Examiner for the American Board of Anesthesiology Applied Examination.



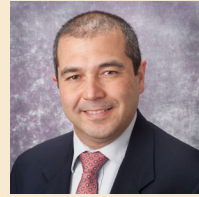
**Scott A. Brancolini, MD, MPH,** won a 2021 UPMC Excellence in Patient Experience Award.



**Michael L. Boisen, MD, FASE,** was appointed Chair of the UPMC Presbyterian Transfusion and Blood Management Committee, Chair of the UPMC Presbyterian Blood Usage Review and Safety Committee, and was elected as Councilor representing Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology for a two-year term in the Association of Anesthesiology Subspecialty Program Directors.



**Monica A. Bolland, MD,** won a UPMC Physician Excellence Award – Physician Excellence in Leadership.



**Murat Kaynar, MD, MPH,** was elected Secretary of the Association of Anesthesiology Subspecialty Program Directors for a two-year term.



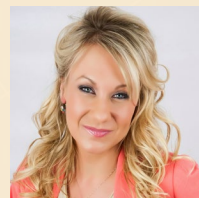
**Joseph M. Kirby, MHS, CRNA,** received the UPMC Passavant Advanced Practice Provider (APP) of the Year Award.



**Charles Lin, MD,** won a UPMC Physician Excellence Award – UPMC Early- to Mid-Career Physician Excellence in Clinical Care.



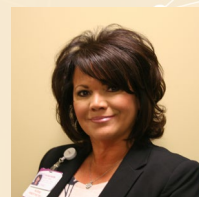
**Daniel Mandell, MD,** received the APP Physician of the Year Award for the Surgery/Anesthesia category as part of the UPMC Passavant APP awards.



**Shannon Morrissey, MSCL,** was chosen among many nominations to be spotlighted for her outstanding leadership during the 2022 UPMC Physician Services Leadership Retreat.



**John O'Donnell DrPH, CRNA, FAAN, FAANA, FSSH,** was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.



**Toni Orsino, MBA, CRNA,** received an Honorary Mention for the UPMC Physician Services Division Extra Mile Quarterly Award.



# Accolades



**Adrienne K. Ruzicka, MSN, CRNA**, won the "My UPMC Health Role Model" award.



**Maria Stangrecki, RN**, received the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses.



**Ajay D. Wasan, MD, MSc**, will receive the 2022 American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM) Founders Award at the 2023 AAPM Annual Meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, FL on March 25, 2023.

## NEW GRANTS



**Sean P. Farris, PhD, and Bradley K. Taylor, PhD**, "Identification of Novel Treatments for Alcohol Use Disorder with Comorbid Chronic Pain," University of Pittsburgh Bridging Connections in Addiction Research.

**Sean P. Farris, PhD**, "LNCrNA Regulation of Gene Expression & Behavior," NIH National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.



**Gregg E. Homanics, PhD**, "Genetic Engineering Core," NIH National Institute on Aging.

**Gregg E. Homanics, PhD, and Shirley Hill, PhD** (Pitt Psychiatry), "Cross-Generational Epigenetic Effects of Pre-Conception Alcohol Use on Gene Expression Associated With Cancer Susceptibility," University of Pittsburgh Bridging Connections in Addiction Research.



**Marsha Ritter Jones, MD, PhD**, Mentored Research Training Grant from the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research, "The Role of Neuronal-Derived MD-1 in Cutaneous Inflammation."



**Andrea Ibarra, MD, MS**, and mentors **Grace Lim, MD, MS**, and **Kristin M. Ondecho Ligda, MD, FASA**, American Society of Anesthesiologists Mentoring Grant, "Diversity in the Anesthesia Workforce: Where are We Now and Where are We Going?"



**Ajay D. Wasan, MD, MSc**, (Pitt PI), "Development and Validation of a Multimodal Ultrasound-Based Biomarker for Myofascial Pain" (Multiple Principal Investigator Grant), National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health.

## PINCH 2022 AWARDS



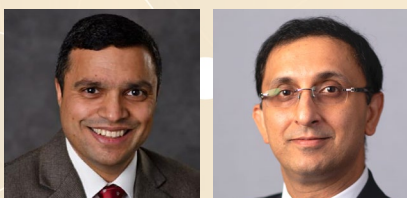
Projects by **Gaurav Chauhan, MD**, and **Trent Emerick, MD, MBA**, were finalists in the 2022 Pitt Innovation Challenge (PInCh) on October 19, 2022. Dr. Chauhan's BIONIC Naloxone Biofeedback Patch team project won a \$25,000 award in the virtual Elevator Pitch Competition and Dr. Emerick's Vanish Bioresorbable Stimulator project won a \$100,000 award as well as a \$15,000 Bonus Award for Engineering Good Health.

# Accolades

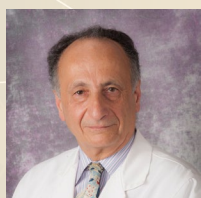
## IN THE PRESS



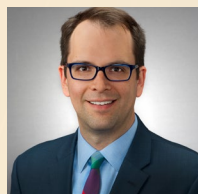
The article "**Case Highlights Way to Avoid Lead Fractures With Dorsal Root Ganglion Stimulation**" in the November 2022 issue of *Pain Medicine News* features work by **Fernando Brea Parrilla, MD**, and **Gaurav Chauhan, MD**, presented at the American Academy of Pain Medicine 2022 Annual Meeting.



