

# Family and Community Medicine



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## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Friends and colleagues,

Happy Spring and welcome to the Spring DFCM newsletter!

This year, we are proud to recognize **Barbara Tobias, MD** as our second **Thomas Todd, MD Distinguished Alumni Award** recipient. Her leadership and dedication to our mission are an inspiration to us all, and you can read more about her contributions in the article below.

There is so much happening in the Department! This issue showcases the innovative, exciting work happening across many of our divisions. **The Freeman Center for Developmental Disabilities** opened a beautiful new space, providing state of the art facilities for patients with developmental disabilities. **The Osher Center for Integrative Health** opened the Wellness Suite this month, which includes the John and Carrie Hayden Learning Kitchen. Doug Smucker, MD shares his work in training physicians in **compassionate communication**. Finally, **Cancer Survivorship and Oncology Primary Care** continues to expand its reach in the community and **Geriatrics** is offering new consultative services for older adults.

We are equally proud to share updates from some of you, our inspiring **alumni**. Please continue sharing your stories—your work in the communities you serve brings all of us tremendous joy and pride. My email is [Christine.odea@uc.edu](mailto:Christine.odea@uc.edu).

Thank you for being part of our DFCM family!



**Christine O'Dea, MD, MPH, FAAFP**  
Chair

## BARBARA TOBIAS, MD, AWARDED 2025 THOMAS TODD, MD DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD



Our department was proud to award alumna Barbara Tobias, MD, the Thomas Todd, MD Distinguished Faculty Award during a recognition celebration on February 20, 2026.

Dr. Tobias graduated from the UC Family Medicine Residency program in 1990, joining the UC Department of Family & Community Medicine. Her tenure is highlighted by her leadership, innovation, and commitment to community & education. Across her time at the UC COM, Dr. Tobias has shaped the educational experience of over 7000 learners – students, residents, and faculty alike.

Since joining us in 1990, she has served as **Director of Medical Education, Vice Chair, and Interim Chair**—roles in which she consistently brought steadiness, clarity, and a deep sense of responsibility. Her leadership during the early COVID-19 pandemic was especially consequential. In a moment defined by uncertainty, Dr. Tobias provided calm coordination, strategic thinking, and a clear commitment to the wellbeing of learners, faculty, and the communities we serve.

The Thomas Todd, MD Distinguished Alumni Award is given annually to a family physician and alumnus of the UC College of Medicine or one of its residency programs who demonstrates the values that our department embraces, and Dr. Todd so gracefully embodied: clinical excellence, dedication to training the next generation of family physicians, and commitment to community service.

We are grateful for Dr. Tobias' continued contributions to our department and to family medicine as a discipline. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!





**SPOTLIGHT: ALUMNI UPDATES**

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**Nancy Knight, MD**  
**CLASS OF 2001**



*Dr. Knight on top of Pacaya Volcano during the July 2019 UC Global Health trip to Guatemala*

I am currently living in Decatur, GA, where I joined The Task Force for Global Health in April 2024 as the Chief Science and Programs Officer. In this role, I lead strategic partnerships across our 18 programs—which work across the three pillars of disease elimination, health systems strengthening, and vaccine excellence in over 140 countries—and share responsibility for organizational decision-making and

strategic direction to improve health and wellbeing globally.

My journey since graduating from the UC Family Medicine Residency in 2001 includes a 22+ year adventure with the U.S. Public Health Service. In 2024, I retired as a Rear Admiral and Assistant Surgeon General, having spent the majority of my career within the CDC's Center for Global Health (now renamed the Global Health Center).

Between 2007 and 2017, my husband Kirk and I lived and worked in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa, where I had the opportunity to direct CDC's largest global HIV (PEPFAR) programs and country offices. My time in Africa was incredibly rewarding. I helped to plan and lead the transition of South Africa's PEPFAR program to focus on the highest risk populations and the 27 districts with the highest HIV burden, an approach that was subsequently adopted as the national strategic plan for five years. In Nigeria, I helped pave the way for the development of the Nigeria CDC, contributing to the foundational work that led to legislation establishing their national public health institute.

