

# women

at the forefront

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### Committee Mission Statement

To develop and enhance the academic environment for women faculty and trainees through networking, mentorship, professional development, and advocacy.



### MEET SONIA KUPFER, MD

**Professor of Medicine,  
Sections of Gastroenterology,  
Hepatology and Nutrition &  
Genetic Medicine**

**Associate Vice Chair for  
Research, Department of  
Medicine**

**Director of Department  
of Medicine's Physician  
Scientist Development  
Program**

Since 2022, Dr. Sonia Kupfer has been the Director of the DOM's Physician Scientist Development Program (PSDP). She also serves as the Associate Vice Chair for Research for the DOM since 2023 and recently established a new Center for Clinical Genetics and Genomics. Dr. Kupfer is a physician-scientist with clinical and research interests in gastrointestinal cancers and health disparities. She received her MD from the Pritzker SOM and is a graduate of the Department's Internal Medicine residency, where she served as chief resident, and the Gastroenterology fellowship programs.

Dr. Kupfer's clinical work is focused on assessment and management of gastrointestinal cancer risk and inherited syndromes. Her translational research is focused on host-environment interactions using human colonic organoids from diverse populations to better understand cancer risk. She currently serves as Principal Investigator on an NIH/NCI R01 and a grant from the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA). She is a past recipient of the Division of Biological Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Junior Award and the American Gastroenterological Association's (AGA) Young Investigator Award. As a mentor, Dr. Kupfer is a past recipient of the Gastroenterology Section's Joseph B. Kirsner Mentorship Award and served as a mentor for the AGA Future Leaders Program. →

**SONIA KUPFER, CONTINUED****WC: What helped you develop leadership skills and be named to leadership positions throughout your career?**

SK: What has helped me in developing leadership skills is to be a good listener and observer in order to understand what isn't working optimally and using those gaps as opportunities to improve and innovate. I try to have a mindset of growth and be open to change. As a leader, I work to meet colleagues or trainees where they are in a particular moment or time in their life and career. I would describe myself as a servant leader guided by defined values who aims to foster a culture of mutual respect and shared mission with my teams.

**WC: What have been your experiences with mentorship throughout your career?**

SK: I have had excellent mentorship experiences throughout my career, that include a team of mentors and sponsors. For my first grant, my very first mentor in genetics wrote feedback in red pen on my grant, which he described as "red marks are signs of love, not criticism." This type of mentorship early in my career helped me to think and write scientifically, skills that I try to pass on to my mentees.

For me, it has been very important to have mentors and sponsors both within and outside of the institution. It has been invaluable for me to have a team of mentors; different aspects of my career and life have benefitted from a variety of people with different expertise and relationships. As a woman, it has been great to have mentors who are women, but this doesn't always have to be the case.

Career mentors have helped me to navigate what opportunities fit within my career path and to seek out leadership positions. Sponsors have also been invaluable in providing and guiding me towards opportunities; these relationships have continued over many years even after specific projects and training have been completed.

**WC: What advice do you have for women faculty and trainees in the Department of Medicine?**

SK: Much of my advice goes along with the previous discussion of mentorship. Find a team that addresses the different aspects of who you are, as we aren't just one thing in academia and life; we wear a lot of different hats. It's very helpful to have a team help you navigate your path and overcome obstacles to get you there. You might even consider working with a coach,

something I have found valuable at different points in my career. Also, sometimes, you just need friends from work with whom to debrief, vent, and commiserate. Of course, you don't want to neglect your family and friends outside of work. It's all about integration, often easier said than done.

The DOM has a robust support network across the department, so I recommend women make sure to connect with colleagues within and outside of your section. Find the community that will support you through the good and more challenging times. Also, take advantage of leadership training opportunities in the Department and Division as well as nationally. If you are interested in a leadership role, let people know of your goals so they think of putting your name forward when opportunities arise. We need to continue to elevate women into leadership positions and to be role models so that they see themselves in these roles. As women, we should continue to advocate for each other, something that the DOM Women's committee does very well that helps to recognize and celebrate all of our colleagues' great work.