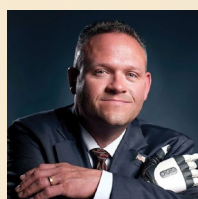
The EurekAlert/AAAS news release "**The Blood Pressure Monitor of Your Dreams**," spotlighted a revolutionary blood pressure monitoring device under development by Feng Xiong, PhD (Pitt Engineering) with our faculty members **Ramakrishna Mukkamala, PhD**, and **Aman Mahajan, MD, PhD, MBA**, along with Matthew Muldoon, MD (Pitt Dept. of Medicine) and Sanjeev Shroff, PhD (Pitt Engineering).



Two studies by **Jacques E. Chelly, MD, PhD, MBA**, and colleagues on the potential role of auriculotherapy as an alternative to opioids for postoperative pain management, "**Auriculotherapy May Reduce Opioid Use After Rotator Cuff Surgery**" and "**Auriculo-Nerve Stimulators a Potential Alternative To Opioids for Cancer Patients After Abdominal Surgery**," were featured in the November 2, 2022 issue of *Anesthesiology News*. Abstracts on these studies were selected as highlighted President's Choice abstracts at the ASRA 47th Annual Regional Anesthesiology and Acute Pain Medicine Meeting on March 31-April 2, 2022.



In the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article "**Cannabis Interactions Prompt New Guidelines from Anesthesiologists**," **Benedict Alter, MD, PhD**, spoke about the recent guidelines from the American Society for Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine regarding cannabis use screening before surgery.



**Brett M. Fadgen, MSN, CFRN, CRNA**, was among the honorees in *Pittsburgh Magazine's* seventh annual Excellence in Nursing Awards. The magazine also published a **feature article** profiling his career.



The UPMC Infonet article "**Serving His Country While Building His UPMC Career**" features the story of **Lt. Col. Chuck D. Giordano, MSN, DNP, CRNA**, (UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital) and his service in the US Air Force. *Please note that the above article link goes to UPMC's internal Infonet and is only accessible within the UPMC network.*



"**There & Back Again: Sarah's Life Changing Experience on the Appalachian Trail**" on the UPMC Careers website tells the tale of our UPMC Presbyterian nurse anesthetist **Sarah E. Robison, MSN, CRNA**, and her adventures hiking the entire Appalachian Trail.



**Ajay D. Wasan, MD, MSc**, was featured in the American Academy of Pain Medicine October 2022 **Member Focus article**.



# Meeting Highlights

## INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

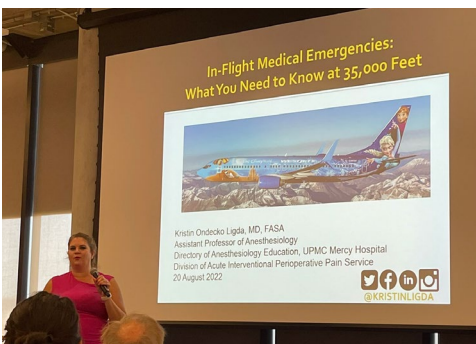


**Theresa A. Gelzinis, MD**, presented "Highlights in Thoracic Anesthesia," at the Asian Australasian Congress of Anaesthesiologists 2022 World Congress, an event combining meetings of the Asian Australasian Regional Section of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists, the Korean Society of Anesthesiologists (KSA), and the Korean Pain Society. Some of these highlights were published in the *Journal of Cardiothoracic Anesthesia*. Dr. Gelzinis was also invited to serve as the distinguished international speaker for KoreAnesthesia 2023, the 100th Annual Scientific Meeting of the KSA, November 9 -11, 2023 in Seoul, Korea.



**Tetsuro Sakai, MD, PhD, MHA, FASA**, was invited to attend the ILTS-iLDLT-LTSI 2023 Consensus Conference: Prediction and Management of Small for Size Syndrome (SFSS) in LDLT on January 27, 2023, in Chennai, India and Co-Chair the Anesthesia Section, "Anaesthesia and Critical Care Considerations in Preventing SFSS."

## NATIONAL EVENTS



**Kristin M. Ondecho Ligda, MD, FASA**, was an invited speaker at several meetings in August 2022. She presented "In-Flight Medical Emergencies: What to Know at 35,000 Feet" at the Physicians Moms Group Third Annual Meeting at Kiawah Island, August 5-7, 2022. She also presented on in-flight medical emergencies for the Inaugural Kenneth Keown Memorial Lecture for the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri on August 20, 2022. Finally, she was an invited speaker for the Oklahoma Society of Anesthesiologists 2022 Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City, August 26-28, 2022, where she presented her in-flight medical emergencies talk as well as the lecture "Management Strategies for Complicated Patients with Complicated Pain."

## ANESTHESIOLOGY 2022

ANESTHESIOLOGY 2022, the annual meeting of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), was held in New Orleans, LA from October 21-25, 2022. We delivered 48 presentations and four workshops (including a difficult airway workshop - images below); seven faculty members moderated or facilitated sessions or workshops; and 28 faculty members and five residents served on ASA and ASA-related committees. A schedule of our presentations and listing of our representation at the meeting is available in our [2022 ASA Meeting Companion](#) (PDF) on our website.



