As I begin the second year of my leadership of the Margaret M. and Albert B. Alkek Department of Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, I want to thank all of the faculty, staff and trainees in the department for making the first year so successful. We have made great strides in many areas, and I expect the coming year to provide many opportunities for growth.

Some important achievements include a new strategic plan developed by Department of Medicine faculty and the implementation of new executive and administrative organizational structures – efforts that will allow us to build on our record of success and continue our significant contributions to the College’s vision of improving health through science, scholarship and innovation. Our new Vice Chair Groups cover Education (Dr. Richard Hamill), Clinical Affairs (Dr. Mandeep Bajaj), Research (Dr. Christie Ballantyne), Faculty and Staff Development (Dr. Tom Giordano), Harris Health/Ben Taub Hospital (Dr. Stephen Greenberg), Veterans Affairs (Dr. Biykem Bozkurt), and Quality Improvement and Innovation (Dr. Aanand Naik). The newly aligned administration is led by our Chief Administrator, Craig DeGarmo, and includes key roles of clinical operations (Dennis Park), finance (Joe Lightfoot, Shelina Velani, Cindy Li), strategic planning (Juni Muhota-Langham), research (Leslie Wu), contracts (Randy Thomas, Bilal Abed, Aleshia Dumas-Burkhalter) and human resources (Robbie Rivera, Leneva Moore), as well as my assistant (Pam Lee). To improve communication, we created a communications project manager position (Luanne Jorewicz) to provide consistent messaging, allow for feedback and improve our website.

Our administrative offices and clinical operations have completed the move to the Baylor College of Medicine Medical Center on the McNair Campus. The space will support the major increase we saw in the number of faculty, trainees and staff and will enhance our patient care and clinical research projects.

With our new structure and most of our teams in place, we are confident that 2018 will see us maintaining those gains achieved in 2017 as well as achieving many more.

Hashem B. El-Serag, M.D., M.P.H.
The Quality Improvement and Innovations (QII) Vice Chair Group, led by Dr. Aanand Naik, was established in March 2017 to foster a new culture of improvement and innovation within the Department of Medicine. Current members of the QII Vice Chair Group are Drs. Kyler Godwin, Molly Horstman, Daniel Murphy, Uma Ayyala, Erica Lescinskas and Mayar Al Mohajer. Tracey Rosen is the QI Project Manager.

The QII Vice Chair Group seeks to accomplish improvements through a range of strategies and initiatives:

- Working closely with the Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness & Safety (IQuESt), home of the Section of Health Services Research, to improve collaboration, generate novel insights and disseminate evidence of best practices
- Establishing the Quality Academy to train and mentor Department of Medicine faculty and staff each year in the concepts of QII
- Conducting recurring quality improvement training over the course of the year
- Supporting faculty and staff who develop healthcare improvement projects and facilitate their implementation into clinical practice
- Collaborating with the Baylor Faculty Group Practice Quality and Safety Committee to identify quality metrics relevant to the Department of Medicine and its sections
- Presenting results in peer-reviewed publications and at professional society meetings
- Developing a tool to capture quality improvement portfolios for promotion among department faculty
- Sponsoring an annual Summer Institute program in conjunction with the national Veterans Affairs Quality Scholars Program

The Quality Academy meets monthly as a group, and each member also meets monthly with a Vice Chair Group mentor to identify opportunities for improvement and receive guidance on the quality improvement process.

The Quality Academy held its inaugural training program in June 2017, with great success. Those selected to participate first received quality improvement training as part of a Quality Improvement Jumpstart short training session, in which they learned basic skills and tools such as how to identify a quality improvement challenge and build an improvement team, how to extract and use clinical data effectively, how to select the proper approach to solve quality improvement challenges, and more. The Academy meets monthly as a group, and each member also meets monthly with a Vice Chair Group mentor to identify opportunities for improvement and receive guidance on the quality improvement process.
The most recent development of the QII Vice Chair Group has been the Department of Medicine’s investment in its new grant program, the Healthcare Innovations Seed Grants, which encourages department faculty and fellows to collaborate on grants for healthcare innovations that improve quality of care at Baylor. At the end of its first competition in fall 2017, three grant recipients had been selected:

