



2025

Department of Medicine • Annual Report

Accelerating Excellence & Innovation



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY
School of Medicine



University Hospitals
Cleveland Medical Center

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

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WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

IGHO OFOTOKUN, MD, MSC, FIDSA | CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE



The past year marked an important period of transition and progress for the Department of Medicine. Following a national search, I assumed the role of Chair in October 2025, building upon the extraordinary foundation established by my predecessor, the late Dr. Robert Salata, and the steadfast interim leadership of Drs. Keith Armitage and Betul Hatipoglu. During these first months, my priority has been to engage with our faculty, trainees, staff, and institutional partners to better understand our strengths and aspirations.

What I have found is a department with remarkable talent, deep commitment to its mission, and tremendous potential for growth and impact.

The Department of Medicine continues to excel across all aspects of its tripartite mission. Our clinical teams provide exceptional care to a large and growing patient population across University Hospitals and the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center. Across our divisions, faculty are developing innovative models of care to improve access, enhance quality, and deliver better outcomes while maintaining an unwavering focus on the patient experience.

Education remains central to our identity as an academic department. Our residency and fellowship programs continue to attract exceptional trainees who represent the future of medicine. Through rigorous clinical training, mentorship, scholarship, and leadership development, we are preparing the next generation of physicians, scientists, educators, and healthcare leaders to meet the evolving needs of our patients and communities.

Our research enterprise continues to thrive, spanning basic, translational, clinical, and population sciences.

Faculty investigators are driving discovery and innovation across our ten divisions. These accomplishments are strengthened by the unique and powerful partnership among University Hospitals, Case Western Reserve University, and the Cleveland VA Medical Center, an academic ecosystem that enables collaboration across disciplines and accelerates the translation of discovery into improved patient care.

Throughout this report, you will see examples of the extraordinary work being performed across our divisions, centers, and programs. These achievements reflect the dedication of the entire department, whose collective efforts continue to advance our tripartite mission.

While we are proud of our accomplishments, our greatest opportunities lie ahead. Healthcare, biomedical science, and medical education are evolving rapidly, creating new opportunities to rethink how we deliver care, generate knowledge, and train future leaders. To meet this moment, we are developing a strategic vision centered on four priorities: expanding clinical access, accelerating discovery, developing future leaders, and strengthening integration across our clinical, educational, and research missions.

Over the next five years, we will integrate this vision into all aspects of our tripartite mission. By leveraging the collective strengths of our three institutions we will continue to expand our impact locally, nationally and globally.

I am deeply grateful to our faculty, trainees, staff, patients, donors, and community partners whose dedication and support make this work possible. Together, we are building a Department of Medicine ready to shape the future of healthcare.

OUR VISION

To redefine the modern Department of Medicine through the integration of patient care, education, and discovery — advancing health, accelerating innovation, and developing the next generation of physician leaders.

**ONE DEPARTMENT
THREE INSTITUTIONS
LIMITLESS IMPACT**



UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS CLEVELAND MEDICAL CENTER

Clinical Excellence

Delivering outstanding patient care across a comprehensive network through innovation and compassion.



CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Education & Discovery

Advancing knowledge through world-class education and cutting-edge research.



LOUIS STOKES CLEVELAND VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Veteran Care & Research

Honoring our Veterans by providing exceptional care and advancing research that benefits all.

AT A GLANCE

500+
Faculty Physicians
across 10 divisions and
multiple centers of excellence

\$406.44M
Annual Stewardship
Responsibility

4.8 to 1
Ratio of
Clinician-Educators to
Physician-Scientists

to **HEAL**
to **TEACH**
to **DISCOVER**



CLINICAL CARE

Delivering High-Value Compassionate
Care Across Northeast Ohio

1.18M
wRVUs delivered
across the
UH Health System

67
new physician and
APP recruits in 2025

\$58.20M
net patient service
revenue

196,976
UHMG-based
ambulatory physician
service encounters

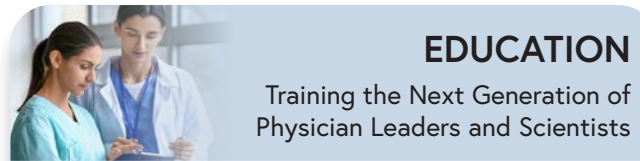
2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Opened the Diabetes
& Metabolic Care
Center at Midtown