My work then brought me back to the United States, to

CDC headquarters in Atlanta, GA, as the Director of the Division of Global Health Protection. There, I led a portfolio of programs and staff with a health systems strengthening approach to the prevention, detection, and response to infectious and non-infectious public health threats across more than 30 countries. In 2022, I was asked to serve at the National Security Council (NSC) in Washington, D.C., as Director for Emerging Biological Threats. At the NSC, I led senior interagency officials in developing U.S. government global health security and biodefense policy positions with a focus on multilateral policies (International Health Regulations and the Pandemic Agreement) and served as the NSC's focal point to the White House's global COVID-19 and mpox outbreak responses. Over the years, I've also served on the front lines of several major responses, including Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana, the 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak, and the global COVID-19 pandemic.

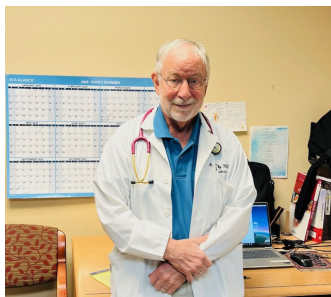
While my husband Kirk and I no longer live abroad, we still love to travel and explore the U.S. and the world, including trips to visit our families in Illinois and North Carolina. At home, our time is spent catering to the demands of our four-legged "child," Loki—our 8 1/2-year-old Portuguese Water Dog who certainly lives up to his name! We also continue to strive to stay in shape, even if my running speed has officially slowed to a jog.

I am forever grateful to the UC Department of Family and Community Medicine for providing the foundation that allowed me to pursue such a diverse and rewarding career in global health!



*Dr. Knight with her husband, Kirk, at the Great Sand Dunes National Park in Colorado in June 2025.*

**Stephen Eby, MD**  
**CLASS OF 1981**



*Dr. Eby at the Good Samaritan Free Health Center*

I retired from private practice 13 years ago, and shortly after took a part time position as medical director of the Good Samaritan Free Health Center in East Price Hill, and am still there. This is a free clinic for the uninsured working poor, people without any insurance who don't qualify for Medicare, Medicaid, etc. Besides seeing patients

1 or 2 half days a week, I help coordinate care provided by our 74+ docs, NPs, PAs, volunteer nurses, social worker, counsellor, and the other wonderful people who give

their time and talent to help others. While challenging at times, it is interesting, never boring, and very rewarding.

My ever-patient wife and I are empty nesters now, with one daughter in Brooklyn, New York, and the other in DC. And, we have an almost 2-year-old grandson in DC who is undoubtedly the cutest baby in the world. I still ride and work on my motorcycles, and no, they are NOT Harley Davidsons. My greatest joy though is when we all can get together, sit down at the dinner table and enjoy being a family together.



*Dr. Eby with his motorcycle*

## Rita Girard, MD

CLASS OF 1996



*Dr. Girard hiking in Tucson*

My career continues to have a healthy balance of teaching and service. Drawing on my background in International Health, I have had the privilege of teaching medical students in Ukraine and participating in two missions to the Dominican Republic.

Just before the COVID pandemic, I established an LLC to minister online urgent care patients through a national platform. I find great fulfillment in being able to tailor my time to the medical and spiritual needs of my patients. Currently, I also collaborate with a group of Ohio nurse practitioners at WellBe Medical, where I enjoy uplifting their important home-visit work with the elderly.

I have recently returned to "school" and am working through a two-year program with Encounter Ministries,

where I am engaging the Holy Spirit in supernatural healing.

