

Research Division

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

In This Issue

- 1 Front Page News
- 2 Wellness Corner
- 2-3 Division Updates
- 3 Dissemination
- 4 Cardi-OH Updates
- 5 Research Division Directory



This summer has been a season of hellos and good-byes. First, we said hello and thoroughly enjoyed our time with seven medical student research fellows who contributed to several different projects within our division and beyond. Their passion for improving health always inspire us. We also welcomed the third training cohort to the RISE Communities program, which is aimed at training community-academic research teams to conduct air quality research. Teams came from as far away as Washington state and

southern California. The good-byes are not true good-byes, but rather well wishes for the future. Dr. Soni Regan and Mary Beth Vonder Meulen are retiring at the end of August after incredible careers in our division. They have contributed to countless projects over their years working in primary care research and will be greatly missed. We wish them all the best as they enjoy retirement!

-Jackie Knapke, PhD
Interim Director of
DFCM Research Division

Mary Beth Vonder Meulen, RN, & Sandra Regan, PhD, announce retirement

It is with bittersweet sentiments that the Research Division announces the retirements of Mary Beth Vonder Meulen, RN, and Sandra "Soni" Regan, PhD. Both leave a legacy of service which will remain at the very foundation of the Division and reverberates through the Department of Family and Community Medicine and out into the surrounding communities.

We wish them the very best in their next chapters. The DFCM and Research Division are forever indebted for their innumerable contributions to the many projects on which they served and to the field of family medicine research.



Happy Retirement

RISE Communities program hosts national cohort for air sensor research training

The RISE Communities in-person training program was held July 30-August 1, 2025 in the Health Sciences Building at the University of Cincinnati. The program again welcomed five national-based teams of academic researchers and community members. This year, teams came from Sacramento, CA; Detroit, MI; Middletown, OH; Erie, PA; and the state of Washington,

The partnered teams attended sessions on team science, collaborative community air sensor projects, air sensor stories, data collection from air sensors, and analysis and visualization of air sensor data for the community and policy makers. The teams also toured Groundworks Ohio River Valley, to learn about projects in action and how they have engaged the communities across Cincinnati. Each team received 10 [PurpleAir monitors](#) to begin their projects. The teams become part of a community of practice, participating in needs assessment-driven webinars on how to optimize and move their projects forward.

The RISE Communities program is funded by a grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and is a partnership between the UC Department of Family & Community Medicine and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. The team includes Research Division members Jackie Knapke, PhD, as Principal Investigator leading the evaluation of the program, with Daniel Hargraves, MSW, as the project manager.

Learn more about RISE

Communities:

<https://www.ejsensors.com/>



WELLNESS CORNER

A New Chapter

By Mary Beth Vonder Meulen, RN

Like 85% of my fellow baby boomers, I will soon be retired. Although retirement generally brings a sense of freedom and additional leisure time, research shows that it can also lead to losses: identity, relationships, financial stability, and daily routines. A profession held for most of our adult life often lies at the core of our identity. Losing it may lead to anxiety and depression, especially if retirement is unplanned.

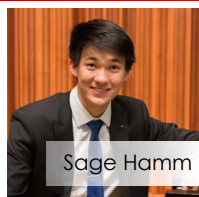
- ◆ Experts recommend strategies to help you find fulfillment in this new chapter of your life.
- ◆ Expect emotions. It is normal – so lean on healthy coping mechanisms like reading, yoga, journaling, walking or prayer.
- ◆ Add structure. A daily schedule can make you feel productive and help to combat stress. Keep a regular wake-sleep schedule and plan daily activities, even if only loosely.
- ◆ Set goals. You have been focused on your professional goals for years. Add a short-term goal to your calendar. You now have time to rediscover passions and interests from earlier in your life.
- ◆ Friendships. Your daily social interactions will change. You may need to actively seek out new connections. Invite a neighbor for a walk or ask a friend for dinner. Using your new free time to engage in new activities which also may grow your circle of friends.
- ◆ Re-employment. You may want to continue to work or need to supplement your income. Rather than returning to your previous role, consider part-time work or a less-stressful profession.
- ◆ Volunteer. Giving your time to a worthy cause can give you a sense of purpose and improve your health. People who volunteer have higher levels of life satisfaction and fewer depressive symptoms than those who do not volunteer. Helping others is a way of helping yourself.