Continued expansion
of the system-wide
Pulmonary Critical
Care model

Expanded primary care
access and resident
continuity clinics

Advanced innovative
programs in CAR-T
therapy, cardiology,
diabetes care,
infectious diseases,
and precision oncology



EDUCATION

Training the Next Generation of
Physician Leaders and Scientists

14

Graduate Medical Education programs

148 + **106** + **189**
residents fellows M3 & M4s

trained annually across UH and VA clinical sites

5

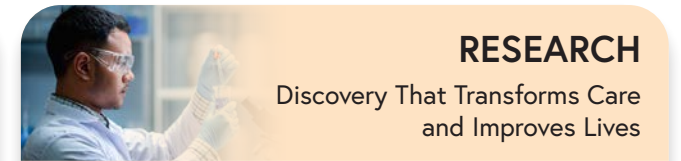
residents retained
as faculty physicians

9

residents retained at UH
for fellowship training

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- ✓ High-quality, diverse training across inpatient, outpatient, community, and VA settings
- ✓ Strong subspecialty match performance - residents matching into many of the most competitive programs and subspecialties across the country
- ✓ Commitment to mentorship, well-being, and leadership development



RESEARCH

Discovery That Transforms Care
and Improves Lives

40

active grants

820+
publications

98

principle &
co-principle
investigators

160

dept. based IRB
reviews in 2025

272

active UH-based
clinical trials

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Renewed NIH P30 Cleveland Digestive Diseases Research Core Center
- Expanded clinical trials and investigator development
- Translating innovation into improved patient care
- 2.5% increase in UH Clinical research grant support
- 3% increase in CWRU grant funding

\$72.3M
annual research
portfolio

MEMORABLE HIGHLIGHTS

Welcomed new Department of Medicine Chair, **Dr. Igbo Ofotokun** in October 2025

The **2025 Medicine Quality Summit, in Memory of Dr. Robert A. Salata**, successfully drew **over 150 registrants** dedicated to improving clinical standards

49 full-time faculty appointments for AY 24-25, 39% of which were women

18 faculty recognized with senior-level promotions to Associate, Full Professor, or received Tenure at Case Western Reserve University

RECOGNIZED EXCELLENCE

89
faculty recognized as
"Cleveland Magazine"
Top Doctors

7
faculty named to 2025
UH Distinguished
Physician Class

UH Siedman Cancer Center named among
Becker's top oncology programs

National recognition for cardiovascular
and diabetes quality outcomes by the
American Heart Association

Gold+ Target: BP Award
(3rd Consecutive Year)
Gold Target: Type 2 Diabetes Award
(4th Consecutive Year)

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Driving Our Future Forward

EXPAND ACCESS & CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

- Improve access across Northeast Ohio
- Develop innovative care delivery models
- Enhance patient experience and outcomes

DEVELOP FUTURE LEADERS

- Train exceptional physicians and scientists
- Strengthen mentorship and faculty development
- Foster a culture of lifelong learning

ACCELERATE DISCOVERY

- Grow translational and clinical research
- Expand clinical trials and investigator development
- Translate innovation into improved patient care

STRENGTHEN INTEGRATION

- Leverage the unique partnership of UH, CWRU, & the VA
- Promote multidisciplinary collaboration
- Align clinical care, research, and education



DIVISION OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICINE

SANJAY RAJAGOPALAN, MD, MBA, FACC, FAHA | DIVISION CHIEF

This year has seen significant accomplishments for the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine (CVM) and the Harrington Heart and Vascular Institute (HHVI), with outstanding progress and growth across our clinical care, research, and education missions. The Division of CVM is the largest division within the Department of Medicine with all clinical programs experiencing steady growth. Our ambulatory practices continue to dominate the region and lead market share expansion across the health system.