My greatest pride is my family's growth. In addition to my four children, I now have two beautiful daughters-in-law and am delighted to be "OMA" to my two delightful grandsons—with another grandchild on the way. I split my time between Westwood, Cincinnati—close to my initial Crossroads posting—and Tucson, Arizona. I love opening my Arizona home to those seeking friendship and respite from Ohio's gray skies. Please reach out; I would be happy to welcome you. GIRARDRME@GMAIL.COM



*Dr. Girard teaching in Ukraine*

## Katelyn Leopold, MD

CLASS OF 2011

After graduating from residency in 2011, my husband and I moved to rural Northwest Ohio to provide comprehensive primary care to my hometown community and raise our growing family. I was fortunate to care for patients in various settings including the newborn nursery, nursing home and office. I enjoyed seeing many pediatric patients and performing a wide variety of office-based procedures. After 11 years in a hospital-owned practice and in the midst of a global pandemic, I was presented with the opportunity to transition back into academic medicine with a local family medicine residency program. For the last 3.5 years I have enjoyed working with Mercy St. Rita's Family Medicine residents and have served as the Associate Program Director for the last 2 years. I continue to see patients in my hometown two days per week and love teaching young physicians in the residency clinic. I have found that working with residents and medical students again has re-ignited my love for learning and patient care. For the last 3 years I have also served as a member of the admissions committee for The Ohio State University College of Medicine and look forward to partnering with their medical students through the Community Medicine Track which will be based in our hospital in Lima, Ohio.

My free time is spent chasing my five sons (ages 18, 14, 12, 10 and 5) as they are very active in a variety of sports (baseball is the household favorite!) and scouting activities. Our oldest son (and former residency baby!) is preparing to leave for university next fall, where he hopes to study engineering while continuing to play baseball. It will be a new chapter for us as we send one to university, one to high school, and one to kindergarten all at the same time! We enjoy traveling and camping as

a family and look forward to exploring Yellowstone National Park together next summer. I am an avid gardener, runner, and reader (usually audiobooks while folding endless piles of laundry!). Jon and I were fortunate to celebrate our 20th anniversary this summer and often reflect fondly and with gratitude on our early days in Cincinnati with UC College of Medicine and Christ Hospital.



*Dr. Leopold pictured with her husband and five sons*

## THE COMPASSIONATE CARE EDUCATION INITIATIVE: VITALTALK COMMUNICATION TRAINING AT THE UCCOM



Doug Smucker, MD, MPH

*"My doctor really understands me."*

*"That doctor was so compassionate."*

What might cause someone to make one of these comments after a visit with a physician in the hospital, the emergency room, or the primary care office? For a physician to be seen as a compassionate, caring clinician, the primary factors within their control lie in their communication skills. The Compassionate Care Education Initiative (CCEI) at the UC College of

all DFCM fellows in palliative care and geriatric medicine. Now with support of CCEI funding, the national VitalTalk faculty development program will come to Cincinnati this year to train 16 additional UCCOM faculty from a number of UCCOM departments including family medicine, emergency medicine, internal medicine, and intensive care disciplines. This expanded team of fully trained VitalTalk faculty facilitators will be prepared to reach all medical students, residents, and fellows

small-group workshop, four to six learners and a faculty facilitator gather in a conference room for four or more hours of active learning. They first agree together on the intentions and ground rules to create a psychologically safe opportunity for each student to learn during difficult role-play challenges. Then the faculty facilitator partners with a trained actor to create a role-play experience that very closely resembles real conversations in the hospital or outpatient clinic. Brief role-play

## 'THERE IS A KINDNESS IN THAT DOCTOR THAT I CAN'T REALLY EXPLAIN.'

Medicine aims to foster compassionate care of patients through intensive communication workshops for medical students, residents, fellows and faculty.

Led by Doug Smucker, MD, MPH, of the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) and supported by a generous private gift through the UC Foundation and the UCCOM Dean's Office, the CCEI is building on 12 years of experience in the DFCM with the VitalTalk method of communication training. Dr. Smucker first brought the VitalTalk training method to the DFCM in 2014, and since then along with Dr. Reid Hartmann, Director of the DFCM Division of Palliative Medicine, has taught annual specialized workshops for

on the UCCOM campus with intensive communication workshops that promote caring, compassionate communication in both hospital-based and primary care settings.

