NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

As we begin a new year, I would like to commend our faculty, staff, residents, and fellows for your unprecedented endurance and stamina during the past year. 2020 is not a year anyone will soon forget. When we finally get COVID-19 under control with vaccines and preventive measures, my hope is that we will not revert to life as it was before the pandemic, but that we take the lessons learned to make the world more just and equitable in the years ahead.

The department was honored to have Adiaha I.A. Spinks-Franklin, MD, MPH, speak at our first Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Grand Rounds in November. Many of the department’s faculty tuned in for the impressive presentation, Racism: A Societal Pathogen. Dr. Spinks-Franklin serves on Baylor’s Inclusion and Excellence Council and is an associate professor in the Department of Developmental Pediatrics at Texas Children’s Hospital and BCM.

A new service grant, Aware-Houston, will implement a community-wide mental health awareness training program to increase the capacity to identify and respond to individuals who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. In doing so, we hope to reduce the individual and public burden of mental illness and emotional stress community-wide and increase access to mental health care. Congratulations to Sandra Gonzalez, Ph.D., LCSW (PI), Mónica Aizate, Ph.D., LCSW (Co-Investigator and Project Trainer), Ashley Siverand, MBA (Project Coordinator), Maribel Mosqueda, MPA/HCA (Research Operations Manager), and Samuel McMaster, Ph.D., (Project Evaluator).

The department held its annual Primary Care Update virtually on October 17. We were privileged to have Ashwin Balagopal, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases, at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, give the keynote address. Please go to our PCU website to see links to all the presentations.

Several of us had to forgo our holiday festivities this year, and many others were held remotely. Your adherence to CDC guidelines will allow us to celebrate with even more vigor than usual in 2021. Thank you for staying safe so that we can strive another day.

Roger Zoorob, M.D., MPH
Richard M. Kleberg, Sr. Professor & Chair
The homicide rate in the United States is more than seven times higher than that of other high-income countries. Firearms play a prominent role since the U.S. firearm homicide rate is more than 20 times that of all other high-income countries combined. Children are at particular risk. According to international data, for example, 97% of all children four years of age and younger killed by guns in high-income countries were killed in the U.S.

The magnitude of gun-related deaths among school-age children (five to 18 years) and younger in the U.S. is especially heartbreaking. From 1999 to 2018, more children ages birth to 18 years died from guns (42,955) than cancer (39,534), and the contrast was even more significant in the school-age group (41,325 versus 30,166).

Legal strategies have been put forward to reduce or eliminate childhood deaths. These include: prohibiting or limiting access to firearms among people convicted of domestic abuse or other violent crimes; enacting laws that prevent child and teen access such as those requiring that guns be kept locked up and unloaded when not in use; and requiring child safety features for all firearms and banning military-style weapons. Programmatic approaches have included group therapy and mentoring for potentially violent youth and focused deterrent programs that seek to identify and directly communicate with youths at high risk of violence. It is clear, however, that no single method completes the mission. Consensus and buy-in on a multi-faceted approach from a broad spectrum of the community are essential.

The need for broad-based support is one reason that Baylor College of Medicine’s recent policy statement against gun violence is so encouraging. Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital were recently awarded a grant to study the epidemiology of firearm injuries and deaths, to identify trends and risk factors to aid in prevention. We hope that Family Medicine physicians and others will integrate the prevention of childhood deaths from gun violence into their practices by taking an appropriate history and educating patients about preventive methods that work as new evidence develops.

If you are interested in writing an essay for this column, please submit your thoughts to Dr. Zoorob. He is interested in sharing what’s on your mind.
Mary McEvoy, MSN, MPH, began her position as a nurse manager with Healthcare for Homeless Houston in January 2019. While she has had a winding career path, Mary is humbled to work with the outstanding caregivers at HHH.

“One thing most people probably do not know about me is that I am half Russian. My mom’s parents met in a refugee camp after WWII and were sponsored to come to the United States. They were relocated to Midland, Texas, and made their way to a small town outside of Boston before my mom was born.”