The division enjoys a strong national reputation and is home to numerous academic leaders. Our faculty include elected members of prestigious organizations such as the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the National Academy of Medicine and more. With over 12 endowed chairs, professorships, and Master Clinician designations, the division is among the most well-endowed within University Hospitals. In 2025, division investigators led efforts addressing obesity, cardiometabolic health, and environmental stressors. More than twenty divisional physicians were recognized in Cleveland Magazine's "Best Doctors" ranking. Dr. Rajagopalan received the American Heart Association's 2025 Distinguished Scientist Award in recognition of his transformative contributions to translational cardiovascular science and environmental health.

The Structural Heart Center is an internationally recognized program performing more than 500 minimally invasive valve procedures annually, with expanded access in 2025 through regional programs at Elyria Medical Center and Lake West Medical Center. The Cardiac Transplantation program successfully performed a record number of heart transplants and

left ventricular assist device implantations. Endowed in 2025, the Lorraine and Bill Dodero Limb Preservation Center is one of the few programs in the United States dedicated to limb saving therapies for advanced peripheral arterial disease. Other nationally recognized programs include the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center, the Center for Novel Integrated Approaches in Vascular Metabolic Care (CINEMA), and the Cardio-Oncology Program.

The Division's Research & Innovation Center includes a Clinical Trials Unit that manages Phase II - IV industry sponsored studies involving over 2,500 patients, alongside a Translational Science Unit that supports NIH funded and industry partnered research. The Division's Imaging Core Laboratory is advancing the frontiers of innovation through the application of artificial intelligence to non-contrast CT and cardiac MRI. The Case Cardiovascular Research Institute serves as the basic science hub for translational investigation, currently supporting 7 funded investigators and over 25 research personnel. The Institute maintains an impressive portfolio that includes several R01 grants, a program project grant, an R35 award, and multiple foundation supported research initiatives.

This year our publication record features more than 250 peer reviewed publications appearing in several leading journals. Our Cardiology Fellowship Training Program continues to attract outstanding candidates, and the division supports more than six advanced subspecialty fellowship programs. Through this comprehensive training environment, we remain deeply committed to developing the next generation of clinician scientists, educators, and leaders.

DIVISION OF CLINICAL ENDOCRINOLOGY

BETUL HATİPOĞLU, MD | DIVISION CHIEF



The year 2025 marked a significant transition for the Division of Endocrinology as we celebrated the retirement of Baha Arafah, MD. Dr. Arafah's remarkable legacy spans 47 years of dedicated service to Case Western Reserve University and University Hospitals, including 18 influential years as Division Chief. The division is now pleased to welcome Betul Hatipoğlu, MD, who steps into the role of Division Chief to build upon this enduring foundation.

This year, the division's internationally renowned investigators have made important scientific contributions in basic science and clinical research projects covering several disease-specific disciplines within the specialty such as diabetes mellitus, thyroid illnesses as well as diseases of the pituitary and adrenal glands. Many research projects addressing these disciplines have been published in prestigious journals. Our faculty members have had a leading role in the planning and execution of several recent NIH-sponsored, nationwide clinical trials addressing diabetes management and its complications. These landmark studies have had a major impact on clinical practice, as they have introduced a new paradigm in the management of some endocrine disorders such as diabetes mellitus. The recent establishment of the new diabetes and obesity program builds on the legacy of the Division's contributions to the field.

This year marked a significant leap in clinical accessibility with the launch of our Diabetes On-Demand care model, providing adult patients with same-day virtual access for urgent needs like glycemic fluctuations and insulin troubleshooting. We enhanced this digital-first approach by integrating WellDoc,

an AI-driven platform that scales our intervention capabilities through real-time, personalized insights.

In terms of education, it is quite an honor and a privilege to work with a group of highly dedicated physicians who are compassionate about delivering the best medical care to and passing that trait to the next generation of endocrinologists. In advocating a patient-centered approach in the management of endocrine diseases, our faculty programs have been recognized nationally for their efforts in promoting the need for integrating the social setting of our patients as well as their educational, economical and personal choices in designing therapeutic interventions.

