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Committee Mission Statement

To develop and enhance the academic environment for women faculty and trainees through networking, mentorship, professional development, and advocacy.



MEET JENNIFER PISANO, MD

Section Chief of Infectious Diseases and Global Health

Since July 1, 2022, Jennifer Pisano, MD has served as chief of the Section of Infectious Diseases and Global after serving for a year in this role as an interim capacity.

Dr. Pisano received her MD at Rush Medical College in 2005 and completed her internal medicine residency training, infectious diseases fellowship training and advanced fellowship training in infectious diseases/transplant infectious diseases at the University of Chicago. She is also a graduate of our Summer Program in Outcomes Research Training (SPORT) and the Medical Education, Research, Innovation, Teaching and Scholarship (MERITS) fellowship programs. In 2011, Dr. Pisano joined the faculty in the Section of Infectious Diseases and Global Health where she currently serves as Associate Professor.

In 2014, Dr. Pisano was appointed as medical director for UCM's Antibiotic Stewardship Program after serving as associate medical director for three years. In this capacity, she co-leads a multidisciplinary team whose primary objective is to improve clinical outcomes and curb antimicrobial resistance through the safe and careful use of antimicrobials in the hospital and community. As a result of this leadership, the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) designated the program as an Antimicrobial Stewardship Center of Excellence. In addition to antimicrobial stewardship educational outreach to hospital clinicians and staff, Dr. Pisano developed the ID fellowship antimicrobial stewardship curriculum, including a third-year advanced antimicrobial stewardship track and co-led the development of the Section's quality improvement curriculum. Dr. Pisano also serves as chair of UCM's Antimicrobial Subcommittee of Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee. →

JENNIFER PISANO, CONTINUED

Dr. Pisano's research is focused on leveraging the electronic medical record to optimize antibiotic prescribing and identify high-impact stewardship interventions. She is an active member of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and continues to be an active member of the IDSA Leadership Institute. Dr. Pisano is also a member of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology in America and the American Society of Transplantation's Infectious Diseases Community of Practice and is the current co-chair of the ID-COP Antimicrobial Stewardship workgroup. She served on the Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee for the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America and as the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America's Liaison for American Transplantation Society White Paper on Antimicrobial Stewardship. Dr. Pisano has published nearly 3 dozen papers and book chapters.

WF: What helped you develop leadership skills and be named to leadership positions throughout your career?

JP: Reflecting on my leadership path, I think back to when I played sports, especially in high school, where I was working as part of a team. Over the seasons and years, the roles changed and evolved on those teams, giving me some early leadership experience. Throughout the years, I have been lucky to be encouraged to do some scary things throughout high school and college and those experiences helped guide me throughout medical school, residency, and as an early faculty member. I've always had support, but I am also not afraid to ask for it when I need it.

As a faculty member, I have had excellent role models that listened to me and excelled at connecting people and encouraged me to have a voice. I tried to take advantage of every opportunity through leadership workshops and trainings as well as through the National Infectious Disease Society. These experiences taught me new skills as well as reinforcing and giving a name to the qualities that I was picking up throughout the years from other people.

WF: What have been your experiences with mentorship throughout your career?

JP: Mentorship is a big word, but it's very important. It's crucial to find different people to mentor you in different aspects of your life: career, goals, home life, etc. It's helpful to create a team, even if not an

official team, of people who have supported you, including people outside your specific area. These people, especially other women faculty members, have helped me to stay balanced, with a successful path forward.

WF: What advice do you have for women faculty and trainees in the Department of Medicine?

JP: When you are in your early career, it can be hard to say "no" to opportunities, but over time, you need to decide what is important to you and what activities you want to put together to tell your story to move your career forward. It can be difficult to know when that time is; sometimes, this time might be created for you because of outside pressures. Oftentimes, the opportunities that you leave behind can benefit others in your field. Sometimes, it can be hard to focus your efforts, but creating a team and community that you can work through ideas with and create different communities with is important.

Looking back, I could have been more intentional about saying "no" or "not now" rather than trying to fit everything in. With academics, it's a long game so you want to ensure that you have enough momentum to move projects forward to completion. Make sure you have a project that you "own" that you can see through from start to finish.

WF: What are your goals and/or vision for the Section of Infectious Diseases and Global Health?