# Meeting Highlights

## ASA ADVANCE



ASA ADVANCE 2023: The Anesthesiology Business Event took place January 27-29, 2023 in Orlando, FL. Per tradition, our Practice Management Research Team, a group of residents, faculty, and CRNAs investigating healthcare business and management, had a strong presence at the meeting. The team presented five posters, presented lectures, and participated in meeting sessions.



Dr. Evan Lebovitz

"Financial Impact of Residents on Provider Expense in a Large Academic Anesthesiology Department" by Lauren Nahouraii, MD, et al. and presented by Evan Lebovitz, MD, MBA, won the FAER ASA ADVANCE 2023 Second Place Poster Award. In addition, our residents Sheri Wang, MD (PGY-3), and Harold Burke, MD (PGY-4), were two of only 12 residents chosen from across the nation to receive Emerging Leaders Scholarships to attend ASA ADVANCE 2023. The scholarship recognizes outstanding anesthesiology residents who demonstrate aptitude and portray interest in leadership and practice management.

A full meeting recap can be found [on our website](#).

## Tele-Town Halls

We participated in two UPMC "Tele-Town Hall" forums where patients participate in question and answer sessions with panels of doctors and clinical experts.

The first Tele-Town Hall focused on Pain Management and Behavioral Health on January 26, 2023 and featured **Trent Emerick, MD, MBA**, and **Susan Jarquin, PhD, MBA**, explaining how our UPMC Pain Management multidisciplinary team can help patients who are living with chronic pain. The event attracted 1,735 attendees and was very well received.



Drs. Susan Jarquin and Trent Emerick

The second event spotlighted our Center for Perioperative Care (CPC) on February 7, 2023 and featured **Stephen A. Esper, MD, MBA**, explaining how the CPC helps prepare high-risk patients for surgery to help reduce surgical risks and tailor treatment to each individual's needs. The town hall was very successful, attracting 1,882 attendees and achieving an above benchmark engagement rate.



Dr. Stephen Esper with Tele-Town Hall host Kathy Svilar

UPMC Marketing will be creating a podcast to reinforce the messages from the Tele-Town Halls.



# CRNA Week

National CRNA Week is a time to honor and recognize the teamwork, dedication, and exemplary care of our department's more than 400 nurse anesthetists and reflect on their heroic work and unique expertise. CRNA Week 2023 took place January 23-29 and marked another year of celebration, appreciation, and community service. CRNAs at our various hospital sites chose to spend the week helping others, which has been a long-standing and inspiring tradition in our department. [See more highlights](#) in the story on our website.



CRNAs at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh cooked and served dinner to 25 members of the community at the Neighborhood Resilience Project in the Hill District. The guests also received new winter hats, gloves, scarves, and socks donated by the Children's CRNA group.

Left to right: Jen Kundick (with daughter Anna), Kathy Pyros, Dana Gemma, Kris Van Sickle, Yvonne Shedlock, and Missy Dupilka



CRNAs at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital collected and donated over 100 food items and participated in a Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank Market Volunteer Event for those in need. The volunteer efforts were organized by our Magee Anesthesia Cares (M.A.C.) committee, which is spearheaded by Serafina Bear and includes Laura Montag and Courtney Thomas.

Front row, left to right: Sofia Bear and CRNAs Donna Koleck, Clarice Johns, Thomas Janczewski, and Serafina Bear. Back row, left to right: CRNAs Laura Montag, Valerie Pomerantz, Dani Meholic, and Connor McClellan, and Todd Bear



UPMC Shadyside CRNAs organized efforts to host and serve dinner to more than 75 guests at Family House, an organization providing affordable and accessible housing for patients seeking medical treatment in Pittsburgh and their families. The CRNA group talked to families about their loved ones' care and answered questions about CRNAs and their role in the world of surgery.

Left to right: UPMC Shadyside CRNAs Morgan Aretz (with Melissa and Duke Aretz), Tera Thomas, Sam Berry, Tammy Nuzzo, Alex Uram, and Patrick Burke

# Publications

## HIGHLIGHTS

Authors from our department produced **85 publications** from September 1, 2022 - February 28, 2023. Below are some highlights. A list of department publications can be viewed [on PubMed](#).

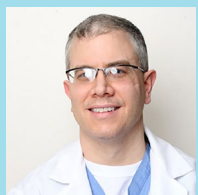


Two papers by **Antonio Arcadipane, MD** (left), and **Gennaro Martucci, PhD**, (not pictured) from ISMETT in Palermo, Italy were published in *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine* (impact factor 102.642), which is considered the world-leading respiratory medicine and critical care journal, ranking first among 35 critical care and 65 respiratory system journals.

- **Transfusion Practice in Patients Receiving VV ECMO (PROTECMO): A Prospective, Multicentre, Observational Study**
- **Comparative Outcomes of Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation for COVID-19 Delivered in Experienced European Centres During Successive SARS-Cov-2 Variant Outbreaks (ECMO-SURGES): An International, Multicentre, Retrospective Cohort Study**



The *Anesthesia & Analgesia* paper "**A Systematic Scoping Review of Peridelivery Pain Management for Pregnant People With Opioid Use Disorder: From the Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology and Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine**," by **Grace Lim, MD, MS**, and **Anne Wanaselja, MD**, was the journal's Article of the Month and included a visual abstract and podcast. The paper was also featured in the journal's Video Summary of Featured Articles.



