LETTER FROM THE CHAIR
A Year to Remember: Celebrating 100 Years of Neurosurgical Excellence at the University of Michigan and Looking Forward to the Next 100 Years and Beyond

The year 2018 has been a momentous one for us. As a department, we looked back and celebrated 100 years of neurosurgery here at the University of Michigan. The Centennial Celebration took place September 13-15, 2018. It was a wonderful celebration that brought together alumni from all corners of the country. It was particularly wonderful to see how each one has taken the opportunities provided by training here at the University of Michigan and used them in so many ways. Whether it was as a CNN reporter or a Chair of a Department of Neurosurgery, we saw the breadth and depth of folks who have called Michigan home.

This year has been particularly heartening as we’ve seen how the Department has grown and changed. Our two newest residents are good examples of the next generation of neurosurgeons that will lead us through our next 100 years of growth and development. The resident cadre this year is once again enormously talented and reminds each and every one of us that the University of Michigan Department of Neurosurgery is a living, growing, and constantly evolving department. We celebrated multiple staff service milestones this year, including Peggy Hoag’s forty-five years of affiliation with the University of Michigan, with nearly 40 of those years being spent in the Department of Neurosurgery.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
We also celebrated Dee Dee (Diane) Peck and Donna Gausa, who both celebrated 30 years of service to and employment by the University of Michigan, with most of those years being spent within the Department. We have witnessed the continued growth of the Department and know that this growth is likely to continue as we embark on our next 100 years of neurosurgery.

New initiatives in diversity and equity and celebration of our roots within the community continue. We have had members of our department participate in a variety of activities including: Food Gatherers, collection of needed school supplies for school aged children, and working to help those less fortunate with a clothing drive.

With regard to research, our research group has once again been quite successful in obtaining funding. This year, we have seen the largest number of our clinical faculty receive NIH funding. I am proud to say that we have multiple R01s, R21s, and K08s for faculty within the Department. Additionally, our researchers hold many prestigious awards including a Javits Award from NIH. Two of our faculty received special Michigan Medicine-wide recognition this year for their talents. Dr. Maria Castro was awarded the Basic Science Research Award and Dr. Dan Orringer was awarded the Innovation and Commercialization Award. For a small department, we have had a large impact on clinical activity, both with respect to new patients and in our number of operations. It was gratifying seeing so many of our residency graduates at the Department’s Centennial Celebration this fall. The continuing participation of our graduates in the mission of the residency program is a unique strength of this department. One of many legacies of the Centennial Celebration was the foundation of a new endowed fund to enhance the educational mission of the Department. For instance, those of you who follow medical education issues closely will likely be aware that the ACGME has begun to emphasize program efforts to maintain resident wellness. These initiatives include visiting professor lectures and dinners, travel to courses, as well as support for team-building and networking within the resident group. Michigan has a long history of training the best and brightest individuals in our field. These initiatives and this newly created fund will position the department well as we continue to attract outstanding individuals in the future.

As we approach 2019, we are all excited for the future that lies before us. We were reminded at the Centennial Celebration of the deep and longstanding traditions that have been established at Michigan, and that the University of Michigan Department of Neurosurgery family will continue proud and strong through the next 100 years. My best to you and your family as we approach the new year.

Karim Murasako, MD
Julian T. Hoff Professor and Chair

We were reminded at the Centennial Celebration of the deep and longstanding traditions that have been established at Michigan, and that the University of Michigan Department of Neurosurgery family will continue proud and strong through the next 100 years.

MEDICAL EDUCATION NEWS

A Word from the Residency Program Director, Dr. Cormac Maher

The resident group at Michigan continues to excel clinically as well as academically. Highlights of some of their recent successes are listed in these pages. We are currently in the midst of application season, and the neurosurgery residency selection process for U-M will be as competitive as ever. This year, we will screen more than 300 applications from US medical school graduates in order to choose the three new residents in the Department.

It was gratifying seeing so many of our residency graduates at the Department’s Centennial Celebration this fall. The continuing participation of our graduates in the mission of the residency program is a unique strength of this department. One of many legacies of the Centennial Celebration was the foundation of a new endowed fund to assist with residency training in perpetuity. In particular, the goal of this fund will be to cover many of the otherwise unsupported aspects to enhance the educational mission of the Department. For instance, those
2018 Chief Resident Graduates

On Saturday, June 16, Neurosurgery faculty, residents, staff, friends, and family gathered at the Ann Arbor City Club for an evening of recognition and celebration honoring graduating residents Kevin Chen, MD, and Elyne Kahn, MD. It was an evening of laughter, tears, and reminiscence about Dr. Chen’s and Dr. Kahn’s rigorous and rewarding seven-year neurosurgical training journeys.

Since completing their residency training at the University of Michigan, both Drs. Chen and Kahn have begun one-year fellowship training – Dr. Chen in functional neurosurgery at Stanford and Dr. Kahn in spine surgery at the Cleveland Clinic. We wish them the best in their future neurosurgical careers.

2018 Medical Education Awards

Julian T. Hoff Teaching Award
The Julian T. Hoff Teaching Award is given each year to a junior faculty member within the department with an exemplary record in teaching our residents.

2018 Recipient: Aditya Pandey, MD

Max Peet Resident Teaching Award
The Max Peet Teaching Award is given annually to a resident who has distinguished him/herself in the arena of teaching other residents and medical students.

2018 Recipient: Kevin Chen, MD

Friend of Neurosurgery Award
The Friend of Neurosurgery Teaching Award is given each year to an individual outside of the department who is instrumental in teaching our neurosurgical residents.

2018 Recipient: Elvie Casper, BSN, RN, CNOR

McGillicuddy Resident Leadership Award
The McGillicuddy Resident Leadership Award recognizes a resident who exhibits exemplary leadership in maintaining the highest standards of professionalism.

2018 Recipients: Kevin Chen, MD, and Elyne Kahn, MD

New Neurosurgery Residents 2018

In 2018, we welcomed Drs. Katherine Holste and Sara Saleh to our residency training program.

Katherine Holste, MD
Medical School: Oregon Health & Science University
Undergraduate: University of Oregon
Hometown: Portland, OR
Why Neurosurgery? Growing up with an uncle with debilitating epilepsy who had undergone a total corpus callosotomy left me wanting to know more about not only that complicated-sounding surgery, but normal brain function and how it can all go wrong. After assisting in a craniotomy for the first time, I knew this was the right field for me.

Hobbies: Rowing, boating, and other water sports, trail running, and cooking - especially Thai and Indian food
Clinical Interests: Pain (Trigeminal, Glossopharyngeal & Nervus Intermedius Neuralgia), Pediatric & Epilepsy Neurosurgery

Sara Saleh, MD
Medical School: University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
Undergraduate: Michigan State University
Hometown: Yäter, Lebanon
Why Neurosurgery? The combination of the nervous system with engineering, hands-on skills, and daily personal interactions with patients and their families makes neurosurgery the most exciting field in medicine for me. I have a deep interest in cognitive/psychiatric disorders from watching my grandfather’s battle with Alzheimer’s disease. There is nothing more amazing nor gratifying than helping someone retain or even restore the organ that makes them who they are.

Hobbies: Martial arts, reading, music, programming, cooking, running, and being outdoors as much as possible
Clinical Interests: Functional, skull base.