With a special love for gardening, Mary’s free time is spent cultivating plants or new knowledge about the subject. She is currently taking an online class to learn about Food Forest gardening.

Mary has always had an interest in community and public health, so after graduating with a BSN, she worked at Ben Taub in Labor and Delivery. Upon graduation with a dual MSN in Community Health and MPH, a really good friend’s mom recruited her to work in Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), a medical and social case management team for persons with severe mental illness. She worked in ACT outside of Washington, DC, and in Vancouver, BC. When she moved to Mexico for family reasons, she worked in medical tourism. Mary notes that working with people from all over the world seeking treatment in Mexico because of their own health system’s barriers was certainly eye-opening.

HHH receives referrals for the City of Houston to test homeless persons suspected of having COVID and provide care coordination so that patients can isolate at a city/county facility specifically assigned for the homeless. HHH also conducts surveillance testing for COVID at various shelters to identify any hotspots early. Mary works on a rather small clinical team and is inspired to see how the group flexed into this new role seamlessly, even as they still maintain primary care access to their patients.

The staff at HHH see, hear, and help heal some difficult lived experiences of their patients. Mary’s team consists of medical assistants, providers, community health workers, case managers, and behavioral health specialists so that patients can access the resources they need. Her team refers patients to HHH’s dental team, and volunteer podiatrists, optometrists, and pharmacists answer the call when needed. Mary writes, “The team really supports patients to coordinate care and remove barriers. I love reviewing patient satisfaction survey results and seeing the comments that our patients leave. For example, when asked what the clinic is good at, one response was “keeping patients healthy no matter the cost.”

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Mary with her eight-year old daughter and her partner, Armando, who is from Venezuela.
Kudos to Baylor Family Medicine provider, Aymer Al-Mutairi, M.D., recently selected to the Top Docs listing of Houstonia Magazine.

The Department of Family and Community Medicine has established a Diversity Inclusion and Equity (DI&E) Committee that meets every month. The committee is chaired by Sandra Gonzalez, Ph.D., LCSW, with Joanne Atkinson, M.D., serving as Vice Chair. Matthew Horsfield, M.D., Sara Rahman, M.S., and Ashley Siverand, MBA, complete the inaugural committee.

The role of the committee includes:

- Developing and revising the Department’s Equity Action Plan
- Ensuring completion of the stated goals and objectives of the Equity Action Plan
- Possibility of Serving as institution-level Equity and Inclusion Ambassadors and disseminating information regarding DI&E activities conducted at the college
- Presenting relevant information at quarterly faculty meetings, monthly staff meetings, and bi-monthly medical director’s meetings

The DI&E Committee will be expanded to represent other department worksites and areas.
Dr. Angie Sung has been named a Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Congratulations, Angie Sung, M.D., FAAFP!

James Buchanan, M.D., was interviewed by the Houston Chronicle in October for a half-page article, 4 Easy Tips for Improving Men’s Health, Physician Explains. Dr. Buchanan seeks to help the broader community to see their bodies as a whole living organism instead of disconnected organs and appendages.

Larissa Grigoryan, M.D., PhD, MSc, is a Co-Investigator of a new grant, Protecting Veterans from Harms of Inappropriate Self-Treatment for COVID-19 (PI: Trautner). The one-year grant is funded by the MEDVAMC VHA Bridge and Seed Award Program.
Arindam Sarkar, M.D., offered his Healthy Habits to readers of Baylor’s Momentum Blog. He and his wife enjoy high-intensity interval training two days a week, but when they can’t, they exercise outdoors instead. He aims for at least one serving of vegetables daily.

When asked about the health tip that he lives by, Dr. Sarkar responded, “Do your best and forget the rest. I try to make choices today that are as healthy as those from yesterday. I take it one day at a time.”