The mission of Vitaltalk is "...that every seriously ill patient will be surrounded by clinicians who can speak about what matters most..." and Vitaltalk leadership has developed teaching cases that expand the usefulness and applicability of the training to multiple settings in all patient care specialties.

The core aims and skills of Vitaltalk foster the qualities of clinician communication that are often experienced as kindness and compassion by patients and families. In a typical

attempts include opportunities for students to listen, notice patients' emotions, try different ways to clearly deliver clinical news, respond with compassion and empathy, and let patients know that they are not alone in their illness journey.

VitalTalk has become the gold-standard advanced communication training program in many medical schools across the country including University of Michigan, Northwestern University, Harvard University, UCLA, and others. The Compassionate Care Education Initiative aims to also make UCCOM a national leader in teaching compassionate communication skills for years to come.

DIVISION UPDATE:

**THE TIMOTHY FREEMAN, MD, CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

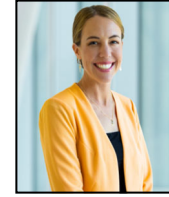
*Lauren Wang, MD, Director*

This fall, the Timothy Freeman, MD, Center for Developmental Disabilities proudly launched its new home at 2830 Victory Parkway in Cincinnati, Ohio, marking a tenfold expansion into a thoughtfully designed 15,000-square-foot space created with dignity, comfort, and inclusion at its core. Every detail—from calming, sensory-friendly features and accessible exam rooms to a large wheelchair-accessible scale, adult changing table, and fully accessible bathrooms—was shaped through collaboration with patients, caregivers, and community partners to ensure everyone feels welcome and supported. Further strengthening this patient-led approach, the Freeman Center welcomed UC Health’s first Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Bree Stepp, whose work enhances behavioral, communication, and sensory supports through direct patient support, the creation of helpful tools and social stories, and external



*Bree Stepp, one of the Freeman Center’s Board Certified Behavior Analysts, supporting individuals and families through compassionate, evidence-based care.*

trainings and support across UC Health. In addition, the center is advancing care through education as home to one of the nation’s first **Adult Developmental Medicine Fellowships**, training future physician leaders committed to improving access and quality of care for adults with developmental disabilities; we’re excited to share that **Alexander Ravajy, MD, joined the team in September 2025**, helping continue this important mission locally and nationwide.



**Lauren Wang, MD**

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*The lobby and entrance of the Freeman Center, designed to be inviting, accessible, and welcoming to all visitors.*



*An intentionally designed, accessible, and inclusive primary care exam room at the Freeman Center, created to support comfort and dignity for all individuals.*



*The welcoming area of the Freeman Center, featuring a community-created mural that reflects shared stories, values, and voices.*



*The Freeman Center was excited to welcome Dr. Alex Rajavy as a Developmental Medicine fellow this past year*



*Holly Freeman, Cory Shaw, and patients, families, and community members participate together in the ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of the Freeman Center.*



*Freeman Center staff standing with Cory Shaw, CEO of UC Health, at the entrance of the Freeman Center to mark this meaningful milestone.*

## DFCM DISSEMINATION

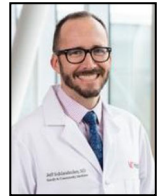
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### DIVISION UPDATE:

#### OFFICE OF GERIATRIC MEDICINE

Jeffrey D. Schlaudecker, MD, MEd, Director



Jeffrey Schlaudecker, MD, MEd

#### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

**PROGRAM  
MANAGER**  
Natalie Seaburn  
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Greetings and Happy 2026! As we begin a new year, we also celebrate our 40th year as Geriatric Medicine here at the University of Cincinnati. Our talented geriatricians continue to provide care for older adults across Cincinnati, based in the office, patient home, nursing facility, or assisted living community. 2026 will also see our talented group of clinician-educators continue to teach medical students and

residents, while also welcoming our first fellows in geriatric medicine. Please read on for a few of the exciting things going on in the DFCM division of geriatric medicine!

