

Department of Surgery

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2021-2022



Letter from the Chair

To say the current time is unprecedented is an understatement. Nonetheless, we are surmounting the third wave together, all of us facing our own challenges because of this virus. With the effectiveness of vaccines, therapeutic options, and a better understanding of the disease, our future prospects of contending with this virus are better. At this point the pandemic has taken an emotional and physical toll on most of us.

We have adapted, we are resilient, and we will get back to normal TOGETHER.

Demetrius

Relentlessly Robotic

UMass Memorial Medical Center became the first hospital in the Northeast to utilize three Intuitive robotic systems at the same time—in the same building— for a multitude of different cases. This includes a total of 14 procedures - bariatric, prostate, ENT, and bronchoscopic endoluminal procedures. For the year, UMass Memorial conducted over 2,500 cases! This excellence in robotic procedures puts UMass Memorial among the top hospitals in the country with similar programs.



Center for Complex Aortic Disease Celebrates 400 Cases

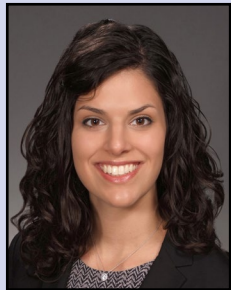
On November 19, 2021, the UMass Memorial Center for Complex Aortic Disease, Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, completed its 400th Fenestrated/Branching EVAR procedure and serves as the highest volume center for complex aortic disease in the US in 2021.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS OF SURGERY



Tess H. Aulet, MD, Instructor, joined the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery. She is originally from the Chicago area and completed her undergraduate studies and medical degree at Tufts University. After completing her general surgery residency training at University of Vermont

Medical Center, she went on to complete her Colon and Rectal Surgery fellowship at Lahey Hospital and Medical Center and now joins our program for a clinical associate year. She looks forward to caring for the full spectrum of colorectal surgery patients. Dr. Aulet has a particular clinical interest in colon and rectal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, and diverticulitis. She is passionate about surgical education and looks forward to contributing to the education of medical students, residents, and fellows at UMass.



Laura Boitano, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Surgery, joined the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery. She received her medical degree from Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine and completed her integrated vascular surgery residency at the

Massachusetts General Hospital in June 2021. During her training, she received an MPH from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She has an interest in treating all aspects of vascular disease and building a broad clinical practice. Her specific interests include women's vascular health. She has extensive experience in vascular surgery outcomes research with a focus on vulnerable populations within vascular surgery and utilizing large databases for predictive analytics. In addition to providing care at the University campus, Dr. Boitano will be a critical member of the Charlton outreach clinic.



Gil Freitas, MD, Instructor, recently joined the Division of General, Minimally Invasive, and Bariatric Surgery. Dr. Freitas is a Rhode Island native who received his undergraduate training at Morehouse College. He then received his medical degree from Tufts University School of

Medicine. Many of you know Dr. Freitas is a recent, outstanding graduate of our UMass general surgery residency program and will be practicing acute care surgery at University, Memorial, and Marlborough campuses. Dr. Freitas will become our Advanced Minimally Invasive Surgery Fellow for 2022-2023.



David J. Linshaw, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Surgical Oncology, was raised in the Boston area and received an undergraduate degree at Berklee College of Music, majoring in guitar performance. Dr. Linshaw toured the country and the world with his band for several years before

developing a passion for medicine. He earned his medical degree from SUNY Downstate College of Medicine and subsequently completed his residency in general surgery at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. It was during this time Dr. Linshaw developed a strong interest in breast oncology and low-cost modalities to improve quality of life in patients dealing with the challenges of survivorship. He went on to a fellowship in breast surgical oncology at Women and Infants Hospital in Providence. Outside of work he still enjoys playing music as well as spending time with his wife, Tosin and son, Noah.

**Thank you for all of your submissions for the
Department of Surgery Newsletter!**

Send submissions to:
Themia.Pappas-Fillmore@umassmed.edu

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS OF SURGERY



Matthew C. Rade, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, grew up in Buffalo, NY before attending college at Williams College in western Massachusetts. He earned his medical degree from the University of Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Science in Buffalo,

before returning to Massachusetts for his general surgery residency at Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Burlington followed by an Advanced GI/ Minimally Invasive Surgery fellowship at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield. Dr. Rade specializes in minimally invasive general surgery, with clinical interests including robotics, anti-reflux operations, and bariatrics at UMass General Surgery at Milford. He maintains a strong interest in medical student and resident education and training.



