

DIVISION OF NEPHROLOGY

WELLER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



May 2018 (Issue 2)



Welcome from the Chief

As Michigan Medicine continues to expand its reach in Michigan (and beyond), so too has our division continued to grow. Our faculty now numbers nearly 50 members, and we continue to foster excellence in all areas: basic science and clinical research; clinical programs such as acute dialysis, transplant, and interventional nephrology; and fellowship training. Even as we continually strive for loftier goals, we also remain committed to strengthening our bonds with our Michigan faculty and fellow alumni family. In this newsletter you will

hear from some old friends; we hope to hear from you in future issues!

- Sub Pennathur

Hello from the Clinical Chief

I have a confession. When Sub asked me to serve as the division's Associate Chief for Clinical Affairs, my first inclination was to give a resounding "No". I was already quite happy in my position, and to be honest I wasn't sure I was ready to take on this important position. What swayed me to accept was the opportunity to give back by playing a role in the future of nephrology here at Michigan Medicine. This place trained me as a nephrologist, and provided all the right opportunities to develop as a clinician, researcher, teacher and mentor. So in the end, I embraced this opportunity to work with Sub in leading our division forward – a duty and an honor.

One of the many goals we have set is to strengthen the division's relationship with our many former faculty and fellows, as well as friends of the program. In this newsletter, you will find some updates from alumni who (like myself) have benefitted greatly from the Michigan experience. In addition, we will highlight some of the exciting ongoing international efforts that are being led by faculty in our division.

If you are interested in more real-time updates of the goings-on here at Michigan, feel free also to follow us on Twitter: check out divisional updates from [@umichkidney](#), follow Sub [@247renal](#), or peruse some of my work-related musings at [@keepingitrenal](#).

- Michael Heung '05



NEW DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR



We were excited to welcome **Giselle Ciorciari** to the Division of Nephrology in December 2017. Previously she served as a Senior Business Consultant for the Medical School, executing special projects for the EVPMA/Dean, Senior Associate Deans, and Chief Operating Officer/Executive Director for

Administration. Giselle received a Bachelor of Arts in Government from Cornell University, and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. She believes strongly in the value of service orientation and responsiveness and brings with her an inherent curiosity and analytical, interpersonal and management skills. One of her goals is to strengthen ties with alumni and increase community outreach, so keep an eye out for her in your neighborhood!

ANNUAL WELLER MEETING

It was great to see so many alumni and friends at the annual Michigan Weller Society dinner in New Orleans this past November. We hope you will be able to join us again this fall in San Diego. More details to come, but this will likely again take place on the Friday evening of Kidney Week (October 26th, 2018).



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Fed Life

After I finished fellowship at UM, I worked for 5 years on faculty at the University of Wisconsin. Madison is a great place to live and UW is a great place to work, but I decided that I wanted to do some more work in the policy arena. So I made the move to DC where I took a position as a medical reviewer with the FDA. I gained valuable experience there learning about the drug approval process and just generally about life in the federal workforce. Unsurprising: Things move slowly and there is lots of Red Tape. Maybe surprising to some: There are lots of really smart, dedicated people that work there. After a couple of years at the FDA I moved to a position at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). I am technically the medical officer charged with overseeing quality measurement for ESRD, but since I am the only nephrologist in the entire agency (!), I've been tapped to do numerous other things which involve coverage, payment innovation projects, etc. I've been here for nearly 2 years and the amount I have learned about ESRD care (which takes up 1% of the ENTIRE federal budget) is astounding. I miss seeing patients sometimes, but what I do is stimulating, challenging and rewarding. I really feel like I'm helping patients and at least trying to be the voice of the nephrologists too.

I got the bug for working in policy when I was in fellowship and worked at UM-KECC. I am really glad I made the plunge. For those looking to make the career jump to public service I can personally attest if done carefully, it can be incredibly rewarding. I am happy I did it and if I can do anything to help others make the transition, please reach out. - **Jesse Roach '09**



Wolverines West

A Michigan-Oregon pipeline? You bet. Old colleagues reunite on a new academic campus: Oregon Health Sciences University.

It's been almost 7 years since I came to Oregon, after spending 8 wonderful years as a fellow and faculty member at U of M. My career path has changed direction since I started in the Transplant Program at Michigan. In 2011 I joined a private practice in Oregon, which was a return to general nephrology and taught me a lot about the business side of nephrology and dialysis, increasing my interest in administration and quality improvement. I left that practice in 2013 to join OHSU where I now serve as the Dialysis Program Director and Director of Quality and Safety for Nephrology and the Department of Medicine Ambulatory Practice. My interest in quality improvement began in 2007 at Michigan, when I started my training in Toyota's LEAN model for performance improvement. Being a part of the Michigan program helped me develop as a professional and as a person. Since then, continued training in QI and administrative experience have helped me develop this expertise and be a part of the process for healthcare improvement. One area we have worked on is improving dialysis vascular access and I have enjoyed collaborating with Raghav on such issues. OHSU has been a great place to work and Portland has been a beautiful (wet) place to raise two children with my wife.