- Dr. Christopher Morgan, with an electronic monitoring system for clinical deterioration that could be adjusted to provide data on and early warning signs of sepsis in acutely ill hospitalized patients
- Dr. Mostafa El-Refai, with an electronic medical record dashboard that provides decision support to physicians for understanding risks of stroke and bleeding, to guide who should be put on medications to improve anticoagulation rates for atrial fibrillation
- Dr. Sylvia Hysong, with a structured process for uncovering the specific tasks clinicians undertake to achieve performance measures for preventive care; a deeper understanding of these component tasks will lead to more feasible quality improvement processes and greater use of preventative care

Through pioneering efforts such as creating the Vice Chair Group for QII, growing collaboration among diverse groups within Baylor and its affiliates, and rewarding intrepid residents and faculty for discovering ways to “do business” in better ways, the Department of Medicine is poised to take its place as a key leader in improving the quality and process of healthcare.
As the Department of Medicine continues its quest to provide superior healthcare and to be a leader in education and research, one segment of the Section of Gastroenterology and Hepatology is advancing the effort. Dr. Mohamed Othman, associate professor of medicine, chief of the Gastroenterology Section at Baylor St Luke’s Medical Center and director of the Center for Advanced Endoscopy, is putting Baylor on the map with his group’s advanced endoscopic procedures, including endoscopic submucosal dissection (ESD), endoscopic mucosal resection (EMR), endoscopic ultrasound and endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography. Dr. Othman and his colleagues (Drs. Kalpesh Patel, Wasif Abidi, Waqar Qureshi, Robert Sealock, Clark Hair, Avinash Ketwaroo) treat a wide range of conditions, including malignant and benign gastrointestinal tumors, pancreatitis and biliary strictures. The center operates through three affiliates: Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Baylor St. Luke’s Medical Center and Ben Taub Hospital.

When Dr. Othman became the director of the center in 2014, one of his goals was to introduce novel techniques for resection of early cancerous lesions of the gastrointestinal tract to the everyday practice at Baylor College of Medicine. After gaining valuable experience during sabbaticals in Japan, Korea and China, where endoscopic submucosal dissection procedures were first developed, Dr. Othman brought his knowledge and skills to his practice at Baylor. Before Dr. Othman introduced these techniques, healthcare providers would have to bring in experts from Japan to do the procedures, which are labor intensive and require extremely meticulous work as well as a high level of expertise.

Dr. Othman is one of only a handful of experts in these procedures in the country and the Baylor Center for Advanced Endoscopy is now one of the top five centers in the United States for ESD. He also is one of the leading experts in the U.S. who teaches the procedures and is one of five physicians who are teaching the master course for training in ESD. ESD is an advanced procedure that allows for complete removal of early tumors and cancers of the esophagus, stomach and rectum. The procedure offers higher cure and resection rates regardless of tumor size, enables patients to avoid surgery and allows for resection when other techniques are not feasible. Possible lesions to be treated include squamous cell carcinoma, rectal and gastric carcinoid tumors and large colorectal polyps.

In addition to the Center for Advanced Endoscopy, the Section of Gastroenterology and Hepatology also now supports the Elkins Pancreas Center, which specializes in the treatment of pancreatic cancer, pancreatitis and other pancreatic diseases through pancreatic surgery, gene therapy and clinical trials. The clinic is an approved National Pancreas Foundation Center for pancreatitis and pancreas cancer and, together with the Center for Advanced Endoscopy, is designated a Center of Excellence by the National Pancreas Foundation.
There is a movement in healthcare toward reimbursement based on quality of care rather than quantity of care, and Department of Medicine faculty at the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center are at the forefront of this healthcare trend. Some early studies suggest that certain VA facilities outperform their non-VA cohorts in quality measures. As the largest integrated health system in the country, the VA has been self-monitoring and developing tools to measure and improve these quality metrics for decades.

The first VA hospital built in the nation, the Houston VA medical center is named for Dr. Michael DeBakey, who, in 1946, proposed the idea of a comprehensive site for the care of all aspects of a veteran’s life. He believed that the vast amount of data inherent to such a site would be incomparable in terms of guiding research and quality improvement. And that belief has borne out at the Houston VA: a 4-star rating in quality; a 5-star rating in efficiency and value; one of the first few centers to provide extracorporeal membrane oxygenation and percutaneous ventricular assist device capability; a high referral rate from other VA hospitals; and the first to provide transcatheter aortic valve replacement, which has resulted in the highest volume of catheterizations of the VA hospitals.

