

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
DEPARTMENT OF

# Family and Community Medicine



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## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Friends and Colleagues, Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of our Department of Family and Community Medicine newsletter.

This is a special newsletter. On July 1, 2024, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Department's founding in the UC College of Medicine. As you know, we've dedicated this year to reflecting on the history of our Department. In this edition, we look back at the history of Global Health in our Department and consider the impact it has had upon our Department's mission and culture. In addition, we highlight the remarkable career of our friend, Andy Filak, who steps down as Dean of the College of Medicine in August. You'll also find articles highlighting The Freeman Center and our new Sawyer Pardo fellowship in LGBTQ+ care, one of only six in the nation.

Consider joining us for some of the events that are taking place this fall to celebrate our 50th anniversary! On November 2nd, we will host a conference, "The Future of Family Medicine," featuring Lou Edje, MD and Andrew Bazemore, MD MPH, both friends of our department and Andrew a 2000 graduate of our residency. The celebration continues that evening with a dinner at The Graduate. We hope everyone can take this opportunity to connect with and celebrate the UC Family Medicine community. Find out more about the festivities at our website: [ucfamilymedicineanniversary.com](http://ucfamilymedicineanniversary.com)

Each one of you has been a part of our Department's success. I sincerely hope that you can celebrate with us as we look to the next 50 years of Family Medicine in Cincinnati.

Warmly, Christy



Christine O'Dea, MD, MD, MPH, FAFAP  
Chair



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## 50 YEARS PAST YEARS FORWARD

UC Department of Family & Community Medicine  
Celebrating the Power of Family Medicine in Community



LOU EDJE  
MD, MHPE, FAFAP

The Future of Family Medicine is Now: Ten Ways Artificial Intelligence Will Transform Your Practice of Tomorrow



ANDREW BAZEMORE  
MD, MPH

Family Medicine in Cincinnati: Building on an Essential Foundation for Health for the Next 50 Years

## CELEBRATE THIS MILESTONE AT THE FOLLOWING EVENTS ON NOVEMBER 2:

CME EVENT | THE FUTURE OF FAMILY MEDICINE  
8 a.m. - 1:45 p.m. at the UC College of Medicine  
Registration includes:

- Breakfast and lunch
- Plenary sessions focused on the future of family medicine
- Breakout sessions with topics across the department including integrative medicine, survivorship, global health, geriatrics, LGBTQ+ care, and more!

CELEBRATION | DINNER & RECEPTION  
6 p.m. - 10 p.m. at the Graduate Hotel



### Presentation on the History of the DFCM by Phil Diller, MD, PhD

On September 12, 2024, "The History of the Family Medicine Department," was presented by Phil Diller, MD, PhD, in the Smith Conference Room. In celebration of our 50th Anniversary this year, Dr. Diller, a UC College of Medicine Family Medicine Residency alum, discussed the history of our department so we can look forward to the future.

## SPOTLIGHT:

**Tribute to Andy Filak** By Chris Lewis, MD

**On April 25, 2024, the Academy of Medicine of Cincinnati honored Dr. Andy Filak for Distinguished Service in Medical Education. Presenting the award was another alum of the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Dr. Chris Lewis. Below is the transcript from Dr. Lewis' tribute to Dr. Filak.**

28 years ago, at the beginning of my first year of medical school, I walked into a small group course titled "Death and Dying." The instructor looked like a younger version of the doc from the Norman Rockwell painting that hung in the office of my pediatrician, the late Dr. Irwin Dunsky, so I felt at ease. During the course, my fellow students and I learned about connecting with patients as human beings, not just subjects of medical inquiry and investigation. We learned the importance of communication, empathy, and cultural humility, before it was even called that. We learned how to be present with dying patients and their families, how to look at them, how to touch them and show them love. Lessons that I have deployed for almost 3 decades since, with countless patients, and many family members, including my own mother and father when they were passing away. The

man who taught that course may not look as young as he did back then, and he now has his own painting hanging on the wall of deans in the COM as a testament to all he has done to educate doctors for a half a century. And it is my honor to sing Andy Filak's praises before you tonight.