Remember to be gentle and flexible with yourself. If you struggle with a loss of identity, loneliness, or depression, allow yourself to seek help from friends, family, and your physician.

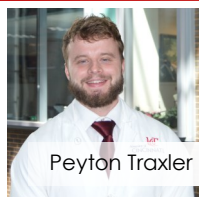
References:

T. Mitchell. The Retirement Process: A Psychological and Emotional Journey. University of Washington Retirement Association. www.retirees.uw.edu
A Morin. 8 Tips for Adjusting to Retirement. www.verywellmind.com

Research Division welcomes back medical students for summer research experience



Sage Hamm



Peyton Traxler



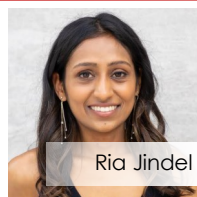
Sidney Gossard



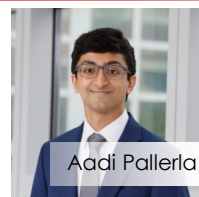
Marcus Grewal



Zach De Mesa



Ria Jindel



Aadi Pallerla

The Research Division invited seven medical students to the summer experience for collaboration on active projects and in the field for clinical shadowing.

Zach de Mesa completed his summer internship experience as a project assistant for the SW Ohio QI Hub. He assisted with the collection of data around the Greater Cincinnati area at spoke sites and community events. The surveys included questions about patient hypertension management, experiences with community pharmacy sites and learning preferences. Zach also analyzed data collected at our sites.

Students engaged with the Osher Center for Integrative Health worked on several projects, including:

- ◆ Implementation and reach of the Nature Rx program by examining patient demographics and identifying opportunities to enhance access and program delivery.
- ◆ Evaluating the longitudinal changes in dietary quality, mood, perceived stress, flourishing, and daily functioning in patients receiving IM care at an urban academic health system.
- ◆ Reviewing the effectiveness and patient utilization of services at the UC Osher Center for Integrative Medicine massage therapy at BCHC.
- ◆ Investigating improvements in mental well-being through a forest immersion experience for higher education faculty and students.

Peyton Traxler worked on the Cardi-OH statewide collaborative for cardiovascular and diabetes health. This included working on a new podcast script about Patient Experience vs Patient Satisfaction and why it should matter for PCPs. He worked with a clinician from one of our partner COMs as they worked through a number of iterations in order to write the final script.

He worked with Dr Orson Austin, a UC Faculty Physician on the Cardi-OH team, to review four already-published Cardi-OH resources to check that the content remained valid and relevant. Once that was done, Peyton and Dr Austin began to gather the basic information needed to develop a podcast on the Mediterranean Diet. He did a chart review and pulled abstracts and articles, which he reviewed with Dr Austin. They also investigated possible topic experts and chose Dr Golubic, an Integrative Health physician from the Osher Center. Peyton worked on defining the outline that would be used as a basis for the podcast script.

The staff and faculty of the Research Division also continued their weekly research curriculum. Students will also develop a poster related to outcomes of their project work to presented at the College of Medicine Research Symposium later in the Fall, and may also be used at national conference presentations. As it has become somewhat of a tradition, many students plan to stay engaged with their division mentors to draft abstracts to present their work with these projects at national conferences and assist with authorship of manuscripts.

The Research Division is grateful for all the productive and valuable work of our future health care providers!