Today, the DeBakey Medical Center not only is the premier VA facility in the country, but also is a key factor in the success of Baylor College of Medicine. Most of the VA faculty also work at Baylor, 95 percent are tenured, and most have received multiple awards for excellence in medical care, research and education. VA physicians lead much of the college’s curriculum and are leaders in research funding. With 1,900 trainees and 271 resident slots – the largest in the VA system – the DeBakey Medical Center’s partnership with Baylor is a key factor in the rise in quantity and quality of research, trials and funding for both entities. Its Health Services Research & Development section is nationally recognized, and its partnership with the Department of Medicine’s Health Services Research section, through the Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness & Safety (IQuESt), has resulted in an award-winning organization that is leading the field of quality improvement.

The DeBakey VA Medical Center has achieved one of the lowest mortality rates within the VA system, reduced hospitalization rates for ambulatory care, reduced lengths of stay and lowered complication rates. Its gastrointestinal program leads the nation in VA recognition for excellence, with advanced endoscopic and therapeutic procedures. It employs one of only four interventional pulmonologists in the country.

The VA also is an integral part of the educational and scholarship goals of the department. The VA has a robust history of investing in academic excellence, funding graduate medical education positions, sponsoring annual chief residents in quality and safety, and seeking to continuously improve the practice of medicine through pilot programs such as its Centers of Excellence.
When Dr. Sarah Candler, assistant professor of medicine, and her fiancé were moving to Houston, she wanted to find a work environment that offered the ability to provide true patient-centered care. She recognized that the DeBakey VA Medical Center, one of only seven VA Centers of Excellence in primary care, not only would allow her to practice primary care but also further her goal of changing the face of medical care – and medical education.

Dr. Candler always knew she wanted to treat her patients holistically, that if you don’t address a patient’s life as well as his condition, you could get suboptimal results. Addressing these social determinants of health is required for success, taking the healthcare providers outside the “four walls” and into every aspect of a patient’s well-being: transportation, food, housing, money and other life stressors, even the ability to bathe regularly.

“This is the future of primary care,” Dr. Candler said, and then explained how it works: The physician acts as the manager of the team; other team members include, as needed, nurses and nurse practitioners, pharmacists, social workers, interns, psychologists, nutritionists – everyone who can combine forces to ensure that each patient has an actionable list that will enable him to not only conquer the health issues but improve his life.

Dr. Candler’s team members work in a hub environment, within hearing range of each other so the entire team can stay involved in the patient’s status, treatment and progress. It increases efficiency, reduces errors and, most importantly, ensures that everyone remains aware of steps needed and steps taken, for the best possible treatment of the patient.

She also knew that healing patients with diverse issues require more than just healthcare. She joined interest groups of like-minded people who seek to create better environments for healthcare, even lobbying in Washington, D.C., for the American College of Physicians (ACP). Today, Dr. Candler is an ACP delegate to the American Medical Association, where she hopes to have an even stronger impact for the benefit of her patients.
A LOOK BACK AT 2017
SELECT FACULTY AWARDS

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY ACTION REGISTRY
PLATINUM PERFORMANCE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Ben Taub Hospital Cardiology Section, led by
Dr. Nasser Lakkis

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION MISSION: LIFELINE
STEMI RECEIVING CENTER - GOLD PLUS ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD
Ben Taub Hospital Cardiology service

BARBARA AND CORBIN J ROBERTSON, JR.,
PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
Dr. Anita Deswal (one of two awardees of this highest
educational honor made by the college)

BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE BEN AND MARGARET
LOVE FOUNDATION BOBBY ALFORD AWARD FOR
ACADEMIC CLINICAL PROFESSIONALISM
Dr. Barbara Trautner

CLARK FACULTY SERVICE AWARD
Dr. Joslyn Fisher
Dr. Mothaffar Rimawi

DISTINGUISHED CHEST EDUCATOR FROM AMERICAN
COLLEGE OF CHEST PHYSICIANS
Dr. Nicola Hanania

H. IRVING SCHWEPPPE AWARD FOR SUPERB
HUMANISTIC SKILLS
Dr. Amy Cobb
Dr. Taylor Teague

JOHN P. MCGOVERN OUTSTANDING
TEACHER AWARD
Dr. Zaven Sargsyan

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN CARDIOVASCULAR
SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND SURGERY
Dr. Mark Entman