Our training program also emphasizes independent learning, inquiry and critical appraisal of the literature and prepares our graduates for successful future academic careers, as many of our graduates have assumed leadership positions at other institutions.

Reflecting on a landmark 2025, our division remains committed to scaling our impact across research, education, and clinical excellence. In the coming year, we are eager to launch several specialized initiatives, including a dedicated thyroid clinic, a pituitary program, and a comprehensive PCOS care model. Additionally, we look forward to formalizing our MASH/MASLD collaboration with the Hepatology department to further enhance integrated patient care.

A circular portrait of Fabio Cominelli, MD, PhD, Division Chief. He is a middle-aged man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a white lab coat over a grey sweater and a striped shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus orange and yellow.

DIVISION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY & LIVER DISEASE

FABIO COMINELLI, MD, PHD | DIVISION CHIEF

The Division of Gastroenterology and Liver Disease continues to distinguish itself as an international leader in clinical excellence, translational research, and academic innovation. By bridging the gap between the laboratory and the bedside, we remain a powerhouse for medical advancement, sustained by robust NIH funding and a culture of deep institutional collaboration.

Under the leadership of Division Chief, Fabio Cominelli, MD, the NIH P30 Cleveland Digestive Disease Research Core Center (DDRCC) was renewed after a decade of transformative impact. Over the last 10 years, the center has also served as a vital incubator for the next generation of scientists, successfully launching the careers of 39 junior investigators.

Continuing this trajectory of research growth, the division has a strong pipeline of early career physician scientists. One of whom was recently selected for the prestigious CWRU CTSC K12 program. Their work explores the role of cytoplasmic stress granules in hepatic fibrogenesis—a critical area of study aimed at developing new therapeutic pathways for Alcohol-Associated Liver Disease (ALD).

Our faculty's commitment to solving real-world clinical challenges has resulted in significant intellectual property milestones. Take, for example, the EZ-Rail and Endo Guillotine—precision instruments engineered by one of our own senior attending physicians to optimize tissue resection and retrieval. Today, these homegrown innovations are making a global impact across the surgical community.

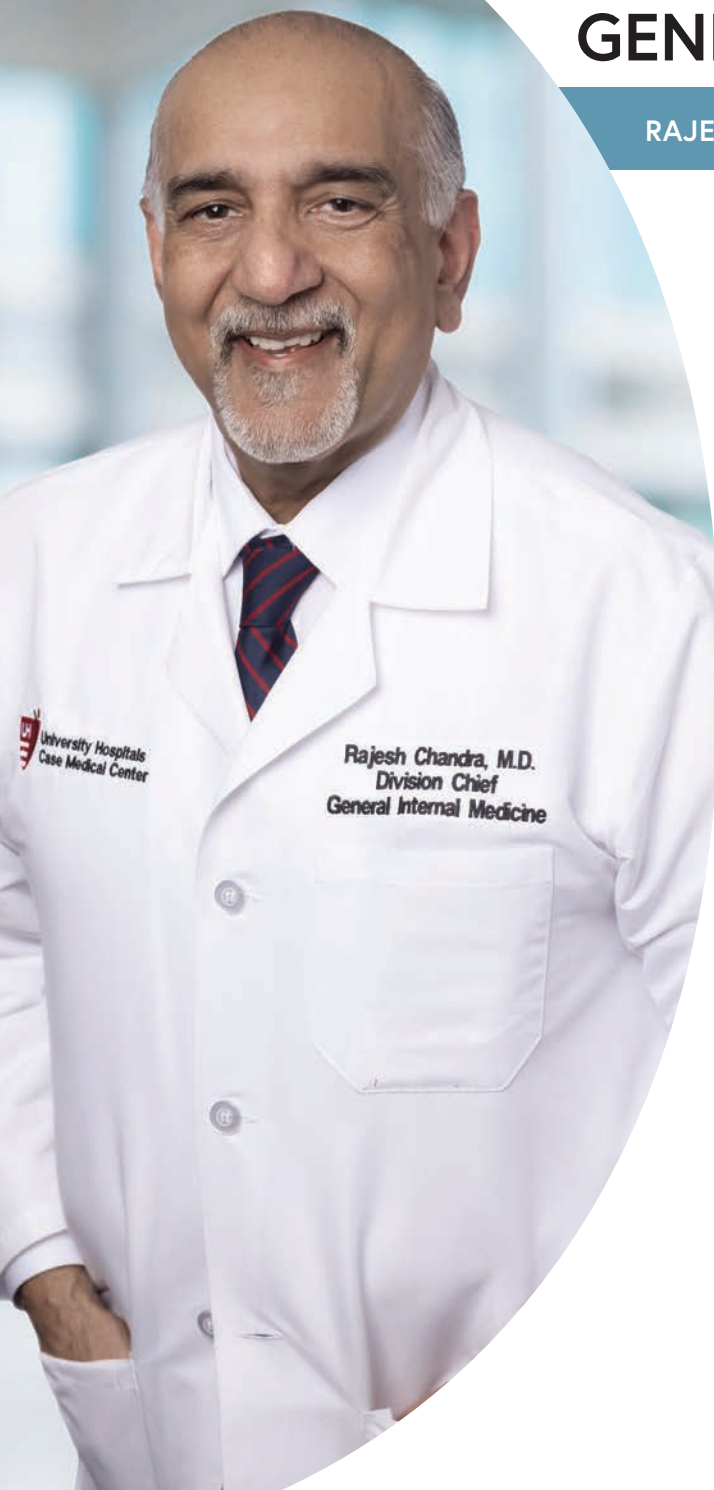
The division remains highly productive clinically, delivering integrated, high-value care across our primary

