DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

DUKE

Advancing Our Values in a Time of Change

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Kathleen A. Cooney, MD, MACP
George Barth Geller
Distinguished Professor of Medicine

Chair, Department of Medicine
Duke University School of Medicine

DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

I am proud to share the 2025 Duke University Department of Medicine (DOM) Annual Report, showcasing the breadth, depth, and impact of the innovative work conducted across our 13 divisions of internal medicine.

With more than 800 faculty members, Medicine is the largest of the 26 departments in the Duke University School of Medicine and a driving force for clinical innovation and academic discovery across the institution. I am deeply proud of how our community has navigated a year marked by uncertainty and rapid change, rising to meet challenges that affected medical research universities nationwide.

Across academic health care, 2025 brought profound shifts and significant economic pressures. Even as rising costs and reductions in federal funding created new constraints, our commitment to excellence and integrity in science, research, education, and patient-centered care enabled us to adapt strategically and position the department for continued strength and growth.

Strengthening our research infrastructure was a top priority in 2025. We advanced a more diversified research funding model that bolsters us for long-term competitiveness. The transition of research administration from the Department of Medicine Research Administration (DOMRA) to the School of Medicine's Research Administration Support Resource, or RASR, brought greater transparency, efficiency, and coordination to our grant processes. Improvements in clinical research operations — including faster startup of industry-sponsored trials and expanded coordinator training — have already generated new opportunities for increasing our participation in clinical research.

The renewal of Duke's seven-year, $69 million Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) — the largest in our history — further strengthens our ability to move discoveries from laboratories to communities. This award expands opportunities for trainees and established investigators alike through competitive K awards, T32 training grants, R grants, and new educational pathways.

We have also deepened our commitment to developing the next generation of physician-scientists. Through DOM programs including the Fellow Research Academy and the Career Development Award Community, we are ensuring that early-career faculty have the mentorship and support they need to thrive. I am especially proud to have established the Emerging Physician Researcher Award this year, alongside Dr. Michael Hershfield's generous new fund for rising physician-scientists — investments that affirm our belief that people are our most valuable resource in our department.

DOM faculty continued to push the boundaries of discovery in ways that directly improve patient care, yet significant unmet needs remain for many conditions where no new therapies have been approved in more than a decade. We must continue expanding partnerships with foundations, philanthropic organizations, and industry collaborators to accelerate progress in these areas.

As we look to the future, I am inspired by the creativity, resilience, and collaboration that define our community. We have repeatedly demonstrated our capacity to adapt and lead, from the COVID-19 pandemic to today's changing research environment. Our bench is deep, our vision is strong, and our commitment to advancing the field of medicine — and improving the lives of our patients — is unwavering.

It is with deep humility and pride that we, as a community, continue to move forward with a clear-eyed vision of our commitment to excellence. With your support, together we will continue to impact the future of medicine and the health of our communities.

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Medical Oncology

Stefanie Sarantopoulos, MD, PhD
Hematologic Malignancies and Cellular Therapy

Noppon Setji, MD
Hospital Medicine

BY THE NUMBERS: EDUCATION

Trainee Subspecialties

1 TRANSPLANT NEPHROLOGY

12 NEPHROLOGY

4 PALLIATIVE CARE

3 GERIATRICS

1 ADULT CONGENITAL

3 INTERVENTIONAL CARDIOLOGY

3 CARDIOVASCUAL DISEASE RESEARCH

24 HEMATOLOGY ONCOLOGY

7 ENDOCRINOLOGY

2 CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE

8 INFECTIOUS DISEASE

2 INFECTIOUS DISEASES RESEARCH

30 CARDIOLOGY

3 HEART FAILURE

1 PULMONARY TRANSPLANT

1 INTERVENTIONAL PULMONOLOGY

14 PULMONARY & CRITICAL CARE

5 RHEUMATOLOGY

12 GASTROENTEROLOGY

1 TRANSPLANT HEPATOLOGY

5 ELECTROPHYSIOLOGY

IM RESIDENTS IMPLEMENT NEW PERFORMANCE METRICS TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

Hospitals increasingly rely on performance metrics such as length of stay, readmission rates, and discharge documentation accuracy to evaluate performance, affect reimbursement, and improve patient outcomes. However, many medical trainees receive limited education on how their actions influence these metrics.

In response, residents in the Duke Internal Medicine Residency Program have developed a structured weekly huddle to introduce Systems-Based Practice (SBP) concepts and raise awareness of how their daily work impacts patient care and health care systems.

Dr. Akhila Belur, Dr. John Hoyle, Dr. Komal Safdar, and Dr. Pahresah Roomiany initiated the huddles at Duke Regional Hospital during the general medicine rotation. Participants have described these sessions as “illuminating” and “relevant,” providing a forum for discussing the implications of clinical documentation and performance metrics.

Throughout the academic year, four key metrics were tracked for senior residents: Case Mix Index (CMI), discharge summary completion within 24 hours, hospital follow-up appointments within seven days, and readmission rates. To enhance engagement, the initiative was turned into a friendly annual competition, resulting in Dr. Sanjay Gadi being named the Resident Metric Champion for outstanding performance.

The huddles are attended by medical students, interns, residents, and attending physicians, fostering a shared understanding of SBP and operational challenges. Each 15-20-minute session includes an open forum for addressing workflow barriers, reviewing metric data, and mini-lectures on foundational SBP topics developed by Drs. Rachel Hughes and Eleni Boussios.

By integrating these performance metrics into residency training, residents gain a deeper understanding of standardized documentation, ultimately supporting high-quality patient care in today’s data-driven healthcare environment.

BY THE NUMBERS: RESEARCH

955 NON-FEDERAL GRANTS

1,245 ACTIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

458 AVERAGE NEW GRANTS ANNUALLY

586 FACULTY WITH A TOTAL OF **5,043** PUBLICATIONS

253 FEDERAL NIH GRANTS + **37** FEDERAL NON-NIH = **290** TOTAL FEDERAL GRANTS

$76,400,000 AVERAGE ANNUAL FEDERAL AWARD

BY THE NUMBERS: CLINICAL

	FY25	FY24	% Growth
RVUs	2,209,566	2,024,221	9.2%
Outpatient Visits	403,045	383,079	5.2%
Procedures	766,059	732,654	4.6%
Unique Patients Seen	176,876	168,213	5.2%

EXPANDING PATIENT CARE: NEW SATURDAY HOURS FOR GI ENDOSCOPY, CARDIAC CATH PROCEDURES

Duke University Health System is expanding patient care by adding new Saturday hours to accommodate the rising demand for cardiac catheterization and gastroenterology endoscopic procedures. The number of patients referred for catheterization has grown by about 15% annually over the past three years, reaching approximately 30 procedures a day. The complexity of these procedures is also increasing, with Duke's cardiovascular team of 20 technicians, 20 nurses, and 20 interventional cardiologists managing them.

Dr. Manesh Patel, chief of the Division of Cardiology, noted that the hospital experienced over 90% room utilization for heart catheterizations on weekdays. While emergency cases are attended to around the clock, additional Saturday hours will help address urgent and non-urgent inpatient needs, facilitating more efficient care delivery.

At Duke University Hospital and Duke Regional Hospital, cardiac labs operate 24/7 to treat emergencies such as heart attacks. Still, weekday hours are currently limited to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Expanding to Saturdays will allow a faculty member, along with two nurses and two technicians, to perform four to six procedures, enabling quicker diagnosis and treatment for patients.

Additionally, a pilot program began in April to offer outpatient endoscopic procedures on weekends, primarily focusing on colonoscopies for cancer screening. Dr. Andrew Muir, chief of Gastroenterology, emphasized the need to improve access, particularly in Wake County, where a new ambulatory endoscopy unit has been established. These new Saturday hours will benefit working patients who struggle to take time off during the week, ultimately enhancing access to care.