Jetsen A. Rodriguez-Silva, MD grew up in Puerto Rico and received his medical degree at Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine. He then completed his general surgery training at Hospital Episcopal San Lucas - Ponce School of Medicine followed by a fellowship

in Minimally Invasive Surgery at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. His clinical interests include robotic and laparoscopic surgery, endoscopy, and colorectal surgery. In addition, surgical outcomes and colorectal cancer are his primary research interests. This year, Dr. Rodriguez-Silva joins the Colon and Rectal Surgery division as Instructor. Next year, Dr. Rodriguez-Silva will continue his surgical education at the University of South Florida Colon and Rectal Surgery fellowship program.



Caitlin Sorensen, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, joined the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery. Dr. Sorensen graduated from the University of California, Berkeley and attended the Georgetown University Medical School. She then trained in integrated

vascular surgery at the MedStar Washington Hospital Center/Georgetown University.



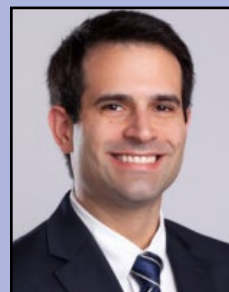
James Senturk, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, recently joined the Division of General and Minimally Invasive Surgery and is based primarily at Milford Regional Medical Center. Dr. Senturk received his medical and doctoral degrees at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New

York. He completed his surgical training at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. He then returned to New York to complete his fellowship in Advanced GI/ Minimally Invasive Surgery at New York Presbyterian-Weill Cornell Medical Center. His clinical interests span a broad spectrum of general surgery, gallbladder disease, gastrointestinal disease and surgery, bariatric surgery, and hernia repair. His academic interests are focused primarily on resident education.



Kaitlyn Wong MD, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Surgery, joined the faculty of the Division of Pediatric Surgery. Dr. Wong returns home to Massachusetts having recently completed her Pediatric Surgery fellowship at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. She attended medical school at Tufts

University where she also earned a Master's in Public Health before earning her PhD in Molecular and Cellular Biology at UMass and completing her general surgery residency at Baystate.



John C. Madore, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, recently joined the Division of Trauma and Critical Care Surgery. He is a Massachusetts native and grew up in Bridgewater, MA. He earned his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and then received his medical degree from the University of

Massachusetts Medical School. After completing his general surgery residency training in our program, he completed a fellowship in Surgical Critical Care at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. His interests include emergency and acute care surgery, outcomes in the elderly population, utilization of frailty models, and resident education.

APPOINTMENTS

Congratulations to the following Department of Surgery faculty on their appointments

Francesco Aiello MD, MBA, FACS (Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery) Professor of Surgery

Karim Alavi, MD, MPH, FACS, FASCRS (Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery) Director, Department of Surgery Research Core

Feiran Lou, MD (Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery) Associate Director, Department of Surgery Research Core

Leora Balsam, MD (Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery) Professor of Surgery

Michael Hirsh, MD, FACS, FAAP (Division of Pediatric Surgery) Department of Surgery Chief Quality Officer

Mary Huerter, MD, MA (Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery) Assistant Professor

John J. Kelly, MD (Division of General Surgery) Professor of Surgery

Bruce J. Simon, MD, MHCM (Trauma and Surgical Critical Care) Chief, Trauma and Critical Care

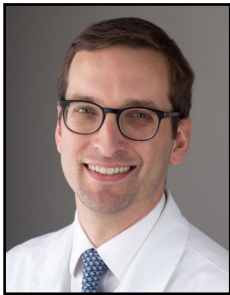
ACHIEVEMENTS



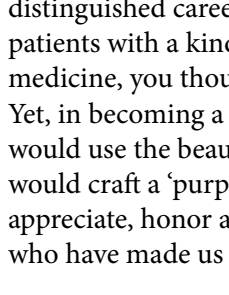
Francesco Aiello, MD, MBA was selected to lead the UMass Memorial Medical Group effort to design, implement, and execute the creation of outpatient multispecialty office-based lab procedural sites in the community.