2018 Fellows

The Department also welcomed two new fellows this year – Drs. Shahid Ahmad and Clay Elswick. Dr. Ahmad will be completing a two-year neurocritical care fellowship, and Dr. Elswick will be completing a one-year spine fellowship.

Dr. Shahid Ahmad
Residency Training: Florida State University
Medical School: Kasturba Medical College, India
Undergraduate: University of Arizona

“I chose to do my fellowship in Neurocritical Care at the University of Michigan due to the extensive training the Neuro ICU fellows obtain. The attendings are very involved in my education and the relationship with the neurosurgeons is not comparable to any other department I’ve been a part of. I’m grateful and blessed to be a part of this program and institution.”

Dr. Clay Elswick
Residency Training: Wayne State University, University of Arkansas
Medical School: University of Texas at Houston
Undergraduate: Baylor University

“I pursued a fellowship at the University of Michigan with Dr. Park to gain increasing expertise in the treatment of all ranges of spinal disorders including degenerative, neoplastic, and traumatic conditions. Through this fellowship, I have developed increased comfort and confidence in minimally invasive and lateral approaches to the spine. I have been impressed with the camaraderie that the faculty and residents share and am blessed to be a part of this unique and great institution.”
Carole Miller 7th Annual Michigan-Ohio State Neuroanatomy Course

Each year, U-M neurosurgery residents have the opportunity to get together with neurosurgery residents from rival Ohio State University for the Carole Miller Neuroanatomy Course – a one-day intensive course that offers residents informative lectures and hands-on surgical training. The course location alternates each year between Ann Arbor and Columbus. This year, it was held on May 5 in Ann Arbor. A number of OSU faculty and residents entered “enemy-territory,” traveling to Ann Arbor to attend the course – now in its seventh year. After a day full of engaging lectures and hands-on surgical training led by Drs. Cormac Maher, Dan Orringer, and Aditya Pandey, residents from both programs enjoyed a barbecue and friendly softball scrimmage.

15th Annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament in New York City

The 15th Annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament – which benefits the Neurosurgery Research and Education Foundation (NREF) – took place in NYC’s Central Park on June 9 this year. A total of 40 teams competed in this year’s tournament.

The 2018 U-M Department of Neurosurgery’s team included several faculty members – Drs. Cormac Maher, Nick Szerlip, and Craig Williamson – as well NICU fellow Dr. Larry Morgan and eight residents:

PGY 6: Todd Hollon, “Coach” Brandon Smith, and Jay Nathan
PGY 5: Yamaan Saadeh
PGY 4: Tom Yee
PGY 2: Sreavanth Koduri and Mike Strong

This year’s tournament raised over $125,000 for NREF neuro-oncology research fellowships.

5th Annual U-M Resident Research Symposium

The 5th Annual Neurosurgery Resident Research Symposium was held on May 11 this year. Dr. WilliamCouldwell from the University of Utah served as the honored guest and Julian T. Hoff Visiting Professor during the symposium.

Dr. Couldwell spent the first half of the day with the residents reviewing case presentations; residents then presented their research in the afternoon. Presentations were scored by the faculty in attendance.

Drs. Todd Hollon (PGY-6) and Luis Savastano (PGY-7) were chosen as co-winners of the Crosby Basic Science Research Award, which is awarded for the best basic science presentation(s). Dr. Drew Wilkinson (PGY-7) was chosen as the recipient of the Chandler Clinical Research Award, which is awarded for the best clinical research presentation.

The 2019 Neurosurgery Resident Research Symposium will be held on May 10, 2019. Dr. Robert Harbaugh of Penn State University will serve as our honored guest as well as the Elizabeth Crosby Visiting Professor.

Each year, the Resident Research Symposium stimulates and promotes the academic productivity of our residents, and brings together research and clinical colleagues in neurosurgery.
Resident Honors & Awards
U-M Neurosurgery residents continue to receive many prestigious awards and honors for their clinical and academic excellence; 2018 was no exception. Notable achievements from the 2018 academic year include but are not limited to those listed below:

Amy Bruzek, MD
- Making a Difference Award, 2018

Kevin Chen, MD
- University of Michigan Learning Environment Task Force recognition/honor given to those who are committed to bettering the learning environment through excellence in professionalism and teaching
- Max Peet Resident Teaching Award, 2018
- John E. McDaidly Resident Leadership Award, 2018
- Began fellowship in functional neurosurgery at Stanford, 2018-2019 academic year

Todd Hollon, MD
- CNS Quarterly Executive Editorial Board, Congress of Neurological Surgeons, 2015-present
- American Association of Neurological Surgeons Ronald L. Bitterman Award on Brain Tumor Research, 2018
- Crosby Basic Science Research Award, Resident Research Symposium, Department of Neurosurgery, University of Michigan, 2018

Elyne Kahn, MD
- John E. McDaidly Resident Leadership Award, 2018
- Began fellowship in spine surgery at the Cleveland Clinic, 2018-2019 academic year

Sri Khalsa, MD
- Awarded Neurology T32 training grant, 2018-2019 academic year
- Making a Difference Award, 2018

Sreanthi Koduri, MD
- Nominated for the Arnold G. Cowen Resident Teaching Award, Department of Surgery, University of Michigan
- Making a Difference Award, 2018

Jay Nathan, MD
- Charles Kurz Scholar Award from the Joint Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves, 2018
- Council of State Neurosurgical Societies Socioscientific Fellowship, 2018-2019
- Resident Travel Award for American College of Surgeons Leadership and Advocacy Summit, 2018
- American Association of Neurological Surgeons Representative for Medicare/MACRA Episode-Based Cost Measure Development, 2018
- United States Senate, Health Policy Fellowship, August-October, 2018
- Appointed to three-year term as senior resident/associate liaison to the Health Policy and Advocacy Group (HPAG) by the Board of Governors of the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress, October, 2018

Luis Savastano, MD
- 2017-2019 CNS Resident Fellow Leadership Program, Congress of Neurological Surgeons
- Pryor-Hale Award (first place) of the Michigan Business Challenge, University of Michigan, 2018
- Elisabeth Crosby Basic and Translational Science Award, Neurosurgery Resident Research Symposium, University of Michigan, 2018

Brandon Smith, MD
- Outstanding Oral Presentation, AANS/CNS Spine Section Meeting, 2018
- Making a Difference Award, 2018

Drew Wilkinson, MD
- 2018 Chandler Clinical Research Award, Resident Research Symposium, Department of Neurosurgery, University of Michigan
- American Association of Neurological Surgeons First Place Pediatric E-Poster Award, 2018

Catherine Ziats, MD
- American Association of Neurosurgeons First Place Pediatric E-Poster Award, 2018

2017 American Academy of Neurological Surgery Annual Meeting
- Smita Bhargava, MD
- Todd Hollon, MD
- Deep convolutional neural networks provide rapid diagnosis of fresh brain tumor specimens imaged with stimulated Raman histology
- Jay Nathan, MD
- Initiating chemoradiation within 4 weeks of index craniotomy is associated with shorter survival in high-grade gliomas
- 2017 AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery Annual Meeting
- Houston, TX
- Jacob Joseph, MD
- Elevated markers of brain injury as a result of clinically asymptomatic high-acceleration head impacts in high school football athletes
- Catherine Ziats, MD
- Abdominal reflex in synnyrgoma is related to spine size, location, and histology
- 2017 Congress of Neurological Surgery Annual Meeting
- Boston, MA
- Jacob Joseph, MD
- Online resources provide inconsistent return to play instructions following concussion
- Elyne Kahn, MD
- Variations in payments for spine surgery episodes of care: Implications for episode-based bundled payment
- Sree Khalsa, MD
- Morphometric and volumetric comparison of symptomatic and asymptomatic Chiai Malformation Type 1
- Brandon Smith, MD
- Impact of expandable interbody cage devices on coronal sagittal alignment after corpectomy
- Drew Wilkinson, MD
- Obstetric management and maternal outcomes of childbirth among patients with Chiari Malformation Type 1