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS

JAMES B. DUKE DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE

J. Andrew Alspaugh, MD

Professor of Medicine
Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases

JAMES B. WYNGAARDEN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE

Cathleen Colón-Emeric, MD, MHS

Professor of Medicine
Chief, Division of Geriatrics & Palliative Care

JAMES B. WYNGAARDEN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE

Stefanie Sarantopoulos, MD, PhD

Professor of Medicine
Chief, Hematologic Malignancies and Cellular Therapy

CATHERINE WILFERT DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE

Susanna Naggie, MD

Professor of Medicine
Director, Duke Clinical and Translational Science Institute
Infectious Diseases

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

1 Rodger Liddle, MD
Professor of Medicine
Division of Gastroenterology

2 Virginia Byers Kraus, MD, PhD
Professor of Medicine
Division of Rheumatology
and Immunology

3 Stephen Smith, MD
Professor of Medicine
Division of Nephrology

CHAIR'S AWARD

4 Amy Porter-Tacoronte, MBA
Vice Chair, Administration and Finance

5 Scott Palmer, Jr., MD, MHS
Vice Chair, Research

CHAIR'S COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE AWARD

6 Chris Weymouth
Director, Finance

7 Ellen McCarthy Steinour
Associate Chief Administrative Officer

NEIL L. SPECTOR ART OF MEDICINE AWARD

8 Katherine S. Garman, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Gastroenterology


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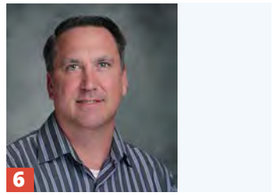
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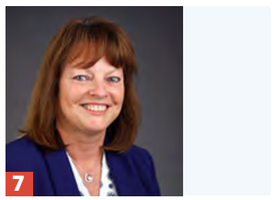
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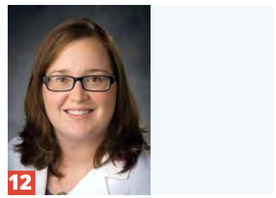
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13

KIMBERLEY J. EVANS LEGACY AWARD

9 David Ortiz Melo, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Nephrology

TRAINEE AWARDS

Bruce Dixon Award

10 Nicholas Brazeau, MD, PhD
House Staff, Medicine

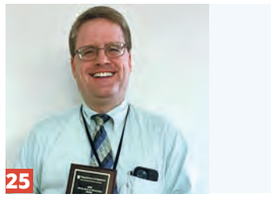
VA Faculty Teaching Award

11 Brian Schneider, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of General Internal Medicine

Eugene Stead Teaching Award

12 Elizabeth Hankollari, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of General Internal Medicine

13 Nathan Hirshman, MD
Medical Instructor
Division of General Internal Medicine



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARD

14 Bharathi Upadhya, MBBS
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Cardiology

15 Steven Choi, MBBS
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Gastroenterology

16 Andrea Sitlinger, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Hematologic Malignancies and Cellular Therapy

17 Joseph Plaksin, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of General Internal Medicine

18 Gwendolen Buhr, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Care

19 Matthew Labriola, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Medical Oncology

20 Stephen Bergin, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine

21 Todd Frieze, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Endocrinology, Metabolism, and Nutrition

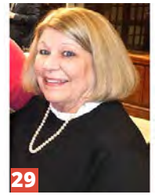
22 Sonya Patel-Nguyen, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Hospital Medicine

23 Rasha Raslan, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Nephrology

24 Philip Chu, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Rheumatology and Immunology

25 Ammon Fager, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Hematology

26 Molly Hillenbrand, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Infectious Diseases
(Not pictured)



ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Distinguished Achievement in Administrative Service Award

27 Beth Lassiter, MSHR, PHR
Director, Human Resources

Rising Star for Administrative Excellence Award

28 Tatiana Scipiao Araujo
Clinical Grants and Contracts Administrator

Lifetime Achievement Award in Administration

29 Dawn O'Briant
Administrative Assistant

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE SOCIETY

30 Jennifer Saullo, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Infectious Diseases

31 Christopher Jones, MD
Professor of Medicine
Division of Geriatrics & Palliative Care

32 Ankoor Shah, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Rheumatology and Immunology

33 Rania Kazan, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of General Internal Medicine

34 Harry Erba, MD, PhD
Professor of Medicine
Division of Hematologic Malignancies and Cellular Therapy *(Not pictured)*

35 Michael Blazing, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Cardiology

36 Rebecca Burbridge, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Gastroenterology

RESEARCH AWARDS

Rising Star Research Excellence Award

37 Aparna Swaminathan, MD, MHS
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine

38 Senthil Selvaraj, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Cardiology

Research Mentoring Award

39 Susan "Nicki" Hastings, MD, MHS
Professor of Medicine
Division of General Internal Medicine

Distinguished Research Publication Award

40 Michael Plebanek, PhD
Postdoctoral Associate (first author)

41 Brent Hanks, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Medicine (senior author)
Division of Medical Oncology

Research Staff Excellence Award

42 Virginia "Christy" Walters
Research Program Leader

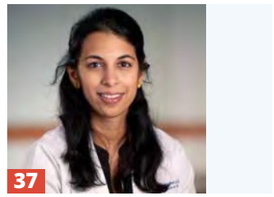
43 Francine Kelly
Senior Laboratory, Research Analyst

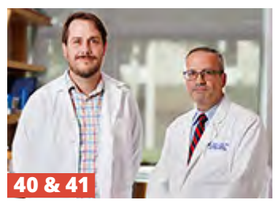
Research Support Excellence Award

44 Katherine Link
Senior Regulatory Coordinator

45 Amy Pierson
Senior Grants & Contracts Administrator

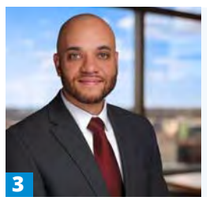
46 Vlayka Liotcheva, PhD
Assistant Research Practice Manager





DUKE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

FACULTY & STAFF AWARDS



DEAN'S STAFF AWARD

Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award

1 Camille Frazier-Mills, MD, MHS
Professor of Medicine,
Division of Cardiology

Leonard Palumbo Jr., MD Faculty Achievement Award

2 Stephen Bergin, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine,
Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine

Mentoring Excellence in Health Services Research

3 Gerald Bloomfield, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine,
Division of Cardiology

Michelle P. Winn Inclusive Excellence Award

4 Julius Wilder, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Medicine,
Division of Gastroenterology

Master Clinician/Teacher Award

5 Lisa Criscione-Schreiber, MD, MEd Professor of Medicine, Division of Rheumatology and Immunology

2025 marked a year of significant transition for medical research nationally and for the Duke University Department of Medicine (DOM).

Despite economic pressures and a shifting federal funding landscape, our values — excellence and integrity in science, research, education and innovative patient-centered care — have continued to be the focus of our work.

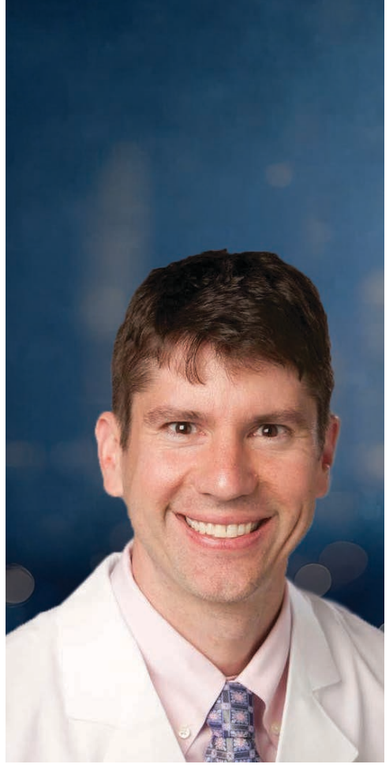
These values also guided key strategic operational changes in 2025 that provide continuity and best position Duke researchers to remain competitive as they continue to shape the future of medicine.

SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE AND SOUND SCIENCE

Transformative biomedical research has historically been supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), but revenue constraints, rising costs, and less NIH funding have necessitated advancement of a more diversified funding model and a pivot to private funding resources.