My admiration and appreciation for Andy goes well beyond what I learned in that class. Later in med school, I saw him powerfully address members of my class during a situation of racial division. He promoted unity and healing that still permeates through my class members to this day. While in residency at UC, I saw him fight innumerable fights to address pressing student needs, like a new library, updated curriculum, integration b/w basic science and clinical teaching. As a young doc working for the Health Alliance's Alliance Primary Care, he offered me a volunteer faculty position at the UC College of Medicine and a small stipend to support my work with Village Life Outreach Project, a non-profit I started in 2004 to unite communities to promote life, health, and education, using many of the lessons I learned from Andy over the years, chiefly that of treating people with humanity and dignity. That initial volunteer faculty position turned into a 20 year career in academia, rising from assistant professor to professor, assistant dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in UC College of Medicine,



and even vice provost of academic affairs at UC, where I helped make decisions that impacted 50,000 students.

I tell you my story with Andy not because my path is anything special-- but because countless other docs across the world can tell similar stories of how their careers, their lives, were impacted by this man.

As Dr. Barb Tobias has said, Andy is a lifelong source of strength and support. He's the example of what it means to invest in the success of his peers and his students.

Andy, you are the doctor's doctor, the teacher's teacher, the leader of leaders, who cares just as much about students and colleagues as you do about patients. You have changed UC for the better, our city for the better, and the lives of countless patients and physicians across the country for the better.

*Reprinted with the permission of Dr. Christopher Lewis.*

The Distinguished Service Award in Graduate Medical Education Administration is presented to a member of the GME Administrators Section (GMEAS) who has shown exemplary engagement and commitment to the field of medical education.

## An Interview with Andy Filak By Christy O'Dea, MD

Over the past year, in my role as interim chair, I have had the privilege of spending some time with Dr. Filak, or Andy, as he has asked me to call him. As he approached his retirement, I asked him some of my burning questions during one of my last monthly meetings with him.

**There are many things that stand out to me about your career, but your longevity is one of the main things. We are living in a time when around 50% of family docs are burned out and retiring earlier. How have you maintained your high level of engagement and performance over time?**  
It is easy—I have surrounded myself with good people. It is all about relationships and the people I work with. I tend to be more pessimistic than optimistic, and anticipating the problems that might occur. It has been good to surround myself with people who project the positive, can pull me out of a funk when needed, and tell me when I am going down the wrong road. I also like the diversity of what family medicine has allowed me to do.

**Were you ever burned out?**  
At times, we all have those feelings of burnout. I sometimes feel overwhelmed. I think the hardest time was during COVID. There was a lot going on, and I was on zoom calls from 8 am to 10 pm at night. There were hard decisions to make like furloughing people. It was very intense. But the secret to success was watching how people responded. Seeing how our clinicians responded by taking care of patients, our researchers stepped up. Even our medical students were volunteering and walking dogs of our clinical faculty who were working long hours. That was what kept me going.



Dr. Filak in the Patent Simulation Center with medical students.

**What are you most proud of?**  
My family and my kids. I am proud of the kind of people they are and the kind of people they have become. Some people talk about legacy, and that is not as important to me. I see someone like Chris Lewis, and he talks about how I was one of his first teachers, and that makes me feel good that I have had some influence on him. It makes me feel good to know that I may have been able to influence some people positively. I like to see people succeed.

**What advice would you give to a new family physician?**  
Find joy in what you do every day. There may be hard things in each day but try to find the joy and hang on to that. Don't let the hard things become a drudgery. Get to know your patients as the people they are, and they will tell you fascinating stories. Try to keep giving back. Pay it forward. I have always been—and continue to be—attracted to outpatient clinical care. Stated simply, I wanted to be a clinician.



Dr. Filak sharing in the enthusiasm of Match Day.



Dr. Filak with medical students: Shawn Krishnan, Caitlin Moore, and Kaitlyn Hegewald.

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**SPOTLIGHT:**

**Timothy Freeman, MD,  
Center for Developmental  
Disabilities**

Adults with developmental disabilities (DD) often face unique challenges in accessing appropriate healthcare services. By providing a medical home, the UC Health's Timothy Freeman, MD, Center for Developmental Disabilities is filling a critical gap in the healthcare system, catering to an underserved population. The center's mission is to advance healthcare for adults with developmental disabilities by providing person-centered, coordinated, and interdisciplinary care, educating health professionals and partnering with the community.