**WC: What are your goals and vision in your roles as Director of the Physician Scientist Development Program (PDSP) and the Center for Clinical Genetics and Genomics (CCGG) in Department of Medicine?**

For the PSDP, an important goal for me was to establish a renewed sense of community for our trainees because there is often a feeling of being a species on the verge of extinction. With the help of our Associate Program Director, Yun Fang, and colleagues in the Biological Sciences Division (BSD), we established grant writing workshops, an annual retreat, a combined BSD recruitment event and social events. Another key goal is to improve diversity of trainees and research areas within the training program. Finally, I am committed to retention of physician scientists from our training program through strong mentorship and increased career development awards.

For the CCGG, our aim is to bridge clinical genetics programs and providers across the institution, increase genetics services across the network, integrate genetics into the EHR, expand our existing research infrastructure, and foster collaborations. A very exciting initiative for the Center is to develop a master's degree training program to develop the next generation of genetic counselors at the University of Chicago. The vision is to improve the lives and longevity of all people with genetic and familial conditions through excellence in our tripartite mission. ■



## WOMEN IN THE NEWS: FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



### **Deepa Ramadurai, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Section of Pulmonary/Critical Care/Sleep Medicine**

Dr. Ramadurai recently joined faculty as an Assistant Professor in the Section of Pulmonary/Critical Care/Sleep Medicine. She attended the Zucker School of Medicine in New York, completed internal medicine and chief residency at the University of Colorado in Denver, and recently completed fellowship in pulmonary and critical care at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. She obtained a Master of Science in Health Policy Research degree during her fellowship, focusing on disparities in communication around social determinants of health in patients admitted to the intensive care unit. She was selected to complete the Measey Fellowship in Medical Education in the Perelman School of Medicine, during which she identified and addressed a need for standardized mechanical ventilation education for critical care trainees.

Dr. Ramadurai will be assisting to co-direct the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Program under the mentorship of Dr. Valerie Press, which focuses on optimizing the vulnerable time of care transitions for patients with advanced COPD. She hopes to leverage her experience in operationalizing health-related social risk assessments to address disparities in access to healthcare experienced by this patient population. She has keen interests in medical education and mentorship, with a goal of enhancing the student and trainee experience as well as health equity and communication at the end of life to facilitate patient-centered outcomes. She hopes to bring her research experience in qualitative and mixed methods to each of these endeavors.

She grew up in the southwest suburbs of Chicago and is thrilled to be back home after exploring the east coast and mountain west. She loves spending time with her two kids and husband, a pediatric intensivist and clinical informatics fellow at U of C. Together, they are exploring the restaurants, breweries, and parks of the city and suburbs. She loves baking (particularly anything chocolate) and is always up for a Bears or Bulls game. ■



## NEW FACULTY



### **DHARA AMIN, MD** **Assistant Professor of Medicine (Emergency Medicine)**

Dr. Amin earned her medical degree from Rush Medical College. She completed her residency at Los Angeles County, University of Southern California. She received her Master in Science in Healthcare Quality Improvement and Patient Safety in 2022 from Northwestern University. Dr. Amin's scholarship interests include improving the quality and safety of care with a crucial lens on health equity. She is the part of the 2022 cohort of the American Medical Association Medial Justice in Advocacy Fellowship and the 2022 cohort of fellows in diagnostic excellence for the Society to Improve Diagnosis.



### **ALICE CHENG, MD, PhD** **Assistant Professor of Medicine (Gastroenterology)**

Dr. Cheng earned her medical and doctoral degrees from The University of Chicago. She completed her residency at Massachusetts General Hospital and fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Cheng's research interests include gaining fundamental insight into pathogen-microbiota interactions and the impact of microbiota on gastrointestinal disease.



### **AMY WEINMANN, PhD** **Professor of Medicine (Rheumatology)**

Dr. Weinmann earned her doctoral degree from the University of California, Los Angeles and completed her postdoctoral degree at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Weinmann's research interests include understanding the genomic mechanisms that regulate cell fate



## RECENT PROMOTIONS

Promoted to the rank of Professor: **Wei Wei Lee, MD, MPH – General Medicine, Anjana Pillai, MD – Gastroenterology, Katherine Thompson, MD – Geriatrics**

Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor: **Anindita Basu, PhD – Genetic Medicine, Lauren Gleason, MD, MPH – Geriatrics, Alejandra Lastra, MD – Pulmonary/Critical Care, Arlene Ruiz de Luzuriaga, MD, MPH, MBA - Dermatology**



