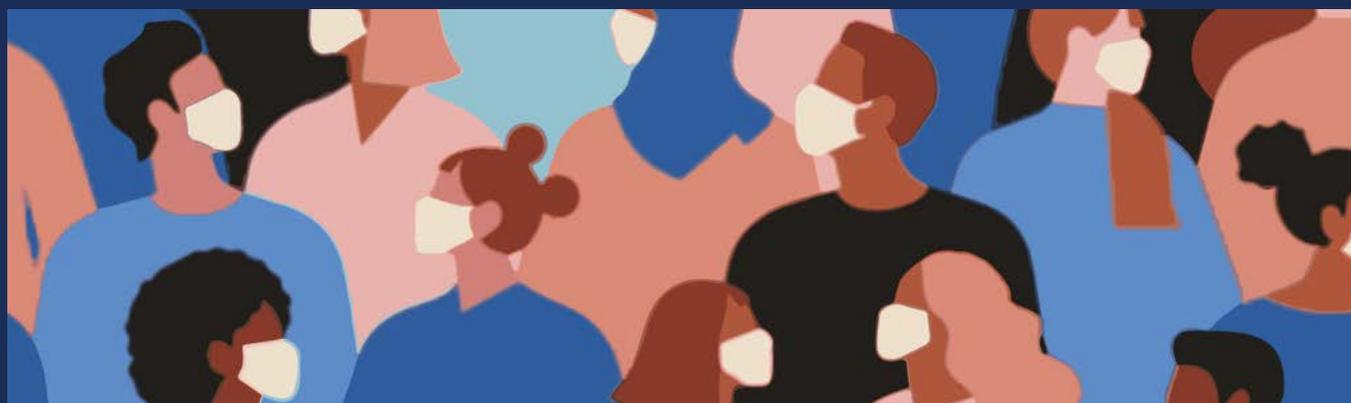
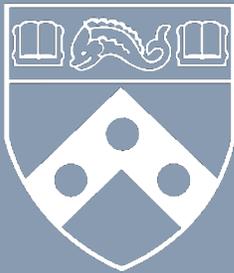


# PENNDERM

2020

Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center





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## Dear Friends and Colleagues,

What a year! 2020 will go down in history as a tragic one that brought out the best and worst in people. I won't focus on the worst, but want to simply recognize the incredible members of our Department and health system who responded heroically to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am regularly astounded by the accomplishments of our Department, but this year we were truly put to the test. Our clinical practices and research activities came to a grinding halt last spring. Our educational programs had to be completely retooled towards a virtual environment. Now, we finally see an end in sight, perhaps about one year after it all began. We have worked together to overcome these difficult times and greatly look forward to 2021 as a year of healing and recovery.

This newsletter focuses on our community engagement and diversity research initiatives within the Department. It originally was meant to be the Summer, 2020 edition and we started putting it together prior to the onset of the pandemic. As our attention was diverted and the newsletter delayed, these themes became even more relevant. The stories in this newsletter reflect the happenings of the Department over the last academic year. They highlight many of the ongoing efforts of our faculty to reach out to underserved communities, and also some of the concerted efforts we are making to address the lack of diversity in the field of dermatology. There is much work to do and we look forward to a better future.

A major milestone for the department was the appointment of Dr. Susan Taylor as the first Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She is also the first Black woman to be appointed to the Sandra J. Lazarus Chair, which is supported through continued philanthropy from the family. Susan Taylor has a demonstrated

commitment to pursuing and calling for a greater understanding of skin disease in patients of color, as well as a lifelong interest in supporting programs for helping minority populations. She serves as a strong mentor for many of our junior faculty and trainees. She works closely with Dr. Temitayo Ogunleye, Assistant Professor and Associate Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Department, as well as with many other members of the department interested in diversity and inclusion.

On the community health front, we feature a number of faculty who volunteer regularly at Puentes de Salud, a free health clinic providing care to Philadelphia's rapidly growing Latinx population. Dr. Zelma Chiesa Fuxench, Assistant Professor, and Dr. Cory Simpson, Clinical Instructor, along with our residents volunteer at Puentes and provide outstanding dermatologic care to this population. Dr. Carrie Kovarik, Professor, and Dr. Amy Forrester, Assistant Professor, volunteer at Philadelphia Health Center 1, and Dr. Jules Lipoff, Assistant Professor, works at the PRIDE Clinic, which provides services for LGBTQ+ patients and those living with HIV/AIDS. Many more members of the Department devote valuable time to the service of those in need, and this aspect of the department continues to grow.

This past spring marked the fourth consecutive year that we held the "Penn Academy for Skin Health" (PASH) which provides local high school students with hands-on experience in dermatology, basic laboratory skills and, more importantly, the beginnings of a support network of peers and mentors throughout the Department, School of Medicine, and University. Drs. Seykora and Grice work closely with Dr. Jamie Shuda, who has a PhD in education, to lead the program. Graduates of the PASH program have gone on to attend local Universities, including Penn. We continue to work with local Philadelphia high schools to recruit driven and exceptional applicants who may one day enter the field of dermatology. The success of our diversity research initiatives and community health programs depends on the dedication of our faculty, our excellent administration and staff, the rich variety of patients and cases referred to us by the community, NIH grant funding, philanthropic support, state of the art research and clinical facilities, and a pipeline of superb students and trainees.

Please enjoy reading this issue of the PennDerm Newsletter. I wish everyone the best for a safe, healthy and happy 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "George Cotsarelis".

George Cotsarelis, MD

Milton B. Hartzell Professor and Chairman



*"I learned so much that has prepared me for college. I learned about time management, organizational skills, and how to study effectively."*

*- PASH Graduate*

**Pictured (this page):**

Student working on a laboratory project during the Spring 2020 PASH session. (Photo taken pre-COVID-19)

## PENN ACADEMY FOR SKIN HEALTH (PASH)

The Penn Academy for Skin Health (PASH) was hosted for its fourth consecutive year this past spring. Funded by a grant through the University of Pennsylvania's Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center (SBDRC), PASH aims to give students a greater understanding of dermatology, laboratory techniques, and biomedical ethics. This year's twelve student cohort was the program's largest ever — a testament to the growing excitement for, and success regarding, the PASH program.

For four consecutive Saturdays each spring, PASH students participate in engaging lectures followed by laboratory instruction. They learn the ins-and-outs of dermatology and the basic skills of laboratory work. They work hand-in-hand with Penn Dermatology attending physicians, researchers, and students. Exceptionally motivated students are hired as summer interns in labs at both Penn Dermatology or Thomas Jefferson University. PASH alumni gain a support network of peers and mentors through the Department, the School of Medicine, and the University as a whole.

Gaining that support system is integral for students being introduced to the medical and research fields. Through PASH, students have the opportunity to learn in a supportive environment with their peers and gain experience as a group.

Students who participate in PASH are introduced to college-level laboratory techniques and gain a level of familiarity in the lab that prepares them for future educational endeavors. The robust curriculum is continuously evolving to expose PASH scholars to cutting-edge topics that influence the practice of dermatology and laboratory investigations. This year, the program continued the newly-introduced segment on health disparities in dermatology, focusing on the sociocultural impacts skin color and economic status have within dermatology and healthcare.

Exceptionally motivated students were invited to participate in a four-week summer internship, conducted remotely this year in light of the ongoing pandemic. The Summer PASH 2020 session had all Philadelphia high school students from the Spring session return for the Summer program, as well as one of the alumni from the 2019 cohort.

The PASH Summer program was organized by Dr. Jamie Shuda and involved faculty from Dermatology and the Perelman School of Medicine who presented on a broad range of topics related to dermatology and academic mentoring. The students attended presentations, including “Diagnose the Disease” and “Ethics in Research,” from Dr. John Seykora and Dr. David Margolis, respectively. Faculty also discussed recent topics in epidemiology with the students. Dr. Temitayo Ogunleye conducted a discussion panel where patients shared their experiences in dealing with skin diseases. An important presentation on health disparities in skin diseases was given by Dr. Junko Takeshita.

To supplement the faculty presentations, the students conducted independent studies related to the presentation topics. In addition, the students attended presentations on college readiness, pursuing a STEM degree, careers in the health professions, COVID-19, and public health. Initial feedback from the students was very positive. All students *agreed or strongly agreed* that the structure of the program was manageable and that PASH helped them make connections and build their network. Students suggested office hours and more live sessions for open discussions, which exemplifies their high level of engagement with the content and program volunteers.

Imperative to the success of PASH is the support of dedicated student and faculty volunteers who make the experience possible year after year. Dr. Paola Kuri is a postdoctoral researcher in the Rompolas Lab who has been involved as a volunteer with PASH for the past two years. She shared, “It’s important for kids to trust science early on! There are a lot of resources in Philly, there are many universities, a lot of science and industry, and it’s a great place to get involved in biotech and pharmaceuticals. A program like PASH creates the opportunity for students from the schools in Philly to get involved in all of this. Many public schools in Philly have really great kids who don’t always get the chances they deserve. It’s been extremely rewarding for me to participate in a program like this.”



