



Colorado Clinical and Translational
Sciences Institute (CCTSI)

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

LEADERSHIP FOR INNOVATIVE TEAM SCIENCE (LITeS)

Description & Directory | 2018-2019

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The Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI), created in 2008, includes the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, University of Colorado Denver, University of Colorado Boulder, Colorado State University, six major hospitals and health care organizations and local communities. The CCTSI will:

- Expand this statewide academic home for clinical and translational research.
- Implement new clinical research management strategies to improve quality, safety, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and innovative team science as well as introduce new software systems and workflows
- Centralize the delivery of resources, services and technologies.
- Incorporate key concepts of community engagement into the full spectrum of translational research.
- Increase the translational research workforce capacity through a broad curriculum of education, training and career development opportunities.

A rigorous tracking, assessment and evaluation program with a formal quality and process improvement component will ensure the best use of resources while protecting the safety of research study participants. These programs will be centralized at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, which is adjacent to participating schools, research laboratories, three hospitals and a biomedical corporate park.



Ronald J. Sokol, MD, FAASLD | Director, Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute

Professor and Vice Chair of Pediatrics

Arnold Silverman, MD, Endowed Chair in Digestive Health

Assistant Vice Chancellor for Clinical and Translational Science, University of Colorado Denver

Chief, Section of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition and the Digestive Health Institute

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Dr. Ronald J. Sokol received his undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, his MD from the University of Chicago/Pritzker School of Medicine, and his pediatric residency training at the University of Colorado Medical Center in Denver. He then completed a three-year fellowship in Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition in 1983 at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the University of Cincinnati. Dr. Sokol has been a faculty member at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and Children's Hospital Colorado since 1983 and is now Professor and Vice Chair of Clinical and Translational Research in the Department of Pediatrics and Section Chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition and the Digestive Health Institute at Children's Hospital Colorado. He is Director and Principal Investigator of the Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute at University of Colorado Denver, funded by the NIH, and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Clinical and Translational Science. Dr. Sokol's major scientific interests are investigating the etiology, cellular, and immunologic pathogenesis of biliary atresia; the mechanisms of liver cell injury in cholestatic, fatty liver disease, and parenteral nutrition associated liver injury; the role of mitochondria and oxidative stress in liver injury; and developing predictive models and novel therapeutics for childhood liver diseases. Dr. Sokol is Chair of the Steering Committee of the NIDDK-supported Childhood Liver Disease Research Network (ChiLDReN). Dr. Sokol is the President-Elect of the American Association for the study of Liver Diseases, (2017). He has been cited in "Best Doctors in America" since 1994 and received the 2003 Nutrition Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the 2009 James E. Strain Award in Pediatrics from Children's Hospital Colorado, and the 2009 Harry Shwachman Award from NASPGHAN. Dr. Sokol has published over 230 peer reviewed articles, 120 chapters and review articles, 10 books or monographs, and over 340 research abstracts. He is co-editor of "Liver Disease in Children," the leading textbook in pediatric hepatology.

LEADERSHIP FOR INNOVATIVE TEAM SCIENCE (LITeS):

A Program for Academic and Research Leadership in the Health Sciences

The Leadership for Innovative Team Science Program (LITeS) has been offered annually by the CCTSI to a selected cohort of University of Colorado senior and emerging leaders. Structured as a year-long experience, individuals attend a quarterly series of two-day workshops, collaborate throughout the year on a team project, and receive the benefit of individual coaching sessions. In addition to enhancing leadership skills, LITeS fosters team science by creating a network of colleagues who serve as resources for one another across the University and the CCTSI, expanding opportunities for cross disciplinary collaboration, and ensuring that the next generation of clinical and translational scientists receive the highest quality training for science leadership. Participants in LITeS have included deans, associate deans, department chairs, and vice-chairs, as well as senior leadership from hospitals, major research centers, and training programs. In response to numerous requests, this year's LITeS cohort draws exclusively from early to mid-career faculty.

The LITeS program addresses three key leadership domains: 1) individual leadership styles and behaviors; 2) interpersonal and team skills for leading, managing, and working with people; and 3) process skills for increasing quality and efficiency in the work of academic leadership. Participants benefit from standardized assessments in such areas as Work Style and Type, Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Management, and Influence Styles. Experienced facilitators lead the group on topics such as: Working with Challenging Colleagues, Communication Styles, Giving and Getting Feedback, Intergenerational Workplace Issues, Time Management, Effective Meetings, Project Management, Developing High Performance Teams, and Stress Management. Additionally, participants will choose a career or professional development goal, complete a plan for its achievement, and receive guidance in putting the plan to work. Over the course of the year, participants carry out a project with a small team of other LITeS participants. They will function as a work team to address a real and immediate issue of concern for the University. Since 2014-15, University leaders have been involved as sponsors or resources for these projects. This team structure provides opportunities for peer coaching and for the assessment and development of team skills as well.