2017 Society for NeuroOncology Annual Meeting
- San Francisco, CA
- Todd Hollon, MD
- Rapid accurate intraoperative diagnosis of pediatric brain tumors using stimulated Raman histology
- Frankel-CVC Cardiovascular Imaging Collaborative Award, University of Michigan, 2018
- 2017 Crosby Basic Science Research Award, Resident Research Symposium, Department of Neurosurgery, University of Michigan

Dr. Wilkinson has extensively contributed to the field of orthopaedic surgery through his research and education. He has been involved in multiple studies focusing on the impact of expandable and fixed interbody cages on coronal sagittal alignment after corpectomy. His work has been presented at several national meetings, including the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, where he discussed the relationship between expandable interbody cages and post-operative sagittal alignment.

Brandon Smith, MD, MS
- Led a study on the relationship between high-acceleration head impacts and long-term cognitive outcomes after pediatric brain injury

2018 American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress
- Boston, MA
- Jay Nathan, MD
- Persistent opioid prescribing in adult patients with spinal deformity undergoing open or non-operative treatment

2018 American Society for Peripheral Nerve Annual Meeting
- Phoenix, AZ
- Brandon Smith, MD, MS
- Poor patient understanding of expectations in peripheral nerve surgery: ameliorated by written surgical educational media

2018 Congress of Neurological Surgeons Annual Meeting
- Houston, TX
- David Atwal, MD, MD, BS SFN, CCMT, and DRO2 Polymorphisms and ability to return to work in adult patients with low- and high-grade glioma
- Todd Hollon, MD
- Rapid intraoperative differentiation of pseudopodiation and glioma reoccurrence using stimulated Raman histology
- Jacob Joseph, MD
- Pulpillary changes after nonconsecutive high-acceleration head impacts on high school football athletes
- Brandon Smith, MD, MS
- The correlation of GOD and the 4-quantile scales for pain and function from PROMIS

Yamaan Saadeh, MD
- Relationship of psoas muscle volume to survival in operative metastatic spine tumor patients
- Drew Wilkinson, MD
- Increased rate of subarachnoid hemorrhage in polysonic kidney disease despite screening

2018 Michigan Association of Neurological Surgeons Annual Meeting
- Thompsonville, MI
- Drew Wilkinson, MD
- Anesthesists in autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease; high rates of de novo formation and screening failures

2018 North American Skull Base Society Annual Meeting
- Cormont, CA
- Todd Hollon, MD
- Visual acuity outcome in patients with acute pituitary apoplexy after hyperacute transsphenoidal surgery
- Predicting early postoperative outcomes after pituitary adenoma surgery using a machine learning approach

2018 Society for Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery Annual Forum
- Las Vegas, NV
- Yamaan Saadeh, MD
- Comparison of segmental lordosis and global spinopelvic alignment after single-level/lateral lumbar interbody fusion or transformative lateral interbody fusion

2018 Society for NeuroOncology Annual Meeting
- New Orleans, LA
- Todd Hollon, MD
- Multiscale, predictive validation of automated intraoperative neuroimaging using stimulated Raman histology and convolutional neural networks

Resident Presentations at National & Regional Meetings: July 2017 - December 2018

Our resident trainees continue to be productive with respect to their research and scholarly activities. Over the past 18 months, the resident cadre has given an impressive 36 talks at national meetings across the country.
Welcome New Faculty Member, Dr. Osama Kashlan

Dr. Osama Kashlan was appointed Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery in September. Dr. Kashlan returns to the University of Michigan, where he completed his neurosurgical residency in 2017, to begin his neurosurgical career. Dr. Kashlan attended the Georgia Institute of Technology for his undergraduate studies, where he studied chemical and biomolecular engineering. He subsequently obtained his medical degree from Emory University.

He completed his residency in neurosurgery here at the University of Michigan in 2017 before returning to Emory University for further training in spine surgery. While a resident at U of M, Dr. Kashlan also obtained a master of public health degree in epidemiology. Since completing his spine fellowship earlier this year, Dr. Kashlan has returned to U of M where his practice focuses on all aspects of spinal disease with a special interest in minimally-invasive spinal surgery.

Anda-Alexandra Calinescu, MD, PhD, was promoted to Research Assistant Professor, Department of Neurosurgery.

Neera Chaudhary, MD, was promoted to Clinical Associate Professor, Departments of Radiology, Neurology, and Neurosurgery.

Kyle Sheehan, MD, was promoted to Clinical Assistant Professor, Departments of Neurosurgery and Neurology.

Osama Kashlan, MD, was appointed Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Neurosurgery and Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.
Faculty Awards & Accomplishments

Maria Castro, PhD, R.C. Schneider Collegiate Professor of Neurosurgery, received the 2018 Dean’s Basic Science Research Award. She was also awarded a grant from the NIH, Interactions between the tumor cells and the neo-vascular microenvironment in mutant IDH1 gliomas: implications for therapeutics, on which she is the Principal Investigator (and on which Dr. Shawn Hervey-Jumper, a former U-M faculty who is currently with UCSF, is a Co-Investigator). Dr. Castro was appointed to a 2-year term as Chair of the Clinical Neuroimmunology and Brain Tumors (CNRT) NIH Study Section, of which she has been a permanent member since 2016. She is an invited panelist for the Sunrise Session, Brain Tumor Stem Cells as Drivers of Therapeutic Resistance, at this year’s SNO conference. She was appointed Chair of the Planning Committee and Co-Chair of the Immune Response Symposium for 2019 ASGCT 2019 Annual Meeting, and is Chair of the annual meeting for the 2019 Translational Research Cancer Centers Consortium (TRCCC).

Emily Levin, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery, passed the oral board certification exam in November of 2017 and thus became a certified Diplomate of the American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS). Dr. Levin also gave a talk at the 2018 CNS Annual Meeting on data privacy in implanted neurosurgical devices.

Pedro Lowenstein, MD, PhD, Richard C. Schneider Collegiate Professor of Neurosurgery, will serve as a permanent member of the NIH Gene and Drug Delivery Systems (GDD) Study Section through 2023. He participated in the NCI Cancer Center Support Grant’s Site Review of the Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center. He was also elected to the rank of American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Fellow in 2018 for distinguished contributions to the advancement of the medical sciences, health care and public health.

George Madsen, MD, PhD, Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research and Director of the Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research (MICHR), who holds a joint appointment of Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery, was elected to the National Academy of Medicine of the National Academies (formerly called the Institute of Medicine) in 2018 in recognition of his major contributions to the advancement of the medical sciences, health care and public health.

John McGillinuddy, MD, Professor of Neurosurgery, received the Meritorious Member Award – Peripheral Nerve Surgery for “dedicated service to the specialty of neurological surgery” at the 2018 meeting of the AANS/CNS Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves in March.