## THE MOST VULNERABLE PATIENTS

*“I pursued a career in medicine because I wanted to serve the underserved patients in the inner city. There were, and continue to be, many health disparities in minority communities and I wanted to investigate and treat the most vulnerable patients who had hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease.”*

*- Susan Taylor, MD*

“The dermatology specialty has much work that needs to be done in regard to the number of under-represented minority (URM) physicians (both academic and non-academic dermatologists) as well as URM residents in dermatology programs. For many reasons, this negatively impacts the health of minority communities,” says Dr. Susan Taylor, Sandra J. Lazarus Associate Professor and Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for our Department of Dermatology.

A veteran of private practice, Dr. Taylor joined the Department in 2016 and has made diversity research and recruitment within the specialty her passion. She received her bachelor’s degree at the University of Pennsylvania before earning her medical degree at Harvard Medical School. After launching her own private practice, she created and directed the Skin of Color Center in New York City in 1999. She is a diplomat of the American Board of Internal Medicine and of the American Board of Dermatology. She is also the Vice President of the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), and a committee member of the Women’s

Dermatology Society and the Skin of Color Society, having served on the Board of Directors for these organizations in the past.

“I pursued a career in medicine because I wanted to serve the underserved patients in the inner city. There were, and continue to be, many health disparities in minority communities and I wanted to investigate and treat the most vulnerable patients who had hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease. When I arrived at medical school and was exposed to dermatology, I heard a new calling which would still ultimately allow me to concentrate on underserved communities.”

Concentration on underserved communities has been the hallmark of Dr. Taylor’s career. With her founding of the Skin of Color Center, she effectively established and defined a sub-specialty of the field: skin of color dermatology. Dr. Taylor shared, “Skin of color dermatology advances and promotes clinical knowledge of the unique needs and treatment challenges posed by ethnic skin and hair as well as

research of these areas. The field also addresses disparities and cultural competency. Prior to my founding of the Skin of Color Center, there was not sufficient interest in or an emphasis on these issues.” Later in 2004, she founded the Skin of Color Society to “...promote awareness, education, research and mentoring within the sub-specialty of skin of color dermatology.”

Dr. Taylor’s pioneering of skin of color dermatology is a primary reason why she was recruited to Penn Dermatology. As a top dermatology department, we strive to promote diversity in our research and clinical initiatives. Dr. Taylor is excited for this new career chapter and plans to use her position at Penn to further research efforts and collaboration with Department colleagues, particularly for dermatologic conditions that disproportionately affect minority communities. She relishes the importance of being able to test new hypotheses and therapies to meet the needs of patients, something most afforded to her through an academic career. Notably, when she first arrived at Penn, Dr. Taylor created a work group of colleagues to study and advance the understanding of Central Centrifugal Cicatricial Alopecia (CCCA). To date, their research proposes and conducts studies about this particularly marginalized disease and strives to find new and effective treatments.

Equally important as research to Dr. Taylor is her role as Vice Chair for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Department. In this newly designated position, she provides leadership and oversight of all aspects of diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism across the Department’s core missions of clinical care, research, and teaching. In collaboration with the Department’s Chair and Vice Chairs, she works to improve recruitment and successful retention of underrepresented faculty, residents, and staff as well as to ensure that the concepts of race, racism, antiracism, and structural competency are infused into trainee curriculum and continuing medical education. This includes ensuring all faculty, trainees, and staff participate in unconscious bias training.

Dr. Temitayo Ogunleye, Assistant Professor and Associate Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, works closely with Dr. Taylor in her initiatives. From early in her training, Dr. Ogunleye knew that she wanted to be well-versed in skin of color health and treatment. After earning her medical degree at the Perelman School of Medicine, she pursued her dermatology residency at the University of Michigan. She ultimately returned to the Department for a fellowship with

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“Skin of color dermatology advances and promotes clinical knowledge of the unique needs and treatment challenges posed by ethnic skin and hair as well as research of these areas.”

– Susan Taylor, MD

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Dr. William James to gain exposure to the breadth of racial/ethnic diversity afforded to the clinics in the city of Philadelphia. She shared, “One of the many wonderful things about the Department is that we’re in a hospital and a city which is very diverse. There is so much exposure to different skin types and diverse populations, and I really thought that I could hone my interests here.”

Dr. Ogunleye said that it wasn’t until her very last elective rotation in medical school when she discovered dermatology, and that up until that point she was undecided on what specialty to pursue. “I really liked the pattern recognition in dermatology. I come from a family of engineers, so I think that the algorithm of diagnosis and treatment made sense to me.” Along her path to becoming a dermatologist, Dr. Ogunleye became particularly piqued by an ever-present concern: a staggering and significant lack of Black dermatologists. According to Dr. Ogunleye, this lack of representation can be harmful to Black patients. She further said, “Traditionally, conditions that are more common in URM groups tend to be less researched. This is changing, but very slowly. One reason that we’re beginning to see more research in some diseases that disproportionately affect minority populations is because we’re seeing some diversification of the field and calls to action to address these inequities. Diversifying the workforce not only allows patients the opportunity to see physicians of color, but increases research in conditions that predominantly affect communities of color.”

Some critical issues affecting communities of color, particularly Black communities, within dermatology include vitiligo, keloids, melasma, and CCCA. While these condi-

tions are studied in a research setting, Dr. Ogunleye notes that they are not being explored as rigorously as she'd like to see. "These conditions can often be unfortunately labeled as 'cosmetic,' but for patients with skin of color they can have significant psychosocial effects."

As part of her role, Dr. Ogunleye is heavily involved in the Department's recruitment efforts for underrepresented medical students to be more successful in matching to dermatology. Through this initiative, she plans many dinners, workshops, and seminars for current medical students and aspiring dermatologists. "Improving our pipeline efforts is crucial for our mission to improve the diversity in the field. We hope that our efforts eventually help guide and develop dermatologists who can continue to address the many health disparities in minority communities." She has spearheaded efforts to partner with other faculty members of the Department and outside organizations to optimize the opportunities available to all.

Junko Takeshita, MD, PhD, MSCE, is a Penn Dermatology faculty member making notable strides within dermato-epidemiology research. Dr. Takeshita is a dually-appointed Assistant Professor in the Penn Departments of Dermatology and Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Informatics — a combination of expertise which truly guides her impressive research. She earned both her MD and PhD from Washington University in St. Louis and, after completing her dermatology residency at the University of Washington in Seattle, joined Penn Dermatology as a post-doctoral fellow in Dr. Joel Gelfand's lab to obtain formal training in epidemiology through Penn's Master of Science in Clinical Epidemiology (MSCE) program. While in the Gelfand Lab, Dr. Takeshita embarked on a study to identify the factors that are associat-

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**"We found that Black patients are far less likely to receive biologics. Biologics are the most effective treatments for moderate-to-severe psoriasis, so this finding was concerning."**

**- Junko Takeshita, MD, PhD, MSCE**

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ed with psoriasis patients receiving treatment with biologic therapies. She shared, "We found that Black patients were less likely than white patients to receive biologics. Biologics are the most effective treatments for moderate-to-severe psoriasis, so this finding was concerning." At the time of her first researching this issue, very few dermatologists were aware of this treatment disparity.

Dr. Takeshita now has her own research team, and they are laser-focused on identifying, understanding, and eliminating health disparities within dermatology. Their research is particularly focused on common, chronic skin diseases such as psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, and acne. Beyond these studies of psoriasis, Dr. Takeshita has also identified racial/ethnic disparities in health care use among children with atopic dermatitis (AD). "Data suggest that Black children have more severe disease than white children. Despite this, we have found that Black children are less likely to see a dermatologist for their AD. On the other hand, Black and Hispanic children are more likely than white children to go to the emergency room for their AD. For a skin disease that should, for the most part, be manageable on an outpatient basis, our findings suggest suboptimal health care utilization for AD among minority children. My research team and I are trying to understand the reasons for this with support from a grant we recently received from the National Eczema Association and the Pediatric Dermatology Research Alliance.

"To date, not much attention has been paid to health and health care disparities within dermatology, but especially in light of the Black Lives Matter movement, this is certainly changing, and I'm encouraged by the direction in which the field is heading." As research progresses, Dr. Takeshita is eager for more data to guide interventions to eliminate health disparities in dermatology. Dr. Takeshita's lab studies disparities using both quantitative and qualitative methods — a mixed-method research approach that has not been used widely in dermatologic research. "Since we're still in the early stages of identifying disparities in dermatology, much of the work is descriptive at this point. I want to move our field beyond the descriptive phase and understand why these disparities exist so that we can eliminate them."

When it comes to the future trajectory of her work, Dr. Taylor is equally eager. "I'm very fortunate to have had diverse career opportunities over the past 30 years... I am now enjoying academic trials, in particular clinical research trials. I enjoy identifying a patient-related disorder or concern, then figuring out how to design a research study

“One reason that we’re beginning to see more research in some diseases that disproportionately affect minority populations is because we’re seeing some diversification in the field, and calls to action to address these inequities.”