For more information about the program, contact the LITeS Director Judith Albino, PhD, 303-724-1467 (judith.albino@ucdenver.edu), the LITeS Associate Director, Susan Johnson, PhD, 303-724-2923 (Susan.Johnson@ucdenver.edu), or Programs Manger Galit Mankin, MSW, 720-848-6249 (galit.mankin@ucdenver.edu).



Judith Albino, PhD | LITeS Director

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Judith Albino, PhD, LITeS Program Director, is President Emerita of the University of Colorado and Professor of Community and Behavioral Health in the Colorado School of Public Health. A health psychologist, she began her academic career in the School of Dentistry at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She spent more than 20 years in academic administration, serving as Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School at Buffalo, as Vice President and subsequently President of the University of Colorado, and then as President of Alliant International University in California. Retiring from administration, she returned to Colorado to work with colleagues to build a research program in health disparities of American Indian/Alaska Native populations. She is PI and Director of the Center for Native Oral Health Research. She has served on the Council of the National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research and on numerous NIH study sections and review panels. She also has served as President of Behavioral Scientists in Dental Research and as Treasurer of the American Psychological Association and of the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences. She was named Distinguished Psychologist in Management by the Society of Psychologists in Management, and she was appointed by Governor Hickenlooper to the board of Caring for Colorado, which she currently chairs. She consults nationally on leadership and organizational development and planning for higher education and the health professions. She is certified in executive coaching and maintains a practice in that field, focusing primarily on services to leaders in the academic health professions and coaching to maximize the performance of academic, scientific, and health care teams.



Susan L. Johnson | LITeS Associate Director

Professor of Pediatrics, Section of Nutrition

Director, The Children's Eating Laboratory

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Susan Johnson is a tenured Professor of Pediatrics and joined the LITeS Program in 2016 as Associate Director. She came to University of Colorado Denver as a postdoctoral fellow and has continued within the Section of Nutrition in the Department of Pediatrics throughout her career. She has a secondary appointment in the Department of Community and Behavioral Health in the Colorado School of Public Health as well as adjunct faculty status at Colorado State University Food Science and Human Nutrition, University of Idaho Family and Consumer Sciences, and the University of Illinois Food Science and Human Nutrition graduate programs. Since 2010, she has been the Co-Director of the Nutrition NIH T32 Nutrition Training Grant. Her major scientific interests focus on early childhood nutrition—specifically the impacts of environment on the development of children's eating behaviors and growth. Her research portfolio includes proof of concept studies that develop novel methods to study the development of eating behavior as well as observational and intervention studies that are designed to improve children's eating and physical activity in the childcare setting, the family home, and across communities. She participated as a member of the 2014 – 2015 LITeS cohort and brings that experience to her role as Associate Director.



Scott D. Markowitz, MD, FAAP

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Director of Faculty Development,
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Scott Markowitz, MD is a new member of the LITeS Faculty in 2018-19. Scott has worked at Anschutz since 2007 as a Pediatric Anesthesiologist, with an academic focus in medical education and faculty development. Scott works with other leaders to create opportunities for growth, mentorship and professional development within his Department. He has also worked with the Dean of Faculty Affairs team on projects related to mentoring support at Anschutz. Scott is a certified executive leadership coach, and consults with faculty members from varied areas, including clinical, research and administration, who are looking to achieve next-level success in their leadership role. His other leadership focus is in the creation, development and support of high-performing healthcare and research teams



Galit Mankin, MSW

Program Administrator, Clinical Science Graduate Program, CCTSI

Programs Manager, Education Training and Career Development (ETCD), CCTSI

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Galit Mankin is the Programs Manager for the Education, Training and Career Development core at the CCTSI, which provides clinical-translational scientists and trainees with knowledge, training, and career skills. In addition, she oversees the operation of the Clinical Science (CLSC) Graduate Program. Working at the University of Colorado since 1998, Ms. Mankin holds a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Denver and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Colorado Denver.

LITeS Class of 2018-2019



Heather Anderson, PhD

Associate Professor

Interim Director, POR Graduate Program Track

Department of Clinical Pharmacy

Skaggs School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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As an epidemiologist and pharmaceutical outcomes researcher at the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (SSPPS), I design and engage in research that informs the effective use of pharmacological treatments for patients in a variety of health care settings, with a focus on decreasing adverse events and increasing effective and appropriate use of medications. Of particular interest to me are interventions that increase clinicians' knowledge about patients in order to guide treatment, thereby reducing the risk of adverse outcomes and increasing the likelihood of successful treatment. Pharmacogenomics and personalized medicine is one such tool. I am collaborating on a project using a mixed methods approach to systematically assess patient and provider perspectives regarding the clinical utility of pharmacogenomic testing following kidney, liver, and heart transplantation. In addition to research, I have a passion for teaching in the PharmD program and PhD program in Pharmaceutical Outcomes Research, and mentoring PhD students. I currently teach Evidence Based Medicine and Research Methods.