**Karen J. Maresch, DNAP, CRNA**, **William Pileggi, MSN, CRNA, MAJ, USAR/AN (Ret.)** (left), and **Shawn West, MSN, CRNA** (not pictured) were authors on the following publications:

- "Neurological Conditions," Chapter 12 in the textbook *Pediatric Anesthesia: A Comprehensive Approach to Safe and Effective Care*, 1st Edition (West)
- **Perioperative and Perianesthesia Considerations for Hypoglossal Nerve Stimulator Implantation in Obstructive Sleep Apnea Patients** (Maresch)
- **A Perioperative Intervention to Prevent and Treat Emergence Delirium at a Veterans Affairs Medical Center** (Pileggi)



"**Preoperative Identification of Patient-Dependent Blood Pressure Targets Associated With Low Risk of Intraoperative Hypotension During Noncardiac Surgery**," by **Michael Schnetz, MD, PhD**, **David J. Danks, PhD**, and **Aman Mahajan, MD, PhD, MBA**, was the "featured article" in the February 2023 issue of *A&A* and spotlighted on the cover. The paper was also featured in an infographic in the February 2023 *A&A* and was the subject of an "Article of the Month" podcast.



**Pei Tang, PhD** and her research team had a paper published in *ACS Chemical Neuroscience*, "SARS-CoV-2 Spike Protein Downregulates Cell Surface 7nAChR through a Helical Motif in the Spike Neck." The implication of their discovery is highly profound for improving COVID-19 vaccines to minimize side effects and for developing treatment options for certain symptoms related to long COVID. [Read more about the team's findings](#)



The laboratory of **Bradley K. Taylor, PhD**, uncovered a promising future therapeutic strategy to treat neuropathic pain. A paper on this work by **Tyler S. Nelson, PhD**, et al., "**Spinal neuropeptide Y Y1 receptor-expressing neurons are a pharmacotherapeutic target for the alleviation of neuropathic pain**," was published in *PNAS* (impact factor: 12.78).



# Upcoming Events

## PARRC 2023

We are pleased to be hosting the **17th Annual Pennsylvania Anesthesiology Resident Research Conference** here in Pittsburgh:

May 13th, 2023, 7:30 am- 5:00 pm  
IN PERSON at UPMC Shadyside Herberman Conference Center, Pittsburgh, PA  
Conference Course Director: Phillip Adams, DO, FASA



The event will showcase the research and talent of Pennsylvania residents from the seven anesthesiology residency programs across the state. Residents will present case reports, cutting-edge research, and other scholarly activities. This activity is approved for the following credit: AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™.

### IMPORTANT DATES:

- **Registration deadline:** May 1, 2023
- **Lodging group rate deadlines:** Wyndham Pittsburgh/Lawrenceville - April 11, 2023; The Westin Pittsburgh - April 20, 2023

Please check [the event page](#) on our website for all the details.

## 13TH INTERNATIONAL NPY-PYY-PP RESEARCH CONFERENCE

We are excited to also host the **13th International Neuropeptide Y, Peptide YY, Pancreatic Polypeptide (NPY-PYY-PP) Research Conference** at Posvar Hall, University of Pittsburgh, July 15-18, 2023. Bradley K. Taylor, PhD, will chair the meeting.

The scientific program will cover the broad spectrum of how the NPY family of peptides controls neurobiological and psychological processes, pain, metabolism, feeding behavior, gastrointestinal function, and other physiological systems.



### IMPORTANT DATES:

- **Early registration deadline:** June 1, 2023 (after June 1, registration fees will increase by \$100 in each category)
- **Abstract submission deadline:** June 1, 2023

Please visit [the meeting website](#) for detailed information.

# Upcoming Events

## 2023 SAFAR SYMPOSIUM/TRAINEES' RESEARCH DAY

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 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, as well as the Winter Institute for Simulation Education and Research (WISER).

**Call for Abstracts:** Abstract submissions are due by April 6, 2023, 5 pm.

Please visit the [Safar Center's website](#) and click the 2023 Safar Symposium tab for all the details.



**20TH ANNUAL SAFAR SYMPOSIUM  
AND  
MULTI-DEPARTMENTAL TRAINEES'  
RESEARCH DAY**

Departments of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine,  
Critical Care Medicine, Emergency Medicine,  
Neurological Surgery, and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

**MAY 18 - 19, 2023  
UNIVERSITY CLUB / WISER**

**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: Submissions due April 6, 2023**

Please visit [www.safar.pitt.edu](http://www.safar.pitt.edu) and click the 2023 Safar Symposium tab for more information

42nd Peter B. Eva Safar Annual Lectureship in Medical Sciences and Humanities  
Geoffrey T. Manley, MD, PhD  
Chief of Neurosurgery,  
San Francisco General Hospital  
Professor of Neurosurgery,  
University of California San Francisco  
Topic: A Paradigm Shift in Traumatic Brain Injury Classification  
May 18, 2023, 12pm

## PAIN NURSING COURSES

The UPMC Pain Management Nursing Education program for UPMC nurses enhances participants' pain management knowledge, attitude, and skills and was designed to support safe, effective, patient-centered, and compassionate care. Courses are held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Upcoming 2023 Virtual UPMC Pain Management Nursing Education sessions are scheduled for **April 14**, **April 18**, and **November 10, 8AM - noon**. Participants will receive 4 hours of Continued Education (CE) upon completion.