2021 Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Clinical Excellence was awarded to **Janice F. Lalikos, MD**, Professor of Surgery, Division of Plastic Surgery. Dr. Lalikos is invited to present a talk at the 2022 White Coat Ceremony.



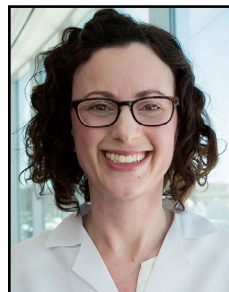
Douglas Jones, MD, MSc received his MSc in Epidemiology from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.



Chancellor Michael F. Collins, MD noted "Dr. Lalikos, throughout a distinguished career as a plastic surgeon, you have cared for patients with a kind and skilled touch. When you came into medicine, you thought it might be as a medical illustrator. Yet, in becoming a plastic surgeon, you decided that you would use the beauty of each patient as your motivation and would craft a 'purpose and mission on this planet to serve, appreciate, honor and respect those in front of us and those who have made us what we are.'"



Jennifer LaFemina, MD was inducted American College of Surgeons, Academy of Master Surgeon Educators as an Associate Member. She was selected alongside 83 other international surgeon educators who have devoted their careers to surgical education and serves as the APDS Liaison to the AAMC



Jennifer Davids, MD, Associate Professor of Surgery, was named the Colorectal Fellowship Director.

and has chaired the effort to revise the 2021-2022 general surgery residency interview and selection process and serves on a number of national committees on resident selection and education. Read Dr. LaFemina's article [Reimaging the General Surgery Residency Match Process: 2021 Update](#)

To continue to highlight our Department's and Institution's great accomplishments, please follow and add @UMassSurgery, @UMassPlastics, @UMassVascSurg, and @UMassColorectal, when you Tweet and umasssurgery, umassvascular, umassplasticsurgery, and umasssthoracic on Instagram.

ACHIEVEMENTS



UMass Chan Medical School faculty John Broach, MD, MPH, **Michael Hirsh, MD**, and Jill Terrien, PhD were recognized as Champions of Humanistic Care by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation. Honorees were selected by their member health care institutions for compassion and courage during the COVID-19 pandemic and recognized at the Annual Gala of the Arnold P. Gold Foundation held virtually on June 10.

Dr. Hirsh, professor of surgery and pediatrics and assistant vice provost for Wellness and Health Promotion at UMass Chan Medical School, has overseen the region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic as medical director for the Worcester Division of Public Health. In this role, he oversees all aspects of local infection control policy including decisions regarding school closures, health care worker regulations and COVID-19 vaccine distribution. Humanism is central to all he does, including as a pediatric trauma surgeon and nationally known advocate for gun control. [Read Full Article: John Broach, Michael Hirsh, Jill Terrien named Arnold P. Gold Foundation Champions of Humanistic Care](#)



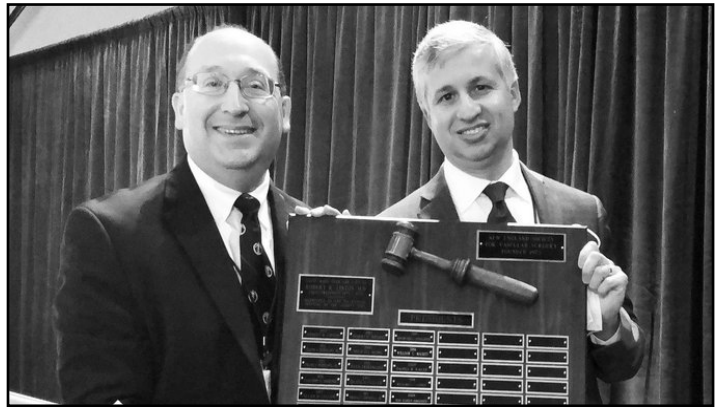
Paulo Martins, MD, PhD, FAST, FEBS has received a \$241,000 research grant from Ochre-Bio. Dr. Martins research is focused on graft treatment during ex-situ machine perfusion preservation. This project will use gene modulation with RNA interference during machine perfusion to improve the quality of liver grafts. His project is expected to provide novel insights into an unexplored area of liver preservation that will not only fuel a better understanding of ischemia reperfusion injury and will facilitate the development of more mechanistic studies to characterize graft viability and even to optimize ischemic and fatty grafts before transplant.