Jennifer Armstrong, MD, MPH, FAHA

Associate Professor

Department of Pediatrics – Pediatric Neurology

School of Medicine

UCD Hemophilia and Thrombosis Center

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I have a solid background in clinical research for over 20 years. As a faculty physician-researcher at the University of Colorado/Children's Hospital Colorado since 2008, I am presently Associate Professor of Pediatrics (Section of Child Neurology), Neurology, and OB/GYN (Division of Basic Reproductive Sciences). I serve as the Director of Clinical Research at the Hemophilia and Thrombosis Center since 2014, where I oversee over 60 pharma/clinical trials and PI initiated protocols and the research administrative team. I have independent studies in fetal programming, as well as many ongoing collaborative studies. I was recognized by the CCTSI as a case study on "how to successfully perform team science". I was a Center for Women's Health Research BIRCWH Scholar, and have additionally garnered grants through the American Heart Association and other private foundations. I graduated in 2011 as a CCTSI Clinical Faculty Scholar, and participated in the Co-Mentor Program first as a mentee, then as mentor. I have been a member of COMIRB Panel C since 2012, and have recently joined Panel B. Additionally, I am appointed to the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) Clinical Research Working Group, and newly inducted into the prestigious AAN Diversity Leadership Program.



Christopher Baker, MD

Associate Professor

Medical Director

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In February 2018, I was appointed as the medical director of the Perinatal Clinical Translational Research Center (CTRC). In this exciting new role, I will lead a core team of Perinatal CTRC research nurses as we collaborate with researchers and clinicians from the departments of Obstetrics-Gynecology and Pediatrics to advance life spectrum research on this campus. Given my own experience as a translational researcher, I am uniquely positioned to both support the Perinatal CTRC team and advocate for the best interests of the principal investigators and researchers utilizing Perinatal CTRC resources. I desire to create a community of perinatal researchers to increase collaboration, share resources and ideas, initiate program project grants, and establish needed infrastructure to help research teams accomplish their goals. Clinically, I am the medical director of the Ventilator Care Program. The members of this interdisciplinary team are national leaders in providing quality inpatient and outpatient care for children who require chronic mechanical ventilation at home, in conducting promising clinical research, and in partnering with other hospitals through several multicenter collaboratives.



Richard Benninger, PhD

Associate Professor

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I came to Colorado with a background in Biophysics and physiology, following my PhD at Imperial College London and postdoc work at Vanderbilt University. I am currently an associate professor of bioengineering and maintain a lab within the Barbara Davis center focused on understanding the function of the islets of Langerhans and dysfunction in type1 and type2 diabetes. An emerging area of my lab has developed contrast-enhanced ultrasound approaches to detect the ongoing insulinitis and decline in beta cell mass in type1 diabetes. We are currently engaged in translating this approach to the diagnosis of pre-clinical asymptomatic type1 diabetes. I am also passionate about training graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in cross-disciplinary research to combine training in biomedical sciences and quantitative sciences.



Elizabeth Carlton, PhD, MPH

Assistant Professor

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Colorado School of Public Health

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My research concerns two overlapping areas of inquiry: estimating the health impacts of climate change and identifying environmental drivers of waterborne disease transmission. The approaches I employ are rooted in my training as an environmental epidemiologist and in my strong belief that 21st century advances in public health require cross disciplinary collaborations that push us out of our disciplinary comfort zones. My approaches include design and implementation of observational studies, and the integration of diverse secondary datasets with the long term goal of improving our understanding of complex causal processes and using this information to improve our ability to identify vulnerable populations and intervene to reduce risk. I have extensive experience carrying out complex field based research studies in diverse settings – from rural China to low-income neighborhoods in Colorado’s Front Range. I also have strong quantitative skills including large scale data integration, analysis of hierarchical data and variable importance analysis. My current research includes the use of next generation sequencing technologies to understand the reemergence and persistence of the water-borne parasite, *Schistosoma japonicum*, in China; and the integration of health, meteorological and demographic data to estimate the potential impacts of climate change on water-borne diseases.