– Temitayo Ogunleye, MD

that will ultimately help my patient.” She shared further, “[One of my goals] is to develop and enhance established programs and events that foster a sense of unity and community for underrepresented minorities through events such as receptions, dinners, and meetings.” One of the ways she achieves this is through her work with the AAD’s Diversity Champion’s Program, which seeks to address access-of-care issues within dermatology for minority populations through means of increasing the number of dermatologists who are themselves URM. The Program aims to increase awareness of the lack of diversity within the specialty while emphasizing the importance among academicians of the critical role that residency programs have in improving the diversity of the workforce; to facilitate the establishment and development of diversity outreach initiatives in residency programs toward medical and undergraduate students; to train potential dermatology residency applicants; and to provide resources for expanding cultural competency among residency programs.

“The ability to identify and test new therapies to meet the needs of patients is critically important,” says Dr. Taylor. “Enrolling underrepresented minority patients in clinical trials is vital as their enrollment often lags. One aspect of my research is conducting phase 3 industry-sponsored clinical trials to evaluate safe and effective treatments for alopecia, vitiligo, as well as cosmetic devices. In this role, I am able to enroll subjects with skin of color to evaluate the safety and efficacy of the products... My work in research is exciting, rewarding and exhilarating.”



Susan Taylor, MD

- Sandra Lazarus Chair
- Associate Professor of Dermatology
- Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Department of Dermatology



Junko Takeshita, MD, PhD, MSCE

- Assistant Professor of Dermatology
- Assistant Professor of Epidemiology in Biostatistics and Epidemiology



Temitayo Ogunleye, MD

- Assistant Professor of Dermatology
- Associate Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Department of Dermatology



**Pictured (this page):**

Dr. Sarah Millar (left) and Dr. George Cotsarelis (right) at the 9th Annual Kligman Lecture & SBDRC Symposium.  
*(Photo taken pre-COVID-19)*

**Pictured (below):**

Students presenting their research posters at the 9th Annual Kligman Lecture & SBDRC Symposium.  
*(Photo taken pre-COVID-19)*

# 9th ANNUAL KLIGMAN LECTURE & SBDRC SYMPOSIUM

The 9th Annual Albert M. Kligman Lectureship was held on October 4th, 2019. This lecture series commemorates the notable legacy of Albert M. Kligman, MD, PhD, and his insurmountable contributions to the Department for over half a century. Dr. Kligman’s dedicated work as a clinician, mentor to young faculty, and extensive researcher has left a lasting impact at Penn and on dermatologic care internationally.

This year, we were honored to welcome back Penn Dermatology Professor Emerita Sarah Millar, PhD. Dr. Millar is now the Director of the Black Family Stem Cell Institute and Lillian and Henry M. Stratton Professorial Chair at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. Dr. Millar earned her PhD in Molecular Biology from the University of London and then trained as a post-doctoral fellow at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and at Stanford University. Before joining Mount Sinai in 2019, she was Vice Chair for Basic Research at the University of Pennsylvania’s Department of Dermatology and held secondary appointments in the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology and the School of Dental Medicine. She was also a principal investigator and Director of the Penn Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center, principal investiga-

tor of the Penn Dermatology research training grant, co-director of the Institute for Regenerative Medicine Program in Epithelial Stem Cells and Regeneration, and a member of the internal advisory boards for the Penn Center for Musculoskeletal Disorders and the Penn Training Program in Rheumatic Diseases.

Dr. Millar is an internationally recognized researcher whose principal focus is the development and renewal of skin, hair follicles, teeth, and mammary glands. Dr. Millar has received several awards in recognition of her research, including an NIH Method to Extend Research in Time (MERIT) Award for the discovery of WNT signaling in the skin, and the 2017 William Montagna Lectureship Award of the Society for Investigative Dermatology. She has published over 70 peer-reviewed papers, review articles, commentaries, and book chapters. Her extensive publication record speaks to her profound dedication to producing knowledge within the field.

Her presentation, entitled “Epithelial Stem Cells in Development, Regeneration and Cancer,” discussed her current research initiatives within this framework. This talk was then followed by an afternoon of exciting poster sessions from the Department’s faculty, students, and trainees. We were thrilled to welcome Dr. Millar back to campus to share her continued findings with us!





## IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

*“Puentes de Salud is founded on the principles of Social Determinants of Health and Social Justice. We believe that community health, wellness, and empowerment result from a collaborative, multidisciplinary effort to address the conditions in which we grow, learn, live, work, and age.”*

- [www.PuentesDeSalud.org](http://www.PuentesDeSalud.org)

Puentes de Salud (“Bridges of Health” in English) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization promoting the health and wellbeing of the rapidly growing Latinx population of the Philadelphia area. Located on South Street in Center City, Puentes (as it is called for short) provides high-quality medical care to patients regardless of insurance status, and also offers innovative educational programs, advocacy, and community-building services. Services are provided in Spanish and English, and clinicians (many affiliated with Penn Medicine) aim to diagnose and treat patients, while helping them better understand their health. Of the specialty medical care offered, dermatology services are popular and necessary. Zelma Chiesa Fuxench, MD, MSCE, Assistant Professor of Dermatology, is a staple of this initiative and has been volunteering with Puentes since she joined our Department in 2013.

She shared, “Working with Puentes has been a very rewarding experience. We offer services to a community of patients

within Philadelphia who may not have access to dermatological care for various reasons (e.g. lack of health insurance).

“Puentes offers a place where patients from the Latinx community can feel safe and comfortable with respect to the care they are receiving.” In addition to treating patients with dermatologic conditions at Puentes, Dr. Chiesa Fuxench also sees this experience as an opportunity to educate patients on the nature of their skin conditions. “We see many patients who have misconceptions about their conditions, such as psoriasis,” she shared. “Patients come in with stories such as ‘*they don’t let me hold my kids or my grandkids because of my psoriasis, because it’s contagious, isn’t it?*’ By educating our patients, we can empower them to be able to speak more freely and confidently about their skin disease and provide an opportunity to be more actively involved in their medical care and decision-making.” Dr. Chiesa Fuxench also stressed the importance of being able to communicate

with patients at Puentes in Spanish. She shared, “When we volunteer at Puentes, patients seem happy and at ease that they can speak in Spanish with a provider whom may also share a similar cultural background. They appear to be more comfortable during the interview and tend to open up more.”

Since 2015, the Department’s outreach clinic at Puentes has been coordinated by Cory Simpson, MD, PhD, Clinical Instructor of Dermatology at Penn. Dr. Simpson echoed the importance of providing culturally-competent care: “The program is called Puentes de Salud, which translates as Bridges of Health. So that means we’re trying to bring health to an underserved group of people in a way that’s approachable. We’re treating patients in their own language, being respectful of their background, and trying to bring down the separation that keeps a lot of people from accessing medical care...particularly specialty care.”

Dr. Simpson first got involved with Puentes in 2013 while he was a resident at Penn Dermatology, and he remains committed as an attending by scheduling coverage for each session, recruiting resident volunteers, and using the clinic to introduce medical students to the field of dermatology while involving them in our effort to help vulnerable populations. “Getting in to see a dermatologist in some of our patients’ situations can be next to impossible. For example, let’s just say a patient of ours works in the restaurant industry and is uninsured. Rashes, moles, and other sorts of growths can be visible to people — they’re concerning to the patient and they’re stigmatizing. Moreover, these issues can be work-jeopardizing. If you’re a restaurant worker and there are warts all over your hands, an employer may unfairly terminate you because of that... many people we see at Puentes lack the legal resources to combat such issues for various reasons. In that sense, skin conditions can be a really big economic problem.”

Similar to the care delivered at Puentes is the work some of our other physicians provide at Philadelphia Health Center 1 in South Philadelphia. Spearheaded by Professor Carrie Kovarik, MD, the Center sees hundreds of patients yearly. Dr. Kovarik shared, “This is a place where we see many skin conditions, from mild to severe. And what this clinic mainly sees are STIs [sexually transmitted infections].”

Indeed, Health Center 1 is the City of Philadelphia’s dedicated walk-in clinic specifically for STI testing, diagnosis, and therapy. Several of our dermatologists volunteer

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“[Puentes] offers services to a community of patients within Philadelphia who may not have access to dermatological care for various reasons. Puentes offers a place where patients from the Latinx community can feel safe and comfortable with respect to the care they are receiving.”

- Zelma Chiesa Fuxench, MD, MSCE

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there weekly, providing treatment regimens for many un- or under-insured Philadelphians. Dr. Kovarik continued, “One of the biggest misconceptions we see is regarding HPV [human papillomavirus]. There is a general confusion with what it is and how it’s spread; patients have a lot of questions. We take the time to explain treatment and how things work.” She believes that both a thorough explanation of the ailment and the treatment are key to success. “Patients need to understand what’s going on with them and how exactly we’re going to handle it.”

Amy Forrestel, MD, Penn Dermatology Assistant Professor, is no stranger to global and public health endeavors. She spends three months of the year at the Department’s clinic in Botswana, and when stateside she volunteers with Health Center 1 alongside Dr. Kovarik and others. Dr. Forrestel shared, “Community health and outreach are so important, and not just for dermatology but for every medical specialty. There’s so much demand and it can be hard to get an appointment with a dermatologist. When there’s something that’s causing a lot of psychological or physical morbidity in your life then waiting to see someone for eight months, for example, is not ideal.” She continued, “We can see this issue a lot with STIs, and I think we’re in a unique position to be able to help these patients correctly identify a lot of their conditions and get them appropriate treatments... Volunteering at the Center is one of the things that gives me the

most satisfaction about what I do.”