and secondary markets. To meet evolving patient needs, our providers have fully embraced a “hybrid” care model, offering both virtual and telephonic.

As we look toward the future, the division remains steadfast in its goal of being a nationally recognized leader in digestive health — where compassionate care, innovation, and collaboration transform lives and inspire hope.

DIVISION OF GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE

RAJESH CHANDRA, MD, FHM | DIVISION CHIEF



It is my pleasure to present our division's 2025 accomplishments that reflect our ongoing commitment to high value patient care, medical education, and process improvement.

At University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center, our teaching Hospital Medicine faculty maintained their excellence and proficiency in clinical care, averaging close to the 95th percentile in RVU productivity and 81% top box HCAHPS patient satisfaction score in the Doctors communication domain. Compared to 2024, they also posted improved quality metrics of a Risk Adjusted Mortality ratio of 0.10 (observed/expected) and an Observed/Expected 30-day Readmission ratio of 0.93. In addition, as part of a Quality Improvement initiative to decrease 30-day readmissions, they conducted a "Telehealth Hospitalist Transitional Care project", which provided attending continuity in follow-up care of patients who were at elevated risk for readmission. Even though the 65-patient sample size was small, they demonstrated a significant decrease in the 30-day readmission rate to as low as 4% for patients who completed the program, compared to an average of 13-14 % in the traditional transitional care model. These results emphasize the importance of continuity in care transitions, especially in medically complex patients who are at a substantial risk for readmission.

In Primary Care, our ambulatory faculty continued to deliver a high-quality service experience maintaining their average multiple year patient satisfaction record of 96 – 100 % Top Box choice in "Rate the Provider" and "Recommend the Provider" CGCAHPS domains. Additionally, in 2025, pursuant to the Department of Medicine's strategic 5-year initiative to develop