Jessica Simons, MD, Division of Vascular Surgery, was elected to the New England Society of Vascular Surgery Executive Council as Recorder.



Andres Schanzer, MD, Chief, of the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, was elected as the New England Society of Vascular Surgery President. As president, he will lead surgeons throughout New England and some parts of New York with the goals of achieving the highest level of patient care in the field, encouraging mentorship and education of those entering the field and staying at the forefront of research and the latest treatments. Additionally, Dr. Schanzer is featured in the recent edition of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. His article, "Management of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms" is a clinical practice review with recommendations for treatment based on Dr. Schanzer's expertise in the field of AAA. Dr. Schanzer and his vascular surgery team are national leaders in the field of fenestrated and branched endovascular aortic repair. [Read the Clinical Practice Review.](#)



Passing the torch! Current NESVS president, Alan Dardik MD, PhD, passes the gavel to **Andres Schanzer, MD**, NESVS' new president.



Devon Robichaud, NP, Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, was awarded a \$20,000 quality improvement grant and was able to design, edit, and implement preoperative information videos for vascular surgery patients undergoing key surgeries. There is easy access to each video via QR code cards, which are available on display in the Vascular Surgery Clinic at ACC.



Department of Surgery Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Task Force

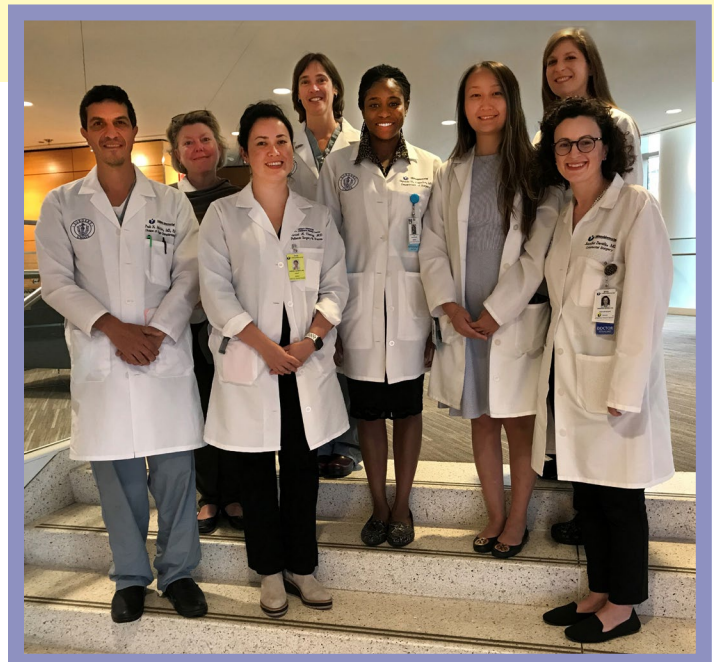
I am so pleased to announce the formation of this Task Force which began meeting in the Spring/Summer of 2021 and has been working to establish DEI goals and objectives for the months and years ahead. The creation of this group is the first step in prioritizing an environment and community that embraces and fosters the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. We have several important projects underway and look forward to sharing these initiatives with our department and medical school community.

These include enhancing our knowledge through annual training sessions, special DEI Grand Rounds events, and research endeavors that celebrate and explore the importance of DEI. We are establishing definable goals and a system of intentional recruitment that will improve our faculty diversity while simultaneously working to provide an inclusive environment with focused mentorship and career guidance for URM faculty. Through participation in the Worcester Pipeline Collaborative and Worcester Community Free Clinics, we are expanding our community involvement. Efforts to improve health equity will also extend beyond local endeavors. Our partnership in Lusaka, Zambia through the American College of Surgeons – Operation Giving Back collaboration will focus on bringing sustainable training, education, research opportunities, and clinical resources to communities abroad. It is our number one priority to have all voices heard and we encourage active engagement of our students, residents, and faculty. Please keep an eye out for our annual DEI survey that will give you the opportunity to have your voice heard and provide us with much needed perspectives from fellow friends and colleagues.