“We have to acknowledge that things are different,” said Dr. Susanna Naggie, director of Duke Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI), vice dean for Clinical and Translational Research in the Duke University School of Medicine and Catherine Wilfert Distinguished Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases. “There is recognition that the future of grant writing is not clear so we have to think about diversifying the portfolio. This is not unique to Duke; all academic centers are thinking about it.”

“At Duke, we conduct research with the utmost integrity, which we have always done and will continue to do, to ensure the public has trust and confidence in our work” said Dr. Scott Palmer, Donald F. Fortin, MD Distinguished Professor of Medicine and vice chair for Research. “We also continue to train physician investigators, physician scientists, and clinical investigators to do important, impactful, outstanding research. We are promoting good science, research, patient care, and education while staying true to the values of scientific integrity and data-driven approaches. What does not change is our commitment to put patients first in all that we do.”



PATIENT-CENTERED RESEARCH

Patient-centered research continued to expand in 2025 with more studies that personalized patient perspectives and preferences.

Innovators such as Diego Bohorquez, PhD, associate professor in the Division of Gastroenterology whose gut-brain research examines how food and microbial signals shape behavior, and Dr. Kamran Mahmood, associate professor in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine, whose landmark research has given lung cancer patients and their doctors more patient-friendly diagnosis options for lung cancer, exemplify how Duke researchers bridge discovery and patient care through clinical trials that assess patient preferences and quality of life.

“Embedded in that caring is research that enables us to take even better care of our patients, not just here at Duke but everywhere in the world,” Dr. Palmer said. “Duke faculty advocate for patients.“

“At Duke, we conduct research with the utmost integrity, which we have always done and will continue to do, to ensure the public has trust and confidence in our work.”

Scott Palmer, MD, MHS

STRENGTHENING COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

To better support faculty grant competitiveness and streamline efficiency, the department's research administration transitioned in 2025 from the Department of Medicine Research Administration (DOMRA) to Research Administration Support Resource (RASR), a centralized model within the School of Medicine.

"Across research administration, we are working to become more efficient given limited resources. This transition represents a significant shift, but one that delivers greater transparency, stronger communication, and improved efficiencies," said Deborah Martin, RASR director.

Key improvements include accelerated startup of industry-sponsored clinical trials, streamlined collaboration and communication between grants administrators and clinical research units, and expanded coordinator training and risk monitoring.

Improving Duke's industry-sponsored clinical startup times, a key priority for the DOM and the School of Medicine, has resulted in new opportunities.

EXPANDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

To accelerate study activation, the Duke Office of Clinical Research (DOCR) and CTSI established a centralized 90-day rapid startup team to expedite the pre-award process, working closely with RASR and the Office for Research Contracts (ORC), which has resulted in more rapid budget negotiation and faster trial activation. DOCR is also working with the Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI) on similar strategy, called DukeFirst, to expedite Duke as a site start-up when DCRI is the coordinating center.

CTSI and DOCR also stood up a program called OneDuke Site Multi-Location to streamline the enrollment process for clinical trials across the Duke Health enterprise, including Duke University Hospital (DUH), Duke Raleigh Hospital, Duke Regional Hospital, and now, Duke Lake Norman.

OneDuke program means one contract and one internal review board for sponsors. For DOM investigators, it means the ability to enroll patients and participants across multiple health centers and sites in North Carolina with the potential to bring in additional sub-investigators to aid recruitment and support faculty.

OneDuke already has two new pilot studies and feedback has been universally positive, positioning Duke to become a top ranked clinical research site.

LEADER-PAD is a Phase III clinical trial to find out if a small dose (0.5 mg) of a drug called colchicine is beneficial for people with peripheral artery disease (PAD), possibly lowering the risk of heart attack, stroke, and corrective leg surgeries for people with the disease. Led by interventional cardiologist Dr. Jennifer A. Rymer, LEADER-PAD is enrolling at DUH, Duke Regional Hospital, and Duke Raleigh Hospital.

The Elevate-HF is an industry-sponsored trial that it is enrolling at both DUH and Duke Raleigh Hospital. Principal Investigator and advanced heart failure specialist Dr. Adam DeVore is testing an experimental technology to help people monitor acute heart failure symptoms and care after hospitalization.

"The nice thing is it's streamlined and we are engaging directly with industry sponsors representing OneDuke as a whole," Naggie said, adding that Duke ranks second in the country for industry-sponsored research dollars. "We really want to show industry sponsors that Duke is making innovative change and we can do more. There's no reason that we can't be number one. We are very well positioned to do this."

Transplant pulmonologist Professor Laurie Snyder, medical director of the Clinical Research Unit in the Department of Medicine — one of the largest clinical research units in the Duke School of Medicine — facilitates such research partnerships. In collaboration with DOCR, she has worked to streamline identification of Duke patient populations for DukeFirst and with larger industry funding sources to make Duke more accessible and a better business partner for new collaborators.

As industry develops new treatments and conducts clinical trials to study them, she said, Duke site-based research center patients at all hospitals will now have the distinct advantage of being included in innovative studies that give them broader access to new medications, treatments, and therapies.

“We’re trying to meet patients where they are by bringing research studies that are helpful to the Duke patients our faculty are taking care of,” said Dr. Snyder, adding that training and supporting clinical research professionals — who often serve as the front face of studies — has been a priority for the department. “Many of our research coordinators chose Duke because they wanted to be a part of the passion of research. I want to keep that strong and make sure that they know that they’re making a difference in the lives of our patients.”

TURNING SCIENCE INTO SOLUTIONS

Amid the federal funding uncertainty in 2025, CTSI has been a major tool for the department in maintaining quality research continuity with a newly-renewed $69 million seven-year grant from the National Institutes of Health Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) program, a national network of over 60 medical institutions.

The award is Duke’s largest CTSI grant renewal since CTSI was funded originally in 2006. It supports partnerships that improve community health, enables investigators across the university and health system to move ideas from the laboratory to patients and communities faster and more effectively, and empowers Medicine faculty to pursue ambitious research that would otherwise be difficult or impossible.

“The CTSA provides multiple opportunities for our faculty to compete for additional grants that are not available to faculty without a CTSA at their institution,” Naggie said, adding that investigators affiliated with CTSA-funded institutions compete in a smaller pool for these funds.

The award opens competitive NIH funding opportunities, including three to four internal K Career Development Awards per year, pre- and postdoctoral T32 training grants, two RC2 awards (R01-equivalent grants), and an R25 Education Award for research training, creating pathways that support retention, advancement, and long-term career success.

EARLY CAREER FACULTY SUPPORT

The DOM values play a fundamental role in programming for trainees and emerging physician-scientists. In 2025, the department adapted content to specifically address challenges faced by early career faculty in research funding and career development, said Dr. Matthew Crowley, associate director for Clinical Research within the DOM’s Research Development Council.

Mechanisms that strengthen support for early-career investigators include the Fellow Research Academy (FRA) and the Career Development Award (CDA) Community, which serve as centralized platforms for tailored career development resources and peer connection, helping ensure early-career faculty have the guidance and support they need during periods of uncertainty.

“Across research administration, we are working to become more efficient given limited resources.

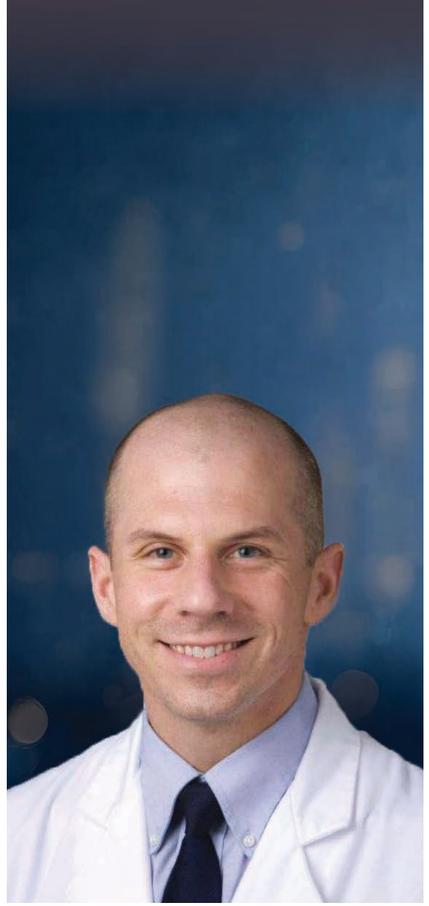
Deborah Martin

New lectures were introduced this year, including a session led by Dr. Palmer on building effective industry collaborations and another by Dr. Susan "Nicki" Hastings, chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine, focused on securing research-oriented positions in today's environment.