Wishing you and yours a wonder-filled 2026,

Jeffrey Schlaudecker, MD MEd

#### GERIATRIC CONSULT CLINIC UPDATE

Dr. Kara Ciani’s Geriatric Consult Clinic continues to grow as more patients and providers recognize the value of comprehensive geriatric assessment. Patient volume has been steadily increasing, reflecting the rising need for specialized support in managing cognitive, functional, and medical complexity in older adults. Even with this growth, the clinic remains well-positioned to accept additional referrals and is eager to partner with colleagues across the department.

Common reasons for referral include concerns about cognitive impairment or changes in memory and thinking, frailty or functional decline, failure to thrive, and support for goals-of-care discussions.



Kara Ciani, MD



Referrals can be placed through an EPIC message or by emailing [cianika@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:cianika@ucmail.uc.edu) with the reason for referral.



The clinic is located at 7798 Discovery Drive, Suite A, West Chester, OH 45069, and we welcome continued collaboration to ensure older adults receive the comprehensive care they deserve.

DIVISION UPDATE: Office of Geriatric Medicine Cont.

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## GERIATRIC MEDICINE FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

The Geriatric Medicine Fellowship is currently seeking qualified candidates for the upcoming academic year. We continue to screen strong applicants who share our commitment to caring for older adults in Cincinnati.

Our team continues to promote the program's strengths —

including flexible, interest-driven curriculum design; robust interdisciplinary training; and meaningful clinical experiences across UC Health and community partners. We look forward to welcoming a fellow who will thrive in our supportive, learner-centered environment!

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN GERIATRIC MEDICINE

This year, our team has introduced new hands-on learning activities designed to deepen learners' understanding of the physical, cognitive, and functional challenges many older adults face. These immersive experiences help students move beyond observation and develop a more empathetic, advocacy-driven approach to geriatric care. Learners step into the shoes of older adults by wearing the GERT Suit, an age-simulation suit that mimics common physical and sensory changes associated with aging. The experience highlights everyday challenges—from mobility limitations to reduced vision and hearing—and encourages learners to reflect on how these changes shape independence, safety, and quality of life. The goal is not only to inform, but to cultivate a mindset rooted in respect for the lived realities of older adults.

Another successful activity is our Medication Management Challenge. In this activity, learners attempt to fill a pillbox while wearing goggles, tremor-simulation gloves, and wrist braces.

Using a provided medication list, they must complete the task

despite fine motor limitations and increased cognitive load. Our reflection prompts include: "How confident were you in the accuracy of your pillbox setup?" and "What support systems or safeguards could help older adults manage medications safely?" These activities reinforce the importance of designing care plans that acknowledge functional limitations and promote dignity, safety, and independence simulation gloves, and wrist braces. Using a provided medication list, they must complete the task despite fine motor limitations and increased cognitive load.



Dr. Kara Ciani pictured with two first-year residents in the age-simulation gear



Dr. Gates pictured with her son, Leo, and husband, Scott

## PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEWEST GERIATRICIAN, MADDIE GATES, MD!

I grew up in Northern Kentucky and attended UCCOM for medical school. I ventured west to Denver, CO where I completed my Family Medicine Residency and Geriatrics Fellowship at the University of Colorado. I loved the mountains but, after training, I was ready to come back home to Cincinnati and to UC.

In my free time I like to hike, read (my #1 recommendation right now is *The Thursday Murder Club*), play board games, and watch sports (*Go Bengals!*). I love spending time with my husband, Scott, and our 2-year-old, Leo. We are all looking forward to Leo becoming a big brother in Mid-March 2026.

**DIVISION UPDATE:**

**OSHER CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE HEALTH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI**

*Sian Cotton, PhD, Director*



**Sian Cotton, PhD**

At the Osher Center for Integrative Health at the University of Cincinnati, we are proud to be at the forefront of transforming health care from a primarily disease-care system to a well-care system focused on prevention and self-care. As one of only 11 Osher Centers across the globe, our mission is rooted in a commitment to whole-person care, combining the best of conventional medicine with tried-and-true integrative therapies and lifestyle medicine approaches.