Edwin de Zoeten, MD, PhD

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I am a Pediatric Gastroenterologist and the Director of the Pediatric Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center at the Children’s Hospital Colorado. In this regard, I oversee approximately 15 people and their involvement in clinical tasks, clinical research and basic research within the center. In addition, I run a basic science laboratory in RC2 that studies the mucosal immune response in IBD with an eye on development of therapeutics to modulate the immune response in the intestine. I am also a member of multiple committees for the development of novel techniques and therapies for a multitude of issues, including Fecal microbiome transplant for the treatment of Clostridium difficile infection as well as genomic, epigenomic and proteomic analysis of patients with very early onset (<1yr) IBD. Currently, our Center is involved in multiple clinical trials evaluating medications that treat IBD as well as treatments for Clostridium difficile. Our basic science group is ramping up to test one of the therapies developed in the laboratory on patients with Ulcerative colitis. Finally, I hope to further develop the fecal microbiome transplant program to include patients with inflammatory bowel disease. Our group is working toward development of a robust clinical/translational research program in IBD.



Derek Fong, VMD

Assistant Professor

Associate Director of Veterinary Services

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As the Associate Director of Veterinary Services in the Office of Laboratory Animal Resources, I oversee the veterinary group, which consists of 5 veterinarians and 12 veterinary technicians. We provide veterinary care to all laboratory animals on the Anschutz Medical Campus. We are responsible for diagnosing and treating any health conditions. We provide support for research that can vary from basic science to device or drug testing looking to move forward to human clinical trials. Our support role also allows us to work with the gamut of research fields, such as audiology, oncology, and cardiology and the various health profession programs, such as the School of Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy. We also have significant roles in surgery and anesthesia support, training, and compliance. I serve on both the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and the Institutional Biosafety Committee. I'm also the training program director of a laboratory animal medicine veterinary internship program. In addition to my management, clinical, and teaching responsibilities, I also perform small research projects that are clinically applicable to the laboratory animal field or collaborate with established research groups.



Joseph Frank, MD, MPH

Assistant Professor

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School of Medicine

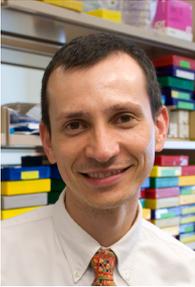
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Joseph Frank, MD, MPH is a primary care physician and health services researcher at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, a Core Investigator with the Denver/Seattle Center of Innovation for Veteran-Centered and Value-Driven Care and an Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. His research focuses on the safe, effective management of chronic pain in primary care settings. He is currently supported by an HSR&D-funded Career Development Award to explore Veterans' views on tapering of long-term opioid therapy and to develop and pilot a team-based intervention to support tapering of long-term opioid therapy and engagement with non-opioid pain care strategies. He has additional funding on related studies examining optimal team-based approaches to complementary and integrative health approaches to chronic pain and to the diagnosis and treatment of opioid use disorder. His work aims to translate evidence to practice (T3) and to populations (T4). Evidence-based treatments for chronic pain and opioid use disorder exist but they are not adequately accessible to patients and challenging to deliver in primary care settings.



Brian Graham, MD, MEng

Associate Professor

*Department of Medicine - Pulmonary Sciences and
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I am an Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Pulmonary Sciences and Critical Care Medicine at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. The primary focus of my research is studying the role of inflammation in the pathogenesis of pulmonary hypertension (PH), working with a mouse model of PH triggered by exposure to the parasite *Schistosoma mansoni*. A second area of research is studying mechanisms underlying adaptation and failure of the right ventricle in PH. As the PI of this group, I plan and interpret the experiments, and write grant applications and manuscripts. I also mentor fellows and junior faculty in our group. As a physician-scientist, I practice clinical medicine in the area of pulmonary vascular disease, primarily in PH and a related disease, hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia. I am also an Associate Program Director for the Internal Medicine residency program at the University of Colorado, primarily helping residents match with mentors to conduct research, and providing guidance on the fellowship application process.



Maryam Guiahi, MD, MSc

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I am currently as Assistant Professor pending approval for Associate Professor at the University of Colorado within the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, specifically in the Division of Family Planning. My specific research interest is how institutional restrictions at Catholic health care facilities impact women's health and residency training. I act as the Assistant Program Director for Resident Research for the OB-GYN department. In this role, I created and implemented a structured 4-year research curriculum that includes research didactics and workshops. Additionally, for each of the 36 OB- GYN residents, I provide detailed protocol reviews, assist with troubleshooting, and give formal feedback prior to their Research Day presentations. I am also the Mentored Scholarly Activity (MSA) contact for the OB-GYN department, I have served as the primary mentor for MSA and research track students, and I have acted as a judge for MSA Research Days. Furthermore, I perform a variety of research related to women's health, pharmacokinetic research, public health, ethics, and medical education and training.