LOCAL HERO AWARD FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF DEVELOPMENTAL MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY
Dr. Cynthia Peacock

MASTER CLINICIAN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN PATIENT CARE
Dr. David Y. Graham
Dr. Stephen Greenberg
Dr. James Pool
Dr. Edward Young
Dr. Alvin Blaustein

MEN OF DISTINCTION
Dr. James Pool, recognized with this annual award that honors
Houston men who have distinguished themselves in research,
education and patient care in the Texas Medical Center

MICHAEL E. DEBAKEY, M.D.,
EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD
Dr. Mary Estes

NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT FACULTY EXCELLENCE
AWARD FOR TEACHING AND EVALUATION
Dr. Basant Arya
Dr. Rola El-Serag
Dr. Cara Foldes
Dr. Jason Hou
Dr. Sai Kaumudi Saridey
Dr. Michelle Schmidt
Dr. Mona Shah
Dr. Wayne Shandera
Dr. Diana Stewart

NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT FACULTY EXCELLENCE
AWARD FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
Dr. Amit Parulekar
Dr. Jose Serpa-Alvarez

NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT FACULTY EXCELLENCE
AWARD FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Dr. Salim Virani

RIITE ROLE MODEL INNOVATION AWARD
Dr. Stacey Rose

RIITE AWARD FOR MEETING AND EXCEEDING
BCM VALUES
Adriana Hernandez-Garcia
Armandina Rodriguez
Nichole Stewart
Angela Waddy

SPARK AWARD FROM THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
ALLERGY, ASTHMA AND IMMUNOLOGY
Dr. Matthew Perez

“THAT’S THE WAY” AWARD
Dr. Jim Schwartz
Dr. Rashmi M. Maganti

TEACHING FACULTY OF THE YEAR
Dr. Alejandro Restrepo

VA HEALTH SYSTEM IMPACT AWARD
Dr. Hardeep Singh
### NATIONAL LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sharmila Anandasabapathy</td>
<td>Texas Executive Women’s 2017 Class of Women on the Move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Christie Ballantyne</td>
<td>member of Association of University Cardiologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Biykem Bozkurt</td>
<td>associate editor of <em>Circulation</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ruth Bush</td>
<td>assistant editor of <em>Journal of Vascular Surgery: Venous and Lymphatic Disorders</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Anita Deswal</td>
<td>chair for the American Heart Association Heart Failure and Transplantation Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Hashem El-Serag</td>
<td>vice president-elect, American Gastroenterological Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Nadeen Faza</td>
<td>serving on the American College of Cardiology Curriculum Design Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Alan Garber</td>
<td>special advisor to the president of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Stephen Greenberg</td>
<td>president-elect of the American Clinical and Climatological Association for 2017-2018 and president for 2018-2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Helen Heslop</td>
<td>president of the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy for 2017-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Hani Jneid</td>
<td>chair-elect for the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology Task Force for Data Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Hani Jneid</td>
<td>senior associate editor of <em>Journal of the American Heart Association</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Fasiha Kanwal</td>
<td>editor-in-chief of <em>Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Glenn Levine</td>
<td>chair for the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology Task Force for Practice Guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Cynthia Peacock</td>
<td>governor-elect of the Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Richa Shukla</td>
<td>Ben Taub Hospital internal medicine core clerkship site director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Hardeep Singh</td>
<td>member of Editorial Advisory Board of <em>The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Salim Virani</td>
<td>vice chair for the AHA Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Laila Woc-Colburn</td>
<td>Faculty Senate at BCM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. LeChauncy Woodard</td>
<td>Faculty Senate at BCM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### COLLEGE LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Lee Poythress has been selected as an assistant dean of Student Affairs at BCM.
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE PROMOTIONS

Dr. Roy Chemaly  
adjunct professor, Infectious Diseases

Dr. Ruth Falik  
associate professor emeritus, General Internal Medicine – Ben Taub

Dr. Christi Guerrini  
assistant professor (tenure track), General Internal Medicine

Dr. Zhaoyong Hu  
associate professor (non-tenured track), Nephrology

Dr. Rammurti Kamble  
professor (non-tenured), Hematology and Oncology

Dr. Waqar Khan  
clinical assistant professor, Cardiology

Dr. Anita Kusnoor  
associate professor (non-tenured track), General Internal Medicine – Ben Taub Hospital