UPMC Nurses can register **online** (click "UPMC Pain Management Nursing Education") or via HR Direct (after logging in select "learning," search for "UPMC Pain Management Nursing Education," select the course, and click "select offering").

Our following clinicians are participating as course instructors:

- Susan Jarquin, PhD, MBA
- Kevin Hoa Luong, PA-C, MBA
- Amy Croushore CRNP, AP-PMN
- Caroline Miller, MPAS, PA-C

Questions? Please contact the UPMC East Education Department at 412-357-3092.





# Education News

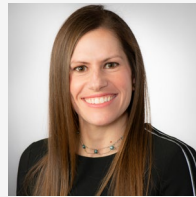
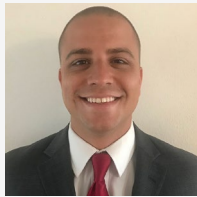
## DR. HANNAH GLOEDE WINS NIMHD COURSE SPOT



Our PGY-1 resident **Hannah Gloede, MD**, was selected as one of only 15 participants for the September 19 – December 12, 2022 course "Health Disparities: A Translational Research Approach" and received a registration fee award. The course and award are funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities of the National Institutes of Health.

## VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS PAPER - JGME ARTICLE OF THE WEEK

The *Journal of Graduate Medical Education* (JGME) article "**Do Lower Costs for Applicants Come at the Expense of Program Perception? A Cross-Sectional Survey Study of Virtual Residency Interviews**" was spotlighted as a JGME Article of the Week in the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education's January 9, 2023 e-communication. The authors from our department were our residents **Sheri Wang, MD**; and **Zachary Denham, MD**, and our faculty members **Elizabeth A. Ungerman, MD, MS**; **Lindsay Stollings, MD**; **David G. Metro, MD, FASA**; and **Phillip S. Adams, DO, FASA**.



## DR. TRAM DURAN WINS 2023 UPSOM CLERKSHIP PRECEPTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

**Tram Duran, MD**, received the 2023 Clerkship Preceptor of the Year Award at this year's University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM) curriculum colloquium. The award honors her for "Outstanding Achievement in Educating Future Physicians," an honor which is well deserved. The Clerkship Preceptor of the Year award was established to recognize faculty clinical preceptors who consistently provide outstanding clinical instruction in the clerkship setting for Pitt medical students. Honorees are selected by the UPSOM Awards Committee and conferred by the Dean based on nominations from students and faculty.



# Education News

## NEW DUAL FELLOWSHIP PATHWAYS

We now offer three new pathways for fellows interested in multi-subspecialty training in adult cardiothoracic anesthesiology (ACTA), anesthesiology critical care medicine (ACCM), and/or obstetric (OB) anesthesiology. Please visit the new pages on our website for more information on these new training opportunities:

- ACCM ACTA Fellowship Pathway
- OB ACCM Fellowship Pathway
- OB ACTA Fellowship Pathway



## VOTE FOR UPMC RESIDENCY PROGRAM ON DOXIMITY

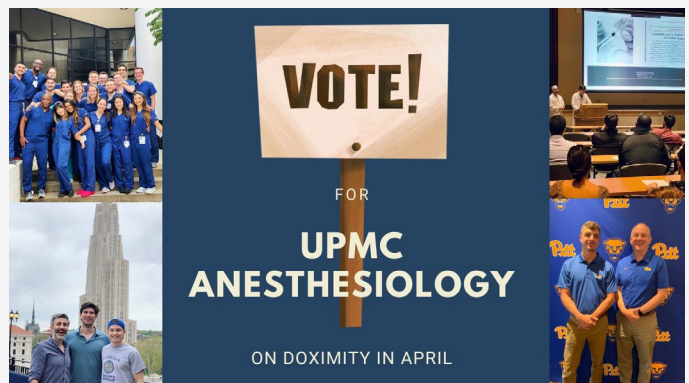
Attention, all alumni and current department faculty, residents, and fellows! We need your help to let future trainees know about the excellence of our top-tier residency program and continue to attract and recruit the best residents.

Doximity is a medical network/website partnered with *US News and World Report* where physicians can rank residency programs. Medical students rely on Doximity's rankings to evaluate training programs and determine where they want to complete their residency training.

All board-certified anesthesiologists can cast their vote on Doximity. To vote, you will first need to activate your Doximity profile. Activation is simple. After activating your account, you must also enter your residency dates and list your board certification. After completing these steps, in April you will receive a ballot to select UPMC Anesthesiology as the top residency program.

Remember - to vote you must (1) activate your account, (2) enter your residency dates, and (3) ensure that your board certification is listed. We have posted a [helpful tutorial](#) with screenshots on our website.

Please activate your account by the end of March and cast your vote!