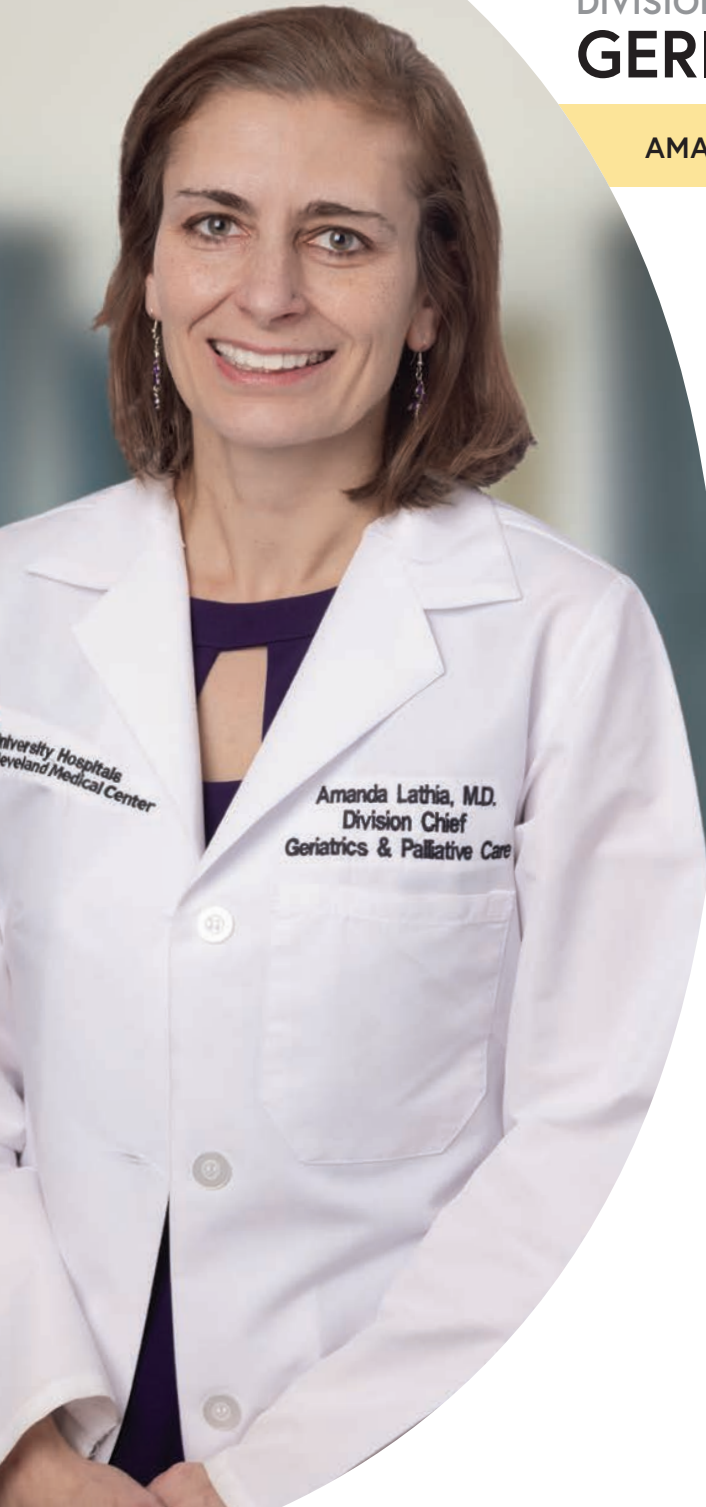
Primary Care in the UH academic market, we recruited two additional faculty to expand our footprint at Cleveland Medical Center so that we can better serve our community and provide an exceptional educational experience to our trainees.

Finally, our division, which historically has been home to outstanding clinician-educators and Master Clinicians, continued its excellence in teaching with two faculty members receiving teaching awards - Faculty Outpatient Teacher of the Year and the Debra S. Leizman Faculty Student Teaching Award.

In summary, our division remains committed to contribute to all areas of University Hospital's tripartite mission "To Heal, To Teach, To Discover" and we look forward to growing and innovating in patient care delivery, medical education, and quality improvement in Primary Care and Hospital Medicine.

DIVISION OF GERIATRICS & PALLIATIVE CARE

AMANDA LATHIA, MD, MPHIL, CMD | DIVISION CHIEF



The Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Care at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center (UH CMC) provides clinical services, educational programs, and research activities aimed at improving care and outcomes for older adults and those living with serious illness through compassionate, person-centered, collaborative, and innovative practice.

Our Geriatric Division continues to provide a comprehensive array of clinical services across the entire University Hospitals care continuum. Throughout 2025, the Division of Geriatrics reached several significant milestones, beginning with the strategic recruitment of new faculty and staff to bolster our presence in inpatient consultation, ambulatory assessment, and post-acute care settings. Clinical access saw a major expansion in April 2025 with the successful launch of the inpatient geriatric consultation service at UH Ahuja Medical Center.