Our center's impact would simply not be possible without the transformative investment from our visionary partners. This includes The Bernard Osher Foundation, inviting us to join the esteemed Osher Collaborative; John and Carrie Hayden, whose investments have established key programs such as the Carrie K. Hayden Endowed Chair of Integrative Oncology Research and the John and Carrie Hayden Community Learning Kitchen; the Turner Farm Foundation; and others.

In Fall 2025, we hosted the [Osher Collaborative Meeting](#), with 5 representatives from each of the 11 Osher Centers from around the world, as well as Mr. Bernard Osher, Dr. Mary Bitterman, and Mr. John Gallo from the Bernard Osher Foundation.

Together with key stakeholders, clinicians, faculty, staff, and our friends of the center, we are catalyzing a health care revolution to achieve our mission of improved health for all.



*Osher Center Directors and Bernard Osher Foundation Leadership at the annual meeting hosted by Cincinnati.*

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**PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

Lisa Doogan  
Lisa.Doogan@uc.edu

Learn more on our website: [med.uc.edu/integrative](https://med.uc.edu/integrative) and subscribe to our email newsletter for more updates!



**CLINICAL CARE: INTEGRATING WHOLE-PERSON CARE ACROSS UC HEALTH**

Clinical care was expanded at the UC Blood Cancer Healing Center with the hiring of a dedicated acupuncturist. Two half-time massage therapists specializing in oncology massage provided over a thousand customized massage sessions, designed to safely meet the unique and changing needs of individuals in active cancer treatment, as well as caregivers and staff. Opening in 2026, the Osher Wellness Suite will open on the fifth floor of the UC Blood Cancer Healing Center. The suite will include the John and Carrie Hayden Community Learning Kitchen, Mind-Body-Spirit Wellness Studio, rooftop Healing Garden, and community programming such as cooking classes, yoga, sound immersion, nature as medicine programs, and more!

Additionally, the Osher Center integrated massage therapy at the new Timothy Freeman, MD Center for Developmental Disabilities, expanding access to integrative care for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, with music therapy on the horizon.



*Renderings of the Osher Wellness Suite Community Learning Kitchen, Rooftop Garden, and Wellness Studio, Courtesy of Champlin Architects*



**DIVISION UPDATE:** Osher Center for Integrative Health Cont.

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**ADVANCED EDUCATION:  
INTEGRATING WELLNESS INTO MEDICAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

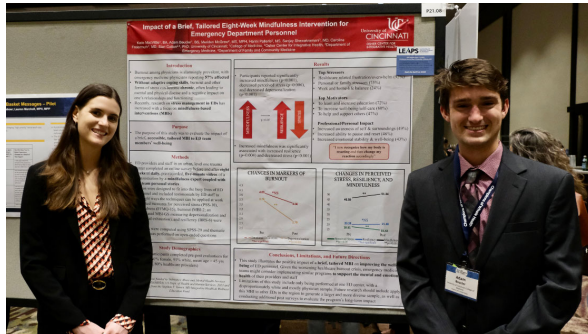
The Lifestyle & Integrative Medicine for Everyone (LIME) curriculum integration project, led by Aaron Marshall, PhD, associate professor, and Mladen Golubic, MD, PhD, FACLM, medical director, and funded by a grant from the Weil Foundation, continued to integrate a longitudinal wellness thread into the medical school curriculum with the implementation of first year student LIME curriculum, with positive responses and feedback from learners which will be used to inform the next academic year, along with the inaugural rollout of the second year curriculum.