The center has had rapid development and growth since evolving from a transition clinic in 2022. The center is currently caring for over 1,300 patients with over 1,000 and counting awaiting transition from CCHMC and the community. The center has received funding to expand to a much larger space intentionally designed to meet the unique physical and sensory needs of the DD population. Simultaneously, the Freeman Center is growing its interdisciplinary team to increase access for patients.

Those with lived experience, UCCOM, UC Health and community partners, have been an integral part of growth and development. The Freeman Center welcomes continued partnership to transform healthcare for adults with DD in our community and beyond.



*Dr. Timothy Freeman examining a patient.*



*Dr. Timothy Freeman having a discussion with a patient and his father in an exam room.*



*Left to right: Corey Keeton, MD, Cory Shaw, CEO of UCHealth, Holly Freeman, wife of late Tim Freeman, MD, and Lauren Wang, MD*



*Dr. Wang and Christy Gregg, Program Manager for the Timothy Freeman, MD, Center for Developmental Disabilities, with a patient and her sibling.*

**Healthcare Hero, Dr. Lauren Wang**

Dr. Lauren Wang, founding medical director of The Freeman Center for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, received the 2024 Healthcare Hero Award for Patient Experience.



*Dr. Corey Keeton speaking with a patient at the Center.*

## SPOTLIGHT:

Global Health Fellowship By Shanna Stryker, MD, MPH

Our department is thrilled to support Faculty Development in Global Health fellowship, and to announce we have welcomed our sixth fellow, Dr. Navid Noori, who joined us in July. We have had consistent fellows since 2018 and are one of nine Global Health fellowships across the U.S. Our fellowship is unique in that we offer one-year and two-year options and opportunities to earn graduate certificates or Master's degrees with tuition remission. Throughout their fellowship, fellows provide primary care to many local immigrants and refugees within the City of Cincinnati Primary Care network of the Cincinnati Health Department and teach global health topics to students and residents. Fellows also provide care in Guatemala twice each year, working with our faculty and residents with our local partner Wuqu' Kawoq/Maya Health Alliance. Each fellow is able to tailor their non-clinical time to meet personalized individual development goals. Our 2023-2024 fellows were Dr. Madhulika (Meena) Mamidi and Dr. Mary Kate Greenwood, both northern Kentucky natives!

Dr. Mamidi is a graduate of the University of Louisville School of Medicine and the Christ Hospital/University of Cincinnati Family Medicine Residency. She spent the last year providing primary care at Millvale Health Center, along with providing domestic medical evaluations for refugees recently resettled in our area by Catholic Charities of Southwest Ohio. Inspired by this work, she is creating clinical protocols for the



*Global Health fellow Meena Mamidi MD, performing a point of care ultrasound on a pregnant patient in Guatemala.*

*Global Health Fellow,  
Mary Kate Greenwood, MD*



*The Christ Hospital/UC Family Medicine resident,  
Sarah Leep, MD (right), with Global Health fellow,  
Mary Kate Greenwood, MD (center)*

diagnosis and management of eosinophilia and latent tuberculosis (the latter in partnership with Hamilton County Public Health Tuberculosis Control). Dr. Mamidi has also been working within our medicolegal partnership with the Immigrant & Refugee Law Center to provide forensic medical evaluations of individuals seeking asylum or U visas. With Wuqu' Kawoq, Dr. Mamidi has been drafting a summary report of a water filter project our team enacted. She completed her fellowship in June, 2024.

Dr. Greenwood is a graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Medicine and the Self Regional HealthCare Family Medicine Residency. During her fellowship she has been providing care to a majority Spanish-speaking patient population at the Price Hill Health Center. She has also been earning a Master's in Public Health Degree with a concentration in Global Health while working with Kentucky Refugee Ministries to understand the facilitators and barriers to connecting recently resettled refugees to primary care services in northern Kentucky. She came to us as medical director of a program providing gynecologic care to sex workers in Guatemala City and this fall will be developing nutrition training tailored to Guatemala for our residents. Dr. Greenwood is scheduled to finish her fellowship in June 2025.