# Graduation Dec. 2022

## GRADUATING SRNAs



Anastasia  
Abkarian-Winkler



Diane  
Adams



Taylor  
Albanese



Courtney  
Augspurger



Anna  
Best



Raymond  
Campbell



Elizabeth  
Chang



Sara  
Cheloha



Benjamin  
Everett



Adam  
Frederick



Meagan  
Gribus



Michael  
Gumpf



Nicholas  
Guyan



Victoria  
Harshbarger



Ashley  
Hileman



Jazzlyn  
Horton



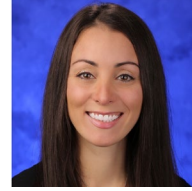
Julie  
Koenig



Miranda  
Kuzman



David  
Liu



Jessica Maritto  
(MSN to DNP)



Deepa  
Mathew



Ion  
Melinte



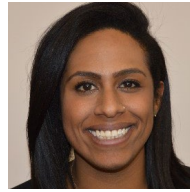
Kendall  
Mello



Benjamin  
Miller



Kristen  
Miskinis



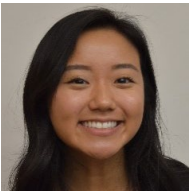
Shahnaz  
Morris



Dustin  
Nichols



John  
Olsen



Grace  
Paik



Marissa  
Palmer



Stefanie  
Paskal



Rachel  
Pierce



Sydney  
Rohrbaugh



Alexander  
Russo



Meredith  
Scheier



Tyler  
Schultz



Christina  
Singleton



Josephine  
Smith



Atalya  
Sunseri



Cassie  
Toribio



Morgan  
True



Sean  
Williamson

# SRNA GRADUATE DNP PROJECTS

**Anastasia Abkarian-Winkler:** Implementation of a Maternal Preeclampsia Simulation in an Obstetrics Department to Standardize Care and Improve Staff Knowledge

**Diane Adams:** Impact of an End-Tidal CO<sub>2</sub> Monitoring Protocol in a Post-Anesthesia Care Unit on Incidence of Postoperative Respiratory Depression

**Taylor Albanese:** Impact of Nurse-Administered STOP-BANG Screening in an Outpatient Gastrointestinal Lab for Adults Receiving Sedation on Identification of Patients at High Risk for Obstructive Sleep Apnea, Intra-Procedure Airway Maneuvers, and Adverse Events

**Courtney Augspurger:** Observational Study of Current CRNA Airway Management and Desaturation Prevention During Outpatient EGDs in a Free-Standing GI Clinic

**Anna Best:** Implementation of a Sterile IV Fluid Preparation Training for Anesthesia Operating Room Support Staff

**Raymond Campbell:** Improving Difficult Airway Management by Anesthesia Providers with a Structured Update of the Difficult Airway Cart

**Elizabeth Chang:** The Development and Implementation of an Evidence-Based Tumescence Liposuction Protocol, Online Educational Course for Perioperative Staff, and Discharge Instructions: A Quality Improvement Project

**Sara Cheloha:** Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of an External Airway Management Device Educational Module for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists

**Benjamin Everett:** Integration of a Standardized Perioperative Handoff Protocol in Non-Emergent Patients to Reduce Surgical Delays

**Adam Frederick:** Decreasing Preoperative Cancellation Rates in a University Special Needs Dental Clinic

**Megan Gribus:** Development and Implementation of a Structured Orientation Process in an Academic Health Center Dental School Special Needs Clinic

**Michael Gumpf:** Ultrasound-Guided Peripheral Intravenous Catheter Training for CRNAs Utilizing Simulation and the Train-The-Trainer Model: A Multi-Site Study

**Nicholas Guyan:** Anesthesia Provider Perceptions of the Anesthesia Crisis Leadership Training Program: A Qualitative Program Evaluation

**Victoria Harshbarger:** Implementation of a Pre-Transport Patient Safety Pause Checklist

**Ashley Hileman:** Impact on Patient Survival Rates and Knowledge and Skills Confidence in Anesthesia Providers After Completion of a Tailored BLS/ACLS/PALS Bundle Renewal Course

**Jazzlyn Horton:** Implementing Maternal Post-Partum Hemorrhage in situ Simulation Training in the Obstetrics Department at a Local Community Hospital to Standardize Care and Improve Patient Outcomes Through Better Prepared Labor and Delivery Staff

**Julie Koenig:** Evaluation of Needlestick and Sharps Injuries Amongst Healthcare Workers in Cambodian Hospitals: A Quality Improvement Project

**Miranda Kuzman:** Development of a Post-Procedure Follow-Up Protocol at an Outpatient Special Needs Dental Clinic

**David Liu:** Assessing Preparedness in Management of a Malignant Hyperthermia Crisis via in situ Simulation: A Quality Improvement Project

**Mathew Deepa:** Implementation of a Pre-Transport Patient Safety Pause Checklist

**Jessica Maritto (MSN to DNP):** Point of Care Ultrasound Course for CRNAs to Improve the Identification of Lung Abnormalities

**John Melinte:** Implementation of a Treatment Protocol for Obstetric Hemorrhage with Uterine Atony Etiology Through in situ Simulation Training at a Local Community Hospital

**Kendall Mello:** The Development and Implementation of an Evidence-Based Tumescence Liposuction Protocol, Online Educational Course for Perioperative Staff, and Discharge Instructions: A Quality Improvement Project