Curriculum integration leadership (from left: Bruce Giffin, Sian Cotton, Aaron Marshall, Kelly Lyle, Mladen Golubic)

**INNOVATIVE RESEARCH: EXPANDING MEDICAL STUDENT SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

MSSP students and Osher faculty were featured at the 2025 International Congress on Integrative Medicine & Health in Seattle, Washington, with their Poster Presentation Impact of a Brief, Tailored Eight-Week Mindfulness Intervention for Emergency Department Personnel. Adam Beucler, Sian Cotton, Caroline Freiermuth, Katie MacVittie, Meriden McGraw, Harini Pallerla, Sanjay Shewakramani.



MSSP Students Katie MacVittie and Adam Beucler presenting at the International Congress



2025 MSSP & Summer Research Students (pictured from left: Sian Cotton, Aadi Pallerla, Ria Jindal, Marcus Grewal, Sanjana Katiyar, Harini Pallerla)

Additionally, thanks to a generous investment from alumnus Stephen T. Turner, MD, COM'75, the Medical Student Scholars Program (MSSP) in Integrative & Lifestyle Medicine expanded with three additional students this year, with summer research projects focused on evaluating group medical visits, oncology massage therapy, and Nature Rx.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CINCINNATI PARKS & REC FOR WELLNESS:  
MAKING WELLNESS IN NATURE ACCESSIBLE**



The new wellness programs, featuring Tai Chi, hikes, and yoga in our Cincinnati Parks

In partnership with the Cincinnati Parks Foundation, launched Cincinnati Parks and Rec for Wellness. The program prescribes nature to patients and leverages one of the nation's top-ranked park systems to introduce no-cost structured wellness programs, such as a guided Hiking Series and Tai Chi at Owl's Nest Park, to communities across the city. Additionally, launched an innovative nature prescription program spearheaded by Barbara Walker, PhD, Director, Nature as Medicine Program, UC Health has become the first and only health system in the region to integrate Nature Prescriptions into their EPIC electronic health record system. Providers can prescribe time in nature and patients receive personalized recommendations to incorporate nature into their daily routines.

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**DIVISION UPDATE:**

**CANCER SURVIVORSHIP AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

*Administrative Director: Dr. Elizabeth Shaughnessy*

*Medical Director: Dr. Melissa Erickson*

The year 2025 continued to be a year of clinical growth for the division of Cancer Survivorship. Dr. Melissa Erickson, Dr. Sara Kleinschmidt, Dr. Rynita Bohler, and Monica Kasse, NP, currently provide primary care services for over 1400 patients with cancer at the Barrett Cancer Center and The Blood Cancer Healing Center. Additionally, Monica Kasse provides survivorship consultations both at the Barrett Center and in West Chester. Monica and our survivorship nurse navigator, Meg Cone, MSN, RN, have been instrumental in piloting a program of automatic Survivorship referral at time of diagnosis for patients with head and neck cancers who will undergo free-flap reconstruction. Dr. Erickson continues to provide survivorship care for adult survivors of childhood cancer at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and assists with the transition of adult primary care and specialty services at UC.

In recognition of their exceptional care, Monica was named an Unsung Hero at the Cancer Family Care awards, Dr. Bohler was recognized as a physician in the Top 1% nationally based on Press Ganey patient reviews, and Dr. Erickson was nominated Cincinnati Business Courier’s Health Care Heroes Finalist. In addition, Dr. Kleinschmidt was named a Top Doctor in Cincinnati Magazine.



*Team-building activity making cannolis*

**Community Connections and Outreach**

Our ability to engage and educate patients through activities has been enhanced through several community connections this past year. The Gathering Place in Cleveland, another center for cancer survivorship, has coordinated with us in our virtual offering of “Emerging from the Haze,” a series created by the University of Southern California, that not only educates patients on the causes of cancer-related cognitive impairment, but also teaches what lifestyle changes can lead to improvement.

With the Hamilton County 513Relief Bus, we also inform cancer survivors of our various educational and activity offerings. We have been working with members of the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company with a seasonal series of improvisation for “Discovering Joy in the Moment,” both in Clifton and at the Cancer Survivorship Community (CSC) Blue Ash site. Our own Program Manager Jennie Martin, certified in HealthRhythms, offers a drumming series in the spring and fall as well with the CSC. Jennie also coordinates with Barbara Walker, PhD, of Integrative Medicine, to host a quarterly session of mindful meditation while walking, ending in a drum circle in one of Cincinnati’s beautiful parks!