Muriel Cleary, MD (Chair, DEI Task Force)

Front row, Paulo Martins, MD, PhD; Muriel Cleary, MD; and Jennifer Davids, MD

Back row, Anne Larkin, MD; Jessica Simons, MD; Olajumoke (Jummy) Akinsulire, MD, PGY2; Emily Fan, MD, PGY4; and Mary Huerter, MD, MA



**Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion
Task Force**

Mission Statement:

We recognize that the profession of surgery exists within a society that has historically undervalued and discriminated against individuals of certain race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, (dis)ability and socioeconomic class. Our mission is to bring light to inequity, eliminate discriminatory practices, and proactively implement changes that will promote a diverse, equitable, and inclusive working and learning environment.

Membership:

Muriel Cleary, MD (Chair)
Olajumoke (Jummy) Akinsulire, MD, PGY2
Katherine Bakke, MD, PGY5
Laura Boitano, MD
Andrea Castaldo, MD, PGY3
Muriel Cleary, MD
Jennifer Davids, MD
Emily Fan, MD, PGY4
Gil Freitas, MD
Giorgio Giatsidis, MD, PhD
Mary Huerter, MD, MA
Ovninder Johal, MD, PGY4
Jennifer LaFemina, MD
Anne Larkin, MD
Feiran Lou, MD
Paulo Martins, MD, PhD
Joyce McIntyre, MD
Andres Schanzer, MD
Bruce Simon, MD
Jessica Simons, MD
Caitlin Sorensen, MD

Sub-Committee Goals:

The task force is divided into several sub-committees that focus on different aspects of this multi-faceted effort. We collectively believe that a diverse and inclusive institutional culture will give rise to innovative and enlightened solutions to patient care and health policy.

- **Our Recruitment committee** is dedicated to the creation of protocols that will guide the intentional recruitment and inclusive support of a diverse and culturally competent workforce that well-represents the patients we serve.
 - Lead: **Anne Larkin, MD**
- **Our Retention/Promotion/Mentorship committee** is focused on directed mentorship and advocacy and is firmly committed to creating an environment where individuals from underrepresented minority groups can thrive and excel.
 - Leads: **Paulo Martins, MD, PhD and Joyce McIntyre, MD**
- **Our Outreach/Education/Access committee** is dedicated to community engagement and mentorship to create opportunities for URM youth and to provide equitable clinical care for patients both in our own community and in underserved communities abroad. This committee will also create an annual curriculum for our department that highlights DEI principles and provides opportunities for both self-improvement and outreach.
 - Local Community Leads: **Laura Boitano, MD, MPH and Mary Huerter, MD, MA**
 - Global Community Lead: **Olajumoke Akinsulire, MD, PGY2**
- **Our Research committee** will study institutional surgical workforce inequities and support research that investigates health inequity in our surgical patient population. Our task force will vocally support and celebrate individuals within our department who perform this work and embody these principles.
 - Lead: **Giorgio Giatsidis, MD, PhD**

Please keep an eye out for our annual DEI survey that will give you the opportunity to have your voice heard and provide us with much needed perspectives from fellow friends and colleagues.

RESIDENT UPDATES

Residents of the Month

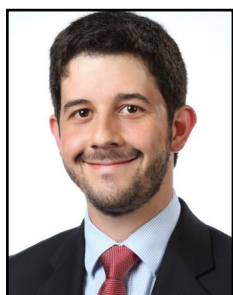
This academic year the three Department of Surgery residency programs established the Resident of the Month Award, which by submission by members of the Department, is awarded monthly to the surgical resident who defines these values in his/her/their everyday greatness.