Jeffrey Jacot, PhD

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Jeffrey Jacot, Ph.D., in conjunction with his collaborators, investigates methods for making laboratory- grown heart tissue using stem cells found in amniotic fluid and novel multilayered biomaterials. These tissues are designed to fix heart defects in infants, eliminating the need for heart transplants or multiple surgeries. As associate professor of Bioengineering at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Dr. Jacot works alongside surgeons, clinicians, radiologists and biologists to understand the clinical needs in congenital heart defect management and repair and develop novel biomaterials and stem cell processing techniques for tissue-engineered heart muscle.

Dr. Jacot received a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1994, followed by six years of experience at a medical device manufacturer developing equipment for pediatric heart surgery. He received a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering from Boston University in 2005. Following postdoctoral work at the University of California, San Diego, he joined Rice University in 2008 and the University of Colorado in 2016. Dr. Jacot has received a National Science Foundation CAREER award, an NIH R01, the Rice Institute for Biosciences and Bioengineering Medical Innovations Award, and the Young Innovators in Biomedical Engineering Award from Emory/Georgia Tech.



Melanie Joy, PharmD, PhD

Associate Professor

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School of Medicine

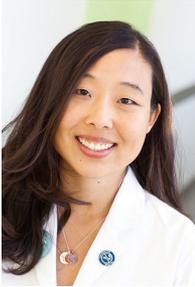
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Dr. Joy is a tenured faculty member at the University of Colorado, with joint appointments in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and School of Medicine, Division of Renal Diseases and Hypertension. She has conducted over 60 clinical and translational research studies in the pharmacokinetics and nephrology areas over the past 23 years. Her research has been sponsored by NIH, foundations, and pharmaceutical/device companies. Dr. Joy has also been highly involved in training and mentoring the next generation of scientists (16 undergraduates, 8 professional students (2 MD and 6 PharmD), 5 graduate students, and 6 post-doctoral scholars). Dr. Joy is a member of the Center for Translational Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacogenomics in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and the Cancer Center at the University of Colorado where she actively participates in the Development Therapeutics Group. Dr. Joy's laboratory specializes in research of drugs, biologics, delivery approaches, and devices in kidney disease from in vitro to in vivo studies in humans. The understanding of pharmacology in this special population comprised of both adults and pediatrics with kidney diseases, has enabled the research and development of novel drugs and devices. This is important given that the rate of new drug and device approvals for kidney disease indications is lagging as compared to other therapeutic areas. Dr. Joy's research program also studies kidney toxicity and its prevention. Dr. Joy is active in scientific organizations including the American Society of Nephrology, Kidney Health Initiative, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Association of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and American Society of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics.



Joyce Lee, MD

Assistant Professor

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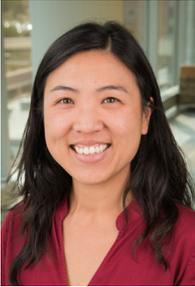
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My clinical experiences have focused my interests on scarring lung disease, in particular idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) and autoimmune associated interstitial lung disease (ILD). I obtained a Master's degree in clinical research and have gained experience in patient cohort development and characterization, biologic repository collection and maintenance, and multi-disciplinary collaboration. My work has encompassed topics and publications in ILD such as risk factors, survival, diagnostic tests including biomarkers, genetics, and quality of life. I was recruited to the University of Colorado to help build the ILD program through an initiative called the Comprehensive Lungs and Breathing Program. I have built a multi-disciplinary ILD program that has included the development of an ILD clinic and multi-disciplinary clinical conference with pulmonary, rheumatology, radiology and pathology participation, an ILD database and biorepository, and a research program focusing on detection of early ILD to serve as the foundation for future prevention strategies in ILD. I have also had the opportunity to mentor trainees and participate in international working groups on ILD diagnosis and management. Through my research, I hope to better understand the biological mechanisms and clinical behavior of ILD, and ultimately translate that knowledge into improving patients' quality of life.



Hillary Lum, MD, PhD

Assistant Professor

Department of Medicine – Geriatric Medicine

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I am Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Geriatric Medicine and VA Eastern Colorado Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center. My career goal is to help older adults receive care that is aligned with their preferences, especially during serious illnesses. My clinical work as a primary care geriatrician and palliative medicine physician at University of Colorado Hospital Seniors Clinic and the Denver VA informs my research on advance care planning for older adults. A major theme of my research is to design effective interventions and implementation strategies to improve advance care planning through primary care, community, or population health-based approaches. Through funding from the NIH, VA, and foundations, I have designed, tested, and implemented novel models of care that engage patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers through group visits, new health information technology, and communication training. My research uses implementation science to effectively implement innovative healthcare system models into real-world clinical settings, and ultimately help patients receive medical care that is aligned with their values.