## APPOINTMENTS/ELECTIONS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

**Anjana Pillai, MD** – Elected member to the 2024 Faculty Advisory Committee for a three-year term (Slate A-Patient Care and Training)

**Jessica Ridgway, MD** – Elected member to the 2024 Faculty Advisory Committee for a three-year term (Slate C-Clinical/Translational Science)

**Pritzker School of Medicine Favorite Faculty Award** – Keme Carter, MD, Jeanne Farnan, MD, MPHE, Tia Kostas, MD, Wei Wei Lee, MD, MPH

**Keme Carter, MD** – Selected as Faculty Marshall for the 2024 Pritzker School of Medicine Divisional Academic Ceremony

**Michelle Josephson, MD** – Recipient of the Michael Reese Lectureship Biological Sciences Division Distinguished Faculty Award

**Krysta Wolfe, MD** – Recipient of the Distinguished Educator and Leader Biological Sciences Division Faculty Award

**Kimberly Trotter, MD** – Recipient of the Distinguished Clinician Biological Sciences Division Faculty Award



## NATIONAL/REGIONAL APPOINTMENTS/ELECTIONS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

**Monica Peek, MD, MPH, MSc** – Elected to the Association of American Physicians and honored as the SGIM24 Distinguished Professor of Health Equity

**Stacy Lindau, MD, MA\*** – Elected to the Association of American Physicians (\*secondary appointment in Medicine)

**Julie Oyler, MD** – Graduate of the 2024 Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program

**Megan Huisingsh-Scheetz, MD, MPH** – Recipient of the 2024 Terrie Fox Wetle Rising Star Award in Health Services and Aging Research; Recipient of the Gerontological Society of American inaugural 2024 Health Sciences Mid-Career Innovation Award

**Amber Johnson, MD, MD, MBA** – Selected as a Top Reviewer for Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes Journal

**Funmi Olopade, MD** – Selected as Chairperson of the National Health Research Committee for Nigeria

**Bhakti Patel, MD** – 2024 Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Finalist for the Clinical Research Forum

**Anna Volerman, MD\*** – Recipient of the Academic Pediatric Association Health Care Delivery Award for Faculty – Mid-Career (\*secondary appointment in Pediatrics)

**Christine Babcock, MD** – Recipient of the 2024 Bill B. Smiley Award from the Illinois College of Emergency Physicians

**Sonali Smith, MD** – Recipient of the 2024 Partners in Hope Award from the Lymphoma Research Foundation



## NEW/RENEWED FEDERAL GRANTS

**Yu-Ying He, PhD** - Epitranscriptomic mechanism of environmental stress response and tumorigenesis (1 R35 ES031693-01A1)

**Maylyn Martinez, MD, MSc** - Racial Differences in Hospital-Associated Disability and Acute and Post-Acute Care Physical Therapy Utilization (1 K23 MD019072-01)

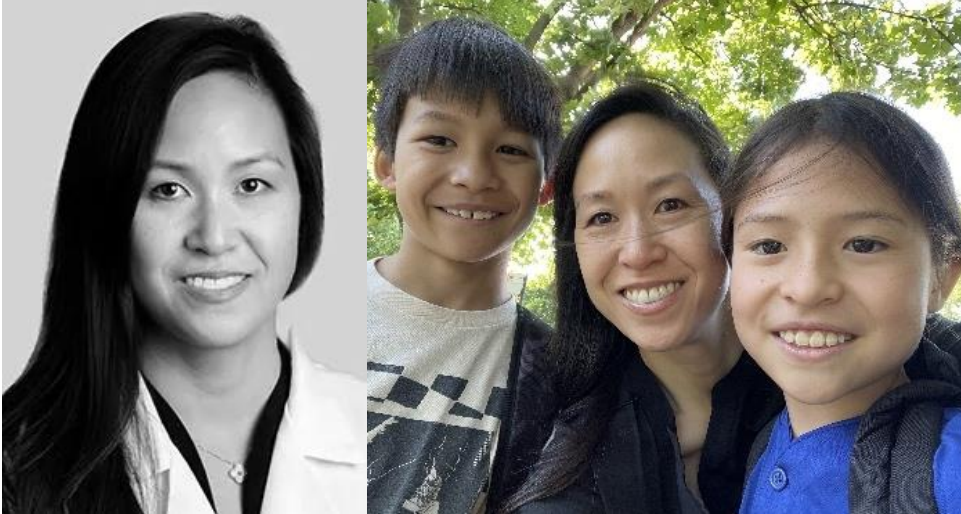
**Moira McNulty, MD** - Identifying Community-Informed DoxyPEP Implementation Strategies to Guide Equitable Delivery of Syphilis Prevention (1 R21MD018707-01)