We encourage all to submit names of residents for this honor at: <https://forms.gle/6LzJ5juQCpizhhF99>



November 2021 – Tom Cervantes, MD, Integrated Plastic Surgery PGY3
Dr. Cervantes is a force of quiet strength in the Integrated Plastic Surgery Residency Program. From his peers, “Thoughtful, organized, and levelheaded, Tom is an exceptional resident and has really demonstrated leadership this year. We applaud his

strong and consistent efforts!” Without fanfare, with humble confidence and a gentle demeanor, Tom supports his peers and co-workers every day to become better physicians and surgeons. Those who know Tom will understand this analogy: He is a load-bearing wall that we have come to trust, be thankful for and rely upon.



September 2021 – Ricardo Bello, MD, General Surgery PGY5

Dr. Bello has distinguished himself in numerous areas of surgery. From his role as the Resident Board Member for the NRMP, to his redesign of the General Surgery educational lecture series, and to his recent receipt of the ED Consultant of the Year, Dr.

Bello is most deserving of the Inaugural September 2021 Department of Surgery Resident of the Year Award. From peers, “Ricardo is a phenomenal chief who goes above and beyond for his co-residents and for his patients. He is kind, down-to-earth and is a great teacher. We all love working with him.”



December 2021– Katherine Bakke, MD, MPH, General Surgery PGY5

Leading from the front lines in COVID, bringing forth humanism in every interaction, and being recently inducted into Alpha Omega Alpha, Dr. Bakke is most deserving of this honor. Her peers consistently praise her efforts: “Takes the time to

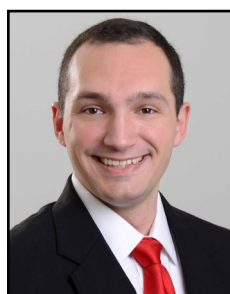
really listen and care for her patients, advocates for them regardless of the effort she needs to put in, great work ethic, excellent bedside manner, superb team leader who leads by example”; “phenomenal senior to her juniors and goes out of her way to help whenever she can. She is kind, patient, and uses available opportunities to teach. She also tries to engage medical students and integrate them into the team.”



October 2021 – Anupama Singh, MD, General Surgery PGY2

Dr. Singh has truly distinguished herself in her clinical care of patients. From peers, “Dr. Singh is a star in our program.” As the consult resident, Dr. Singh is “always thorough and thoughtful and delivers the best possible patient care, while seeking

ways to improve even more.” She consistently demonstrates a very strong knowledge base and excellent technical skill. Even more impressive, she does so while maintaining a commitment to the wellbeing and self-care of her family, friends, and peers.”



January 2022 – Robert Benjamin, MD, General Surgery PGY1

Dr. Benjamin has been consistently praised this year on all fronts: “Rob functions so far beyond the expectations of a PGY1. He is incredibly flexible to varying situations...and absorbs all knowledge very well and pays incredible

attention to even the smallest details,” “very strong work in his rotations, demonstrating excellent professionalism, efficiency in floor work, and growing skills in the OR.” From our APP partners, “(Rob) demonstrated exceptional clinical judgement, leadership skills, and bedside manner...I had the utmost trust in his care for our patients...He was truly a joy to work with.”

RESIDENT UPDATES

Chief Residents Fellowship Matches

- **Ricardo J. Bello, MD, MPH, PGY5:** Complex Surgical Oncology Fellowship, Medical College of Wisconsin
- **Salim Munoz, MD, PGY5:** Abdominal Transplant Surgery, University of Miami
- **Clark Murray, MD, PGY5:** Surgical Critical Care/Trauma, John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County
- **Dorothy Liu, MD, PGY5:** Trauma/Critical Care, Temple University
- **Jorge Lujan-Hernandez, MD, PGY5:** Craniofacial Fellowship, Stanford University
- **Brian Jao, MD, PGY5:** Hand Fellowship, UT Southwestern

Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society

Congratulations to **Katherine Bakke, MD, PGY5** and **Robert McLoughlin, MD, PGY5** (General Surgery) as well as **Brian Jao, MD, PGY6** and **Jorge Lujan-Hernandez, MD PGY6** (Plastic Surgery) who were inducted as House Staff Members to the UMass Chan Medical School chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society.

American College of Surgeons 2021 Resident Award for Exemplary Teaching Finalist

Ricardo Bello, MD, PGY5 was selected as one of the top 10 finalists for the American College of Surgeons (ACS) 2021 Resident Award for Exemplary Teaching.