Through the CDA Community, faculty can receive support from their peers and DOM's Research Development Council. The CDA Community is led by early-career DOM faculty Drs. Deepshikha (Deep) Ashana and Caroline Sloan with Dr. Crowley serving as an advisor.

One of the most critical components of a strong research enterprise is sustained support for early career investigators. In 2025, Department Chair Kathleen Cooney, MD, and Michael Hershfield, MD, professor of medicine and biochemistry, established two new funds that demonstrate their commitment to long-term investment in the department's most valuable resources – its people.

An inaugural gift from Dr. Cooney launched the new Emerging Physician Researcher Award, underscoring her vision to bridge critical funding gaps for promising early-career physician investigators. Dr. Hershfield's generous gift to the department will help give the next generation of physician-scientists an opportunity to make the life-saving, life-changing discoveries that defined his own career. (See page 52)



LOOKING FORWARD

"We saw with COVID how we could adapt to significant challenges," Dr. Snyder said. "We are innovators. We are creative and resilient. When we bring forward challenges, the bench is deep and we have the ability to rise to those challenges. We're going to continue to innovate and do great research at Duke, and we are going to continue to change the field of medicine. That's just what we do here."

ASCI 2025 Early-Career Awards

Gastroenterology fellow **Dr. Zachary S. Lorsch** and hematology-oncology fellow **Dr. Katherine Zhou** are recipients of the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) 2025 Early-Career Award, which recognizes post-MD, pre-faculty appointment physician-scientists who are meaningfully engaged in immersive research.

The career programming associated with the award will allow them to connect with other early-career physician-scientists and gain mentorship from leading investigators who are equally passionate about advancing scientific discovery and improving patient care.

ZACHARY S. LORSCH, MD, PHD

Bridging the Gut and the Brain

Gastroenterology fellow Zachary Lorsch, MD, PhD, is pioneering research at the intersection of neuroscience and gastroenterology, studying how gut-brain interactions influence health, longevity, and disease.

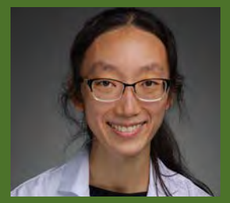
His work holds significant promise for improving outcomes in obesity and disorders of gut-brain interaction such as irritable bowel syndrome.

Award nominator Rodger Liddle, MD, professor of medicine, praised Lorsch as an exceptional physician-scientist whose unique combination of neuroscience and gastroenterology expertise positions him to make transformative advances.

“He continually seeks ways to integrate clinical care with research,” Dr. Liddle said. “He even trained in double balloon enteroscopy—a rare skill among gastroenterologists—to non-invasively collect small bowel tissue for his studies. Dr. Lorsch truly exemplifies what a physician-scientist should be.”

Dr. Lorsch began neuroscience research in high school, conducting functional MRI (fMRI) studies on decision-making at Columbia University. After earning honors in research at Cornell University, he completed an MD/PhD at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, where his groundbreaking studies on brain resilience appeared in Nature Neuroscience, Nature Medicine, and Neuron, and demonstrated the first use of CRISPR technology in vivo in brain.

His long-term goal is to establish a basic science research lab focused on how sensory cells in the gastrointestinal tract communicate with the brain to enhance understanding and treatment of gut-brain disorders while providing clinical care as a gastroenterologist.



KATHERINE ZHOU, MD, PHD

Illuminating the Role of RNA in Cancer Progression

Dr. Katherine I. Zhou, MD, PhD, is advancing research into how RNA molecules influence cancer development and metastasis with a vision to integrate clinical care and scientific discovery.

She aspires to lead an independent laboratory at an academic medical center, translating molecular insights into meaningful advances for patients.

Recruited to Duke’s Internal Medicine Physician–Scientist Training Program in 2020, Dr. Zhou has focused her research on the role of small nucleolar RNAs in breast cancer lymphatic metastasis. She conducts her work in collaboration with Dr. Christopher Holley, associate professor in the Division of Cardiology.

In just over a year, Dr. Zhou has demonstrated remarkable productivity, co-authoring a review paper on 2′-O-methylation in RNA that has already earned both an American Society of Clinical Oncology Conquer Cancer Foundation Young Investigator Award and a Duke Cancer Institute Cancer Research Young Investigator Pilot Award.

A native of Chicago, Dr. Zhou graduated from Yale College with a degree in molecular biophysics and biochemistry before earning her MD and PhD at the University of Chicago. Her doctoral research explored the post-transcriptional RNA modification N6-methyladenosine (m6A), leading to seven first-author publications in prestigious journals. Her work was supported by an NIH F30 fellowship from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences.

Dr. Zhou’s career goal is to expand the understanding of RNA biology in cancer and translate these discoveries into innovative therapies that improve patient outcomes.

The Duke University Department of Medicine conducts transformative research with a broad portfolio in both basic and clinical science in every subspecialty of internal medicine.

Much of our scientific investigation involves interdisciplinary work with collaboration, mentorship, and excellence at the core of all we do. Here is a small segment of the work being conducted across the department.

Julie Steinbrink, MD, MHS

ADVANCING DIAGNOSTIC METHODS FOR FUNGAL INFECTIONS

Dr. Julie Steinbrink, assistant professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases, is leading efforts to transform the way in which clinicians detect life-threatening fungal infections in immunocompromised patients.

Dr. Steinbrink received a K23 career development award from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) to advance a novel, noninvasive diagnostic strategy for invasive aspergillosis.

Her work centers on harnessing the body's own immune response—specifically, gene expression patterns in circulating white blood cells—to identify infection earlier and more accurately.

"The current diagnostic methods are limited, especially in immunocompromised patients who are at high risk of complications from invasive procedures," Steinbrink said. "We need a better way to diagnose these infections early and that's what this grant will help us accomplish."

The approach has already shown promise across multiple pathogens, including Aspergillus, Cryptococcus, and Candida, in animal models, in vitro studies, and human cases of Candida infection. The next phase of the research will expand these methods to immunocompromised patients with real-world Aspergillus infections, directly linking laboratory insights to clinical care.

By offering a simple blood test capable of detecting infection and monitoring the immune system's response over time, Steinbrink's work could significantly improve outcomes for high-risk patients, such as those undergoing stem cell or solid organ transplantation or living with hematologic malignancies.

Early and accurate diagnosis, she noted, is essential to ensuring patients receive timely and effective antifungal treatment.

Joshua Parsons, MD, PhD

FINDING RESEARCH GRANT SUCCESS THROUGH FELLOW RESEARCH MENTORING

Joshua Parsons credits his involvement with the Duke Department of Medicine's Fellow Research Academy (FRA), which supports the goals of aspiring researchers, as the key factor in his successful application for the National Institute of Health (NIH) K08: Clinical Investigator Award.

Dr. Parsons, assistant professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases, has been interested in researching why some patients do well on antibiotics while others do poorly.

There are two aims to the study: one is to examine how differences in bacteria genome affect susceptibility

to antibiotics, and the second is to find out how changes in the Staphylococcus aureus genome are related to clinical outcomes in humans.

If it is possible to detect in the microbiology lab which strains of Staphylococcus aureus are likely to cause more significant disease, practitioners can identify patients at risk of poor outcomes and adjust clinical management accordingly.