**Funmi Olopade, MD** - Chicago Alternative Prevention Study for BReast CAncer in Diverse Populations of High-Risk Women (CAPSBRACA) (1 R01CA276652-01A1)



## THE BALANCING ACT:

HOW DO WOMEN BALANCE ACADEMIC SUCCESS WITH HOME AND PERSONAL LIFE? WHAT ADVICE WOULD WOMEN GIVE OTHER WOMEN?



**ANN NGUYEN, MD**

**Assistant Professor  
Section of Cardiology**

### PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dr. Ann Nguyen (Annie) is an Assistant Professor in the Section of Cardiology who specializes in advanced heart failure with a focus in heart transplantation. She helps to manage the heart transplant program, including overseeing referrals, evaluations, waitlist management, protocols, and quality improvement. She participates in a multidisciplinary Fontan clinic that follows patients with failing Fontan who will eventually need heart and liver transplant. Nationally, she is on the scientific advisory board for CareDx, Inc., a company that specializes in non-invasive testing for graft surveillance. Additionally, she is a member of the American Society of Transplantation Acute Congenital Heart Disease Community of Practice. In line with her clinical practice and extramural activities, her research focuses on assessing the role of the microbiome on heart transplant outcomes.

### WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Finding a balance between work and my personal life is so challenging! I have 9-year-old twins named Charlotte and James who are growing up too fast. I don't want to miss a moment of their lives, whether it be a school play, baseball game, piano recital, or playing board games on the weekend. On the other hand, there are so many things I want to achieve in my career, and I have set lofty goals for myself. I am no expert when it comes to work-life balance, but here are a few things I try to keep in mind.

### ADVICE

#### Remember to play

Life is too short to not enjoy every moment! I always try to include play in my life so I can keep my mind and experiences open to every possibility life has to offer.

#### Perfection is not the goal

I try to practice being kind to myself. Mistakes will happen, but as long as I am authentic to myself and kind to others, I trust things will always fall into place.

#### Have patience

I may not be able to achieve all my goals now, but if I keep doing my best every day, good things will come. ■



## NEWS: BSD WOMEN'S COMMITTEE



In April 2024, Dr. Mark Anderson announced the establishment of the Biological Sciences Division (BSD) Women's Committee, with Dr. Julie Oyler as the inaugural Chair. Multiple departments in the BSD, have local women's committees, but there is no unifying structure for faculty to meet or collaborate on BSD wide issues relevant to academic gender equity. Many of the committees are in nascent stages and need BSD/peer support. Other departments do not have support structures for gender equity in academic medicine and the BSD Women's Committee will provide mentorship to develop local departmental support for gender equity in academic medicine.

The purpose of the BSD Women's Committee is to guide the development of institutional goals and planning aligned with the enterprise-wide Mission, Vision and Values framework and ensure that the Biological Sciences Division (BSD), Pritzker School of Medicine (PSOM) and the University of Chicago Medicine (UCM) continue to create and support a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community for women faculty/trainees across the organization.

The BSD Women's committee will have 16-24 members, one from each clinical and basic science department. Members will have a 3-year term and participate in one subcommittee. The professional development subcommittee will hold professional development events for issues related to women faculty/trainees, manage nominations to national conference (ELAM/ ELH, AAMC Early and Mid-Career), participate in UChicago's Warner Reynold Leadership Academy. The advocacy subcommittee will review policies with gender equity lenses including: lactation policies, promotion policies, parental leave policies, and childcare policies. The structural subcommittee will evaluate gender equity in structural environment – photographs on walls in lecture halls/hospital/research buildings, and review lactation spaces.