Traci Lyons, PhD

Assistant Professor

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I have been involved in translational breast cancer research for nearly a decade now. First, in my role as a postdoctoral fellow in the Young Women's Breast Cancer Translational Program and now as an Assistant Professor of Medical Oncology and Senior Scientist in the Young Women's Breast Cancer Program. My lab's research utilizes basic science discovery and pre-clinical modeling to understand mechanisms that underlie breast cancer metastasis in young women with a particular focus on postpartum women. Then, we validate our findings in our clinical cohort of breast cancers from young women. Finally we aim to rapidly translate our findings by repurposing current drugs and/or developing novel targeted therapeutics for these young, postpartum, patients with breast cancer.



Jessica Malmberg, PhD

Assistant Professor

Clinical Director of Outpatient Services

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I was trained as a scientist-practitioner and am strongly interested in the integration of research and clinical practice. My research has broadly focused on the development and dissemination of evidence-based practices in behavioral pediatrics, with a specific interest in translational research. My early research efforts focused on generating and disseminating a line of research designed to inform clinical interventions and prevention strategies for childhood behavior problems, which included dissemination within a primary care setting. More recently, I have become interested in the utility of a transdiagnostic approach to pediatric behavioral health. This innovative approach aims to develop evidence-based practices focused on targeting underlying mechanisms of psychopathology, rather than categorical diagnoses/symptoms, which coincides with the Research Domain Criteria established by the National Institute of Mental Health. To this end, I have been leading a transdiagnostic research lab at the Pediatric Mental Health Institute (PMHI) at Children's Hospital Colorado. As the lead researcher of this lab, in conjunction with my role as the clinical director of outpatient services at the PMHI, I have developed and disseminated a transdiagnostic clinical approach to the assessment and treatment of pediatric patients presenting with behavioral health concerns.



Candace Mathiason, PhD, MS

Assistant Professor

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The focus of the Mathiason laboratory is to assimilate an understanding of the biological mechanisms associated with covert transmission of infectious agents (prions and viruses). The work carried out in my laboratory, utilizing native and rodent in vivo hosts and highly sensitive in vitro assays to detect minute quantities of infectious agent found in bodily fluids and tissues, has provided a better understanding of disease pathogenesis and transmission dynamics. These studies include investigation of: (i) maternal infections, the maternal-fetal interface and pregnancy outcomes, (ii) the role of hematogenous prions in disease pathogenesis, and (iii) potential reservoir hosts for prion and viral infections. The intent of these works— to provide basic science principles for continued efforts to mitigate infectious agents via preventative, therapeutic and vaccine therapies.



Lisa McLeod, MD, MSCE

Assistant Professor

Director, Pediatric Surgical Outcomes Research Center

Department of General Pediatrics – Hospital Medicine

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Center for Children's Surgery

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Lisa McLeod, MD, MSCE is a Pediatric Hospitalist and health outcomes researcher who studies inpatient surgical care for children with medical complexity. Her current work includes an AHRQ Patient Centered Outcomes Research K99/R00-funded multi-center mixed methods trial evaluating the organizational factors associated with high performance in orthopedic surgical care for children. Other ongoing multi-specialty research collaborations include comparative effectiveness of multi-modal interventions to improve recovery and reduce opioid use in adolescents undergoing spine fusion, and development of strategies to reduce disparities in Patient Family Center Care among children and families requiring invasive orthopedic surgeries. Dr. McLeod was recently named Director of the Center for Research in Outcomes for Children's Surgery (ROCS) within the Center for Children's Surgery at CHCO where she will lead outcomes research development and research training/mentorship for surgical research scholars. Dr. McLeod's clinical work involves leading multi-disciplinary teams in the development of surgical comanagement processes and pathways at CHCO. She is also involved in National pediatric research and value improvement initiatives, and serves on the executive boards of both the Pediatric Research in Inpatient Settings (PRIS) Network and the Safety in Spine Surgery Project (S3P).



Megan Morris, PhD, MPH, CCC-SLP

Assistant Professor

Director of the Qualitative Research Core

ACCORDS

Department of Community and Behavioral Health

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Megan A. Morris, PhD, MPH, CCC-SLP is the Director of the Qualitative Research Core at the Adult and Child Consortium for Health Outcomes Research and Delivery Science (ACCORDS). Dr. Morris is a health services researcher and holds faculty appointments in the Community and Behavioral Health Department at the Colorado School of Public Health, and the Divisions of Healthcare Policy and Research and Physical Therapy in the School of Medicine. As Director of the Qualitative Research Core, Dr. Morris collaborates with faculty, fellows and staff across a wide range of disciplines to integrate qualitative methodologies into their T3 and T4 research studies. She has been funded as a qualitative methodologist on multiple NIH, AHRQ and PCORI research studies. In her own research content area, Dr. Morris is a leading researcher in the area of healthcare disparities experienced by patients with disabilities. Specifically, she identifies and addresses system- and provider-level barriers that contribute to poorer quality of care received by patients living with disabilities. She leads several workgroups on the topic, has consulted with healthcare systems across the US, and has received federal and foundation funding to support this work. In addition to being a researcher, Dr. Morris is a licensed speech-language pathologist.