Inspired by the myriad of resources available to him at Duke, Dr. Parsons found interest in Duke's immense S. aureus Bacteremia Group Prospective Cohort Study (SABG-PCS) biorepository, a collection of S. aureus clinical bloodstream isolates from patients at Duke. It is the largest biorepository of S. aureus bloodstream isolates in the world, created by Dr. Parsons' mentor, Vance Fowler, MD, over the past 30 years.

"One of the unique things about the FRA is that it breaks things down into certain stages," Dr. Parsons said. "Each component of the grant is broken down and systematically taught to you. It's really good to have an expert to guide you," said Parsons. "I did the FRA three years in a row, and it was the first time I'd been exposed to the systematic analysis of how you write grants and how you approach them."

UNRAVELING THE GENOMIC ROOTS OF STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE FAILURE

Dr. Parsons received a $900,000 K08 grant to advance his research on genomic factors that drive antibiotic failure and poor patient outcomes in Staphylococcus aureus bloodstream infections — one of the deadliest bacterial diseases in the world.

The award will enable him to dedicate 75% of this time to building an independent research program focused on understanding how S. aureus evolves to evade antibiotics and cause persistent infection.

A cornerstone of his effort is the Duke S. aureus Bacteremia Group (SABG) biorepository, the largest collection of S. aureus bloodstream isolates in the world.

Collaborating with investigators at the University of Melbourne, he will conduct the world's largest bacterial genome-wide association study, analyzing more than 3,500 S. aureus isolates to identify genetic determinants of antibiotic failure.

By integrating whole-genome sequencing with patient outcome data, Dr. Parsons will identify genetic signatures associated with antibiotic treatment failure. His lab has also developed an in-vivo evolution model in mice to study how S. aureus adapts within a host to become more virulent and become more tolerant to antibiotics.

"Despite our best efforts, antibiotics frequently fail, leading to persistent infections, recurrence, and death," he said. "This research not only sheds light on why current antibiotics fail but also opens doors to developing new therapeutic approaches."

Under the mentorship of Vance Fowler, MD, MHS, Dr. Parsons is poised to make transformative contributions to the fight against S. aureus, helping clinicians better manage one of medicine's most formidable pathogens.

Alexandra Thomas, MD

ADVANCING CANCER AND HEART CARE FOR YOUNG WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER

Dr. Alexandra Thomas, professor of medicine and associate director of Translational Research at the Duke Cancer Institute, received a $3.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to advance research into how hormone-sensitive breast cancer therapies affect heart health.

The ongoing CaRdiac Outcomes with Near-complete Estrogen Deprivation (CROWN) study focuses on premenopausal women with breast cancer—a group not typically monitored with detailed cardiovascular imaging.

The study uses advanced imaging to track how estrogen deprivation therapy influences the heart, revealing early signs of treatment-related cardiac changes and allowing researchers to better understand who is at risk of heart injury from cancer therapies.

"Our goal is to intervene earlier to optimize both cancer and cardiovascular outcomes," Dr. Thomas said.

The five-year grant supports extensive analysis of cardiovascular data, enabling the Duke team to uncover the natural history of heart health in young breast cancer patients, underscoring the institutional commitment to the study's groundbreaking objectives.

Dr. Thomas is collaborating with Dr. Donald McDonnell at Duke to explore potential therapies that could simultaneously treat cancer and protect heart health—an approach that could significantly improve survivorship and long-term quality of life.

The study is managed by Sarah Hatcher, project manager in the Breast Oncology Research Unit, whose expertise ensures steady progress toward developing interventions that may transform outcomes for women facing both cancer and cardiovascular risk.

A. Ian Wong, MD, PhD

TACKLING PULSE OXIMETRY BIAS AND HIDDEN HYPOXEMIA

Dr. A. Ian Wong, assistant professor in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine, is leading a $3.4 million NIH grant to improve clinical detection and management of hidden hypoxemia, which disproportionately impacts patients with darker skin tones, increasing their risk of severe organ dysfunction and mortality.

The project leverages advanced machine learning techniques to identify patients at the highest risk using data already present in electronic health records (EHR).

Dr. Wong's prior research, published in JAMA Open, demonstrated that hidden hypoxemia is not just a theoretical concern—it's associated with a 41% increase in patient mortality and a substantial rise in organ dysfunction markers. These findings intensified the urgency to address the issue directly.

Pulse oximeters were originally developed to signal severe hypoxemia, but they've become routine monitoring devices. "When you rely heavily on them for critical clinical decisions, even small inaccuracies can lead to significant harm, particularly in vulnerable patient populations," he said.

By analyzing subtle but clinically significant signals from routinely collected EHR data, the research team is building predictive models that can identify patients with hidden hypoxemia early, prompting clinicians to consider further testing or more aggressive oxygen therapy before life-threatening complications develop.

By enhancing early detection, this research seeks to improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare disparities related to skin pigmentation, aligning with the department's mission to improve health through research and education.

Jamie L. Todd, MD, MHS

RECEIVES CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION GREENBERG AWARD IN LUNG TRANSPLANTATION

Dr. Jamie L. Todd, associate professor in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine received the 2025 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Mitch Greenberg Memorial Award in Lung Transplantation.

Dr. Todd is the top-ranked awardee of the foundation's research grant program for approaches to early diagnosis and treatment of chronic lung allograft dysfunction or CLAD, the main complication after transplant which presents as chronic rejection with lung function decline. There are currently no approved therapies for CLAD.

Her research centers on lung tissue transcriptional profiling to identify molecular endotypes of CLAD. By uncovering specific molecules involved in the disease's development, Dr. Todd aims to identify targeted treatment options, whether existing, repurposed, or newly developed, aligned with the biological pathways active in CLAD.

Building on previous Cystic Fibrosis Foundation awards, Dr. Todd's work will leverage biopsy data to better understand the underlying mechanisms that lead to CLAD. Her goal is to categorize disease subtypes that correlate with patient outcomes, facilitating personalized therapies.

"Essentially all of the treatments we have for lung transplant recipients come from other organ groups," she said. "But they are ineffective in preventing or treating CLAD in our patients, so we are really interested in better understanding the lung-specific biology."

The award affirms Dr. Todd's leadership in lung transplantation research, contributing vital insights into the biological underpinnings of lung fibrosis and transplant rejection, and advancing Duke's mission to improve transplant outcomes through innovative science.

"Despite our best efforts, antibiotics frequently fail, leading to persistent infections, recurrence, and death," she said. "This research not only sheds light on why current antibiotics fail but also opens doors to developing new therapeutic approaches."

Juliessa Pavon, MD, MHS

ADVANCING GERIATRIC CARE: AI-DRIVEN DEPRESCRIBING TO COMBAT POLYPHARMACY

Geriatrician Dr. Juliessa Pavon is leading research to make personalized deprescribing a practical reality with a $2.8 million NIH grant that leverages artificial intelligence to address polypharmacy—the use of three or more central nervous system (CNS)-acting medications.

The use of CNS medications has doubled over the last decade and poses significant health risks, including physical and cognitive impairment, falls, and poor health outcomes, particularly for older adults.

The study is developing a machine learning model that analyzes thousands of electronic health records to support clinicians in making safer, more informed choices for managing medication in this growing patient population.

The AI model will provide recommendations on which CNS-acting medication to target for deprescribing based on an individual patient's clinical profile. The ultimate goal is a user-friendly clinical interface that clearly presents both the benefits and potential risks of medication discontinuation.

"Integration into clinical practice depends on trustworthy AI—transparency about how models make decisions is essential," she said. Dr. Pavon notes that current guidelines often fail to account for the complex interplay between multiple drugs and unique patient characteristics, a critical gap their approach aims to fill.

The research team, which includes investigators from Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the Medical University of South Carolina, will utilize multi-site electronic health record data linked to Medicare information for their study.

Kamran Mahmood, MD, MPH

PIONEERING PULMONARY INNOVATION: NEW LUNG CANCER TREATMENT AT DUKE

Despite major therapeutic advances, lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer deaths, the second most common cancer among both men and women.