- **Pavan Chopra '05**

I've been in Portland at OHSU since finishing fellowship in 2008. When I left Michigan I was heavily involved in interventional nephrology work, but that has become a smaller part of my everyday work. I do meet regularly with the vascular surgeons and Pavan to come up with access plans for difficult patients and attend the ASDIN meeting every other year. But if I'm being totally honest a lot of the reason I go to ASDIN is because it's somewhere warm in February and a nice chance to catch up with **Matt Leavitt '05**.

I've become more involved in teaching and served 5 years as Course Director for the nephrology section of the medical student curriculum, as well as Associate Program Director of the nephrology fellowship for 3 years. I've transitioned now to more administrative and quality work (largely with Pavan) and am the Director of Outpatient Services for nephrology. This position suits me quite well as it is mostly about efficiency and problem solving and not as much about being touchy feely - which I've been repeatedly told is not my strong suit!

Outside of work, I've really gotten into running and even completed the Boston Marathon since being here. Portland's a big running town though so no one here seems particularly impressed by that! The one major upside from running was meeting my wife because we were both members of the same running club. She's a local Portlander and spent her life mostly in the Pacific NW so slowly we've traveled to locations where I've lived and trained. I'm pretty sure Michigan is our next stop. Zingerman's better still be there or she's going to be sorely disappointed since I mention that all the time!

- **Raghav Wusirika '08**

INTERNATIONAL ENDEAVORS

The Division of Nephrology continues to grow its international outreach and collaboration efforts, and faculty have recently participated in several exciting events.

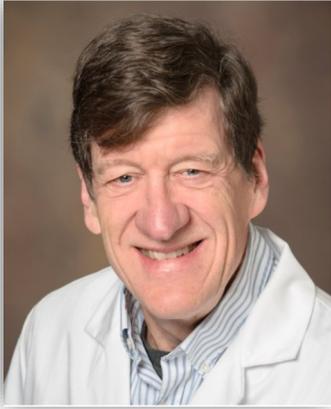
Last November, a contingent from UM-KECC traveled across the world to **Chandigarh, India**, to help co-host a Chronic Kidney Disease Workshop as part of the First World Non-Communicable Diseases Congress. Speakers included UM faculty **Rajiv Saran**, **Michael Heung '05**, **Jennifer Bragg-Gresham** and **Vahakn Shahinian**, as well as former UM fellow **Austin Stack '99** who is now in Limerick, Ireland. This conference put a spotlight on the burden and impact of chronic kidney diseases, and in particular highlighted the emerging epidemic of CKD of unknown origin (CKD-U).



In January, nephrology faculty **Rajiv Saran**, **Michael Heung '05**, and **Jennifer Bragg-Gresham** participated in the Caribbean Institute of Nephrology's 10th Annual International Conference on Nephrology and Hypertension in **Kingston, Jamaica**. There they were reunited with former division chief **Chip Brosius** for 2 days of great talks. Our division has been a strong partner in this conference over the last decade, originally spearheaded by former faculty members **Akinlolu Ojo** and **Chip Brosius**. We are proud to carry on this collaboration.

Over the past 3 years, a select group of nephrology faculty members have traveled to **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia** to develop and support the burgeoning nephrology fellowship program there. **Pandu Rao**, **Sanjeevkumar Patel '99**, **Patrick Gipson**, **Jim Shayman** and **Puneet Garg** have all made this journey to help develop the critical nephrology resources needed to meet the evolving needs of the Ethiopian people. In March, Drs. Rao and Gipson helped administer exams to graduate the first 3 fellows from this program – all of whom are staying in Ethiopia to continue working and training new fellows. Through this transformational partnership, Ethiopia's nephrology workforce has now grown from 4 to 7 nephrologists. We are honored to have played a part in this historical achievement and contributed to sustainable, high-level nephrology care in Ethiopia.





Brosius Professorship

We are continuing to solicit donations to help establish the **Frank C. Brosius M.D. Collegiate Professorship in Nephrology**. After many years as the Fellowship Program Director, Chip went on to serve as Division Chief from 2004 until 2016, all while maintaining a highly successful research career. We hope to permanently honor his many achievements and contributions to the University through this professorship. If you haven't already, please consider making a contribution.

<https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#!/give/basket/fund/799814?keyword=799814>

Contact Us

Please be on the lookout for future Weller Society updates! In future issues, we would like to continue spotlighting some of the current activities of our alumni and friends. If you wish to share any information, or have suggestions for other future content, please contact Michael Heung (mheung@med.umich.edu; @keepingitrenal on Twitter).

The Weller Society brings together alumni, faculty and friends of the University of Michigan Division of Nephrology. The Society is named after Dr. John Weller, who served as the first Chief of Nephrology at University of Michigan from 1964-1977.