Karin Muraszko, MD, Julian T. Holf Professor and Chair, was voted to be the 100th President of the Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS) she will be the first-ever female president of the SNS, which is the oldest neurological society in the world. Her term will begin in 2019 and will last for one year, culminating in the 2020 SNS meeting in Philadelphia, PA.

Mark Oppenlander, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, was accepted as a Candidate Fellow of the Sciossia Research Society for a five-year term in October with an effective membership date of Jan. 1, 2019.

Daniel Oreninger, MD, Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery, received the 2018 Dean’s Award for Innovation and Commercialization.

Awards & Accomplishments

George Madsen, MD, PhD, Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research and Director of the Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research (MICHR), who holds a joint appointment of Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery, was elected to the National Academy of Medicine of the National Academies (formerly called the Institute of Medicine) in 2018 in recognition of his major contributions to the advancement of the medical sciences, health care and public health.

John McGillinuddy, MD, Professor of Neurosurgery, received the Meritorious Member Award – Peripheral Nerve Surgery for “dedicated service to the specialty of neurological surgery” at the 2018 meeting of the AANS/CNS Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves in March.

Karin Muraszko, MD, Julian T. Holf Professor and Chair, was voted to be the 100th President of the Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS) she will be the first-ever female president of the SNS, which is the oldest neurological society in the world. Her term will begin in 2019 and will last for one year, culminating in the 2020 SNS meeting in Philadelphia, PA.

Mark Oppenlander, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, was accepted as a Candidate Fellow of the Sciossia Research Society for a five-year term in October with an effective membership date of Jan. 1, 2019.

Daniel Oreninger, MD, Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery, received the 2018 Dean’s Award for Innovation and Commercialization.

Alumni News & Notes

Nicole Bentley, MD, (2017) has been appointed Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama Birmingham and Director of the Deep Brain Stimulation Program.

Robert Dempsey, MD, (1983) Manscher Award Chairman of Neurological Surgery, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, was presented with the 2018 Medical Student Teaching Award in recognition of his role as an outstanding educator and mentor by the Society of Neurological Surgeons.

Arnold Etame, MD, PhD, (2012) Neurological Surgeon and Scientist, Moffitt Cancer Center, Assistant Professor of Oncology, University of South Florida, Morsani College of Medicine, passed the oral board certification exam in November of 2017 and became certified Diplomate of the American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS).


Vishal Gala, MD, MPH, (2006), was appointed Chief of Neurosurgery for Kaiser Permanente Washington in Seattle, WA in May, 2018. His department at Kaiser Permanente functions as the neurosurgical hub for the entire system throughout the state of Washington.

Steven Giannotta, MD, (1978) Chair of Neurological Surgery, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, recently completed a 10-year term as Secretary/Treasurer of CAST (Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training) under the aegis of the Society of Neurological Surgeons. Prior to stepping down permanently, he will serve CAST for one year as the delegate for Open Vascular Neurosurgery.

Nicole Bentley, MD, (2017) has been appointed Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama Birmingham and Director of the Deep Brain Stimulation Program.

Robert Dempsey, MD, (1983) Manscher Award Chairman of Neurological Surgery, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, was presented with the 2018 Medical Student Teaching Award in recognition of his role as an outstanding educator and mentor by the Society of Neurological Surgeons.

Arnold Etame, MD, PhD, (2012) Neurological Surgeon and Scientist, Moffitt Cancer Center, Assistant Professor of Oncology, University of South Florida, Morsani College of Medicine, passed the oral board certification exam in November of 2017 and became certified Diplomate of the American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS).


Vishal Gala, MD, MPH, (2006), was appointed Chief of Neurosurgery for Kaiser Permanente Washington in Seattle, WA in May, 2018. His department at Kaiser Permanente functions as the neurosurgical hub for the entire system throughout the state of Washington.

Steven Giannotta, MD, (1978) Chair of Neurological Surgery, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, recently completed a 10-year term as Secretary/Treasurer of CAST (Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training) under the aegis of the Society of Neurological Surgeons. Prior to stepping down permanently, he will serve CAST for one year as the delegate for Open Vascular Neurosurgery.
U-M Neurosurgery Centennial Celebration

This year – 2018 – marked a momentous milestone for the U-M Department of Neurosurgery. This year marked our centennial anniversary and the culmination of 100 years of world-class neurosurgical services at the University of Michigan.

To commemorate the occasion, the Department hosted a three-day celebration in September, which brought together U-M Neurosurgery alumni, faculty, residents, and staff members, as well as family and friends, to remember the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future of U-M Neurosurgery. Alumni from all across the country and spanning the decades journeyed back to Ann Arbor to take part in the celebration.

The Centennial Celebration kicked off on Thursday, Sept. 13 with a welcome reception at the Big House and Jack Roth Stadium Club, during which guests had the opportunity to tour the locker rooms, spend time on the football field, and enjoy a performance of the Michigan Fanfare Marching Band. On Friday, Sept. 14 the U-M Neurosurgery: Past, Present, and Future Conference took place at the North Campus Research Complex. The day consisted of a series of interactive talks and presentations by alumni, faculty, and residents on the past, present, and future of the Department. We welcomed renowned neurosurgeon and New York Times bestselling author Henry Marsh, CBE, MA, FRCS, as our keynote speaker for this event. The celebration continued on Friday evening with a gala at the U-M Museum of Art, where alumni, faculty, and residents gathered to enjoy an elegant evening with colleagues and friends. The Centennial Celebration culminated on Saturday, Sept. 15 with a tailgate at the U-M Golf Course Clubhouse, followed by a resounding Wolverines victory over Southern Methodist University on the football field.

“It was an amazing opportunity to reconnect with old friends and colleagues and to show our ‘go blue’ spirit! It was fantastic to see everyone doing so well and looking hardly different from their Michigan days – perhaps a testament to the fact that neurosurgeons are a unique bunch whose lives are too busy to allow time to get old! It was fun to meet the young alumni and current residents and it is clear that they are successfully carrying the Michigan torch to even greater success and achievement! I couldn’t help but think about Dr. Hoff and how very proud he would have been to see so many of his trainees happy and healthy. There is really something special about the ongoing bonds U-M Neurosurgery alum have that I suspect are quite rare among training programs... Overall, a fantastic weekend that I will remember for a long time!”

Judy Gorelick, MD (2001)

“My wife Sue and I greatly enjoyed every aspect of the wonderful Centennial Celebration. The highlight for us was seeing all of our loyal alums making such a huge effort to return for a long weekend of celebration. It literally seemed like our past reappearing with trainees arriving from every decade of our time in Ann Arbor... There are very few neurosurgery training programs that have the privilege of celebrating 100 years and none of them have as much to be proud of as we do at Michigan.”

William Chandler, MD (1977)
Welcome to U-M Neurosurgery!
The Department of Neurosurgery welcomed a number of new staff members this year. Take a moment to get to know your new colleagues.

Nicole Schwartz, Patient Services Assistant
Nicole joined the Department in December of 2017. In her role as Patient Services Assistant in the Adult Clinic, she manages all the patient imaging and provides occasional support to the front desk staff. Prior to joining Michigan Medicine, she worked as an ER registration clerk at Prometheus. Nicole holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Eastern Michigan. Outside of work, she enjoys movies, going up north, and spending time with her husband and son.