In addition to volunteering at Health Center 1, Jules Lipoff, MD, Penn Dermatology Assistant Professor, also manages the PRIDE Clinic (PRoviding Integrated Dermatology for Everyone), and echoes the sentiment of affirmative care for patients of varying gender identities and sexualities. Dr. Lipoff laid the groundwork for the clinic in 2014, as a venture to better understand and treat the unique dermatologic needs of LGBTQ+ patients and those living with HIV/AIDS. Patients are connected to the PRIDE Clinic through practitioner referral and are generally seen within one month. Dr. Lipoff said, “My primary interest is access to care. Both the HIV/AIDS-positive and LGBTQ+ communities are [medically] underserved, and my goal in creating this clinic was simply to improve access to excellent health-care.” The Clinic operates once per month at Penn Medicine University City, and seeks to rebrand itself from a clinic focused on immunosuppression to an entity looking to promote health equity within the GSM (gender and sexual minorities) and transgender communities as a whole. Dr. Lipoff hopes to implement a self-referral system in the near future to further broaden the Clinic’s reach and lessen any stigma faced by potential patients seeking care.

The need for community healthcare is essential to many underserved populations who face various disparities, which have only been amplified by the current pandemic. The United States, for all of its advancements in modern medicine, lags significantly behind countries of a similar economic status worldwide with respect to access-to-care and treatment affordability. Many un- and under-insured Americans alike seek care at centers for community health in times

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“My primary interest is access to care. Both the HIV/AIDS-positive and LGBTQ+ communities are [medically] underserved, and my goal in creating this clinic was simply to improve access to excellent healthcare. ”

- Jules Lipoff, MD

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of need, and rely on the services rendered and good intentions provided by physicians and professionals from across the medical spectrum. Since dermatologic examination is highly visual and many diagnoses can be made using photographs, the field of dermatology also has a unique opportunity to leverage technology to expand access to our specialty. In fact, several members of the Department are using tele dermatology to offer consultations to primary care colleagues working in under-resourced clinics who see a high burden of skin disease. Dr. Simpson, Dr. Kovarik, and Dr. Lipoff (among others) have served as liaisons to Puentes and Philadelphia Health Centers to provide free access to



Zelma Chiesa Fuxench, MD, MSCE

· Assistant Professor of Dermatology



Amy Forrestel, MD

· Assistant Professor of Dermatology



Carrie Kovarik, MD

· Professor of Dermatology



Jules Lipoff, MD

· Assistant Professor of Dermatology



Cory Simpson, MD, PhD

· Clinical Instructor of Dermatology

dermatology advice using smartphone apps that deliver patient histories and photographs to volunteer dermatologists in the Department, enabling them to provide input on a diagnosis and treatment plan. These committed physicians donate their time with the ultimate goal of reducing health-care disparities amongst vulnerable members of our society.

Dr. Chiesa Fuxench also shared, “When you alienate certain communities, you risk hurting them in the long run. At the end of the day, this creates more problems: patients will seek care in the wrong places and take advice from those who may not be properly trained. They can often be misdiagnosed or mistreated — I see all sorts of complications coming from that, and it’s really sad. It’s sad when you see that happen because you know you could’ve done something about it, you know we could have and should have done better.”

Fulfillment is often reciprocal when it comes to community health work, as Dr. Chiesa Fuxench continued: “For me, as a physician coming from an underrepresented minority, Puentes allows me the opportunity to engage with people from a similar community as my own. In a way, it makes me

feel less underrepresented and part of the bigger picture. It truly is a wonderful way to be of service.”

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“When you alienate certain communities, you risk hurting them in the long run. At the end of the day, this creates more problems: patients will seek care in the wrong places and take advice from those who may not be properly trained. ”

- Zelma Chiesa Fuxench, MD, MSCE

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## NEW CHOP DERMATOLOGY SECTION CHIEF

### *Marissa Perman, MD, Appointed CHOP Dermatology Section Chief*

After a thorough interview process, we are proud to announce the selection of Dr. Marissa Perman as the new Section Chief of Dermatology at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Dr. Perman is a practicing pediatric dermatologist, Director of the Epidermolysis Bullosa Multidisciplinary Clinic at CHOP, and an Associate Professor of Clinical Practices and Dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine.

She received her medical degree from the University of Maryland School of Medicine and has been in practice for more than 15 years. She is a devoted educator-clinician who treats children with blistering disorders and

polycystic ovarian syndrome. Her current research interests focus mainly on epidermolysis bullosa and the development of new therapies targeting the pathophysiology of specific diseases such as vascular anomalies in children. She is a highly-lauded physician who is regularly invited to speak around the world.



Dr. Perman is a world-class clinician who will serve invaluable as CHOP’s Section Chief; we ask you all to welcome and support Dr. Perman in this exciting new role!

## HAILS & FAREWELLS

*Hail to our incoming residents and fellows!*

### Residents:



**Victoria Fang, MD**  
 Medical School: New York University  
 Internship: Hospital of the U. of Pennsylvania



**Stephanie Florez-Pollack, MD**  
 Medical School: UT Southwestern  
 Internship: Dallas Presbyterian Hospital



**Claire Hannah, MD (Med Derm Resident)**  
 Medical School: University of Iowa  
 Internship: Hospital of the U. of Pennsylvania



**Daniel Lewis, MD (Former CTCL Fellow)**  
 Medical School: Baylor University  
 Internship: Memorial Sloan Kettering



**Supriya Rastogi, MD (CTCL Fellow)**  
 Medical School: Northwestern University  
 Internship: Beth Israel Deaconess



**Corinne Rauck, MD**  
 Medical School: University of Cincinnati  
 Internship: Riverside Methodist Hospital



**Olaf Rodriguez, MD**  
 Medical School: University of Pennsylvania  
 Internship: Hospital of the U. of Pennsylvania



**Arianna Yanes, MD**  
 Medical School: Northwestern University  
 Internship: Kettering Medical Center

### Fellows:



**Matthew Hedberg, MD, PhD (Dermath Fellow)**  
 Medical School: University of Pittsburgh  
 Residency: Washington University St. Louis



**Mary Larijani, MD (CHOP Fellow)**  
 Medical School: Sidney Kimmel Medical College  
 Residency: Thomas Jefferson University



**Joanna Walker, MD (Mohs Fellow)**  
 Medical School: Sidney Kimmel Medical College  
 Residency: Thomas Jefferson University



**Margaret Wat, MD, PhD (Dermath Fellow)**  
 Medical School: Baylor University  
 Residency: Cleveland Medical Center

### *Future endeavors of graduating residents & fellows:*

**Ashwin Agarwal, MD:** Will be working in private practice in Texas

**Sara Berg, MD:** Joining the faculty at Brigham and Women's Hospital

**Lucas Cavallin, MD, PhD:** Will be working in private practice in Texas

**Andrew Fisher, MD:** Will be working in private practice in Texas

**Michelle Khurana, MD:** Joining the faculty at CHOP Dermatology

**Aimee Krausz, MD:** Joining Penn Dermatology as an Instructor

**Susan Pei, MD:** Joining the faculty at Roswell Park Comprehensive Care Center in New York

**Courtney Rubin, MD:** Joining the faculty at Brigham and Women's Hospital

**Bridget Shields, MD:** Joining the faculty at University of Wisconsin

**Robert Smith, MD:** Joining the faculty at Eastern Virginia Medical School



## 36th ANNUAL DONALD M. PILLSBURY, MD, LECTURESHIP

### *“Uses of Chromatin Dynamic Maps for Genetically-Corrected Tissue Replacement”*

The 36th Annual Pillsbury Lectureship in Dermatology was held on June 4th, 2020. This lecture celebrates the life and leadership of Dr. Donald M. Pillsbury, who helped raise the prestige of dermatology in the scientific world, the government, and the public during his time at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Anthony E. Oro, MD, PhD, Eugene and Gloria Bauer Professor of Dermatology at Stanford University, presented the lecture entitled, “Uses of Chromatin Dynamic Maps for Genetically-Corrected Tissue Replacement.”

Dr. Oro earned his MD and PhD from the University of California San Diego. He completed both his internship and residency at Stanford University, where he now sits on the faculty. Dr. Oro is a leader in the field and at the forefront of skin disease research, specializing in hair loss, dermatologic oncology, cutaneous oncology, and stem cells. At Stanford, he currently serves as the Eugene and Gloria Bauer Professor of Dermatology, Associate Director of the Center for Definitive and Curative Medicine, and the co-director of the Child Health Research Institute. At Stanford, he is co-founder of the Program in Epithelial Biology, an active

member of the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, Children’s Health Research Institute, Bio-X, and the Program in Cancer Biology.

Given the circumstances, this year’s Pillsbury lecture was held remotely through the help of the Zoom virtual platform. While we were all saddened to not have the opportunity to gather in person for dinner and company, we are grateful to have been able to celebrate in any capacity. The Donald M. Pillsbury, MD, Lectureship traditionally honors our graduating residents and fellows, wishing them well on the next chapters of their journeys. We send our biggest congratulations to the graduated fellows and third-year residents on their outstanding accomplishments, and we wish them luck in their future endeavors!