Future goals of the BSD Women's Committee include evaluating data for gender equity, % women in BSD, % women each department, % women in leadership, salary equity data, starting salary and retention/promotion packages, gender bias in evaluations, promotion equity (time to promotion), and student and trainee support. The medicine representative to the BSD Women's Committee will be Anna Volerman, who will be taking over the Department of Medicine Women's Committee as Julie Oyler transitions to her new role. ■



## TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT

### DOM Women's Committee Fellows

While the DOM Women's Committee has included fellows for the past few years, in September 2023 the DOM Women's Committee decided to create a separate fellows subcommittee to address gender equity issues in Graduate Medical Education. The three fellows Dr. Meghan Gwinn, Dr. Sriya Muralidharan, and Dr. Clarissa Smith joined Dr. Oyler (Chair), Dr. Zisman (Neph), and Dr. Lee (PCC) to form the fellows subcommittee. The first goals were to:

1. Collect data on the percentage of female fellows in each fellowship program and compare it to the published ABIM average. Next, the subcommittee plans to provide feedback to fellowship programs.
2. Address the pronouns used for physicians on the consent form for procedures. On multiple consent forms, the doctor was referred to as he/him. The forms will be updated to they/them or he/she per department.
3. Contribute to the DOM Women's Committee by nominating faculty for local awards and participating in advocacy discussions.



**Dr. Claire Smith** is a pulmonary and critical care fellow. Her interests include interventional pulmonology, pulmonary infections, and exercise physiology. She completed her previous medical training at the University of Kansas Health system.



**Dr. Sriya Muralidharan** is a first-year fellow in the GI-Hepatology-Nutrition section. She completed medical school at Brown University and residency in combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at Duke University. She is interested in pediatric and adult device development, and conducts research in endoscopic innovation. In residency, she developed an innovations track for trainees across specialties teaching the Biodesign process. She enjoys time outdoors and is married to another first year GI fellow who is training at Northwestern.



**Dr. Meghan Gwinn** is originally from Detroit, Michigan. She attended Marquette University where she studied biomedical sciences. Before attending medical school at Michigan State University, she worked at the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program through AmeriCorps. Dr. Gwinn completed her internal medicine residency and chief medical resident year at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. She is currently a second-year nephrology fellow. When not working, she enjoys making fancy birthday cakes for friends, adventuring around Hyde Park with her husband and son, and doing crafts with her sister. ■

## RECENT DOM WOMEN'S COMMITTEE EVENTS

**Monday, May 20, 2024 , noon to 1pm, Janet Bickel, "Discussing the Undiscussable with the Powerful"**

Janet Bickel is a nationally recognized career and leadership development expert with now 50 years of experience in academic medicine and science. During the 25 years prior to creating her own coaching business, Janet held positions of increasing leadership at the AAMC including Associate Vice President for Medical School Affairs. She established an influential Office of Women in Medicine, including a series of leadership development programs that have stimulated the careers of thousands of women physicians and scientists. She has served the renowned ELAM Program in multiple capacities.



## NEW DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE CHAIR

**Anna Volerman, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine (General Medicine) and Pediatrics, has been appointed as Chair of the Department's Women's Committee effective July 1, 2024.**

As a member of the Department's Women's Committee for the past eight years, Dr. Volerman actively contributed to the committee's efforts to promote professional development, mentorship, and advancement for women. As chair of the Women's Advocacy Subcommittee, Dr. Volerman collaborated on and spearheaded efforts to enhance programs and policies in the areas of parental leave, pay equity, back-up care and most recently lactation. These efforts led to two publications in Academic Medicine in partnership with other women faculty and trainees in the department. As chair of the DOM Women's Committee, Dr. Volerman will continue the work of building a greater community among women across sections as well as between women faculty and trainees in the department. Further, she will sustain and expand development efforts, advocacy initiatives, and mentorship/sponsorship programs to support and advance women faculty and trainees.



## UPCOMING DOM WOMEN'S COMMITTEE EVENTS

**Friday and Saturday, September 13-14, 2024 Women in Medicine Summit**  
Drake Hotel, Chicago, IL, <https://www.womeninmedicinesummit.org/>



## WOMEN AT THE FOREFRONT EDITORIAL BOARD

Julie Oyler, MD

Adriana Segura Olson, MD, MA.Ed

Nancy Zavala