In addition to expanding our footprint, we partnered with the Department of Anesthesiology to initiate the Geriatric Surgery Verification application at CMC, ensuring our surgical pathways meet the highest national standards for older adults. This focus on specialized care was complemented by the development of standardized delirium order sets and the continued leadership of the CMC Delirium Task Force. Furthermore, our division took a central role in the Quality Institute's Age-Friendly Inpatient Hospital Measure project, contributing both active leadership and clinical expertise to improve systemic outcomes. Finally, we remain committed to cultivating the next generation of specialists by maintaining our robust fellowship program and appointing a dedicated program director to oversee its growth and expansion.

The Palliative Care Section continues to exemplify UH's "Art of Compassion" focus through its inter-professional patient and family-centered approach to care. We are engaged in UH system-wide initiatives to offer services to all UH patients with palliative care needs and to solicit and honor patient values and preferences in the face of life-threatening illness. We encourage early, proactive palliative care consultation among high-risk patients admitted to the ICU.

In 2025, the palliative care team significantly enhanced its reach most notably through the opening of a new ambulatory palliative care clinic in Beachwood to broaden patient access. To foster a culture of high-level collaboration, the department sustained structured quarterly meetings and established a productive partnership with Reserve Care Hospice. These efforts, combined with the launch of the joint Geriatrics and Palliative Care Grand Rounds, have launched shared patient care improvement initiatives and strengthened internal networking. Furthermore, the division continues to uphold its commitment to medical education by maintaining the palliative care fellowship program, which has grown steadily in prestige since its 2021 inception and subsequent accreditation in 2022.

DIVISION OF HEMATOLOGY & CELLULAR THERAPY

KOEN VAN BESSEN, MD, PHD | DIVISION CHIEF



2025 saw impressive growth in clinical activity and in referrals of patients with hematological malignancies. Allogeneic transplants have increased by nearly 50 percent over the past three years. They are the only curative therapy for patients with leukemia, and we have become the referral center for the most complex patients in the region. Our research focus on improving cord blood transplant results in low rates of relapse and excellent outcomes. We are conducting several innovative clinical studies and are studying mechanisms graft vs leukemia effects in the lab.

CART cell therapy and BITE therapy (Bispecific T cell engagers) have revolutionized the treatment of myeloma and lymphoma. We are well positioned to lead in this area. We have access to in-house products and an impressive array of clinical trials

Nine new faculty have joined over the past three years to manage the growth of the program and after several lean years, we are now nearly fully staffed and have been able to assign junior faculty to areas of expertise with dedicated programs in lymphoma, leukemia and myeloma/amyloid.

Each of these programs has its own faculty, research portfolio and importantly its own research and educational meetings. This has greatly enhanced the opportunity for fellows and staff to participate in the programs and develop deep knowledge and interest.