In July 2024 we welcomed our newest fellow Dr. Navid Noori DO, who will be earning a tropical medicine certificate during his one-year fellowship. Applications for two fellowship positions starting in July 2025 are due October 15th, 2024 - please email Shanna Stryker at [shanna.stryker@uc.edu](mailto:shanna.stryker@uc.edu) if you know anyone interested!

## The Beginnings of Global Health in the Department of Family and Community Medicine

By Phil Diller, MD, PhD

This year marks the 30th year for the Global Health (initially International Health) educational program in the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM). When it was started there was little thought on the potential impact this program would have on the residency and in turn, the DFCM. The unintended consequences turned out to be far beyond the original intent. How did it begin?

Dr. Jeffery Heck joined the Department in July of 1987 establishing his practice at the Wyoming Family Practice Center. Before coming to Cincinnati, he had gone with his wife Cathy and then, three children Jeffery (8), Allison (4) and Stephen (3), to serve as a physician at the Kijabi Medical Center in Kenya, East Africa for a year. In September, 1990 he became Director of the pre-doctoral division and had recruited two UC COM senior students, Molly Kramer and Tom Brewer, and, Phil Diller, an R3, to join him on an international health trip. The Christian Medical and Dental Society (CMDS) was active in global health, and they had a trip planned for Guatemala in October, 1990. However, within a month before the trip, the group was informed that due to the potential unrest anticipated with the upcoming government elections, the trip was changed to nearby Honduras.

It was on this trip that a connection was made with Daniel and Ruth Castro, CMDS Honduran medical brigade coordinators. The Castros had lived in the United States and knew the country very well and had selected a remote, impoverished village, Santa Lucia, Intibuca, the last village on the road, less than 5 miles

from the border of El Salvador. Besides serving the health needs of the region, Phil Diller's task upon return was to tell the Dept chair, Dr. Robert Smith, how valuable this experience would be in training family doctors!

Two years later, Dr. Heck, gave up the pre-doc director role to concentrate on the new residency that was being planned to move out of UC General Hospital to a community hospital. In August, 1993, a new FMC was created at then Providence Hospital and in July, 1994 the residency program moved to the Providence Campus. It was in that year that the International Health Track within the residency was launched with two trips a year planned for Honduras. After that first trip Honduras, additional trips were taken to identify a community to establish a long-term relationship rather than rotate experiences in a new community year-after-year. That community turned out to be Santa Lucia, the site of the first trip.

The track began to attract a different type of resident to Cincinnati. These were residents who were looking to serve in a meaningful way while being trained as family doctors, to care for those who little access to health care. These were individuals with hearts of service, broad interests, hard workers, eager to pitch in and volunteer, and with leadership potential. The program began to match strong students from across the country, including from the UC College of Medicine. These residents became cultural change agents in the residency and some of them subsequently joined the faculty promoting cultural change in the Department.



Family Medicine team in Honduras

Several years after the beginning of the relationship with Santa Lucia, several faculty members from the University of Pittsburgh asked to be part of Shoulder to Shoulder by bringing students and residents to another village in Honduras. Other medical schools and residencies showed similar interests and by the peak of Shoulder to Shoulder there were 13 US medical schools affiliated with Shoulder to Shoulder. The organization and the University of Cincinnati gained recognition by the government of Honduras, including the late prominent Honduran physician and Minister of Health, Dr. Plutarco Castellanos and the first lady of Honduras, Maria Flores.

The broad cultural changes in the Department of Family Medicine included the formation of the underserved track, attracting residents interested in urban service for the underserved and the creation of Village Life, a Shoulder to Shoulder like model in rural Tanzania which is still headed by Family Medicine resident graduate Dr. Chris Lewis. These were the unintended consequences that carried a high return on the investment in the program. This is part of the legacy of Dr. Heck during his Cincinnati years that is still seen in the Residency and the Department 30 years later. The Global Health Program remains a key feature of the DFCM and the UC-TCH Residency.