Deborah Rinehart, PhD, MA

Assistant Professor

Associate Director, Research Methods Core, DH

Department of Medicine – General Internal Medicine

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I am the Associate Director of the Research Methods Core in the Office of Research and a Research Scientist in the Center for Health Systems Research at Denver Health and an Assistant Professor in the School of Medicine at the University of Colorado. My specific areas of research interest include maternal and child health, sexual health, and the integration of behavioral and physical health among vulnerable populations. My research incorporates diverse research methodology guided by patient and community partnerships to illuminate and impact the complex and multilevel issues related to improving individual and population health. My research experience has focused on developing and testing behavioral interventions to prevent sexually transmitted infections, utilizing a texting venue to prevent unintended pregnancies and STIs, and research and evaluation of substance abuse and mental health services. I am currently the PI on an NIH/NIDA grant utilizing mixed methods to develop a sexual health intervention with adult women in opioid medication assisted treatment and PI on a PCORI pipeline grant focused on super-utilizing women with chronic medical conditions complicated by substance use and mental health.



Laura Saba, PhD

Assistant Professor

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The long-term goal of my lab is to develop bioinformatic and statistical methods to explore the interwoven roles of genetic, epigenetic and environmental variation on complex phenotypes including alcohol- and drug-related phenotypes. These methods can be used to identify novel drug targets, novel indications for FDA approved drugs, and biomarkers to identify the most efficacious therapy for an individual. I am currently co-Director of the NIDA Core “Center of Excellence” in Omics, Systems Genetics, and the Addictome and Lead of the Transcriptome Informatics and Mechanisms Core. The center’s purpose is to empower researchers supported by NIDA/NIAAA to explore the influence of genetic variation and variability of RNA, proteins, and metabolites on drug abuse risk, relapse, and treatment. We will accomplish this by 1) centralizing data, 2) developing and disseminating systems genetics tools, and 3) providing various forms of training. I am also co-Principal Investigator of a NIAAA R24 resource grant to gather and disseminate (via <http://phenogen.ucdenver.edu>) massive omics datasets from the Hybrid Rat Diversity Panel. Because of the renewable nature of this inbred panel, we can accumulate molecular, physiological and behavioral phenotypes and use sophisticated systems genetics methodologies to uncover the mechanisms by which genetics influence disease severity and susceptibility.



Regie Lyn Santos-Cortez, MD, PhD

Associate Professor

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I am PI of an R01 grant that aims to identify genetic variants that predispose to otitis media in humans and also affect the middle ear microbiome. This project involves collaboration with 3 foreign universities, 6 US research labs outside Colorado, and 10 surgeons and 4 PIs within campus. With the wealth of samples and data that we have been working on, we have been expanding our studies to other -omics technologies and other ENT diseases as well.

Though most of the studies we perform are still within the realm of basic science, some of our results have been used for genetic screening and counseling, antibiotic guidance and public health interventions, particularly in the Philippines. We hope that in the future our studies will also be useful for disease management in US populations as well.



Isabel Schlaepfer, PhD, MA

Assistant Professor

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I am an Assistant Professor in the Division of Medical Oncology. The basic research in my lab focuses on understanding cancer metabolism via CPT1A, a rate-limiting mitochondrial enzyme for lipid oxidation. As PI on several internal, ACS- and NCI-funded grants, I have developed effective measures of lipid catabolism in prostate cancer cells and tied these metabolic findings to hormonal, biochemical and signaling pathways, using human and mouse models. By using non-toxic metabolic drugs, my research can be easily translated to the clinic and complement current cancer therapies. Particularly, my lab has found that blocking the ability to burn lipids in combination with anti-androgen drugs, is a very effective way of thwarting metastatic prostate cancer growth. These studies are the basis of my patent application. Furthermore, the clinical implications of my research go beyond prostate cancer, as breast, ovarian and colon cancers are also very lipid-dependent for their growth and their resistance to therapy. I hope to expand the significance of my work with translational collaboration opportunities, including clinical trials.