Alicia Kowalchuk, D.O., led a MAT Waiver Training on Saturday, December 12. The free virtual course teaches the skills needed to apply for a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorder.

Irvin Sulapas, M.D., Assistant Professor, and Peter Baek, M.D., (PGY-2), covered the Village School vs. Prince of Peace football game in October. The Village School won the contest 55-21.

Dr. Sulapas covers the home games of the Dynamo as the VMD (Venue Medical Doctor).

Dr. Sulapas spoke with Andy Phifer and Nicole Blanton of BCM’s Momentum Blog, about how to incorporate fitness into your daily life.
Vanessa Gallien, M.D., Assistant Professor, gave a rundown of tips to stay protected against flu and COVID-19 for the Momentum Blog. Dr. Gallien notes that “Influenza and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses but are caused by two different viruses. The symptoms overlap, which makes it difficult to differentiate one from the other.”

San José Clinic CEO and President Maureen Sanders, and Diana Grair, M.D., San José Clinic’s medical director, spoke with a representative of the Texas Catholic Herald about the hardship the uninsured face in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Treating patients with no insurance and high rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, and other chronic illnesses can be challenging at any time, but has definitely heightened throughout the past seven months of the pandemic’s impact. We’ve had patients who are extremely distressed. They’ve lost jobs and have depression, so many are stressing and are thankful that we are still here to help,” Dr. Grair said.

Anjali Aggarwal, M.D., Associate Professor, served as a judge of educational research posters for BCM’s Annual Showcase of Educational Scholarship in September. Dr. Aggarwal has also broadened her electives portfolio as Elective Director of Introduction to the Care of the Underserved (MEFAM-408), a preclinical elective.
In this giving season, please donate to the Family and Community Medicine Educational Endowment, a permanent source of funding for the ongoing work of our trainees. Your donation strengthens the department’s educational resources, provides more varied electives for students and residents, and bolsters our residency program by funding unfunded rotations.

Your donations are tax-deductible and provide essential support for our trainees to have exceptional and career-defining experiences. To make a secure online donation, please go to the Baylor Medical Foundation page and choose “Write in a designation not listed.” In the space provided, enter “Family and Community Medicine Educational Endowment.”

Our family medicine residents have been busy this quarter! Photos from the bcm_family medicine Instagram posts.
Dr. William Huang will offer Preceptor Workshops X2 on January 9.

1) Giving effective feedback to your learners (9:00 AM - 10:30 AM)
2) Creating a safe learning environment for your learners (10:35 AM - 12 PM)

Registration for the Intermediate Course: Training in Analysis of Continuous and Categorical Outcome Data is now open. The course will be held virtually on Friday, January 24, 2020, from 3:00 - 7:00 PM. and Saturday, January 25, 2020, from 9:00 AM - 5 PM.

This course focuses on providing hands-on competency with the most common statistical procedures used to analyze continuous and categorical outcome data. At the end of the course, participants will perform independently and interpret the results of the following statistical procedures using SAS software.

Pre-requisites: Although not necessary, it is highly recommended that individuals interested in this course have taken our Beginner’s course or have previous familiarity with basic statistical concepts. However, our team is equipped to provide you with as much guidance as needed when using statistical software to analyze your data.

Nominations are being accepted for the Women of Excellence Awards, which will be presented during Women’s History Month in March. Nominees can be women and men, faculty, staff and learners who have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to issues that affect women at Baylor College of Medicine or in the larger community while also exemplifying Baylor values. Nominate are accepted until February 5.

The College has established the Equity Trailblazer Award to recognize faculty, staff, and learners who have made significant contributions, above and beyond their role, to increase diversity and inclusivity at Baylor. Commitment may be demonstrated through initiatives such as recruitment, retention and advancement efforts, teaching, mentoring, research, multi-cultural programming, and community outreach activities. Make your nominations by February 5.

Research Day

The call for presentations for the first annual Family and Community Medicine Research Day on February 20, 2021, is now open. The conference is free for attendees as part of FCM’s overarching goal to foster research, quality improvement (QI), and collaboration.