#### **Pictured (above):**

(LEFT) Dr. Donald M. Pillsbury, former Chair of Penn Dermatology and namesake of the Annual Donald M. Pillsbury, MD, Lectureship.

(RIGHT) Anthony Oro, MD, PhD, guest lecturer.



We closed our clinics in early March to protect our patients, staff, and to preserve PPE.



With our faculty and students powering the COVID-19 testing phone line, we've gotten the results turnaround time down from days to hours.

## COVID-19 HEROES

*"Wherever the art of Medicine is loved, there is also a love of Humanity."*

- Hippocrates

The COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged us globally, domestically, and personally. We as physicians, nurses, students, and allied healthcare workers are scared, curious, and frustrated. A situation like this is unprecedented in many ways, and while it's easy to fall into the trap of despair, it's necessary to recognize all of the heroes among us. The University of Pennsylvania Health System has indeed risen to the occasion. Before the virus took full stranglehold of Philadelphia, we enacted sweeping measures to ensure that all nonessential staff would be able to work remotely and that our physicians would have the technology necessary to consult, the greatest extent possible, with their patients via telemedicine.

As the virus began to emerge in our city, we closed our clinics as soon as possible to protect the health of our patients and to preserve necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) for our colleagues on the frontlines. Misha Rosenbach, MD, is one of our own who led the Penn Dermatology response — he had this to say: "As a department, we're doing our part to flatten the curve while still caring for skin disease. We have to do whatever we can to help other doctors who are totally overwhelmed; the wards have been doubling and tripling up with COVID-19 patients. Early on, we noticed that while there were many tests being administered, what was lacking was the available manpower to call, consult, and counsel the patients who were either testing positive or negative. The Department of Dermatology decided to find a way to optimize this process."

Remodeling the reporting of results required creating new workflows from data collection to processing and delivery. These algorithms were all developed by our residents, under the guidance of Sara Samimi, MD, and Nicholas Mollanazar, MD, MBA. They developed systems to report both positive and negative results and devised various tools and educational materials to train faculty to handle various COVID clinical and test result scenarios. Dr. Rosenbach continued, "When we started managing the COVID-19 results, the turnaround was anywhere from 5-7 days, now we have it down to a few hours."

While Dermatology has played a key role in managing COVID-19 results, we do it with the help of talented staff and healthcare workers from all over the Health System. Dr. Samimi said, "What we're doing is solving problems. We're working with the wonderful social work team at Penn to get counseling to those who need it most, single mothers, the elderly, and otherwise vulnerable. They're experiencing anxiety at unprecedented levels due to these issues."

"This is about combining all of our specialties to make a cohesive system. Dr. Mollanazar's brilliance with technology integration has been crucial to making any of this even work, and Dr. Rosenbach's leadership has held our faculty and residents together. Dermatology is a relatively small department, but we're playing a huge role for the Health System right now. We're showing ways our group can be helpful for the entire System in moving forward in innovative ways."



**We've delivered thousands of COVID-19 test results — positive and negative — and counseled many more on staying safe.**

Dr. Mollanazar echoed the sentiment greatly and further shared, “This is a prime example of us working with the entire Health System and being outside of our comfort zone. We’ve now processed over 20,000 results and are working every day of the week. Through this, we’ve built a good reputation for the Department within the Hospital and throughout the region. We’re leveraging technologies not usually associated with medicine to handle patient care in a pandemic.”

In addition to managing the testing results, we honor the selfless commitment of our nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and nursing assistants to virus testing and patient care. Almost immediately at the onset of the pandemic, our staff stepped up to offer their services to the areas and clinics most in need. They’ve staffed the triage and testing centers at all Penn Medicine locations, joined the prescreening teams at the emergency department, and even at drive-through testing centers. Additionally, our clinic staff have been taking temperatures and conducting visitor screenings around the hospital for all visiting patients, faculty, and staff.

“COVID-19 doesn’t rest. Patients are getting tested 7 days a week and the results are coming in at all times. The Department has been working all day, every day. COVID-19 has become somewhat of a monolith; there are no longer discrete ICUs or specialty clinics, hospitals are now a single unit for COVID,” shared Dr. Rosenbach. “Philly responded quickly, and in many ways, we’re faring better than [other cities]. Everyone is trying to find their own methods to help. What we can all do is listen to voices of reason: wash your hands, wear a mask, and don’t come to work when you’re sick. We are doing our best in figuring out the logistics for this new normal.”



## FACULTY PROMOTIONS



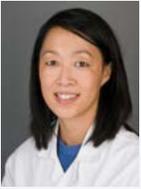
**Carrie Kovarik, MD**  
*Professor*

Dr. Carrie Kovarik has been promoted to Professor. Dr. Kovarik is a pioneer in global health, and one of the field's most recognized dermatologists fighting for global equity in the treatment of skin disease. She was a founding faculty member in the initial stages of the Botswana-UPenn Project (BUP), with which she remains active, and currently assists with various community health initiatives closer to home in the Philadelphia-area.



**Douglas Pugliese, MD, MPH**  
*Associate Professor*

Dr. Douglas Pugliese has been promoted to Associate Professor. Dr. Pugliese is an expert in general dermatologic issues and specializes in wound healing; he has published extensively on wound healing and inflammation. He primarily see patients at our Penn Dermatology University City location as well as at the Penn Wound Care Center.



**Aimee Payne, MD, PhD**  
*Professor with tenure*

Dr. Aimee Payne has been promoted to Professor with tenure. Dr. Payne has led her research team, and thus our Department, to the frontlines of medicine with her successful exploration of CAR T-cell therapy in her research on pemphigus and skin blistering. Her co-founding of Cabaletta Bio is in clinical-stages and bringing engineered T-cell therapies to patients with B-cell mediated autoimmune diseases.



**Joseph Kist, MD**  
*Associate Professor*

Dr. Joseph Kist has been promoted to Associate Professor. Dr. Kist is an expert in general dermatologic issues and is highly regarded by his patients.. He primarily practices at our Penn Dermatology Cherry Hill location in Cherry Hill, NJ.



**Todd Ridky, MD, PhD**  
*Associate Professor with tenure*

Dr. Todd Ridky has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. Dr. Ridky has nurtured his research team to some fascinating discoveries, including but not limited to, the 2016 founding of Linnaeus Therapeutics with former doctoral student, Chris Natale, PhD. Linnaeus is in development stages engaged in the identification and development of small molecule agents for the treatment of cancer.



**John T. Seykora, MD, PhD**  
*Professor with tenure*

Dr. John T. Seykora has been promoted to Professor with tenure. Dr. Seykora has long served as a dermatopathologist committed to hair pathology and skin cancer research within the Department, having personally analyzed many thousands of pathology specimens. He is a core faculty member with the Penn Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center (SBDRC) and an active mentor in the Penn Academy for Skin Health (PASH).

## FACULTY LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Jeremy Etzkorn, MD**

*Director of Research for the Penn Dermatology Oncology Center*

Dr. Jeremy Etzkorn has been appointed as the Director of Research for the Penn Dermatology Oncology Center. In this new role, Dr. Etzkorn will lead the Center in conducting cutting-edge research to advance the prevention and treatment of skin cancer. Dr. Etzkorn's research expertise includes melanoma, Mohs surgery, cutaneous oncology, and reconstruction (which involves investigating surgical techniques to improve outcomes for special site melanomas). His research is supporting him in becoming one of the leading international physician-researchers in dermatological surgery.



**Thuzar Shin, MD, PhD**

*Director of High-Risk Skin Cancer Clinic for Organ Transplant & Immunosuppressed Patients*

Dr. Thuzar Shin has been appointed as the Director of High-Risk Skin Cancer Clinic for Organ Transplant and Immunosuppressed Patients, one of the four specialized clinics that comprise the Penn Dermatology Oncology Center. Dr. Shin's clinical and research interests are perfectly conjoined, including the treatment of skin cancers and rare tumors with Mohs surgery, caring for immunosuppressed patients and organ transplant recipients with numerous skin cancers, and the management of high-risk skin cancers requiring multidisciplinary care. In this new role, Dr. Shin will lead a team of surgeons, medical dermatologists, and researchers on a mission to prevent and treat skin cancers in organ transplant and immunosuppressed patients.



**Susan Taylor, MD**

*Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Sandra Lazarus Chair*

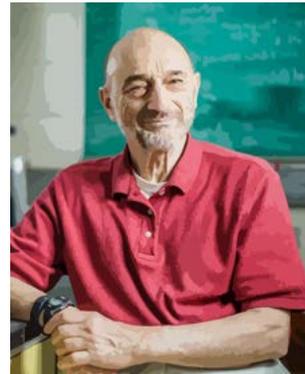
Dr. Susan Taylor has been appointed as the Sandra Lazarus Chair, and as the Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Department. The Sandra Lazarus appointment is made to "support a bright, mid-level academic physician in Dermatology who demonstrates compassion, humanity, creativity, and a commitment to academic excellence." Dr. Taylor has made an ineffable impact on our specialty for over two decades, and embodies each of these characteristics. In addition to these roles, Dr. Taylor serves as the Vice President of the American Academy of Dermatology. She continues to obtain competitive external funding sources for her numerous clinical trials, especially for skin diseases found predominantly in racial minorities.