Aisha Simmons, Patient Services Intermediate
Aisha joined the Department in October and provides administrative support to Dr. Pandey. Prior to joining the Department, she spent a year in Pediatric Surgery and Urology. Aisha attended the University of Detroit-Mercy and enjoys traveling. She is also a huge Michigan football fan and can often be found at the Big House cheering on the Maize and Blue.

Samantha Stevenson, Call Center Representative
Samantha Stevenson joined the Department in November as a Call Center Representative. She has several years of experience in customer service. Outside of work, Samantha enjoys spending time with her nieces and nephews, trying new restaurants, and karaoke. She is also planning her wedding, which will take place in September of 2020.

Melanie Ward, Medical Assistant
Melanie joined the Adult Clinic as a Medical Assistant in February. She came with five years of experience in the medical field, including managerial experience at Serenity Hospice in Ann Arbor. Melanie has two young sons and enjoys golfing, cooking, and reading.

Peggy Hoag – the Department of Neurosurgery's inaugural recipient of this award this year and was presented with it at the U-M Neurosurgery: Past, Present, and Future Conference, which took place during the department's Centennial Celebration in September. The Department is grateful for Peggy's outstanding service these last 39 years.

Helen Bauer – the Department of Neurosurgery's first inpatient nurse practitioner – retired in March this year. Helen joined the Department of Neurosurgery in 2006 and pioneered the inpatient NP role. She enjoyed teaching and served as a mentor to many of the NPs who joined the department after her. Outside of work, Helen enjoys traveling and spending time at her cabin in northern Michigan. She also enjoys creating glass art (mosaics and pendants), as well as orchestra and opera music; in fact, she frequently udoks at several local theaters. After a long and successful nursing career, Helen is enjoying having more time for these hobbies in retirement, as well as more time to travel and spend time with family.

Elvie Casper – former Neurosurgery Service Lead in the Main OR, retired from Michigan Medicine in October this year. Elvie joined Michigan Medicine in February of 1998 and shortly thereafter began working with Neurosurgery in the OR. She was first a staff nurse, then Service Educator, then Service Lead – a role she held for six years leading up to her retirement. This year, at the Chief Resident Graduation Dinner in June, Elvie was honored with the 2018 "Friend of Neurosurgery Award" which is presented annually to an individual outside of the Department who has been instrumental in teaching our neurosurgical residents.
A new book entitled Off He Goes! and a stuffed elephant named Wimbo are helping reassure Michigan Medicine pediatric patients that they are not alone in their journey with NBPP.


It all started with a unique holiday gift. Dr. Susan Brown, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and Associate Professor of Kinesiology at the U-M School of Kinesiology, had enjoyed collaborating with the faculty and staff of the Brachial Plexus and Peripheral Nerve Program throughout 2017, so a thoughtful holiday gift seemed in order. With a desire to find a memorable gift, Dr. Brown considered contributing to a charitable cause on behalf of the Brachial Plexus Program.

A friend came to mind who had recently sponsored an orphaned elephant through the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust. Dr. Brown took a chance and decided this might be the right gift for her BPP colleagues. However, after a month passed with no response from anyone in the Brachial Plexus Program, she wasn’t so sure. Fortunately, the cause for delay was a lack of awareness, not interest. “The email notification had gone to our generic ‘BP Clinic’ email inbox and had been totally overlooked,” explained Dr. Lynda Yang, Professor of Neurosurgery and Director of the Brachial Plexus and Peripheral Nerve Program.

Once Dr. Yang and her team learned that an orphaned elephant had been sponsored on their behalf, they soon began to enjoy weekly updates about the elephant’s well-being, activities, and child-like antics. A month later while traveling home from a conference in February, 2018, Dr. Yang was on a flight and found herself watching a documentary about the ongoing efforts in Africa to save orphaned elephants. She then found another way to occupy her time – sketching cartoon-like elephants using a drawing app on her phone. Somewhere between the documentary and electronic sketches, the idea for a children’s book for her neonatal brachial plexus patients was born.

Dr. Yang didn’t waste any time in exploring the possibility of making this idea a reality. She called Dr. Don Tomford, Chief Department Administrator, Radiation Oncology, and formerly that of Neurosurgery, on the way home from the airport to see whether his wife, Sue – a retired teacher and grandmother of seven – might be interested in writing the book. Sue was reluctant at first and turned down the offer; a night of sleep changed her mind, however.

“The next morning, I was texting Dr. Yang at 6 a.m. telling her that Sue wanted to write the book after all,” Don explained. On that very day, Sue sat down to write the story of Wimbo, Swahili for “song,” and within just a few hours, the first draft of Off He Goes! was complete. The story chronicles Wimbo’s daily activities with Neonatal Brachial Plexus Palsy. Despite having NBPP, Wimbo participates in many activities throughout his day: he gets himself dressed, eats breakfast, rides his scooter, swims, eats ice cream, dances, builds a fort, reads a book, goes to sleep, and dreams of the fun day he had.

With a completed draft of the story, Dr. Yang began working on the illustrations. She created the electronic drawings of Wimbo while Yuen-Ching Lin – her mother and a professional artist – painted the background watercolor illustrations.

As the story and illustrations were finalized, and the publishing process began, Dr. Yang enlisted Jason Colman, Director of The University of Michigan Press, and Patrick Goussy, Senior Digital Publishing Coordinator, to publish both the hard copy and electronic versions. Subsequently, Don secured funding through Loree Collett, former Associate Hospital Director of Mott Children’s Hospital, to support the project.

The idea to accompany the book with a stuffed animal version of Wimbo was born at this time as well. Multiple prototypes were created until Wimbo was just right. 1,800 copies of the book were printed, and 530 stuffed animal versions of Wimbo were hand-made.

The books and stuffed animals were delivered to Dr. Yang and her team in late November, at which time they began distributing them to their patients.

“The whole goal of this project has been to help our patients,” Dr. Yang said. “Because Neonatal Brachial Plexus Palsy is relatively uncommon, our patients can sometimes feel like they are alone or can’t do anything, but that is not the case. Wimbo is meant to show them that they can do anything that other kids can do. Wimbo is just like them.”

During the early summer months of 2018, the story and illustrations were finalized, and the publishing process began. Dr. Yang enticed Jason Colman, Director of The University of Michigan Press, and Patrick Goussy, Senior Digital Publishing Coordinator, to publish both the hard copy and electronic versions. Subsequently, Don secured funding through Loree Collett, former Associate Hospital Director of Mott Children’s Hospital, to support the project.

Dr. Cormac Maher, Professor of Neurosurgery and Michigan Medicine Pediatric Neurosurgeon, suggested that Wimbo have a “Brachial Plexus arm” so that children with this same condition could relate to him that much more. Each drawing of Wimbo shows a different deficit that children with NBPP might experience.

The U-M Department of Neurosurgery’s Brain Tumor Support Group celebrated its 25th anniversary this year. For 25 years, this support group has served as a lifeline to many of our brain tumor patients, providing invaluable support at a very scary time in their lives. The group was started in 1993 by Michadyn Page (now retired), who was a clinical nurse specialist in Neuro-Oncology. The support group meets on the third Tuesday of each month and holds an annual picnic for members and their families in June, as well as a holiday party each December. Many group members also participate in a 5K fundraising walk each May sponsored by the American Brain Tumor Association. Charlotte Gunden, NP, has been working with the group for 23 of its 25 years in existence; and Liz Walkowiak, NP, has worked with the group for the last 10 years.