We are soliciting presentations from within FCM to showcase the work going on in the department. If you have any project that is interinstitutional or interdepartmental or with learners at BCM, you may submit it if an FCM employee has conducted the majority of the work on it. We are inviting completed and work in progress research and QI projects. Presenters can include any projects or research they have completed or presented in 2019 (since the pandemic may have suspended some research efforts).

The deadline for submission is January 20, 2021. Abstracts will be reviewed, and notification will be sent out by January 25, 2021.

If you have any questions, you may reach out to Gabriella, Mireles@bcm.edu or Juneja@bcm.edu.
Same Day Clinic Educational Series
Sep 11, 2020
States S, Barning K. The ABCs of sexually transmitted diseases: Vaginal discharge causes, diagnosis and treatment.

Texas Pediatric Society
Oct 15-18, 2020

IDWeek Conference
October 22-25, 2020


American Public Health Annual Meeting
Oct 24-28, 2020

TAFP Annual Session and Primary Care Summit
Nov 6-7, 2020
Luc L, Coverdale S, Warwick E, Rode R. Standardizing the medical reconciliation process: Moving from med wreck to med rec.
Shah N, Rode R, Porter T. “I prefer to watch than to read!” Engaging diabetic patients via educational videos to improve health outcomes. *Awarded second place.
Okorafor N, Khan R. Assessing and improving residents’ self-efficacy in research critique through implementing a revised journal club.

Association of American Medical Colleges Annual Meeting
Nov 16-18, 2020
Huang W, Purkiss J, Eden AR, Appelbaum N. Family medicine clerkship directors’ handling of student mistreatment: Results from a national survey.

NAPCRG Annual Meeting
Nov 20-24

Family & Community Medicine
First Annual Research Day
Saturday, February 20, 2021
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM
FCM is sponsoring its first Research Day on February 20, 2021. The call for submissions is open until January 20.

The conference will be held virtually and is free for all FCM faculty. The non-commercial setting will include presentations of research and quality improvement projects, both completed and work-in-progress.

**5.0 CME Credits by AAFP**

AAFP Prescribed credit is accepted by the American Medical Association as AMA PRA Category 1 credit(s)™ towards the AMA Physician's Recognition Award.

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**PUBLICATIONS**

Levine RS, Zoorob R, Hennekens C. Smoking cessation in hospitalized patients: An opportunity to avoid premature deaths. *Ochsner J.* In press


Faustinella F. The shadow of the moon. *Perceptions Mag.* In press


Faustinella F. Remembrance. *The Furious Gazelle.* In press


Gore M, Bansal K, Asuncion RMD. *Lacunar Stroke.* *StatPearls* [Internet]. 2020 Sep 27

Gore M, Bansal K, Jadhav N. *Menetrier Disease.* *StatPearls* [Internet]. 2020 Sep 23


(This links to a MOBI format that can only be opened by a Kindle reading app or device. A paperback version is available on Amazon.)
Marissa Valentine-King, Ph.D., MPH, earned her master’s degree and Ph.D. from the University of Florida Gainesville in 2019. While there, she held several roles, including a Postdoctoral Researcher (Department of Infectious Diseases and Immunology), a graduate assistant (Department of Environmental and Global Health), a COVID-19 volunteer researcher, and a research consultant. Dr. Valentine-King began her FCM T32 postdoctoral work in August.

Dongni Yang, M.D., earned her medical degree (2011) and Ph.D. (2003) from Baylor College of Medicine. She completed two residency training programs at UTHSC, the first in diagnostic radiology (2015) and family medicine (2020). Previously she was a research fellow at BCM under the tutelage of Dr. Read Montague. Dr. Yang sees patients at Gulfgate Health Center.