Dr. Charlie Lan  
associate professor, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine

Dr. Lindsey Martin  
assistant professor (non-tenure track), Health Services Research

Dr. Nicholas Mitsiades  
associate professor (tenured), Hematology and Oncology

Dr. Atasu Kumar Nayak  
clinical professor, Cardiology

Dr. Mona Dhiraj Shah  
associate professor (non-tenured), Cardiovascular Research

Dr. Robert Webster  
instructor, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine

Dr. Laila Woc-Colburn  
associate professor (tenured), Infectious Diseases

Dr. Huaizhu Wu  
associate professor (tenured), Cardiovascular Research

COURSES COMPLETED

Drs. Laila Woc-Colburn and LeChauncy Woodard completed the inaugural Baylor College of Medicine 2017 Faculty Senate Leadership Course.

Dr. Lavannya Pandit earned a Master’s of Science degree from the Baylor Graduate School of Biomedical Science’s Clinical Scientist Training Program.

BOOKS


Drs. Nicola Hanania and Amir Sharafkhaneh are co-editors of a book titled *Depression and Anxiety in Patients with Chronic Respiratory Diseases*.

Drs. Martha Mims and Teresa Hayes are co-editors of a book titled *Handbook of Prostate Cancer and Other Genitourinary Malignancies*.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center liver transplant team performed its 100th liver transplant surgery on Aug. 10, 2017.
Established in 2008, the Center for Space Medicine represents the first time space medicine has been codified at the level of an academic center or department in a university or medical school. Over the years, the Center for Space Medicine and the Department of Medicine, along with other areas within Baylor, have built alliances in research and education that bridge earth and space health medicine. Two recent initiatives are strengthening the synergy.

In 2016, Baylor, through the Center for Space Medicine, received a 12-year cooperative agreement from NASA to lead a new Translational Research Institute (TRI) for Space Health. With funding up to $246 million, the TRI for Space Health seeks to support and connect innovations in healthcare, aerospace and technology to enable far-ranging improvements in mitigating biomedical risks associated with spaceflight. Baylor is teaming with the California Institute of Technology and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to manage this cutting-edge program for NASA. The latest opportunity brings Dr. Hashem B. El-Serag, chair of the Department of Medicine, together with Dr. Jeffrey P. Sutton, director of the Baylor Center for Space Medicine and professor in the Department of Medicine.

Through the TRI for Space Health, new opportunities for research collaborations with the Department of Medicine exist that push the frontier of medicine for space and Earth. Fundamentally, NASA is relying on the new institute to accelerate disruptive approaches in biomedical science and technology. These approaches and emerging advances may have a dual purpose in being relevant to the mission of the TRI for Space Health and in being applicable to the care of patients with a variety of medical conditions.

A second activity strengthening the synergy between the Department of Medicine and the Center for Space Medicine is the launching of an aerospace medicine initiative in 2017. Last August, the FAA named Baylor a Center of Excellence in Commercial Space Transportation. In October, the Center for Space Medicine entered into a contract with Virgin Galactic to provide medical services for the world’s first commercial space travel company. In parallel, two new senior faculty members were recruited to Baylor and serve as the chief medical officer and as a flight surgeon for Virgin Galactic. The faculty members, Drs. Jamess Vanderploeg and Tarah Castleberry, both have academic appointments in the Department of Medicine and the Center for Space Medicine.

As government and commercial space travel evolves, there will be many new issues and opportunities. For example, in the case of suborbital flights, which are the focus of Virgin Galactic, pilots will fly routinely and experience changes in G-force between 1G and microgravity much more frequently than traditional astronauts. What are the associated risks and detriments to performance? As Dr. Sutton notes, “the demographics in space travelers will also be changing; they’ll be shifting away from the ‘right stuff’ and toward the average citizen, often older than in the past and in some instances with pre-existing conditions.” What better time to coordinate with the department that provides care for internal medicine?
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE’S NEW FACILITIES AT MCNAIR CAMPUS ▼
Known to be a clinically rigorous program that graduates outstanding specialists, the strength of the education program at the Department of Medicine is proven through the success of the fellowship match. For example, this year, as in most years, all of our residents were matched to a fellowship in at least one of their chosen subspecialties, a testament to the quality of their education and the caliber of the residents in the department. Fellows in the various subspecialties in the Department of Medicine are mentored by leading experts in their respective fields, and the new fellows are assured the training they hoped for. Many of our fellows choose to stay and work at Baylor upon graduation, and those who don’t are employed by some of the most prestigious institutions in the country.