JP: I'm excited to have the opportunity to step into this position in such a time of transition in our section in rebuilding our faculty after some retirements. As we are recruiting new faculty, we have had to take a step back and think about the type of section that we want to be. I'm looking forward to continuing to grow our faculty and to building connections, with particular focus on the basic and translational sciences with other parts of the university. We hope to recruit to diversify the type of science that the section focuses on and we want to expand on the already amazing faculty involved in public health work through FQHCs on the south side of Chicago. Additionally, we want to take science from bench to bedside, especially in HIV, where there are so many advances that our community has not been able to benefit from as much secondary to social factors and lack of access. ■





WOMEN IN THE NEWS: FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Aarti Venkat, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Section of Biomedical Data Science

Dr. Venkat is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Section of Biomedical Data Science and the Director of Clinical Informatics at the Center for Translational Data Science (CTDS). She completed her Ph.D. in Human Genetics from the University of Chicago, and joined Tempus Labs, a precision oncology company where she served as the Associate Director of Bioinformatics. There, she developed clinical bioinformatics pipelines and algorithms for applications in oncology and germline genetics. Armed with dual experience from academia and industry, she returned to the University to combine her academic research with her clinical interests.

The goal of Dr. Venkat's research is to develop computational infrastructure and machine learning pipelines for large omics datasets to uncover the genetic basis of diseases. She has developed a patented algorithm that uses tumor-normal matched sequencing data to match solid tumor patients to PARP inhibitors. At CTDS, she is the co-PI of the Biomedical Research Hub (BRH), a data ecosystem that interoperates with over sixteen petabytes of data scattered in several cloud-based data repositories generated for cancer, cardiovascular and other diseases. The BRH provides a central location to search and discover from diverse data repositories. She is also working with clinical and molecular data from the national Veteran Affairs health system to uncover molecular markers for prostate and lung cancer among military veterans.

Dr. Venkat is co-leading several other projects at CTDS under the mentorship of Dr. Robert Grossman. These include the development of software technology that enables cancer researchers to easily spin up a data commons -- a platform that co-locates data with computing resources. She is also leading the development of reproducible containerized workflows for disease research and actively working with Dr. Grossman on developing Large Language Models for efficient search and discovery from disease data.

On a personal note, Dr. Venkat loves mentoring young women for careers in STEM and computational fields. She has a 2 year-old daughter who she enjoys speaking to in several Indian languages. She loves running and enjoys exploring Chicago with her husband, a cellist. ■



TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT



Geriatric and Palliative Care Fellows

The Section of Geriatrics and Palliative Care is home to many inspiring female role models. Trainees agree that it is a very supportive environment for women and those with families. One office is now converted into a lactation and wellness room. The section throws excellent baby showers and has a wellness fund dedicated to supporting outings for the fellows to connect outside the hospital.

Current fellows include **Laura Kahn, MD, MPH**, who completed her medical training and Master of Public Health at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and Family Medicine residency at Northwestern McGaw/Erie Family Health Centers. She is currently a palliative fellow at UCMC. Her clinical interests include end-of-life care, primary palliative care, maternal and child health, and strength training for older adults. She hopes to have an eclectic clinical practice.

Dr. Nikita Gill is specializing in geriatric medicine with a passion for health advocacy, preventive care, and nutrition. After completing her internal medicine training at NYU, Dr. Gill pursued geriatrics fellowship. She takes a holistic approach to healthcare, focusing on preventive care, nutrition, and whole-patient wellness. Dr. Gill is returning home to Canada to practice medicine in Parry Sound, Ontario, a rural community with unique healthcare needs. Her patient-centered approach involves creating personalized plans tailored to each patient's unique needs, empowering them to take an active role in their health and well-being.

Dr. Kelsey Dullinger earned her medical degree from Midwestern University and did her Internal Medicine residency training at Advocate Christ Medical Center. She is currently completing a fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Care at UCMC with plans to pursue a Hospitalist position next year in Denver, CO.

Dr. Samantha Sawicki is a geriatrics and palliative care fellow. She works with faculty across departments on research projects related to the care of patients with neurodegenerative diseases. ■



NEW FACULTY



BEATRICE CONCEPCION, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine (Nephrology)

Dr. Concepcion earned her medical degree from the University of the Philippines and completed her residency at Rush University Medical Center. She completed fellowships at Rush University Medical Center and Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Dr. Concepcion's scholarly work is focused on clinical studies that investigate access to kidney and pancreas transplantation and clinical and patient-centered outcomes of kidney transplant recipients.