Huma Rahman, M.D., received her medical degrees from the Saba University School of Medicine (2011) and the American University of Antigua College of Medicine (2015). She completed family medicine residency training at MCCG/Navicent Health in Macon, Georgia, in 2019, where she recently completed a Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellowship (2020). Dr. Rahman sees patients at Strawberry Health Center.

Christina Majd, M.D., received her medical degree from Ross University School of Medicine in Bridgetown, Barbados (2017) and completed family medicine residency training at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio (2020). Dr. Majd sees patients at Robindell Same Day Clinic.
Lisa Webb, LCDC, is a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC) and brings over a decade of experience in substance use disorder treatment to the research team. She has provided direct clinical services, facilitating processes and educational groups, and developing curricula and educational materials for adults with substance use disorders.

Jennifer Martin is a Community Health Worker for Healthcare for HHH. Jennifer comes to Baylor with over 13 years of customer service, administrative and healthcare provider experience.

Hung Nguyen, M.D., Ph.D earned his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston in 1999. He completed family medicine residency training at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in Houston (2000); Ochsner Family Medicine and LSU Family Medicine Residency Program (2001-2004). He earned a Ph.D., in Physics from Rice University (1981). Dr. Nguyen sees patients at Strawberry Health Center.

Alyssa McElwany, PMHNP-BC, received her master’s degree from the MGH Institute of Health Professions in Boston. Prior to coming to Baylor, she was a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner at Kingwood Psychiatry. Ms. McElwany sees patients at HHH.

Kiara Olmeda joins the research team as a Research Coordinator I. She received her Bachelor of Science in Human Biology, Health and Society from Cornell University in 2019 and will earn a Master’s Degree in Bioethics from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine in 2021.

Giovanna Carroll is a Behavioral Health Specialist and Licensed Professional Counselor for the research team. Giovanna received her Master of Arts in Psychology/Counseling from the Houston Graduate School of Theology-Cum Laude and is currently working on her Doctorate in Professional Counseling with a concentration in Mediation and Bowen Family Systems. She works at Santa Maria Hostel.

Stephanie Lazalde is a Medical Assistant II at HHH. Stephanie comes to Baylor with over 15 years of customer service, administrative and healthcare provider experience.

Dianna Godley is a Medical Assistant II with the Baylor Medicine Group Practice.

Gelmar Romero is a bilingual Licensed Vocational Nurse II at HHH. He earned the Licensed Vocational Nurse degree from the College of the Mainland in 2017 and received certification as a Medical Assistant at Fortis College (2011).

Jesse Crain is a Community Health Worker for the Environmental Health Services team. He received his Master’s in Environmental Science from Prairie View A&M in 2011.

Zeuz Islas is an Assistant Coordinator in Clinical research for the Environmental Health Services team. Zeuz is a current student at Columbia University working towards a Bachelor’s in Biology and a concentration in Ethnicity and Race Studies.

Laura N. Fletcher, MA, LPC, CHWC, is a Behavioral Health Specialist and Licensed Professional Counselor for HHH. Laura received her Master of Arts in Psychology from The University of Alabama and comes to Baylor with over twenty years of experience serving as an administrator and a therapist primarily for adults.

Emily Rivera is a Medical Assistant I for HHH.

Chantele Martin, RN, is a Registered Nurse II for the Baylor Medicine Group Practice. Chantele received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Prairie View A&M University in 2015.

Taneisha Johnson received her medical assistant diploma from the Everest Institute in 2012. She joins the department as a Medical Assistant II with the Baylor Medicine Group Practice.

Ajeesh Sunny is a Senior Programmer Analyst for our research team. He returns to us to continue his work with Dr. Rustveld on the colorectal cancer prevention (CRC) grant. Ajeesh received his Master of Science in Health informatics in 2016 from the University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston.
For all you are,  
For all you do,  
Thank you.

*The Family and Community Medicine Quarterly Newsletter* is a publication of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine.

To be added to the *Newsletter* email listserv, please email [Joan Newell](mailto:Joan.Newell).