*improv class with Cincinnati Shakespeare for cancer survivors*



*Team photo at cancer support community fund raising event*

DIVISION UPDATE: Cancer Survivorship and Supportive Services

UNIVERSITY OF  
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COLLEGE OF  
MEDICINE

## New Programs to Enhance Cancer & Survivorship Care

As exercise has been shown to reduce the incidence and recurrence of numerous cancers, the Cancer Exercise Wellness Center was coordinated to enhance the participation in exercise of those persons who need to be closely monitored, such as those with pulmonary or cardiac issues, or those individuals with metastatic disease to the bone. The program has had over 800 encounters since its inception 5 years ago.

Sleep is important to all of us, and the circadian rhythm is frequently thrown off by stress and treatment side effects in

patients with cancer. Current guidelines recommend Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) as first line treatment, but access to trained providers can be a challenge. In response, we have opened a new CBT-I clinic at the Barrett Center, led by Yehudit Rothman PA, who has undergone specialized training in this area and is open to any cancer survivors who struggle with insomnia.

**To refer patients to either program**, you can place a referral in EPIC to Oncology Supportive Services, which brings up a menu including exercise and CBT-I.

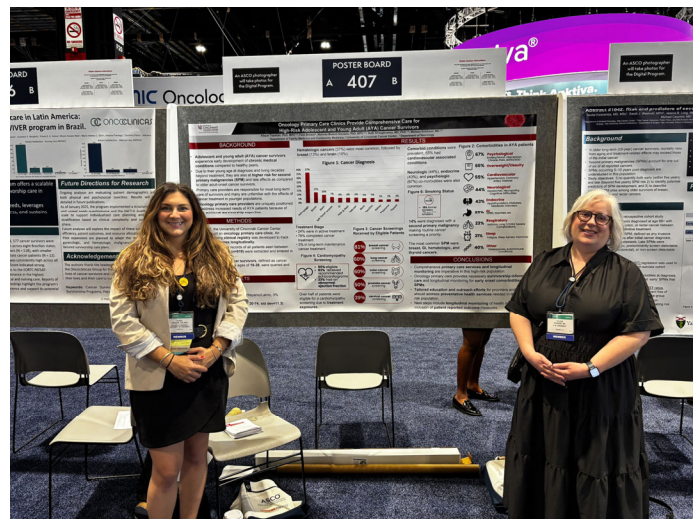
## Fellowship, Research, and Department Partnerships

This past fall, we began offering elective rotations in oncology primary care to medical students and residents. We have been overwhelmed by the amount of interest in our trainees to learn more about our field! We continue to move forward with pilot grants as well as presentations and papers in this field, but our proudest moment came when our proposal for an Oncology Primary Care Fellowship was approved! Applications are now open for this one-year, non-ACGME accredited fellowship that trains family medicine, internal medicine or med/peds residents in the unique aspects of providing evidence-based primary care for cancer survivors.

We look forward to initiating new programming this spring in the Integrative Medicine space within the Blood Cancer Healing Center focused on the cancer survivors of adolescent and young adult cancers, which will include classes in movement, journaling, cooking, improvisation and crafts.

This coming October 16-17, we are proud to be hosting an international survivorship conference for blood cancer survivors, in partnership with Hodgkin's International and CCHMC! This conference will bring together top experts in the field to discuss topics ranging from cardio-oncology to onco-primary care to onco-fertility.

Stay tuned for more information in future newsletter issues.



Poster presentation at 2025 ASCO (American Society of clinical oncology)



Team photo at Halloween



Nature walk for cancer survivors



Dr. Bohler giving a talk to the Cincinnati women's club about oncology primary care



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*Dr. Wang and team members from the National Down Syndrome Society gather for a photo celebrating the opening of the center's new location.*