LALITHA SITARAMAN, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine (Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition)

Dr. Sitaraman earned her medical degree from Northwestern University and completed her residency at University Hospitals Case Medical Center and the New York Presbyterian-Columbia University Medical Center. She completed her fellowship at Loyola University Medical Center. She received additional training for motility and neurogastroenterology in Augusta, GA. Her academic interests are in developing a comprehensive program for treatment and research for fecal incontinence and defecatory disorders.



NEW APPOINTMENTS

Beatrice Concepcion, MD – Medical Director of the Kidney Transplant Program
Renea Jablonski, MD – Medical Director of the Lung Transplant Program



RECENT PROMOTIONS

Promoted to the rank of Professor – **Esra Tasali, MD** – Pulmonary/Critical Care
Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor – **Joyce Tang, MD, MPH** – Hospital Medicine, **Celeste Thomas, MD** – Endocrinology, **Rongxue Wu, MD, PhD** (Research Associate Professor) - Cardiology



APPOINTMENTS/ELECTIONS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

Vineet Arora, MD, MAPP – Pritzker Favorite Faculty Award
Keme Carter, MD – Pritzker Favorite Faculty Award
Jeanne Farnan, MD, MHPE – Pritzker Favorite Faculty Award
Samantha Gunning, MD – Janet D. Rowley Research Day Best Poster Winner for Clinical Research
Wei Wei Lee, MD, MPH – Pritzker Favorite Faculty Award

Sonali Paul, MD – Elected to the Faculty Advisory Committee, Slate A (Patient Care and Training)
Monica Peek, MD, MPH – Diversity Leadership Award
Milda Saunders, MD, MPH – Pritzker's Alpha Omega Alpha Carolyn L. Kuckein Student Research Fellowship Selection Committee Member
Esra Tasali, MD – UChicago Big Brains Podcast "Unraveling sleep's greatest mysteries"



NATIONAL/REGIONAL APPOINTMENTS/ELECTIONS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

Julie Oyler, MD – Recognized as one of the Journal of Graduate Medical Education's Outstanding Reviewers
Bhakti Patel, MD – American Society of Clinical Investigation Young-Physician-Scientist Award
Valerie Press, MD, MPH – Society of Hospital Medicine Award of Excellence in Research, ATS Assembly on BSHSR Mid-Career Achievement Award

Uzma Siddiqui, MD – ASGE Master Endoscopist Award
Wendy Stock, MD – Appointed co-chair, Leukemia Committee – Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology
Esra Tasali, MD – Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Award – Clinical Research Forum



THE BALANCING ACT:

HOW DO WOMEN BALANCE ACADEMIC SUCCESS WITH HOME AND PERSONAL LIFE? WHAT ADVICE WOULD WOMEN GIVE OTHER WOMEN?



GRACE LaSHORE, MD
CLINICAL ASSOCIATE
HOSPITAL MEDICINE

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dr. Grace LaShore is a clinical associate in the Section of Hospital Medicine whose clinical work is as a Comprehensive Care Program (CCP) physician. As a CCP physician, she focuses on the care of medically and psychosocially complex patients who are at high risk of hospitalization. She is the Director of Clinical Operations for the CCP program and also oversees the work of non-physician staff on the team including an NP, RNs and project coordinators. She is a preceptor for the preclinical Patient Centered Longitudinal Experience (where first year medical students are paired with 2 patients and follow them over the course of a year) and also runs the Comprehensive Care Program fourth year medical student elective.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

My work-life balance is mainly embodied in dance and travel, and I have been fortunate to be able to combine the two. I have been dancing salsa for 7 years and I mainly train and perform with a Chicago-based team called the Moves Project. During the pandemic, I started training virtually with world-champion salsa dancer Denisse Cambria (who is in the picture above) through the Iroko Ladies World Project. Through these teams, I have been able to perform in a few US cities and most recently in London with dancers from across the USA and Europe.

Dance is multipurpose for me; it serves as my stress relief, my main source of exercise, another way to connect with my husband (who also dances salsa), and a way to connect with people from different walks of life outside of medicine. The beauty of the salsa scene is that no matter what language you speak or how old you are, if you step onto the salsa dance floor, you can connect with anyone.