**Benjamin Miller:** In situ Crisis Management Simulation in an Ambulatory Plastic Surgery Center

**Kristen Miskinis:** Nurse Anesthesia Provider Perceptions of Mock Induction Simulation: A Program Evaluation

**Shahnaz Morris:** Use of Ultrasound-Guided Peripheral Intravenous Catheter Insertion in Perioperative Adult Populations to Improve Knowledge, Confidence, and Skills of Nurse Anesthetists

**Dustin Nichols:** Exploring the Development of a Standardized Process for Implementing New Anesthesia Equipment into the Perioperative Setting of a Large Academic Medical Center for the Purposes of Enhancing Patient Safety

**John Olsen:** Improving the Discussion of Fire Risk During Pre-Surgical Time Out: A Quality Improvement Project

**Grace Paik:** Exploring the Incidence of Postoperative Hypothermia in Critical Care Pediatric Patients who Receive General Anesthesia

**Marissa Palmer:** Implementation of High-Flow Nasal Cannula Use to Reduce the Incidence of Airway Maneuvers in Same-Day Surgery Patients Receiving Procedural Sedation



# SRNA GRADUATE DNP PROJECTS

**Stefanie Paskal:** The Development and Implementation of an Evidence-Based Tumescence Liposuction Protocol, Online Educational Course for Perioperative Staff, and Discharge Instructions: A Quality Improvement Project

**Rachel Pierce:** Lowering CLABSI Rates in UPMC St. Margaret Hospital by Reorganizing the Current CLABSI Bundle to Include the Use of Chlorhexidine Bath Wipes in at Risk Patients

**Sydney Rohrbaugh:** Effect of an Evidence-Based Educational Module on Sterile Technique Performance in a Nurse Anesthetist Regional Anesthesia Training Course: Evaluation of Skill, Knowledge, and Confidence of Nurse Anesthesia Providers

**Alexander Russo:** Impact of a COVID Training Module as Part of a BLS/ACLS/PALS Renewal Course on Provider Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes: A Pilot Study

**Meredith Scheier:** The Association of Intraoperative Ketamine Administration with Postoperative Pain, Nausea, and Vomiting among Orthopedic Trauma Survivors

**Tyler Schultz:** Ultrasound-Guided Peripheral Intravenous Catheter Training for CRNAs Utilizing Simulation and the Train-the-Trainer Model: A Multi-Center Study

**Christina Singleton:** Ultrasound-Guided Peripheral Intravenous Catheter Training for CRNAs Utilizing Simulation and the Train-the-Trainer Model: A Multi-Center Study

**Josephine Smith:** CLABSI Protocol Update to Include Chlorhexidine Bathing of Patients with Central Venous Catheters to Reduce CLABSI Rates at UPMC St. Margaret Hospital

**Atalya Sunseri:** Retrospective Qualitative Analysis of a Tertiary Medical Center's in situ Mock Code Program: Recommendations for System Change

**Cassie Toribio:** Assessment of Anesthesia Providers' Confidence and Attitudes Regarding Critical Incident Stress Management After Tailored BLS/ACLS/PALS Bundle Renewal Course

**Morgan True:** Implementation of an Infectious Disease Cognitive Aid in the Operating Room to Increase Anesthesia Providers' Compliance of Infection Control Policies

**Sean Williamson:** The Implementation of Capnography in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit to Improve Detection of Respiratory Compromise in High-Risk Adult Patients

# 2022 PITT NURSE ANESTHESIA GRADUATION AWARDS

Two of our esteemed clinicians were honored with awards at the University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program Class of 2022 graduation ceremony on Thursday, December 15, 2022 at the University Club. **Nicole R. Nowe, MSN, CRNA** (UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital) received the Mary DePaolis Lutzo Anesthetist of the Year Award and **Ezeldeen Abuelkasem, MBBCh, MSc, FASE** (UPMC Montefiore) received the Stephen Finestone Anesthesiologist of the Year Award. Congratulations to our award winners as well as the graduating Pitt nurse anesthesia class of 2022!



Nicole R. Nowe,  
MSN, CRNA



Ezeldeen  
Abuelkasem,  
MBBCh, MSc, FASE



Graduate registered nurse anesthetist (GRNA) Anna Best presented Nicole with her award



Our Department Chair, Dr. Aman Mahajan, accepted the award on behalf of Dr. Ezeldeen Abuelkasem from GRNA Taylor Albanese.

# Winter Festivities

**We spent the cold months celebrating holidays, giving back to the community, and engaging in team-building activities. Thank you to all faculty and staff who provided photos!**



Submitted by Dr. Andrew Herlich (Scaife Department Administration): His wife Thelma with their dog Lady celebrating Hanukkah