Catherine Velopulos, MD, MHS

Assistant Professor

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I am a Trauma/Emergency/Critical Care Surgeon, with a Master's in Clinical Investigation and Certification in Health Finance and Management from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. I am published in health care disparities and access to care, with particular interest in the intersection of policy, economics and behavior. I wish to build a Health Services Research section in the Department of Surgery, exploring Access to Care, Disparities, and Cost Utility Analysis. I work in the Surgical Outcomes and Applied Research Group and mentor two students through the CU-UNITE Urban Underserved Track in the SOM. I have experience in secondary data analysis through large administrative data sets, and am moving into primary data through qualitative methods, with the goal to combine these through mixed methods approach, particularly using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to link data and employ practical interventions to affect the health of marginalized populations. I currently support a surgery resident in research, and was selected to the 2017-2019 cohort of the Clinical Faculty Scholars Program. I was selected as the Health Policy Scholar for the American College of Surgeons/Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma for 2018-2019, and will participate in the 2019 Leadership & Advocacy Summit.



Vijaya Vemulakonda, MD, JD

Associate Professor

Associate Urologic Residency Director

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Dr. Vijaya Vemulakonda is an Associate Professor of Pediatric Urology and Associate Residency Program Director for the Division of Urology at the University of Colorado. She earned her law degree cum laude from Harvard Law School and her medical degree from the University Of Mississippi School Of Medicine. She completed her urology residency at Baylor College of Medicine and her pediatric fellowship at Seattle Children's Hospital, University of Washington School of Medicine. She is active in the American Urologic Association, currently serving as Chair of the Judicial and Ethics Executive Committee and as a member of the Bylaws Committee. Her clinical interests include the management of antenatally detected congenital urologic anomalies, including UPJ obstruction, vesicoureteral reflux, posterior urethral valves, and cloacal and bladder exstrophy variants. Her research focuses on the development of evidence based guidelines to optimize surgical outcomes in children with congenital urologic anomalies and the use of the electronic health record to facilitate prospective multi-center collaborative surgical research. Current funding includes an AHRQ K08 Career Development Award studying variations in care for infants with suspected UPJ obstruction.



Sachin Wani, MD

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Medical Director, Esophageal and Gastric Center
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I specialize in esophageal diseases and therapeutic endoscopy and serve as the Medical Co-Director of the Esophageal and Gastric Center of Excellence. Clinically, I perform interventional endoscopy procedures that include EUS, ERCP, endoscopic mucosal resection and complex colon polypectomy among others and involved in training 1-2 advanced endoscopy trainees annually. I continue to serve on several GI national committees and currently chair the ASGE Guidelines Committee and serve on the ACG and AGA Research Committees. My research has focused on several key aspects of esophageal diseases. I have been the PI and co-investigator on key studies in Barrett's esophagus and esophageal adenocarcinoma focusing on the epidemiology and natural history, diagnosis and management. I have served as the PI in several prospective trials related to endoscopy training and in the field of EUS and advances in tissue acquisition. I was honored to receive the Department of Medicine Outstanding Early Scholars Award and funded through the NIDDK and GI society grants. It is my vision that the clinical and research programs will provide fertile ground for federal, academic society and industry funding that will enhance the national visibility of our institution and ultimately provide the best care for our patients.



Tracy Webb, DVM, PhD

Research Scientist II

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I am a veterinarian and Research Scientist II at Colorado State University in the Clinical Sciences Department of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. I am residency-trained in Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care Medicine and have a PhD in Pathology (Immunology). I have been actively involved in translational research for many years, specifically in the area of natural animal models of clinical disease with a hope of making a positive difference in both veterinary and human medicine. My current research involves investigating the application of cell-based therapies to challenging clinical diseases occurring spontaneously in dogs, cats, and wildlife. I serve on the Board of Directors for the North American Veterinary Regenerative Medicine Association and am working to help develop best practice standards in veterinary cell-based therapies. Recently, I have become a more involved advocate for quality clinical research serving as Coordinator of the CSU Clinical Review Board and working to advance support for clinician-scientists performing clinical trials.



Sonja Ziniel, PhD, MA

Assistant Professor - Research

Senior Survey Methodologist

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I am an Assistant Research Professor in the Department of Pediatrics, Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine, at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. I received my PhD in Survey Methodology from the University of Michigan. After over 10 years within academic medicine as a survey methodologist and applied statistician, I have collaborated with clinicians and clinical researchers from a variety of disciplines.

My research interests primarily relate to methodological issues in survey design. I have developed and psychometrically tested several widely utilized patient-centered survey instruments, such as the Pediatric Integrated Care Survey. My survey methodological research interests focus on understanding the cognitive foundations of how people answer survey questions and I am planning to build an interdisciplinary research program bringing together cognitive neuroscience and survey methodology to increase knowledge in this area.

As Children’s Hospital Colorado’s Senior Survey Methodologist I am responsible for conducting and analyzing hospital-wide surveys such as the Faculty Medical Staff Survey, the AHRQ Culture of Safety Survey, and the Workplace Violence and Aggression Climate Survey. I ensure that leaders from different levels throughout the organization receive these data in useful formats and help them to interpret the results.



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