Dr. Heck and Angie Fratini, 1996



Honduras Team, 1997



Children of Honduras

## SPOTLIGHT:

## UC Welcomes Dr. Jesus (Aaron) Ramirez



The University of Cincinnati's Department of Family and Community Medicine is proud to announce the appointment of Dr. Jesus (Aaron) Ramirez, MD, as the inaugural fellow of the Sawyer Pardo Fellowship for LGBTQ+ Health. This pioneering program is designed to enhance LGBTQ+ health care education, advocacy, and clinical practice within the medical community. Dr. Ramirez's extensive background in LGBTQ+ health initiatives and education make him an exemplary leader for this transformative endeavor.

### *A Commitment to LGBTQ+ Health*

Dr. Ramirez has dedicated much of his medical career to advancing LGBTQ+ health care. His efforts at the UC Hoxworth Med/Peds Clinic have been instrumental in establishing comprehensive care protocols for LGBTQ+ patients, ensuring that the clinic's services are inclusive and sensitive to the specific needs of this community. One of Dr. Ramirez's notable contributions to LGBTQ+ health care is his involvement with HIV-ASSIST. This innovative web-based tool integrates the latest HIV treatment guidelines into a user-friendly platform that assists clinicians in developing treatment strategies for patients with HIV.

### *The Sawyer Pardo Fellowship for LGBTQ+ Health*

The Sawyer Pardo Fellowship, endowed by the LGBTQ+ community and one of only six fellowships in the country, aims to address the urgent need for specialized knowledge and practices in LGBTQ+ health care. The fellowship program offers a comprehensive training and research environment where fellows can engage in in-depth clinical practice, participate in community-based research, and develop public health initiatives aimed at reducing disparities in LGBTQ+ health outcomes.

### *Vision for the Future*

As the first LGBTQ+ health fellow, Dr. Ramirez is poised to set a high standard for future participants in the program. His vision includes not only the continuation of his clinical and educational work but also an expansion into broader advocacy roles within the community. By integrating more comprehensive LGBTQ+ health care practices into the curriculum of medical education, he hopes to cultivate a more inclusive and informed generation of healthcare providers. For the Department of Family and Community Medicine, the introduction of the Sawyer Pardo Fellowship for LGBTQ+ Health represents alignment with our mission to provide equitable health care for all. Dr. Ramirez's leadership and expertise will undoubtedly inspire and educate our team, enhancing our ability to serve the LGBTQ+ community with the highest standards of care.

## SPOTLIGHT:

## Addressing Primary Care Shortages: Family Medicine Pipeline Project

By Sarah Pickle, MD

As educators specializing in family medicine, we recognize the distinct role our field plays in narrowing the healthcare gap. The "25 x 2030" goal, established by the American Academy of Family Medicine Physicians, is an initiative aimed at ensuring that 25% of combined graduating U.S. allopathic and osteopathic medical school students choose family medicine as their specialty by 2030. This overarching objective addresses the critical need for more primary care physicians and strives to meet the healthcare requirements of patients and communities.

To contribute to this initiative, the division of medical education launched the Family Medicine Pipeline Project, led by Dr. Hillary Mount and Dr. Jackie Knapke. This project investigates how early connections with family medicine faculty during medical school influence students' career choices.

Over five years, our institution utilized an electronic database to empower family medicine faculty to record and track encounters with students interested in family medicine. While no specific contact types were significantly positively correlated with students choosing family medicine, 62% of students matching with family medicine had at least two contacts, emphasizing the importance of sustained engagement. From 2019 to 2023, 70 residency matches to family medicine were recorded, with 49 (70%) represented in the Pipeline Tracker. A compelling trend emerged: the more the tracker was utilized by faculty, the more effective it became at identifying family medicine matches.

Looking ahead, our focus shifts to practical initiatives. Recognizing the importance of continuous engagement, we have created the Family Medicine Experiences and Engagement Listserv. This platform serves to offer experiential clinical and community learning opportunities for students who express interest in family medicine. By fostering consistent communication with medical students interested in our specialty, we aim to further identify and nurture future family medicine physicians.



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