Interventional pulmonologist Dr. Kamran Mahmood, associate professor in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine and director of Duke Interventional Pulmonology, is among the first in the nation — the first at a North Carolina academic medical center — to offer a groundbreaking new treatment for advanced lung cancer: bronchoscopic pulsed electric field (PEF) ablation.

Recently cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for bronchoscopic use, PEF ablation had previously been performed only percutaneously with CT guidance. Duke's adoption of the bronchoscopic PEF marks a significant leap forward in broadening access to this promising therapy.

The minimally invasive, robotically guided procedure uses a bronchoscope and catheter to deliver high-frequency electrical pulses directly into tumors, ablating cancerous tissue while stimulating the immune system to recognize and attack cancer cells. Tumor destruction and immune activation make PEF ablation a potential game-changer in thoracic oncology.

Dr. Mahmood is leading clinical studies at Duke to evaluate the safety and efficacy of PEF ablation in lung cancer patients. Early findings show tumors shrinking or stabilizing after treatment in select patients.

We are optimistic about this technology," said Dr. Mahmood. "It may offer a safe and effective option for patients whose cancer is progressing despite standard therapies— improving both survival and quality of life."

Dr. Sonali Bracken, MD, PhD

2024 AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY DISTINGUISHED FELLOW AWARD RECIPIENT

Dr. Sonali Bracken, medical instructor in the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology, was honored with the prestigious 2024 Distinguished Fellow Award from the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) — one of only 10 recipients nationwide.

The award recognizes exceptional achievements in research, advocacy, and education among rheumatology fellows.

Dr. Bracken, whose NIH K38-funded research has earned national recognition and reflects her growing leadership in the field, has long been motivated to uncover the intricacies of the immune system and its role in autoimmune disease.

Her scientific curiosity and clinical focus converged in rheumatology, where she has made impactful contributions to understanding immune-mediated disorders.

Working closely with mentors Dr. Stefanie Sarantopoulos, chief of the Division of Hematologic Malignancies and Cellular Therapy, and Dr. Scott Palmer, vice chair of Research, Dr. Bracken investigates the role of B cells in autoimmune and alloimmune diseases, with focus on autoimmune lung fibrosis.

"I am especially interested in how B cells behave within the context of autoimmunity and their role in the pathogenesis of lung fibrosis," she said. Dr. Bracken credits her success to her dedicated mentorship team Drs. Ankoor Shah, Bill St. Clair, and David Pisetsky.

Dr. Bracken has also been an influential member of the Duke Rheumatology Fellowship Program. "Sonali's academic accomplishments are remarkable, but it's her personal contributions to the fellowship community that truly set her apart," said Dr. David Leverenz, program director.

Senthil Selvaraj, MD, MS, MA

IMPROVING HEART FAILURE OUTCOMES THROUGH METABOLIC RESEARCH

For Dr. Senthil Selvaraj, a heart failure physician-scientist in the Duke Heart Center and assistant professor in the Division of Cardiology, the path to improving care for patients with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF) starts with a deceptively simple question: what do the heart and skeletal muscle actually use for fuel and can we change that?

HFpEF affects more than half of all people with heart failure and is hard to treat. Patients retain normal pumping function but still experience debilitating symptoms.

"It is a systemic problem. It's also skeletal muscle, blood vessels, and the body's metabolism, not just the heart," said Dr. Selvaraj, who recently led a clinical trial known as "KETO-HFpEF," which tested the effects of a single dose of ketone therapy vs. placebo in patients with HFpEF.

The findings were intriguing with treatment leading to several potentially beneficial physiologic changes, such as lower heart pressures, shifts in metabolism away from carbohydrate utilization, and increased heart rate during exercise.

Dr. Selvaraj and cardiologist Dr. Svati Shah are launching a new trial, supported by a Swann Lee Award through the Duke School of Medicine, to test whether longer-term ketone supplementation might do what a single dose could not.

"Ketones are a natural substrate, something our bodies already make," he says. "If we can harness that safely and effectively, we may be able to offer patients a new option—one that works across systems, not just on the heart alone."

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Vice Chief, Education

Svati Shah, MD, MHS
Vice Chief, Research

Chet Patel, MD
Vice Chief, Outreach and Network Development

Camille Frazier-Mills, MD, MHS
Vice Chief, Culture, Engagement, and Community

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Chief, Veterans Affairs

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Vice Chief, Advanced Practice Providers

ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT

Education

Dr. Loretta Que was selected as a fellow in the 2024–2025 Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program at Drexel University College of Medicine. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Kamran Mahmood was recognized during the 2024 CHEST Annual Meeting as a Distinguished CHEST Educator. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Nicholas DeVito received the **2025 Wendell Rosse Teaching Award** for excellence in medical education. (Medical Oncology)

Dr. A. Ian Wong chaired the 2nd Duke Annual Datathon, a highly successful event drawing interdisciplinary participation. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Loretta Que received the 2025 American Thoracic Society Elizabeth Rich Award for mentorship. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Stephen Bergin received the FY25 Pulmonary Division Faculty Teaching Award. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Neil MacIntyre was named a Master Fellow of the American College of Chest Physicians. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Matthew Kappus received the Paul G. Killenberg Teaching Award. (Gastroenterology)

Dr. Jeremy Glissen Brown received the 2025 Paul G. Killenberg Teaching Award. (Gastroenterology)

Dr. Kara Wegermann received the 2025 Joseph C. Greenfield Jr. Mentorship Award, and **Dr. Lindsay King** received the Dawn Provenzale Mentorship Award. (Gastroenterology)

Dr. John Roberts was appointed director of Undergraduate Medical Education. (Nephrology)

Dr. Nicole Helmke was named director of residency training in Medicine–Psychiatry. (General Internal Medicine)

With collaboration from **Drs. Julius Wilder, Omobonike Sanders, David Ortiz-Melo**, and **Daniella Zipkin** launched a longitudinal leadership rotation for senior residents, focusing on culture, engagement, and community within the Department of Medicine. (Internal Medicine Residency Program)

The Advocacy and Clinical Leadership Track (**ACLT)** visited the North Carolina State House for its annual advocacy trip, during which residents met with legislators to discuss expanding the Healthy Opportunities Program. (Internal Medicine Residency Program)

Dr. Denise Pong was appointed Associate Program Director for Ambulatory Care, succeeding **Dr. Daniella Zipkin,** who had served in the role for over nine years. **Dr. Joseph Plaksin** was appointed Assistant Program Director for Ambulatory Care. (Internal Medicine Residency Program)

Program leadership collectively published 21 peer-reviewed papers during the academic

year, including work by **Drs. Matt Labriola, Joel Boggan, Stephanie Garbarino, Nia Mitchell,** and **Aimee Zaas.** The 2025 graduating class produced 62 publications, and 36 residents presented at national meetings. (Internal Medicine Residency Program)

The **13th Annual Stead Tread** raised over $10,000 for the Lincoln Community Health Center, led by **Dr. Caroline Sloan**. (Internal Medicine Residency Program)

Incoming interns participated in a walking tour of Durham's history, led by **Dr. Jeffrey Baker,** which connected Duke's new physicians with the community they serve. (Internal Medicine Residency Program)

Dr. Nick Brazeau, first-year ID fellow, was named one of the Duke Chief Residents in Internal Medicine for 2026–2027. (Infectious Diseases)

Dr. Ann Cameron Barr implemented a novel musculoskeletal ultrasound training curriculum with 39 Duke interns. Participants reported significantly greater confidence and knowledge in musculoskeletal examination after the session. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Dr. Philip Chu was selected as program director for USSONAR, the national organization leading the education and certification of musculoskeletal ultrasound. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Dr. David Leverenz led "RheumMadness", an international rheumatology education program for providers and trainees, engaging more than 100 participants and earning over 3,000 podcast episode downloads across six continents. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Drs. David Leverenz and **Ann Cameron Barr** were invited to present and author "Rheumatology Medical Education Year in Review" for the American College of Rheumatology. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Dr. Liza Genao was featured by the Duke University School of Medicine for her work teaching medical Spanish to benefit both patients and students, advancing culturally responsive care. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