OTHER DEPARTMENT NEWS

CENTER FOR VEIN DISEASE



New patients: 855-UMASS-MD
Current patients: 508-334-VEIN (8346)



Vein Center Opens in Westborough

Dejah Judelson, MD, Medical Director of the Division of Vascular Surgery Vein Center, has successfully opened a freestanding outpatient vein center in Westborough. The Vein Center's new location is at 33 Lyman Street in Westborough. Patients can receive medical and cosmetic consultation and the latest treatments in a convenient location with free parking.

The center has been extremely successful, and it is already functioning with a wait list for the full spectrum of venous care.

Ugly Sweater Conference

The Division of Vascular Surgery's 1st Annual Ugly Sweater Conference was a joyous success. The division put their heart and soul into their sweaters, and they all looked amazing. The four winning looks won great prizes like Chief for a Day, Momma Aiello's Lasagna, Homemade Libations, and Sweet Stuff made with love and care. Congratulations to all winners.





Optimizing Adipocyte Precursors

Silvia Corvera, PhD, Endowed Professor of Molecular Biology, Program of Molecular Medicine and **Janice Lalikos, MD**, (left) Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, have been collaborating for several years on optimizing adipocyte precursors and their scaffold for possible medical delivery (diabetes treatment, wound healing, radiation fibrosis management, etc) and/or soft tissue volume restoration. They have recently received a DoD award that will further forward this work, collaborating with a laboratory at Wake Forest University that has human primate capability for testing.



Visiting Fulbright Scholar

We are honored to have **Sonja Grazhdani, MD** join the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery as a visiting Fulbright scholar under the mentorship of **Leora Balsam, MD**. She is a graduate of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje Medical School and is a trainee in cardiac surgery at the University Clinic for Cardiac Surgery at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje. Her clinical and research interests include cardiac surgery and mechanical circulatory support.



2021 BRIDGE Fund Grant Recipient

Raymond Dunn, MD, Professor of Surgery, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, is a recipient of the UMass Chan Medical School 2021 BRIDGE Fund grant for his proposal, "Prevention of Pressure Ulcers: A Wireless Pressure Sensor System to Transform Best Practices."

Pressure ulcers (PU) are one of the most medically and financially burdensome hospital-acquired complications in elderly, debilitated and spinal cord injured populations. Excessive pressure on patients' skin leads to lack of blood supply (ischemia), commonly resulting in painful, difficult to treat wounds, ultimately leading to physical and psychological impairment.

In the US, 2.5 million patients a year develop PUs, resulting in an estimated 60,000 deaths annually.

Current prevention of pressure ulcers is primarily based on empirical, nonpatient-centered and inefficient strategies that rely on care providers to mobilize patients every few hours, regardless of whether a patient's condition warrants it. Dr. Dunn's work will focus on developing wearable, integrated, remotely communicating patches containing sensors that monitor body areas with known risk of pressure ulcer development. The system detects early biological processes that lead to skin damage before it happens, then remotely communicates with caretakers in real-time for timely and targeted intervention. A device prototype has already been created and needs a few improvements to bring the technology to a stage ready for clinical adoption and licensing. [Read more.](#)



Michael Hirsh, MD was featured in a July 20, 2021, Telegram & Gazette article "Nearly 60% of Worcester fully vaccinated against COVID-19, but gaps remain."

[Read article](#)

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY RESEARCH UPDATES

Thoracic Robot Simulation Education Research Grant

The Division of Thoracic Surgery was awarded an Education Research grant from the Intuitive Surgical Foundation to study emergency undocking procedures during robotic thoracic surgeries. Intuitive Surgical Foundation is a global technology leader in minimally invasive care and the pioneer of robotic-assisted surgery. The grant allowed the Thoracic Surgery division to study team interactions and pitfalls during simulated massive intraoperative hemorrhage. Two phases of the study were completed with help from the Department of Anesthesia, operating room staff, Department of Patient Safety and Quality, and the Simulation Department.