Group member Tim Egan is an 8.5-year survivor of Stage-4 GBM. He was a student at Michigan State University when he was diagnosed with a brain tumor that ultimately led to blindness. Here, he shares about his experience and involvement with the Brain Tumor Support Group.

I first got involved with BTSG when I attended a holiday dinner in December of 2013. The group helped me to build a new identity that included strength and survivorship amidst a sense of belonging. I reached a point where I was starting to help others and ended up co-facilitating the group for a couple of years. This experience led to my Master of Social Work degree from U of M and a passion for Psych-Oncology. At this point, everything I do is to help patients and families whose brain tumor experiences have begun more recently. With that said, helping others assures that my own brain tumor experience will not end until I’ve turned it into what I want it to be... a positive rebound full of purpose and growth.
Advanced Technology Helps 19-Year-Old Recover from Massive Stroke

How a cutting-edge procedure known as endovascular thrombectomy resulted in a Michigan woman’s remarkable stroke recovery.

When 19-year-old Kristen Jeffries had a massive stroke while driving, she could have died or been severely disabled. But advancements in science, coupled with her determination to preserve, ultimately led to a positive outcome.

Jeffries’ ordeal began on a cold January morning as she made her way to class at her community college. Jeffries remembers feeling a bit disoriented as she drove along the highway, eventually veering off the road and hitting a mile marker as she lost consciousness. She recalls going in and out of consciousness as she tried to grasp what was happening to her. Unable to move her left leg and arm, she determined to enable Jeffries to drive her car to the next exit, where she parked on the shoulder.

The Howell, Michigan, resident found her cellphone and called her mother, but her words were incomprehensible. When Jeffries’ father called minutes later, she was able to utter the highway exit number on a nearby sign. Fifteen minutes later, emergency responders were at her car door along with the familiar face of her father. With stroke-like symptoms, Jeffries was rushed to the nearby Michigan Medicine emergency room, where neurosurgeon Adriya S. Pandey, MD, and the stroke team were assembled. The diagnosis was a massive ischemic stroke: “Jeffries’ case is remarkable and extremely rare because she is so young,” says Pandey. “She was paralyzed on her left side and was unable to speak or understand due to a blood clot that was blocking the main blood vessel going to the right side of her brain.”

Removing the clot

As Jeffries would discover later, she was brought to the right place for treatment. The University of Michigan is a designated Comprehensive Stroke Center providing the most advanced medical and surgical therapies available. In her case, endovascular thrombectomy, a minimally invasive surgical method to trap and remove debilitating blood clots with technology known as a stent retriever, would prove to be a lifesaver. “An endovascular thrombectomy was performed while she was awake, and improvement in her condition could be appreciated within minutes of the procedure,” Pandey says.

The stroke’s cause

Although noninvasive, the cause of Jeffries’ stroke may have been a clot that originated in her heart due to a cardiomyopathy condition. As a 3-year-old, Jeffries was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer known as Ewing sarcoma in her left chest wall. She underwent chemotherapy and radiation treatments in 2003, which led to chemotherapy-induced cardiomyopathy. “Cardiomyopathy prevents the heart from pumping with force, often leading to the formation of clots that can travel to the brain blood vessels and cause devastating strokes,” says Pandey.

An endovascular thrombectomy involves inserting a catheter into an artery in the leg or arm, says Pandey. “Through that, we thread another catheter up to the location of the clot. Then we pass a stent through the catheter into the clot. The stent ‘traps’ the clot, and the stent and clot are then pulled out together through the catheter,” Jeffries remembers feeling better almost immediately after the procedure. “I could talk and move my left arm and leg again,” she says.

Although she will likely remain on blood thinners for the rest of her life, Jeffries is back to a routine that includes running and strength training. She’s also determined to return to college for a degree in psychology. Pandey credits scientific advancements, including endovascular thrombectomy, in helping thousands of stroke patients like Jeffries live independent lives. In the past, he says, “Such strokes would have disabled patients for the remainder of their lives.”

Know the Symptoms and Risk Factors of Brain Aneurysm, Survivor Urges

Donna Poole considers herself fortunate after surviving a brain aneurysm. To help others learn from her experience, she’s working to spread knowledge.

Six years ago, Donna Poole was diagnosed with a brain aneurysm during a follow-up exam for a stroke she had suffered three years earlier. Due to unusual symptoms, including pain behind her right eye and esoteric migraines, Poole was referred by her family doctor to a specialist who discovered the aneurysm. Michigan Medicine neurosurgeon B. Gregory Thompson, MD, performed surgery to “clip” the aneurysm. During surgical clipping, small metal clips are placed around the base of the aneurysm, essentially depriving the aneurysm of its blood supply and preventing rupture. Poole was cleared to go home two days later.

Since then, the 70-year-old has remained a diligent promoter of brain aneurysm awareness—not only during Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month each September, but every chance she gets. “I speak for those whose lives ended with a ruptured aneurysm,” Poole says. “I speak for those who lived but can no longer talk, read, write, walk or see. I speak for caregivers too weary to talk in any language but tears. I speak for you, because yours may be the next voice silenced.”

For more patient stories, please visit michiganhealthblog.org.
Positivity & Family Inspire Post-Brain Tumor Recovery

Constant headaches brought a mother to Michigan Medicine, where a brain tumor was removed. Now, she’s back on her feet.

It’s a busy fall for Rebekah Cobbin. She’s sending her daughter, Amiyah, off to third grade, starting a new semester of business courses, working as a vault teller for an armored car company and, as always, making plans for quality time with her family and church.

Imagine doing it all with a constant headache. That was once a reality for the 30-year-old Cobbin, who spent much of her 20s in pain and confusion. “I did everyday life with a migraine,” she says. That pain was amplified by uncertainty a reality for the 30-year-old Cobbin, who spent much of her vision and motor function were right over the tumor, Orringer says.

Watchful waiting

When she first came to Michigan Medicine in 2016 after being told she wasn’t has slight headaches, but not every day. What hasn’t changed is the positive attitude that has gotten her through every trial along the way. Says Cobbin: “Gods, it feels really good just to live life without a migraine!”

For more patient stories, please visit michiganhealthblog.org.

Laser Ablation Ends 12-Year Journey with Epilepsy

Rob Coleman had to sacrifice a lot while dealing with seizures, but after a successful laser ablation, the computer programmer is done planning around his epilepsy. After 12 years, Rob Coleman is breaking up with his neurologist. The Michigan Medicine patient is also back to being his own chauffeur, letting his teenage son off the hook. Coleman, 44, hasn’t had a known seizure in more than a year, since his July 2017 laser ablation for temporal lobe epilepsy. And as he taps off his final seizure medication this winter, it’s back to a full life that had been interrupted for more than a decade.

A chance to stop the seizures

It had been a while since Coleman could drive, and he was still working from home, so he and his wife decided to see if LITT would stop his epilepsy and get him back to his former, pre-seizure lifestyle. “I thought, if the worst that could happen is the seizures are still there, I at least tried,” Coleman says. “If it works, everything’s great, if not, I haven’t really lost anything.” Levin, Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery at Michigan Medicine, started planning his LITT procedure. Because all brains are different, so are all brain surgeries.