Dr. Serena Wong was selected to become the Duke Geriatrics Fellowship Program Director. She was also recognized for her mentorship in the Duke AHEAD Certificate Program. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

Dr. Saumil Chudgar was named Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs in the Duke University School of Medicine. (Hospital Medicine)

Dr. Alexandra Horne was named Associate Director for the Clinical Skills Course. (Hospital Medicine)

Dr. Nathan Hirshman was appointed Course Director for Clinical Correlations in the Duke University School of Medicine. (Hospital Medicine)

Dr. Saumil Chudgar was also named a Duke AHEAD Distinguished Member in recognition of his contributions to education and mentorship. (Hospital Medicine)

Drs. Tingrui Zhao and **Yasmin Marcantonio** won the Triangle Chapter of the Society of Hospital Medicine Poster Competition for top innovation with their presentation "Building the Next Generation of Hospitalists Through Individualized Curriculum." (Hospital Medicine)

Cardiology faculty hosted multiple major continuing medical education programs during the year, including the **Duke Heart Failure Symposium, Duke Structural Heart Disease Symposium,** and **Duke Advanced Heart Failure Symposium**, convening national experts and multidisciplinary faculty to advance cardiovascular education. (Cardiology)

The Amyloidosis Support Seminar, held in March 2025, brought together more than 100 patients, caregivers, and clinicians to share advances in amyloidosis research, genetics, and patient-centered care. (Cardiology)

Clinical

Duke GI of Raleigh opened a new clinic and endoscopy unit featuring four endoscopy rooms and expanded anesthesia availability to improve access in Wake County. **Dr. Darin Dufault** was appointed Medical Director. (Gastroenterology)

The **GI Day Hospital** in Clinic 2J opened to provide paracentesis and urgent evaluations for patients with cirrhosis, reducing emergency department visits and hospital admissions. (Gastroenterology)

Saturday endoscopy sessions at Duke South began offering outpatient routine procedures twice monthly, expanding patient access. (Gastroenterology)

Dr. Mark Chandler was named unit medical director for 3200/2200. (Hospital Medicine)

The **Duke Orthopedic Value and Equity (DOVE)** Clinic was launched to improve post-fracture care, led by **Patrick Cacchio, PA-C.** (Endocrinology, Metabolism, and Nutrition)

The **Critical Care Medicine Program** received full accreditation from the ACGME. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Jamie Todd received the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Greenberg Award in Lung Transplantation. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

The **Cystic Fibrosis Program** was reaccredited thanks to the leadership of **Drs. Harvey Marshall** and **Shatha Yousef.** (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Andrew Wang and the **Duke structural heart team** completed Duke Health's first TriClip transcatheter edge-to-edge repair (TEER) procedures in September 2024 at Duke University Hospital. Duke became the second hospital in North Carolina to initiate use of TriClip and the first in the Triangle and eastern region of the state, expanding minimally invasive treatment options for patients with severe tricuspid regurgitation. (Cardiology)

The **Duke heart transplant team** helped pioneer use of the BiVACOR Total Artificial Heart, successfully bridging one of the first patients worldwide to heart transplant as part of a first-in-human clinical study. (Cardiology)

The **Duke Electrophysiology Program** surpassed 1,000 atrial fibrillation ablations in calendar year 2024, marking a major procedural milestone and reflecting the program's scale and expertise in complex arrhythmia care. (Cardiology)

The **Heart Center** integrated Barostim device therapy into its comprehensive care pathway for HFrEF, marking a system-level innovation in advanced heart failure management. (Cardiology)

A new ID service was established at Duke Raleigh Hospital, offering inpatient consultation, outpatient clinics, and oversight of antimicrobial stewardship and infection prevention. The inaugural DRaH ID team includes **Drs. Amit Sharma, Leslie Blackshear,** and **Will Woodhouse.** (Infectious Diseases)

The **musculoskeletal ultrasound clinic** and the **Rheumatology–Neurology combined clinic** opened in 1J at Duke South, expanding access to multidisciplinary care. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

The **myositis clinic** launched at the South Durham Rheumatology location, providing specialized care for patients with inflammatory muscle diseases. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

All three Duke Health System hospitals achieved participation status in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) Age-Friendly Health System Initiative, reflecting Duke's leadership in age-friendly care. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

A longitudinal **Dementia Care Program** was implemented in collaboration with the Division of Geriatrics, Population Health Management, and the Duke Dementia Family Support Program to improve continuity of care. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

The **HOPE Transitional Care Program** for people living with dementia transitioning to skilled nursing or assisted living facilities was expanded to Duke Regional Hospital. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

Dr. Tara Spector was appointed Site Medical Director for the Duke Hospital Medicine Program. (Hospital Medicine)

Dr. Joanna Cavalier was named Unit Medical Director for Unit 2100 at Duke North, and **Dr. Zachary Hager** was named Unit Medical Director for Unit 8300 at Duke North. (Hospital Medicine)

Research

Dr. Matthew Foster received the Chair's Research Award for his project on pulmonary fibrosis. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Barrett Bowling became the Multiple Principal Investigator of the NIA Aging Initiative MCC Scholars Program, supporting the next generation of aging researchers. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

Dr. Diego Bohorquez's team's discoveries were showcased at the Marbles Kids Museum in May 2025 through the Gastronauts exhibit, engaging families in GI science. (Gastroenterology)

Dr. Jackie Hodges received a DST SPARK Seed Grant from the Duke Office for Research & Innovation for EmPath: Low Barrier, Community-Partnered Telemedicine for Underserved People Who Use Drugs. (Infectious Diseases)

Dr. Joshua Parsons received a 2025 Strong Start Award from the Duke University School of Medicine. (Infectious Diseases)

Dr. Cassy Sims received a Mentored Scientist Award from the Rheumatology Research Fund to study cervical cancer screening in patients with lupus. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Mavorixafor, the first targeted treatment for WHIM syndrome, received FDA approval based on Phase 3 findings published in Blood by **Dr. Terri Tarrant and colleagues.** (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Dr. Noel Ivey received a DST Launch Seed Grant for "Expanding Advocacy Beyond Disciplines: Improving Access to Care for Persons with Opioid Use Disorder through Medical-Legal Partnership." (Hospital Medicine)

Dr. Nicholas DeVito developed the **BB-OPCO immunotherapy protocol,** a translational clinical trial supported by Gateway and GI Hub funds showing promising patient outcomes. (Medical Oncology)

Dr. Laura Alder received the **2025 Lung Cancer Initiative Research Fellowship** for "CNS PATTERN: CNS Progression After Targeted Therapy and Effect of Radiation in NSCLC," and the **2025 Albert Lung Cancer Research Award** for her study of PCSK9 inhibition in small cell lung cancer. (Medical Oncology)

Dr. Laura Alder was selected for the **2025 Duke–Duke-NUS Research Collaboration Pilot Project Program,** strengthening global cancer research partnerships. (Medical Oncology)

The **ADAPT clinical trial,** a multi-center collaboration including Dr. John P. Middleton, was presented as a late-breaking trial at the American Society of Nephrology 2024 Annual Meeting. (Nephrology)

The **Aging Center T32 Postdoctoral Training Program,** co-directed by **Drs. Maria Marquine** and **Kimberly Johnson,** received competitive renewal from the NIH with a perfect score. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

Dr. Juliessa Pavon received the Society of Hospital Medicine Triangle Excellence in Research Award and was named a 2025 NIA/JHU AITC AI, Technology, and Aging Summit Distinguished Scholar. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

Drs. Jessica Ma and **David Casarett** convened a Palliative Care Research Summit, supported by CTSI, to identify promising opportunities at the intersection of palliative care and technology. (Geriatrics and Palliative Care)