ADVICE

1. Every time you think about taking on a new task, ask yourself how it fits into your goals and values. If you are not familiar with the concept of “ikigai”, look it up. There is so much we are expected to do as women and as doctors, especially in academia, and it is easy to be roped into a path that may or may not align with what truly makes you tick, leading to dissatisfaction.
2. If you have a partner, I highly recommend having a shared calendar, and include blocks of time to take care of projects and time blocked off for activities that are just for you. Give yourself the space to just “be.” This is especially helpful if your partner is also in a busy profession.
3. Find an activity outside of medicine that brings you joy, and make it a regular part of your life for balance (put in on the calendar!). ■



ARTICLE: PAID PARENTAL LEAVE..... OR LACK THEREOF

Evaluation of Faculty Parental Leave Policies at Medical Schools Ranked by US News & World Report in 2020. Jessica Slostad, MD; Shikha Jain, MD; Marie McKinnon, MD, MPH; Sukarn Chokkara, BS; Neda Laiteerapong, MD, MS

This study in *JAMA Network Open* examines an important factor in work-life balance and burnout among physicians, specifically in those that are interested in becoming parents. The authors **evaluated parental leave policies, both paid and unpaid, at 90 ranked medical schools and identified factors associated with these policies.** Not only did the authors look at leave for birth parents, but also for non-birth parents including adoptive and foster parents.

For **birth mothers**, although 72.4% of the medical schools offered some paid leave, only 14.9% provided full pay for at least 12 weeks and 27.6% did not provide any paid leave and required use of vacation, sick, or short-term disability. Leave for **nonbirth parents** was even more limited: 43.7% of medical schools did not offer any paid leave and only 12.6% offered 12 weeks of paid leave. Similarly limited, for **adoptive parents**, 40.2% had no paid adoption leave and only 13.8% of medical schools offered 12 weeks of paid leave. **Foster care** was mentioned in only 27 leave policies and only 6.9% of medical schools offered 12 weeks of paid leave, while 74.7% offered no paid leave at all. Interestingly, higher ranked and private medical schools were associated with higher rates of 12 weeks of paid leave for birth mothers.

The findings of this study are disappointing in the lack of consistent paid parental leave for physician parents, including birth mothers. There are known benefits to mothers, families, and newborns of 12 weeks of paid leave for parents including positive effects on well-being, decrease in burnout, and higher satisfaction with work-life integration. The authors suggest that **the lack of adequate parental leave further contributes to gender, racial and ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities.** ■

RECENT DOM WOMEN'S COMMITTEE EVENTS

12/7/22	Gender Equity: Ethical Concerns, Strategy, and Solutions Julie Silver, MD
12/14/22	Designing for Academic Success: Gender and Racial Diversity in Academic Medical Leadership Melissa Gilliam, MD, MPH
1/11/23	Gender Equity and DEIB at Dartmouth Health, Joanne Conroy, MD
1/18/23	Race and Gender Equity in Health Justice, Monica Peek, MD, MPH
1/25/23	Panel on Allyship in Gender Equity, Shikha Jain, MD, Jeremy Yardley, MD, David Smith, MD
2/1/23	Thriving in Medicine: Navigating Adversity in Healthcare, Stella Safo, MD, MPH
2/8/23	Gender equity in medical education: Flourishing or Floundering? Holly Humphrey, MD
2/15/23	Publish or Perish: Women as Authors and Peer Reviewers in Pediatrics, Lainie Ross, MD, PHD
2/22/23	Gender Equity and Research, Karen Kim, MD, MS
3/1/23	Overcoming the Challenges and Mitigating The Disparities in The LGBTQI+ Community, Sonali Paul, MD, MS
3/8/23	Gender Gaps in Career Advice, Yana Gallen, PhD
3/22/23	Gender Equity and Ethics, Anna Volerman, MD
3/29/23	Beyond Binaries, Carl Streed, MD, MPH
4/5/23	Incivility Is Unethical, Pringl Miller, MD
4/19/23	Gender Equity in Family Planning, Julie Chor, MD, MPH
4/26/23	Gender Equity & Ethics at Morehouse School of Medicine, Valerie Rice, MD
5/17/23	Improving Gender Equity at the University of Chicago, Julie Oyler, MD



UPCOMING DOM WOMEN'S COMMITTEE EVENTS

9/22-23/23	Women in Medicine Summit, Drake Hotel, Chicago, IL
1/9/24	Department of Medicine, Women's committee grand rounds with Dr. Caprice Greenberg, Chair, Department of Surgery, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



WOMEN AT THE FOREFRONT
EDITORIAL BOARD

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