"Rob's seizures were coming from the left temporal lobe," Levin explains. “We also had to figure out where his speech and memory functions happen.” She plotted a route to the source of the seizures that wouldn’t damage those normal areas of Coleman’s brain. Coleman was able to go, getting MRIs throughout the day, while Levin operated on his brain for about an hour, only making an incision smaller than a quarter-inch. He was home the next day, resting for a couple of weeks, and back to work in his home office the next month.

Year One without a seizure

The epilepsy team tests patients after surgery to determine their risk for future seizures. “The tests didn’t indicate Rob was at risk for future seizures,” Levin says. “He’s been seizure-free ever since.”

For more patient stories, please visit michiganhealthblog.org.
New Algorithm Decodes Spine Oncology Treatment

Experts explain their approach to treating patients who are living longer with cancer that has spread to the spine, as the options for metastatic spine tumors increase.

Any kind of cancer can spread to the spine, yet two Michigan Medicine physician-scientists who treat these patients describe a scarcity of guidance for effectively providing care and minimizing pain. Daniel Spratt, MD, and U-M neurosurgeon Nicholas Szerlip, MD, co-founders of U-M multidisciplinary spine oncology clinic, recently led a study, published in The Lancet Oncology, that provides a guide to the management of spine metastases on the basis of a review of 243 existing studies on the topic.

First-author Dr. Spratt says spinal metastases are commonly managed without integrated care. A patient might see a variety of subspecialists. Recommendations could range from pain management to aggressive treatment, and referring providers don’t always know whether or when to refer a spine oncology expert may be necessary. “Spine oncology is such a multidisciplinary pathology,” says senior author Dr. Szerlip. “We wanted to form a transparent understanding so everyone, from the oncologists and primary care providers to fellow neurosurgeons who aren’t specifically trained on this, could lean on one algorithm in language we can all understand.”

Spratt describes the algorithm, a report from the researchers’ new International Spine Oncology Consortium, as a step-by-step method designed to help comprehensively manage these patients, as their disease progresses. The goal is to help providers treat the patient and not just the tumor. “Most of the frameworks that have been available prior to this have focused on just surgery or just radiation,” Spratt says. “This algorithm integrates all of the specialties together, including PM&R, radiology and medical oncology, to provide a much more personalized treatment approach.”

A different approach

Cancer can spread widely through the body, but spinal metastasis throws a wrench in typical treatment plans because of the sensitivity of the spinal cord. Quality of life can worsen much faster. “A spinal metastasis causes a lot of pain,” Dr. Szerlip says. “People can live with metastases in other areas of the body without much discomfort, but bone pain hurts a lot, and the ability to treat a tumor near the spinal cord is less. Surgeons on other bones are much easier than surgeons on the spine, and less morbidity.” A popular treatment path is surgical decrompression of the tumor, followed by radiation to control the cancer. Spratt is particularly excited about offering spine stereotactic body radiotherapy (SBRT), a form of high-dose radiation that requires just one to three treatments. “If you look back 10 or 20 years, you’d see people with spine metastasis lived in the order of months,” Dr. Spratt says. “Now, with new systemic therapies, targeted therapies and immunotherapies, it may be years.” That means there is more opportunity to treat the cancer in a spine oncology clinic, to manage the patient’s comfort and prevent painful and debilitating compression that can result from a tumor pressing on the spinal cord.

Szerlip says not long ago, physicians were much less likely to send a spinal metastasis patient to a neurosurgeon because of the high morbidity of surgery. Now, he says, spine oncology clinics can offer additional options and surgical procedures with less morbidity than in the past.

A long-term project

The algorithm that leads to these treatment decisions takes the user through a series of steps starting with an assessment of life expectancy. Then, the systemic burden of the disease is considered, followed by a calculation of how controlled the disease is, and then a consideration of systemic treatment options. However, Szerlip says much more data are needed to continue to develop best practices and prove that current efforts are most effective. “Identifying which patients should get these treatments is also difficult,” he says. The researchers are working with oncologists to help determine who will live long enough to benefit from these procedures.

Patients are living longer

“Even without symptoms of concussion, researchers studying high school football players found two elevated biomarkers that are associated with brain injury.”

If you look back 10 or 20 years, you’d see people with spine metastasis lived in the order of months. “Now, with new systemic therapies, targeted therapies and immunotherapies, it may be years.” That means there is more opportunity to treat the cancer in a spine oncology clinic, to manage the patient’s comfort and prevent painful and debilitating compression that can result from a tumor pressing on the spinal cord.

Szerlip says not long ago, physicians were much less likely to send a spinal metastasis patient to a neurosurgeon because of the high morbidity of surgery. Now, he says, spine oncology clinics can offer additional options and surgical procedures with less morbidity than in the past.

A long-term project

The algorithm that leads to these treatment decisions takes the user through a series of steps starting with an assessment of life expectancy. Then, the systemic burden of the disease is considered, followed by a calculation of how controlled the disease is, and then a consideration of systemic treatment options. However, Szerlip says much more data are needed to continue to develop best practices and prove that current efforts are most effective. “Identifying which patients should get these treatments is also difficult,” he says. The researchers are working with oncologists to help determine who will live long enough to benefit from these procedures.

He says basic science research will play an important role in the continued development of treatments for spine metastases, because they develop differently than other metastases.


For more research stories, please visit michiganhealthlab.org.

Clinical Trial Support Unit (CTSU) Update

The Department of Neurosurgery was joined with the departments of Neurology and Dermatology to create the Neurosciences and Sensory (NSS) CTSU in 2016. Our CTSU has now been born and running for two years and is fully operational. We offer pre-clearance, support, post-clearance, post-award support, trial coordination, data acquisition and management, regulatory support, statistical support, and publication support. The Neurosurgery support unit consists of the following individuals. Dr. Parag Patil, CTSU Medical Co-Director; Karen Sagoon, Manager and Clinic Trial Study Coordinator; Jenny Bell, Clinical Study Coordinator, and Katherine Wood, Pre/Post award. Additionally, Donna Gauza, Research Process Senior Manager in the Crosby Lab, and Angela Collada, Research Administrative Specialist in the Castro-Lowenstein Lab, provide Pre/Post award support in certain instances. Katherine Kerley serves as the NSS-CTSU Administrator, overseeing the unit’s business operations. Both Jenny Bell and Katherine Wood are now new additions to the team as new awards are added into the CTSU.

For more research stories, please visit michiganhealthlab.org.

“Do not know if the elevation was a result of participation in football or running around the field wearing helmets. In addition, we don’t know how much a biomarker has to go up for it to be bad.”

We’re trying to understand how biomarkers work and which ones work at certain points of time—two-hours post-injury or three days post-injury,” Broglio says. “Plus, not everyone responds in the same way to concussion. In addition, we haven’t compared the biomarkers in other athletes, such as swimmers, who don’t have high-impact blows to their heads.” Broglio cautions that it is too early to diagnose brain injury based on just these two biomarkers. “We don’t think it will be a single biomarker or combination of five biomarkers. There may be a dozen biomarkers for brain injury.”

Key takeaways

In the meantime, coaches and athletic trainers are advised to play it safe and consider sideline the athlete who takes a big hit for the rest of the game. “We see evidence that those big hits, obvious to everyone in the crowd, may cause problems,” Joseph says. Also, large-scale prospective trials are needed that look at the whole host of biomarkers, the profile for each and which can be used at which time points. Greater understanding about brain injury biomarkers could lead, for example, to a point-of-care device that could be used on the sidelines to take a blood test.