The education segment of the Department of Medicine is one of the largest in the country. The residency program offers several tracks in which our students can specialize:

- Primary care
- MeRIT (medical resident investigator track)
- Categorical (3 years)
- Preliminary (1 year)
- Combined medicine/pediatrics through Texas Children’s Hospital
- Baylor – MD Anderson Cancer Center (3 years)
- Internal medicine/genetics

Our fellows practice in a variety of settings, which contributes to the strength of the training. Openings exist in the Michael E. DeBakey Veteran Affairs Medical Center, Ben Taub Hospital, Baylor St. Luke’s Medical Center and, now, MD Anderson Cancer Center as well. New initiatives are being created, such as a new track within the residency program that aims to improve physician well-being, which is being led by Dr. Stacey Rose.

The residency program offers its residents a wide variety of opportunities for engagement for residents:

- Academics committee, which was founded by residents to promote scholarly activity by offering scholarships, research projects and mentorship
- Wellness committee, which addresses the residents’ well-being through planning events, pursuing scholarly work and improving their experience
- Recruitment committee, which is dedicated to recruiting the next group of residents
- Diversity committee

Residency Director Dr. Chirayu Shah is an example of the successful education program in the Department of Medicine. Attending Baylor College of Medicine as a medical student, Dr. Shah met his future wife here. Upon graduation, Dr. Shah chose to join the Baylor faculty and now practices at Ben Taub Hospital. The camaraderie, the quality of the education, the sense of community...all these things contribute to Department of Medicine residents continuing to both select and recommend us as their training center of choice.

**TRAINING IN DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE IN NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>384 TRAINEES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>218 residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>166 post-doctoral fellows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>29 TRAINING PROGRAMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 residencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 specialty programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Patients increasingly use online portals to access their test results, but do they really understand what the results mean for their health and what steps they should take next? To help explore this question, researchers from the VA and the Department of Medicine’s Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness and Safety (IQuEst) conducted a study to explore patients’ experiences and preferences when accessing their test results electronically. “We looked at a large sample of patients. This analysis is quite timely because patients currently have unprecedented access to their health information, including their test results, and we must ensure that data is meaningful and useful for them,” said lead author Dr. Traber Giardina, assistant professor and researcher in IQuEst.

The study found that about a fourth of participants who received a normal test result experienced negative emotions, such as anxiety, similar to those who received abnormal test results via the portals, explained Giardina. She said it might be because of the manner in which the information is presented, leading to misunderstandings. The study also found that about half of the participants searched online to better understand what their test result meant.

The researchers then created a framework for practice and policy recommendations to guide how the portals are developed and used. Their key recommendations were organized along eight components:

- Ensure the portal is available in multiple sources
- Provide easy access to educational websites
- Provide better explanations of test results
- Ensure “human” support services
- Provide personalized or contextual information
- Develop local policies and procedures to create standardized language and provide educational content
- Create national consensus and standards on best practices for releasing normal/abnormal test results
- Create mechanisms to evaluate patients’ experiences and use these data to help developers improve portal usability and understanding

“Our prior work shows how delays in follow-up of abnormal test results are common and can lead to patient harm,” said senior study author Dr. Hardeep Singh, chief of the Health Policy, Quality and Informatics Program at IQuEst and associate professor of Medicine at Baylor. “Studies like this help change the norm, and our recommendations offer a starting point for ensuring that patients use online portals successfully.”
The Department of Medicine established the Research Vice Chair Group in 2017 to improve the process of, and results from, the department’s research activities. The mission of this group includes enhancing the research careers of department faculty and trainees, increasing collaboration with other Baylor investigators and affiliated institutions, and fine-tuning our department’s research portfolio.