DISSEMINATION

Publications

Stryker SD, Elzarka A, Christopher A, Ruiz P, Chinchilla K, Lubans-Otto DA, Pallerla H, Vaughn LM. (2025). Immigrants' Access to Healthcare in a Nontraditional Immigration Destination During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Mixed Methods Study. *International Perspectives on Health Equity*, 1(1), 62-88. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IPHEE-07-2024-0035>

Petterson M, **Pallerla H**, Atallah M, Jameson J. Improving Comfort With Palliative Care Concepts: A Longitudinal Didactic Curriculum for Internal Medicine Residents. *Am J Hosp Palliat Care*. Published online May 8, 2025. [doi:10.1177/10499091251341810](https://doi.org/10.1177/10499091251341810)

Tune in to Cardi-OH Radio


Podcast 58 - Supporting Patients With Food Insecurity Through Community Connections

Listen to Kristen Mikelbank, MA, and Eric Pecherkiewicz, RDN, LD, and from the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.


Moderated by L. Austin Fredrickson, MD, Northeast Ohio Medical University.

Cardi-OH Radio podcasts highlight national, state, and local leaders discussing timely topics for primary care clinicians.


Want to be the first to know when a podcast is released? [Subscribe to our channel.](#)



**Cardi-OH
RADIO**



Kristen Mikelbank, MA



Eric Pecherkiewicz, RDN, LD

Pearls for Clinical Practice

Capsule 57 - Resources to Address Food Insecurity in Ohio

Did You Know?

Over 14% of Ohioans face food insecurity, increasing their risk for chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

Capsules provide busy clinicians brief summaries of best practices that are ready to be implemented in clinical care.



CARDI-OH
Ohio Cardiovascular and Diabetes Health Collaborative

CAPSULE

JULY 2020 - CAPSULE 57

Resources to Address Food Insecurity in Ohio

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS: Karen R. Bailey, MS, RDN, LD, CDCES, Ohio University; Jennifer Glimmer, PhD, RN, University of Toledo; Debra Goodale, RN, Ohio University; Mary Beth Snyder, PhD, MS, CCRC, University of Cincinnati; Cole Crowe, MD, Case Western Reserve University, on behalf of Team Best Practices

Food insecurity refers to the inability to afford enough food for an active, healthy life.¹ Over 14% of people in Ohio face food insecurity, and nearly 7% have limited access to healthy food options.² Food insecurity has been associated with a higher risk of diet-related diseases and cardiovascular risk factors.³ A focus on improving self-efficacy and related skills can help people build resilience to manage food insecurity.⁴ It is important to address social drivers of health and connect patients with needed resources during clinical visits to improve health equity and patient outcomes. Community organizations, such as food banks and other food distributors, play a key role in addressing food insecurity, especially for patients with specific health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes.^{4,5}

Table 1. Community Resources to Address Food Insecurity

 <p>Ohio Association of Food Banks A curated list of local food banks and nutrition resources across the state: ohiofoodbanks.org</p>	 <p>211 A confidential, non-emergency hotline connecting people with local resources, including food assistance: 211.org</p>
 <p>FreeFood.org Searchable list of food pantries and food banks by state, including a comprehensive list for Ohio: freefood.org/ohio</p>	 <p>County Health Departments Information on food resources in areas without a local food bank or 2-5-5 service: odh.ohio.gov/find-local-health-districts</p>
 <p>Food Finder A mobile app that helps individuals locate free food resources nearby: foodfinder.us</p>	 <p>Agencies on Aging Support and food resource information, especially in counties without food banks or 2-5-5: careohio.org/list10_ohio_Aging_Services_senior_centers.htm</p>



Download Cardi-OH's NEW! Web App

- Access Cardi-OH's library of cardiovascular and diabetes care resources.
- Bookmark your favorites.
- Share best practices with colleagues.



Get Web App →

Research Directory

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<http://www.familymedicine.uc.edu/research>

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Dedicated full-time staff members with over 50 years of cumulative experience provide full project support from assisting in design and implementation to analysis and evaluation. The division offers expertise in:

- Project Management
- Data Management
- Grant Writing
- IRB Protocols
- Statistical Analysis
- Data Collection Methods
- Project Reports
- Manuscript Development, Writing and Editing
- Research Nurse
- Qualitative Research



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