## REMEMBERING DR. GEORGE PRETI

George Preti, PhD passed away March 3, 2020 from bladder cancer. Dr. Preti trained at MIT as an organic chemist and is known for work on the chemistry of human body odor. He worked at Monell Chemical Senses Center on Market street in West Philadelphia for over 50 years. He collaborated with a number of our faculty, including Drs. Kligman, Leyden, Fakharzadeh and Grice, on topics related to sweat, body odor and detection of cancer using the dog's ability to smell organic volatiles produced by tumors. Our department was so fortunate to interact with such a unique gem of a person who was only a few blocks away. He gave fascinating lectures on one of a kind topics to the medical students and residents. I would encourage all of you to explore his publications:

<https://bit.ly/37BHj3>

Dr. Preti was often in the popular press — the New York Times magazine once featured him with a cover story. He was a kind and colorful individual with a wonderful sense of humor. Raised in Brooklyn, he had an extraordinary ability to explain his findings in a straightforward manner and apply his expertise to questions of interest to the general public. His infectious enthusiasm, collegial manner and unique perspectives pushed everyone around him to excel and into new areas of study. His impact on dermatology remains through his published work, and he will be greatly missed by those lucky enough to have known him.



## PENN CUTANEOUS PATHOLOGY SERVICES

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- Tropical & Infectious Dermatologic Conditions
- Cutaneous Lymphoma

*Oral Pathologist with specialties in:*

- Inflammatory & Autoimmune Mucosal Lesions,
- Oral Preneoplasia and Cancer

# WELCOME NEW FACULTY



**Claudia Hossain, MD**  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Dr. Claudia Hossain completed a BS/MD program through the Pennsylvania State University and Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University. Dr. Hossain completed her residency at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Her clinical interests include general dermatology, oncodermatology, and cosmetic dermatology.



**Analisa V. Halpern, MD**  
*Associate Professor*

Dr. Analisa Halpern earned her BA from Stanford University and her MD from the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine. Dr. Halpern completed her residency at Cooper Hospital University Medical Center. Her clinical interests include psoriasis, acne and rosacea, atopic dermatitis, cosmetic enhancement, complex general medical dermatology, women's health, adolescent dermatology, and resident and student medical education.



**Stacy McMurray, MD**  
*Assistant Professor*

Dr. Stacy McMurray earned her BS at Middle Tennessee State University and her MD from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC). Following residency at UTHSC, Dr. McMurray completed a Mohs fellowship at Vanderbilt University. Her interests include cutaneous oncology, transplant dermatology, Mohs micrographic surgery and advanced reconstruction, and medical education.



**Meera Sivendran, MD**  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Dr. Meera Sivendran earned her BA from the University of Pennsylvania and her MD from Jefferson Medical College. She completed her residency in dermatology at Geisinger Hospital. Dr. Sivendran's clinical interests include general dermatology, including skin of color, acne, atopic dermatitis, and psoriasis.



## GLOBAL DERMATOLOGY: GUATEMALA

*Working alongside Guatemalan dermatologists, Penn Dermatology participants learn about community-specific diseases and cultural practices while acquiring hands-on training in an under-resourced setting, where ingenuity and compassion are essential.*

The Guatemala-Penn Partnership has spanned a century of collaborative research, service, and scholarship with the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, Universidad Francisco Marroquín, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, and Hospitalito Atitlán.

The international partnership has deep roots in global and community health-related endeavors, which have been supported by philanthropic funds. In 2005, the Penn-Guatemala Health Initiative was formed, which allowed Penn Dermatology to initiate its own efforts in clinical outreach and educational exchange with local dermatologists and trainees.

In 2012, Dr. Rudolf Roth initiated a yearly dermatology-specific collaborative effort with the *Instituto de Dermatología y Cirugía de Piel* (INDERMA), the premier Latin American residency training program in dermatology for Central and South America, where training opportunities for aspiring dermatologists can be scarce. Luckily, Penn volunteers were able to complete the 2020 trip to Guatemala this past winter just before the pandemic began in the Western hemisphere. During non-Covid times, our physicians, residents and

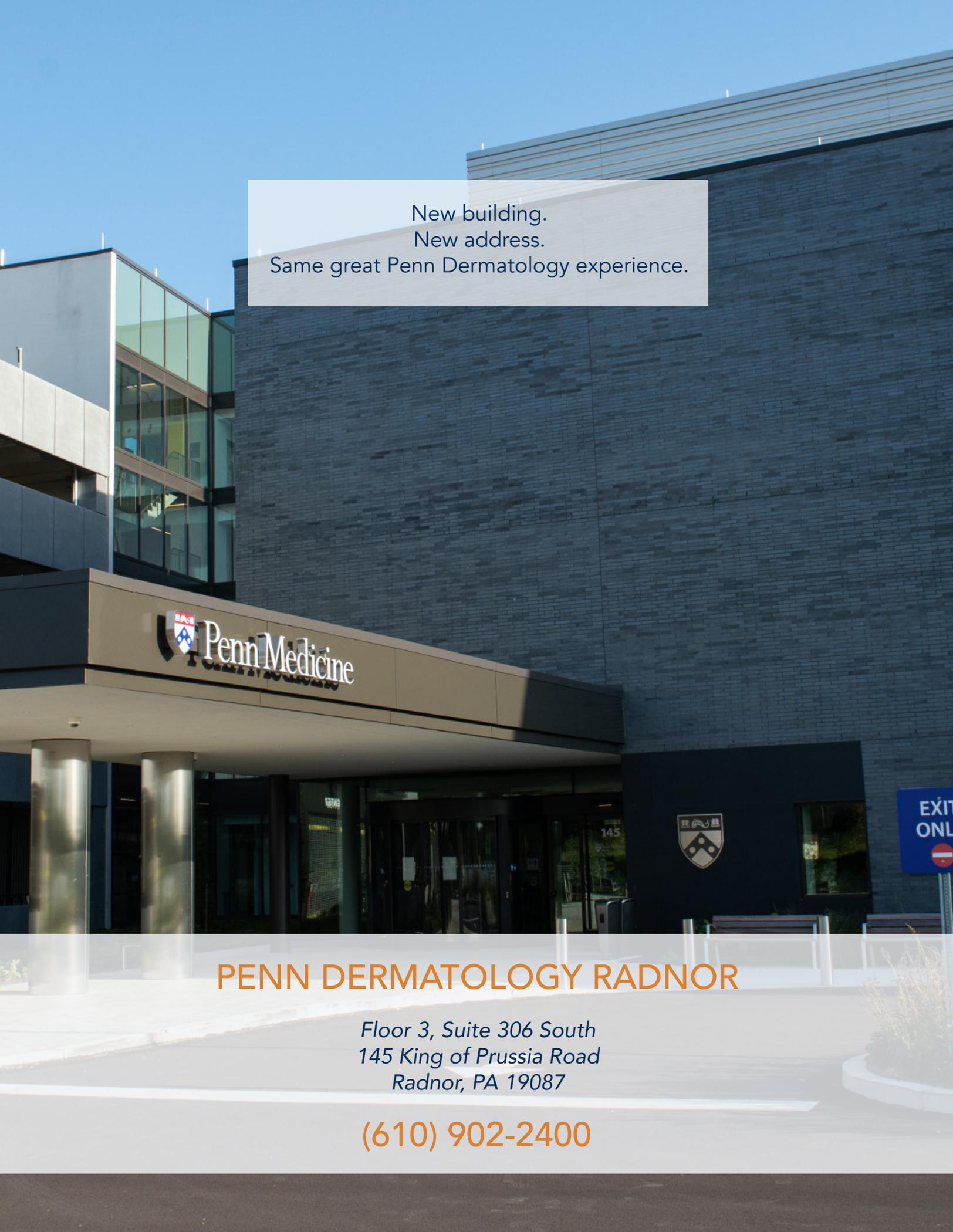
fellows venture twice yearly to underserved areas of the country to provide dermatologic care and assist in the training of INDERMA residents and healthcare workers. There, they provide dermatologic care and offer educational lectures to Guatemalan healthcare providers at local clinics and the main hospital in Santiago Atitlán.

All Penn partnerships have a two-way flow of faculty and residents, and Penn Dermatology regularly hosts faculty, students, and trainees from INDERMA. In this initiative, residents and fellows acquire hands-on training while treating many community-specific diseases in a real-world global health setting. Through this bi-directional exchange, dermatologists and trainees from both Penn and Guatemala have provided a valuable experience to each other in cross-cultural medical learning and clinical competency.

### **Pictured (above):**

Physicians and residents participating in the Penn-Guatemala Health Initiative.

*(Photo taken pre-COVID-19)*



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## HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCOVERIES

*This isn't a 'biotech bubble,' it's 'Philadelphia's moment' to become a center for gene therapy, says Penn-based CEO*



Adapted from  
[inquirer.com](http://inquirer.com)

Dozens of small biotech companies have popped up in the US over the last two years, including several in the Philadelphia area.