In Phase I, an emergency protocol and checklist were created through round table discussions and in-situ simulations in the Memorial Campus OR. In Phase II, OR teams received training on the emergency protocol and checklist. These teams were then tested in in-situ OR simulations. Failure mode and effects analyses were completed following all simulations, identifying 28 latent patient safety threats. The ultimate goal of the project is to improve operating room team efficacy, communication, and experience in managing rare but high-stakes situations that require emergent conversion from robotic to open approach.

Thoracic Robot Simulation Operating Room Team

Under the direction of thoracic surgeon **Feiran Lou, MD** (left) and thoracic surgery research fellow **Bryce Bludevich, MD**, General Surgery Research Resident (second from right), two emergency protocols and checklists for OR teams working with da Vinci robots have been developed and simulated. These protocols will help to improve patient safety at UMass Memorial Medical Center and beyond.



WELCOME TO THE NEWEST DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY MEMBERS



Kate H. Dinh, MD (Surgical Oncology) and her husband, Dr. Geoff Findlay, welcomed a baby girl, Mara, on June 3, 2021.



Zachary Fang, MD, PGY5 (Vascular Surgery) and his wife, Frances Hu, MD, welcomed their son, Caleb August Fang, on September 7, 2021.



Thomas Cervantes, MD, PGY3 (Plastic Surgery) and his wife, Sarah Southerland, welcomed their son, Michael James Cervantes, on October 27, 2021.



Larissa Pamen, MD, PGY3 (General Surgery) welcomed a son, Eli-James (EJ) Kontchou, on December 17, 2021. Mom, dad, big brother PJ, and baby EJ are doing well.



Gazi Rashid, MD, PGY2, Research (General Surgery) and his wife, Rachel Buckle-Rashid, MD, welcomed their daughter, Yasmin Sophia Rashid, on February 3, 2022.

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY - COMMUNITY OUTREACH

UMass Homeless Diabetic Foot Screening

The THIRD UMass Homeless Diabetic Foot Outreach Event was on November 13, 2021. This is the first event through the support of the Remillard Family Foundation Community Service Grant. **Tammy Nguyen, MD, PhD**, Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, was awarded the Remillard Family Community Service Grant for her work creating the UMass Homeless Diabetic Foot Screening.

The event highlights the consistency of care and passion from a multidisciplinary group at UMass, focusing on helping the underserved in our community. There has been consistent support from over 35 volunteers spanning

over at least six different medical groups (Vascular Surgery, Vascular Lab, Podiatry, Diabetes, Road to Care, and Behavioral Health). Including the support from three Division Chiefs: **Andres Schanzer, MD** (Vascular Surgery), **Frances Lagana, DPM** (Podiatry), and **Samir Malkani, MD** (Diabetes, Endocrinology, & Metabolism) at the most recent event!

Since the conception of this project, free comprehensive diabetes foot care has been provided to over 100 under resourced patients! COVID vaccines and boosters have been provided through Road to Care, spear headed by Kavita Babu, MD, Department of Emergency Medicine.



Left photo (left to right) Danny Schanzer (volunteer) and Flavi Oliveira (Vascular Technician) screen a patient at the UMass Homeless Diabetic Foot Screening Clinic.

Right photo (left to right) Alexandra Forsyth, MD, PGY1; Kris Boelitz, MD, PGY2; Emily Fan, MD, PGY4; Sudie-Ann Robinson, MD, PGY1; Hazel Marecki, MD, PGY5; and Tammy Nguyen, MD, PhD.



Jessica P. Simons,
MD, MPH

People to Meet in 2022: Jessica Simons, MD, MPH

Worcester Business Journal
Published December 20, 2021

Since becoming the first female vascular surgeon ever hired by UMass Memorial Health in 2013, **Jessica Simons, MD, MPH** has seen a gender evolution in her field.

In eight short years, UMass Memorial's vascular division went from having only one female surgeon to now being a female-majority division. Dr. Simons is passionate about her life-saving work and enjoys finding solutions for the unique health needs of her patients. An aging population combined with a future shortage of surgeons, is a healthcare challenge Dr. Simons anticipates will take place over the next few decades. She hopes to mitigate this future healthcare challenge through technological innovations and diversity.

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