The agenda of the group, which is led by Dr. Christie Ballantyne, includes:

- Identifying more opportunities for teaching and lectures for our research faculty, to enhance their career development
- Matching research mentors with fellows, residents and medical students to encourage their participation in research while training and consideration of a career in research
- Improving our process for grant applications by developing an internal Department of Medicine review process for new investigators and investigators whose funding is threatened, improving communications between Department of Medicine sections and the Office of Research for plans for future grant submissions, and identifying grant opportunities for investigators
- Developing a new compensation plan that better recognizes and rewards research activity
- Placing more emphasis on collaboration between the department’s sections and other departments in Baylor, which is expected to open doors for more avenues of research that may not have been available without the collaboration

To that end, the Department of Medicine, with the help of Dr. David Corry and Dr. Colin Duckett, is working to facilitate the smooth transition of faculty who work at Baylor Scott and White into the Department of Medicine at Baylor. Baylor Scott and White, a collaborator with Baylor College of Medicine on biomedical research, is one of the largest not-for-profit healthcare institutions committed to innovation, collaboration, integrity and compassion. Dr. Duckett, vice president of research for Baylor Scott and White, is an active member of the Research Vice Chair Group and has joined the Faculty and Promotions Committee for the Department of Medicine.

The department also has made an active effort to recruit new faculty and investigators who bring substantial funding with them. From FY15 to FY17, NIH funding at the Department of Medicine has steadily increased. The goal of the Research Vice Chair Group is to continue this process of expanding our research base.

One step toward this goal is the implementation of the GrantForward search engine, now available on the Baylor College of Medicine website. This tool allows investigators to fine-tune searches for all possible funding opportunities.

Another step is the Research Vice Chair Group’s continuous focus on optimizing our use of space, which will provide greater flexibility to determine available space that is needed for current and future research projects. Already, we have seen a dramatic improvement in the dollars per square feet of space for the department.
Finally, the Research Vice Chair Group is working closely with department leadership to ensure that the new compensation incentive plan that is underway will address research and academic goals as well.

“It’s a very exciting time in the Department of Medicine,” said Dr. Ballantyne, referring to the changes now being brought to bear regarding our increased focus on translational research. In this approach, a wide range of disciplines, expertise and techniques are combined to promote and speed up improvements in healthcare, to translate basic scientific research into new approaches for diagnosis and treatment of disease, and then to implement evidence-based therapies into clinical practice. Because of the College’s strengths in genomics, basic research, clinical medicine, outcomes research and education, the Department of Medicine has a unique opportunity to play a leading role not only in the development of new personalized approaches to diagnose, treat and prevent disease, but also to determine cost-effective methods to implement these approaches and to educate both trainees and practicing physicians in the medicine of the 21st century.

### NIH GRANTS

- Dr. Gerd Brunner – R01 – National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- Dr. Jessica Donnelly – F32 – National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
- Dr. Matthew Ellis – U01 – National Cancer Institute
- Dr. Suzanne Fuqua – R01 – National Cancer Institute
- Dr. Bin He – R01 – National Cancer Institute
- Dr. Paul Klotman – P01 – National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
- Dr. Gabriel Lazaro-Muñoz – R01 – National Institute of Mental Health
- Dr. Na Li – R01 – National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
- Dr. Rajagopal Sekhar – R01 – National Institute on Aging
- Dr. Massimo Pietropaolo – R01 - National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
- Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan – K23 - National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
- Dr. Dennis Villareal – R01 – National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
- Dr. Reina Villareal – R01 – Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child Health and Human Development
- Dr. Zheng Sun – R01 – National Institute on Environmental Health Sciences, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; R21 – National Cancer Institute

### MISCELLANEOUS GRANTS

- Dr. Aladin Boriek – National Science Foundation
- Dr. Tony Eissa – Alpha-1 Foundation
- Dr. Kevin Erickson – American Society of Nephrology
- Dr. Kevin Erickson – National Kidney Foundation
- Drs. Vagish Hemmige and Alejandro Restrepo – Roderick D. MacDonald Research Fund at Baylor St. Luke’s Medical Center
- Dr. Molly Horstman – American Heart Association
- Dr. Valentina Hoyos – CPRIT
- Dr. Sylvia Hysong – FY18 National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases grant
- Dr. Ayse Leyla Mindikoglu – Roderick D. MacDonald Research Fund
- Dr. Nicholas Mitsiades – Department of Defense
- Dr. Hardeep Singh – Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Dr. Vinod Vijayan – American Heart Association
- Dr. Yanlin Wang – FY18 Interim and Bridge to Independence Funding grant

### VA GRANTS

- Dr. Bich Dang
- Dr. Hashem El-Serag
- Dr. Sylvia Hysong
- Dr. David Sheikh-Hamad
- Dr. Hardeep Singh