For more research stories, please visit michiganhealthlab.org.
showed us that there is purpose. The more money you can give, the brighter that light gets. “This becomes a light for you. It was definitely a guide out of a terrible time for us and tissue during surgery. When reflecting on giving as part of the healing process, Dave says, to help surgeons visualize cancer cells and accurately distinguish between tumor and normal additional therapeutic strategies to target cancer stem cells in brain tumors, and technology focuses on immunotoxin therapy for brain tumors, the biology of brain tumors, developing The Moore family supports innovative pediatric brain tumor research in the Department of He had a deep love for the University of Michigan and we hope that with these funds, people receive the same level of care – or even better – than he received.” The Moore family supports innovative pediatric brain tumor research in the Department of Neurosurgery, which is spearheaded by department chair Karin Muraszko, MD. This research focuses on immunotoxin therapy for brain tumors, the biology of brain tumors, developing additional therapeutic strategies to target cancer stem cells in brain tumors, and technology to help surgeons visualize cancer cells and accurately distinguish between tumor and normal tissue during surgery. When reflecting on giving as part of the healing process, Dave says, “This becomes a light for you. It was definitely a guide out of a terrible time for us and showed us that there is purpose. The more money you can give, the brighter that light gets.”

**Why We Give: Donor Spotlight**

Dave and Kate Moore donate to the Pediatric Brain Tumor Research Fund each month in memory of their son, Jake, who passed away in 2011 at age 13 from an ependymoma. They give because they are extremely grateful for the care they received while Jake was undergoing treatment at Mott. It is their goal and life-long commitment to support research aimed at finding a cure for this devastating form of cancer, so that other children and families don’t have to face the same challenges that they did. “Are there other things we could be doing with our time or money? Certainly, but this is what Jake would want. It’s a way to honor and remember him, and this is absolutely what he would want us to do,” says Dave.

The family consistently keeps the Department of Neurosurgery in mind when interacting with friends and family, even providing giving information at birthday parties and funerals. “If there’s some small way we can help improve others’ experience and care, that’s what we want to do,” says Dave. Kate agrees, saying, “We give knowing Jake would be proud of us, and that’s important to us. He was a very logical and unselfish person, and this is what he would want. He had a deep love for the University of Michigan and we hope that with these funds, people receive the same level of care – or even better – than he received.”

The Centennial Celebration Campaign has raised $249,860 from alumni, donors, and friends. We are excited to boast 100% participation from current residents as well as 16.5% from our neurosurgery resident alumni. A special thank you to each and every individual who made a donation to support our residents.

**PLATINUM**
- Karin M. Muraszko, MD and Scott K. Van Sweringen
- W. Christopher Fox, MD (2010) and Family

**GOLD**
- Barun Brahma, MD (Residency, 2007)
- David G. Kline, MD (Residency, 1967)
- James E. Raxis, MD (Residency, 1976)
- John A. Feldermeier, MD (Residency, 1989)
- Khoi D. Thue, MD (Residency, 2014)
- Michael N. Bucci, MD (Residency, 1989)
- Saeed M. Farhadi, MD (Residency, 1964)

**BLUE**
- Prem Swarup & Vidya Vati Chawla Resident Education Fund
- Joseph & Irene Muraszko Resident Education Fund
- Jen & Chris Fox Family Resident Education Fund
- Prem Swapna & Vinay Vatsa Resident Education Fund

If you would like to learn more about these initiatives or are interested in making a gift to support the program, please contact our development officers. Thank you for celebrating this incredible milestone with us. We look forward to seeing what we can accomplish in the next 100 years as our amazing team of physicians, scientists, administrators, donors, alumni, and friends all continue working together to change the landscape of neurosurgery.

**Connect with the Development Team**

The Michigan Medicine Office of Development supports the fundraising priorities of faculty and staff with the goal of accelerating breakthrough discovery, transforming patient care, developing leaders, recruiting and retaining extraordinary minds, and creating innovative environments for all.

**Michelle Davis**
Director of Development, Neurosciences
734-763-3555 | badma@umich.edu

**Kirsten Petriches**
Assistant Director of Development, Neurosciences
734-763-5240 | kagwiz@umich.edu

**Join us: Be a Victor!**

If you would like to learn more about philanthropy, the fundraising priorities of the Department of Neurosurgery, or how you can make a gift, please contact our development team.

We are also excited to share that we have launched a new Resident Wellness Program. This program will enhance our residents’ experiences in the areas of nutrition and exercise, well-being and resilience, and co-curricular learning. To date, the Centennial Celebration Campaign has raised $249,860 from alumni, donors, and friends. We are excited to boast 100% participation from current residents as well as 16.5% from our neurosurgery resident alumni. A special thank you to each and every individual who made a donation to support our residents.

**PLATINUM**
- Lily UyHarm, MD, and Rodolfi UyHarm, MD (Residency, 1970)

**GOLD**
- Baran Brahma, MD (Residency, 2007)
- David G. Kline, MD (Residency, 1967)
- James E. Raxis, MD (Residency, 1976)
- John A. Feldermeier, MD (Residency, 1989)
- Khoi D. Thue, MD (Residency, 2014)
- Michael N. Bucci, MD (Residency, 1989)
- Saeed M. Farhadi, MD (Residency, 1964)

**MAIZE**
- Robert E. Dicke, MD (Residency, 1979)
- Debbie K. Song, MD (Residency, 2010)
- Sanjay Gupta, MD (Residency, 2000) and Family
- William F. D’Angelo, MD (Residency, 1984)
- Michael F. Bokem, MD (Residency, 1992)
- Nathan Selden, MD, PhD (Residency, 1999)
- Hella N. Jermyn-Journey
- Luis Savastano, MD, PhD (PGY-7, Chief Resident)
- Stephen J. Napolitan
- Hank Gischl, MD (Residency, 1970)
- Kirsten A. Petriches
- Michelle A. Davis
- Allison J. Mayer
- Amy Bruzek, MD (PGY-4)
- Badri Junior Dasu, MD (PGY-3)
- Brandon Smith, MD (PGY-6)
- David (Drew) Willmes, MD (PGY-7, Chief Resident)
- David Althuler, MD (PGY-5)
- Jacob Joseph, MD (PGY-7, Chief Resident)
- Jay Nathan, MD (PGY-6)
- Katherine Holte, MD (PGY-1)
- Matthew Willows, MD (PGY-3)
- Michael Strong, MD, PhD (PGY-2)
- Sara Saleh, MD (PGY-11)
- Sri Sashik Khalea, MD (PGY-4)
- Sreaweth Sokdinh, MD (PGY-2)
- Timothy Yee, MD (PGY-3)
- Todd Hollon, MD (PGY-6)
- Yamaan Saadeh, MD (PGY-5)

**VICTORS FOR MICHIGAN**

Join us: Be a Victor!
If you would like to learn more about philanthropy, the fundraising priorities of the Department of Neurosurgery, or how you can make a gift, please contact our development team.
This year, we celebrated 100 years of neurosurgical excellence at U-M. We look forward to continuing our tradition of excellence for the next 100 years and beyond.

Department of Neurosurgery
3552 Taubman Health Care Center,
1500 E. Medical Center Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5338
734-936-7010
medicine.umich.edu/dept/neurosurgery