**Aimee Payne, MD, PhD**, Professor in the Department of Dermatology and Co-Founder of Cabaletta Bio was recently mentioned in an article from the Philadelphia Inquirer.

The science, technology, and discovery backing her startup, Cabaletta Bio, is much more sound and studied than many. The company is developing T cells that don't kill human B cells indiscriminately, but instead target destructive ones. The company has raised nearly \$100 million dollars in the past couple of years, and went public in October of 2019. The company now has enough money to operate for the next few years as it ramps up clinical trials.

*Penn Medicine Researchers Illuminate Racial Disparity in US Acne Treatment*



Adapted from  
[penntermine.org](http://penntermine.org)

There are a variety of medications to treat acne, ranging from oral drugs to topical medications. A new study from **Junko Takeshita, MD, PhD, MSCE** and **John Barbieri, MD, MBA**, is highlighting the racial gap in which certain patients are more likely to receive prescription drugs for acne medications, particularly antibiotics.



They've discovered that patients who are Black are far less likely to receive prescription medications, even though Black people often face scarring and long-lasting post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation from acne.

Dr. Takeshita shared, "Finding that patients across the US are receiving different care for the exact same condition is jarring, especially since there is no evidence that a person's race or gender has any impact on how effective these treatments are. Our study suggests that disparities involving race/ethnicity, sex, and insurance exist. Now we need additional research to help tell us why."

## What are COVID Toes?

Adapted from  
[usatoday.com](https://www.usatoday.com)



“Doctors discover symptom of coronavirus mostly seen in kids,” according to an article from USA Today.

Doctors at the Perelman School of Medicine have recently identified a new symptom of COVID-19 — they’ve informally dubbed it “COVID toes.” This is the presence of blue or purple lesions on the feet and toes. Interestingly, COVID toes seem to appear in patients who otherwise may be considered asymptomatic. COVID toes can often be painful or uncomfortable for the patient.

**Misha Rosenbach, MD**, says that besides COVID toes, dermatologists need to be paying attention for livedo reticularis, which has been seen in hospitalized COVID-19 patients. The blood clotting condition is said to be similar to [what’s thought to be] the clotting causing the toe discoloration. Although patients with COVID toes are more likely to test negative for COVID-19, as they appear when the virus is at its earliest stages, patients should quarantine at home and closely monitor any developing or worsening symptoms.

## Do You Really Need to Wear a Mask This Summer?

Adapted from  
[everydayhealth.com](https://www.everydayhealth.com)



Months into the COVID-19 pandemic, you may question: “Do I still need to be wearing a mask?” **Carrie Kovarik, MD**, weighs in at Everyday Health with some advice on how to maintain skin health under your mask.

The short answer is: yes, you should be wearing a mask. While many who test positive for the novel coronavirus have visible symptoms, asymptomatic carriers have become overly prevalent. Wearing a mask at all times while in public helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 from all potential carriers.

While in hot weather, face coverings trap more dirt and irritants on the skin. Dr. Kovarik shared, “Saliva and moisture from your breath are also irritants,” she says. “The friction from the mask will tend to dry your face out as well.” She recommended the following strategies for maintaining healthy skin under a covering:

- 1) *Wash with a gentle, fragrance-free soap;*
- 2) *Apply a mild moisturizer;*
- 3) *Minimize the use of makeup and other products;*
- 4) *Find a comfortable mask;*
- 5) *Wear a fabric that doesn’t irritate.*

### *What one doctor has learned from calling patients with COVID-19 test results*

Adapted from  
inquirer.com



“I’m calling with your COVID-19 test results.”

**Jules Lipoff, MD**, recently wrote for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Testing patients for COVID-19 has been one of the biggest struggles in the fight against this pandemic. Even now, with elevated testing rates, it is clear that the process of testing and delivering results has been problematic from the start.

While front line workers are certainly essential in this crisis, many other physicians have continued to support patients remotely, many of whom sign up for shifts to triage patients that have been tested in drive-through locations and emergency rooms and sent home to await their results.

Many of the patients he’s called have been workers in hospitals, nursing homes, and even hospice centers across Philadelphia. He writes about how it can be frightening to think about how widespread this disease is, especially in the places with the most vulnerable patients.

### *Flexible, Personalized Care Needed for Psoriatic Disease During COVID-19 Pandemic*

Adapted from healio.com



In June, the National Psoriasis Foundation’s COVID-19 Task Force updated its list of recommendations for patients with psoriasis and practitioners regarding treatment options, office visits and risk factors.

“In general, most patients with psoriatic disease should probably remain on their systemic therapy if they’re on it. And if they need to start systemic therapy for their disease, that should be considered as well,” said **Joel Gelfand, MD, MSCE**, co-chair of the task force. “The burden of psoriasis is quite substantial. It’s hard enough to deal with the emotional and difficult effects of the pandemic, and then having to deal with psoriasis on top of it.”

“Each patient is going to have their own unique concerns around the pandemic, and we need to tailor our treatment plans for the patient we are dealing with,” Dr. Gelfand said.

## TV ads may be contributing to treatment disparities for psoriasis, eczema



Adapted from  
[phillyvoice.com](http://phillyvoice.com)

People of color are rarely featured in medication commercials, **Junko Takeshita, MD, PhD, MSCE** and her research team are finding.

“The number of people of color in pharmaceutical ads for psoriasis and eczema is disproportional to the diverse group of patients living with these conditions,” according to their study published in *Cutis*.

“There remains a lot of speculation about why people of color are less likely to receive the most effective psoriasis and eczema medications,” said lead author Alexis Holmes, a fourth-year medical student in the Perelman School of Medicine.

“There are likely multiple variables affecting the rates of prescription among non-white patients,” Holmes said. “Considering the wide reach that direct-to-consumer ads have among the general public, we thought that they were an important source of information to study.”

The researchers analyzed 40 commercials that aired between 5-11 PM over a 14-day period. 93% of the characters in the psoriasis commercials and 54% of those in the eczema ads appeared to be white.

## Psoriasis Biologics May Reduce Heart Disease Risk, Study Suggests



Adapted from  
[everydayhealth.com](http://everydayhealth.com)

New research has found that drugs like adalimumab and ustekinumab might lower levels of a dangerous type of coronary plaque.

For a new study, **Joel Gelfand, MD, MSCE**, and his colleagues enrolled 209 people with psoriasis who had not yet been treated with biologics. Roughly one-half were prescribed biologic therapies to treat their condition, while the rest were not. On average, those who received biologic therapy saw their lipid-rich necrotic core (LRNC) decline from 3.12 square millimeters ( $\text{mm}^2$ ) to 2.97  $\text{mm}^2$  — about a 5% decrease. Those who weren’t on biologic therapy saw, on average, a LRNC increase from 3.12 to 3.34  $\text{mm}^2$  — a 6% rise.

Larger studies are needed to confirm the positive effects of biologics on LRNC and heart disease risk, but Dr. Gelfand says the findings are exciting. There is a lot of recent research which suggests that people with psoriasis are at increased risk for heart disease.

“This risk is more clinically significant in those with more severe skin disease,” Gelfand notes. “People with psoriasis should be screened for traditional cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol, and they should adopt a heart-healthy lifestyle — whether they’re on biologics or not.”



## 44th ANNUAL M.H. SAMITZ, MD, LECTURESHIP

*“Translational research in vitiligo: Launching a new era of targeted treatments”*

The 44th Annual M.H. Samitz, MD, Lectureship in Cutaneous Medicine was held on November 7th, 2019. The Samitz Lecture is named in memory of Morris H. Samitz, MD, who was a preeminent educator, talented clinician, and passionate dermatologist within our department. Dr. Samitz was a dedicated physician and served as one of Philadelphia’s leading dermatologists. He was also an outstanding teacher who inspired students during his many prolific years within the Penn Dermatology Department. Dr. Samitz was adored by patients, students, and colleagues for his endearing and compassionate personality, as well as his exceptional knowledge and clinical intuition. When Dr. Samitz retired in 1975, students and colleagues in the Department wanted to honor his legacy by undertaking a fundraising campaign to create a lectureship series in his name.

This most recent guest lecture was given by John Harris, MD, PhD, of the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS). Dr. Harris is a Vice Chair and Tenured Professor in the Department of Dermatology at the School, the Director of their Vitiligo Clinic and Research Center, and also serves as the Associate Director of their MD/PhD

Program. He is a dermatologist and physician-scientist, caring for patients in a specialty clinic and running a large research laboratory focused on understanding the pathogenesis of vitiligo. Dr. Harris earned his MD and PhD degrees at UMMS, and then completed his dermatology residency and post-doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine Department of Dermatology.

Dr. Harris’ talk, entitled “Translational research in vitiligo: Launching a new era of targeted treatments,” discussed his impactful research while drawing on his extensive experience as both a physician and groundbreaking scientist. Dr. Harris talked extensively on the crossover between vitiligo, vitiligo immunity research, and the associations of vitiligo and alopecia areata.