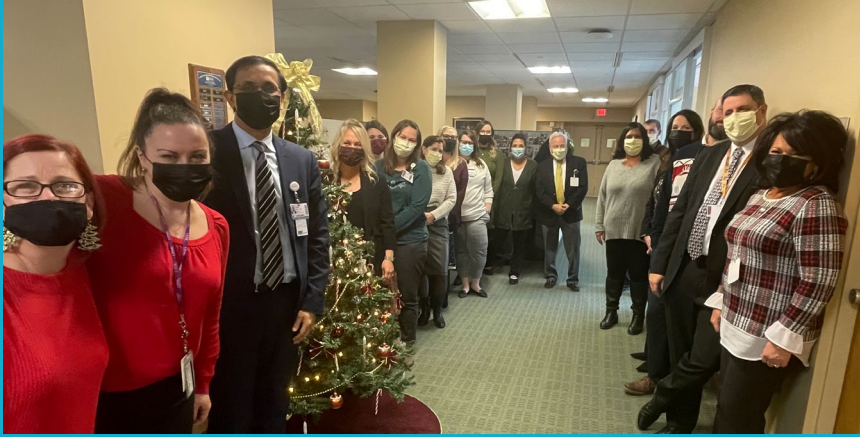


On Christmas morning, CRNA Francis Feld (UPMC Passavant) filled in for the Ross West View EMSA supervisor so he could stay at home with his wife and young son and enjoy the morning. Ross West View EMSA serves Ross Township, West View Borough, Millvale Borough, Reserve Township and Ohio Township. It was a busy morning, but fortunately none of the calls were serious.



On December 17, 2022, these jolly anesthesiology elves joined the volunteer efforts at the Best of the Batch Foundation for their annual holiday Batch A Toys event. The group wrapped toys and household items for families in need and had a lot of fun in the process. CA-2 resident Dr. Boris Anyama coordinated our anesthesiology volunteers, who worked hard picking out just the right toy for each little girl and boy. Best of the Batch Foundation founder, former Steelers Quarterback Charlie Batch, even joined the group for a photo (left)!





Scaife Department Administration after celebrating the winter holidays with their annual "white elephant" gift exchange



Jen Branik and Joanne Hirt, Scaife Department Administration, looking festive

## UPMC PRESBYTERIAN HOLIDAY PARTY





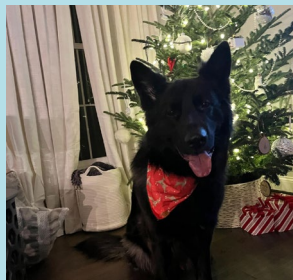
# CPC TEAMBUILDING SOCIAL GATHERING



# HOLIDAY FUN AT UPMC PASSAVANT



A custom-made ornament on the Passavant Anesthesiology tree



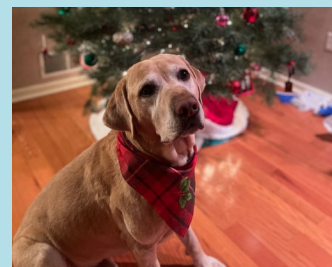
CRNA Joey Manilla's dog Duke



Bulletin board made by Rafelin O'Dell with Passavant Anesthesiology department chiefs as snowmen



Rafelin O'Dell's dog Roxey



CRNA Nicole's Kuchta's dog Max



# PASSAVANT DEPARTMENT-WIDE CELEBRATION DURING CRNA WEEK



# UPMC PET THERAPY VISITS CHRONIC PAIN CENTRE COMMONS STAFF





# Career Opportunities

## FACULTY

We are seeking highly motivated physicians and physician researchers with demonstrated track records for excellence and the ability to work with a highly productive team. We offer positions in numerous anesthesiology subspecialties throughout over 20 clinical sites. Our anesthesiologists enjoy exceptional career growth opportunities, stability, and flexible scheduling 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 various faculty positions, including clinical leadership and subspecialty focused roles.

Please visit "[career opportunities](#)" on our website for more information and to view current vacancies.

Interested candidates should send their CV via e-mail to the attention of David G. Metro, MD, FASA, and Dr. Aman Mahajan, MD, PhD, MBA, at [gallascj@upmc.edu](mailto:gallascj@upmc.edu).

## T32 POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS

We are actively recruiting physicians who are committed to excellence in both 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 and pain medicine. 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.

## CRNAs



We are seeking full-time, part-time, and casual CRNAs at various UPMC facilities/hospitals. Our CRNAs enjoy:

- Market-competitive salaries with newly increased salary ranges and new sign-on bonuses
- A robust CRNA career ladder to support career advancement with compensation increases to recognize expertise and contributions along the way
- Generous paid time off, including PTO advance for experienced CRNAs to support work-life balance
- Site movement incentives to recognize and reward flexibility
- Annual pay increases based on performance to acknowledge professional contributions as a CRNA
- Comprehensive benefits package and retirement options



Scan the QR code to apply today. To connect directly with a member of our recruitment team, please contact Rise' Porter-Wolf at [wolfr@upmc.edu](mailto:wolfr@upmc.edu) or 412-864-2034. For questions regarding CRNA positions, please e-mail Toni Orsino, MBA, CRNA at [orsinoa@upmc.edu](mailto:orsinoa@upmc.edu).

**UPMC positions: EOE. Minority/Female/Vet/Disabled**

**The University of Pittsburgh is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and values equality of opportunity, human dignity and diversity, EOE, including disability/vets.**



# 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 or [LauraLatini@pitt.edu](mailto:LauraLatini@pitt.edu). Types of gifts accepted include:

- gifts of cash, check, or credit card
- gifts of stock
- gifts of other assets
- memorial gifts
- unrestricted gifts
- 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 would like to make a credit card gift to another area, please contact Laura Latini at 412-398-0786 or [LauraLatini@pitt.edu](mailto:LauraLatini@pitt.edu).

## 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.



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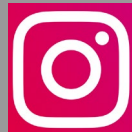
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