A Duke-led clinical study found that long-term wearable heart monitors identified significantly more cases of atrial fibrillation compared to usual care. The findings were presented at the European Society of Cardiology meeting and published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, with **Dr. Renato Lopes** as lead author. (Cardiology)

Dr. Stephen Greene led a late-breaking clinical trial demonstrating that heart failure medication dosing could be safely simplified, streamlining care and reducing clinical inertia. The study was presented at the 2025 European Society of Cardiology meeting and published in the European Journal of Heart Failure. (Cardiology)

Duke investigators launched the MAGNITUDE Trial, a first-in-human, CRISPR-based therapy targeting transthyretin amyloid cardiomyopathy. **Drs. Ravi Karra** and **Michel Khouri** serve as site co-principal investigators, with Duke selected as one of the few participating centers in the southeastern U.S. (Cardiology)

People

Dr. Robert Tighe was appointed Director of the Climate & Health Research Initiative (CHeRI). (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Armando Bedoya was featured on a national podcast on AI in healthcare and selected for The Academy AWS Technology Fellows Program. (Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine)

Dr. Bonike Olorunto-ba-Sanders continued leading the Duke GI Culture, Engagement, and Community Committee's Share Your Thanksgiving initiative, supporting 10 Durham families. (Gastroenterology)

Dr. Manesh Patel is serving as President-Elect of the American Heart Association and will advance to the presidency in 2026. Dr. Patel was also appointed Duke University Health System Physician Vice President for Heart and Vascular Services (Cardiology)

Dr. Sana Al-Khatib is serving as President-Elect of the Heart Rhythm Society and will assume the presidency next year. (Cardiology)

Dr. Michael Felker was elected President of the Heart Failure Society of America for the 2024–2025 term. (Cardiology)

Dr. Victor J. Dzau received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon — one of Japan's highest national honors — in April 2025, recognizing his contributions to global health, academic exchange, and international collaboration. (Cardiology)

Dr. Leonor Corsino was named to the Board of Directors of the Endocrine Society. (Endocrinology, Metabolism, and Nutrition

Dr. Christopher Holley was appointed Vice Chair for Academic Affairs in the Department of Medicine. (Cardiology)

Dr. Christina Wyatt was appointed Associate Vice Chair for Academic Affairs in the Department of Medicine. (Nephrology)

Two Duke Nephrologists — **Drs. Opeyemi Olabisi** and **Tomokazu Souma** — were elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), recognizing their scientific contributions and leadership in kidney research. (Nephrology)

Drs. Pahresah Roomiany, Jenny Van Kirk, and **Mark Chandler** received Excellence in Teaching Awards from the Triangle Chapter of the Society of Hospital Medicine. (Hospital Medicine)

Dr. Joanna Kipnes received the Mentoring Award, and **Dr. Suchita Sata** received the Outstanding Service in Hospital Medicine Award from the Triangle Chapter of the Society of Hospital Medicine. (Hospital Medicine)

Dr. Pahresah Roomiany was named to the Editorial Board of Today's Hospitalist. (Hospital Medicine)

Drs. Juneko Grilley Olson and **Marvaretta Stevenson** received the **Spring 2025 DPAL Advocacy Award** for outstanding patient advocacy. (Medical Oncology)

Dr. Richard Riedel was named a **Fellow of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (FASCO)** for his national leadership in sarcoma research. (Medical Oncology)

Dr. Sonali Bracken received the **2024 Distinguished Fellow Award** from the American College of Rheumatology. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Dr. Virginia Byers Kraus received the **2024 John B. Winfield, MD Visiting Scholar Award** and delivered the annual Research Day keynote address at the UNC Thurston Arthritis Research Center. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Dr. Virginia Byers Kraus was selected to the American Clinical and Climatological Association (ACCA), honoring her distinguished career in arthritis research. (Rheumatology and Immunology)

Dr. Noppon Setji was named the first Division Chief of Hospital Medicine. (Hospital Medicine)

Dr. Noel Ivey won the Triangle SHM Poster Competition for top clinical vignette with "When Beauty Turns Toxic: An Unusual Case of Hypercalcemia." (Hospital Medicine)

INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF PHYSICIAN-SCIENTISTS

Becoming a physician-scientist requires years of highly specialized training and protected research time in an environment that fosters rigorous scientific inquiry alongside clinical practice.

At a time when traditional sources of funding are under pressure and academic medicine faces new challenges, sustainable support for the Department of Medicine's mission is more essential than it ever has been.

We are pleased to share two initiatives demonstrating our commitment to supporting the development of new researchers.

Emerging Physician Researcher Fund

The new Emerging Physician Researcher Fund is a philanthropic initiative established in 2024 by Department Chair Kathleen Cooney, MD that underscores her vision to bridge critical funding gaps for promising early-career physician investigators.

This fund was launched with an inaugural gift from Dr. Cooney in tribute to her parents, Robert and Patricia Cooney, who nurtured her own career in medicine and research through their encouragement and sacrifices.

“I’ve been fortunate throughout my career to benefit from the mentorship, sponsorship and resources that make physician-led research possible,” said Dr. Cooney. “I hope this fund encourages others to give back and help provide young investigators with the time and support they need to pursue big ideas and tackle complex problems.”

The fund supports new research projects that have transformative potential yet are not ready for funding from traditional sources like the National Institutes of Health.

Fueling Future Research

The new Michael Hershfield Award for Scientific Discovery honors Dr. Michael Hershfield, whose four-decade career at Duke has significantly impacted patients with rare immunodeficiencies and treatment-resistant gout.

He is now directing a portion of his lab's royalties to support early-career physician-scientists, particularly in a challenging funding environment.

Dr. Hershfield's lab became a leader in understanding adenosine deaminase (ADA) deficiency, leading to the development of PEG-ADA (Adagen), an FDA-approved enzyme-replacement therapy in 1990. This success paved the way for pegloticase for advanced gout, approved by the FDA in 2010 as Krystexxa, the first new class of gout treatment in over 40 years.

Duke retained rights to these innovations, with royalties currently supporting ongoing research and strategic initiatives, including BioRender licenses and annual Research Day events. As royalties have surpassed Dr. Hershfield's immediate needs, he has sought to make a broader impact in the field.

Training the Next Generation of Physician-Scientists: Dr. Sonali Bracken

One of the first beneficiaries of Dr. Hershfield's generosity is Sonali Bracken, MD, PhD, a rheumatologist and translational immunologist who joined the faculty in the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology in 2025 after completing her clinical training her at Duke.

Dr. Bracken, who specializes in B-cell signaling in lung fibrosis caused by rheumatic conditions, is positioned to help lead Duke into a new frontier: the use of CAR-T cell therapy for severe autoimmune diseases.

Being selected as an inaugural recipient of the Hershfield Award was a transformative milestone for Dr. Bracken, who was personally selected for the award by Dr. Hershfield. At a time when early-career physician-scientists face an increasingly challenging funding landscape, this support allowed her to continue building a translational research program focused on improving the lives of patients with autoimmune disease.

"Philanthropy like Dr. Hershfield's is essential to sustaining the physician-scientist pipeline," she said. "Early-stage investigators are navigating a climate where outstanding science may go unfunded, and gifts that support protected time and emerging research programs help propel medical discovery forward and ensure that the most promising investigators continue to illuminate the path ahead."

Dr. Bracken's recruitment to our faculty is just the beginning of what department leadership hopes will become a robust pipeline of young, cross-disciplinary physician-researchers across the department.

Shaping the Future of Medicine: Partner with Us

The Duke Department of Medicine is the largest department within the Duke University School of Medicine, with more than 800 faculty members who lead and collaborate globally to create groundbreaking change.

The powerful work taking place across the department drives critical and innovative life-saving therapies across all areas of medicine. With your support for early-career faculty and their research, we are building a thriving ecosystem of innovation to sustain the future of academic medicine.

How you can help. We welcome the opportunity to partner with you. To learn more about ways to give or discuss giving options, please contact Elizabeth McBride, Assistant Vice President, Individual Giving, at elizabeth.mcbride@duke.edu or call 919-430-4661.

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