### Pictured (above):

Dr. John Harris (University of Massachusetts Medical School) presenting at the 44th Annual Samitz Lecture. *(Photo taken pre-COVID-19)*

# PARTNERING WITH PENN DERMATOLOGY

Penn has consistently moved the field of dermatology forward through personalized care and therapeutic advances. The Department of Dermatology works continuously to develop new techniques and therapies through research and to educate the next generation of outstanding physicians and researchers. To maximize our expertise and potential, improvements to our research infrastructure are required. Basic, translational, and clinical research activities are the hallmark of our clinical care and patient outcomes. With significant philanthropic investments, the Department will move forward addressing pressing medical challenges in dermatologic care and will be instrumental in improving diagnoses, new surgical techniques and quality of life. Lastly, offering the best multidisciplinary care for our patients remains a top priority.

## Department of Dermatology Fundraising Priorities

### Pilot Research Projects

#### *Honoring Leaders*

As the oldest dermatology department in the country, Penn Dermatology has been shaped by many great leaders whose legacies live on through their scientific breakthroughs. Established in 1874 by Dr. Louis Duhring, Penn Dermatology follows the traditions of many great 19th and 20th century physician-researchers who worked collaboratively and across disciplines, such as with the engineering school. As a contributor to pilot research projects in cutaneous regeneration, Penn investigators gain the ability to impact patients worldwide with novel approaches to skin diseases, innovative treatments, and potential for cures.

### Fellowship Training Programs

#### *Supporting New Investigators*

Penn Dermatology's training programs attract the most outstanding candidates, developing leaders in dermatologic research, academic, and clinical dermatology. Funds directed toward fellowship training programs guarantee Penn Dermatology's long tradition of educating exceptional scientists and physicians.

### Endowed Professorships

#### *Rewarding Innovation*

Supporting the work of Penn's physician-scientists is of utmost priority. Endowed professorships in investigative dermatology provide Penn Dermatology with the ability to retain and attract exceptional faculty. For decades, Penn's preeminent dermatologists and researchers consistently receive recognition for excellence in patient care, research discoveries, and education. Endowed professorships are instrumental in permanently recognizing the dedication of the Department's faculty and their important work.

### Laboratories & Research Facilities

#### *Promoting Scientific Advancement*

Research space is of great necessity. New laboratories and instruments provide the path to great discoveries. With the right resources, Penn Dermatology will develop a cutaneous regeneration and tissue engineering effort focused on developing new treatments for skin disorders.

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Private philanthropy meets funding needs not covered by government grants or insurance reimbursements. Your donation enables us to break new ground and to improve upon existing therapies.

Philanthropic gifts of all sizes to support our research, educational, and clinical endeavors are greatly appreciated. Naming opportunities within the Department begin at the \$25,000-level. Additionally, any gift can be given outright, through a planned giving vehicle, or can be structured to be paid over a 5-year period.

For more information about partnering with Penn Dermatology, please contact [Caitlin Crowe Doelp](#) at Penn Medicine Development & Alumni Relations at (215) 746-2167 or [ccrowe@upenn.edu](mailto:ccrowe@upenn.edu).

## FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS



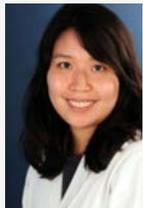
**Bruce Brod, MD**

- Appointed Chair of the American Academy of Dermatology Government Affairs and Health Policy Council



**Zelma Chiesa Fuxench, MD, MSCE**

- Received a 2020 Diversity Research Supplement Award from the Dermatology Foundation



**Emily Chu, MD, PhD**

- Elected to the Board of Trustees for the Dermatology Foundation
- Received a Dermatology Foundation Diversity Research Supplement Award



**Jeremy Etzkorn, MD**

- Received a Foundation Investigator Award from the American College of Mohs Surgery



**Joel Gelfand, MD**

- Appointed Co-Chair of the National Psoriasis Foundation's COVID-19 Task Force
- Appointed to the Board of Directors for the International Psoriasis Council



**H. William Higgins, MD**

- Awarded the Florida State University College of Medicine distinguished alumni award and was inducted into their Hall of Fame
- Named Pennsylvania's representative for the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery Association's (ASDA) Advocacy Network for Dermatologic Surgery (SANDS)
- Won the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery's 2020 Iron Surgeon Competition (Click to watch the accompanying video: <https://bit.ly/3pj5Jlm>)



**Robert Micheletti, MD**

- Elected to the Penn Medicine Academy of Master Clinicians



**Christopher Miller, MD**

- Received a 2020 Penn Medicine Award of Excellence (Luigi Mastroianni Clinical Investigator Award)



**Sara Samimi, MD**

- Received the 2020 Bennett Johnson Attending Teaching Award



**Cory Simpson, MD, PhD**

- Received a Patient Hero Care Award from the American Academy of Dermatology



**Susan Taylor, MD**

- Received the Women's Dermatology Society Mentor of the Year Award
- Appointed as Vice President of the American Academy of Dermatology



**Junko Takeshita, MD, PhD, MSCE**

- Received a Dermatology Foundation Diversity Research Supplement Award



**James Treat, MD**

- Elected to the Academy of Master Clinicians



**Victoria P. Werth, MD**

- Received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching
- Received the Naomi Kanof Clinical Investigator Award from the SID
- Received the Dermatology Foundation's Lifetime Career Educator Award



**Joy Wan, MD**

- Received a Public Health Career Development Award from the Dermatology Foundation

## Philadelphia Magazine's Top Doctors 2020

Edward E. Bondi, MD  
Bruce Brod, MD  
George Cotsarelis, MD  
Glen H. Crawford, MD  
Cherie Ditre, MD

Joel Gelfand, MD, MSCE  
Analisa V. Halpern, MD  
William James, MD  
Ellen J. Kim, MD  
Christopher J. Miller, MD

Michael E. Ming, MD  
Alain H. Rook, MD  
Misha Rosenbach, MD  
Adam Rubin, MD  
Joseph F. Sobanko, MD

Shobana Sood, MD  
James R. Treat, MD  
Victoria P. Werth, MD  
Albert C. Yan, MD

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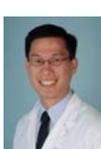
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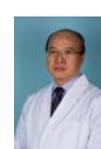
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# 2020-21 DUHRING GRAND ROUNDS

Please note that due to COVID-19, Duhring Grand Rounds will be conducted virtually, at the below URL, until further notice.

Please email [PennDermAlumni@uphs.upenn.edu](mailto:PennDermAlumni@uphs.upenn.edu) with any questions.

## Zoom Connection Information:

<https://zoom.us/j/8048127474?pwd=bGE3M2J5L3RzTXpMVHNtc1Vhc2NYZz09>

**Meeting ID:** 804 812 7474

**Passcode:** 153655

<b>December 24</b>	*No Grand Rounds*	<b>March 5</b>	Philly Derm (PCOM)	<b>May 3-8</b>	SID Annual Meeting — Virtual Event
<b>December 31</b>	*No Grand Rounds*	<b>March 11</b>	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Penn SBDRC Symposium & Trainee Research Day 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM <b>Keynote Speaker:</b> Amanda W. Lund, PhD Associate Professor of Dermatology & Pathology, NYU Langone Health <b>Title:</b> TBD; <b>Location:</b> Virtual Session	<b>May 6</b>	*No Grand Rounds*
<b>January 7</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>March 18</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>May 13</b>	<b>Pillsbury Lecture</b> <b>Lecturer:</b> Ilona J. Frieden, MD Professor of Dermatology and Pediatrics, University of California, San Francisco <b>Title:</b> TBD; <b>Location:</b> Virtual Session
<b>January 14</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>March 19-23</b>	American Academy of Dermatology	<b>May 20</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion
<b>January 15</b>	PAH Philly Derm	<b>March 25</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>May 21</b>	Philly Derm (Temple University)
<b>January 21</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>April 1</b>	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM <b>Lecturer:</b> Donald Glass, MD, PhD Assistant Professor, Dedman Family Scholar in Clinical Care, Department of Dermatology at the Eugene McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development, UT Southwestern Medical Center <b>Title:</b> TBD; <b>Location:</b> Virtual Session	<b>May 27</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion
<b>January 28</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>April 8</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>June 3</b>	<b>Hohenberg Lecture</b> 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM <b>Lecturer:</b> Marjana Tomic-Canic, PhD Professor of Dermatology, Vice Chair of Research & William H. Eaglestein Chair in Wound Healing, Director of the Wound Healing & Regenerative Medicine Research Program, Dr. Phillip Frost Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami <b>Title:</b> TBD; <b>Location:</b> Virtual Session
<b>February 4</b>	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM <b>Lecturer:</b> Tiffany C. Scharschmidt, MD Assistant Professor of Dermatology, University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine <b>Title:</b> TBD; <b>Location:</b> Virtual Session	<b>April 15</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>June 10</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion
<b>February 11</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>April 16</b>	CHOP Philly Derm	<b>June 17</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion
<b>February 18</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>April 22</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion	<b>June 24</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion
<b>February 19</b>	Philly Derm (Cooper Medical School)	<b>April 29</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion		
<b>February 25</b>	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion				
<b>March 4</b>	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Virtual Patient Viewing & Discussion 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM <b>Lecturer:</b> Haley Naik, MD, MHSc Assistant Professor of Dermatology, Director of Hidradenitis Suppurativa Program, University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine <b>Title:</b> TBD; <b>Location:</b> Virtual Session				