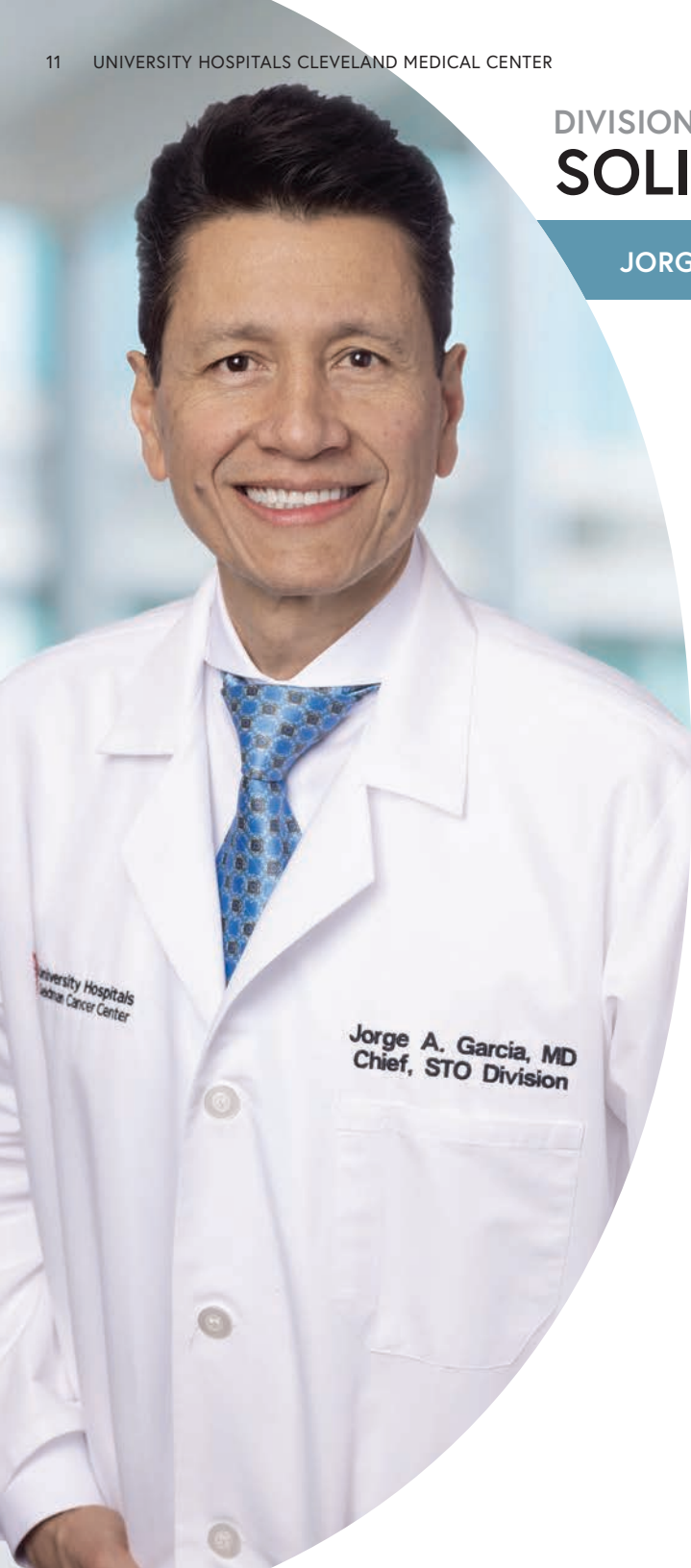
Common to all hematologic malignancies is the profound immunosuppression that is associated with their treatment. We are developing close cross divisional collaborations (ID, pulmonary) to better address the complex problems facing our patients. In addition,

management of patients from rural communities is hampered by lack of access, education and remoteness from the academic centers. We are actively working to address these issues and implement better care and access for rural patients – through focused education efforts, optimal use of the electronic record and ride support.

In 2025 we also organized two regional symposia on lymphoma (with colleagues from CCF) and on myeloid disorders (in honor of Dr. Brenda Cooper). Both were very well received and we hope to make ongoing regional education an important part of our program.

The care of patients with sickle cell disease and other non-malignant hematological disorder constitutes a third of our mission. The management of sickle cell disease in particular is entering a new era. Several new medications have been approved to alleviate sickle cell symptoms. But even more exciting is the recent approval of gene therapy for patients with sickle cell disease – finally a curative therapy with wide implementation. UH Rainbow and Seidman Cancer Center are the major referral centers for sickle cell care in Cleveland and are one of a few centers in Ohio to offer both gene therapy and allogeneic transplant for patients with advanced sickle cell disease. The program is closely integrated with the cell therapy program.

The combined Hematology/Oncology Fellowship under the direction of Dr. Benjamin Tomlinson, continues to achieve recognition and excellent applicants. Two of our graduating fellows joined the faculty in July 2025.



DIVISION OF SOLID TUMOR ONCOLOGY

JORGE A. GARCIA, MD, MSC, FACP | DIVISION CHIEF

As we enter 2026, the Solid Tumor Oncology Division aspiration remains clear: to be recognized among the nation's premier academic oncology programs, distinguished by scientific leadership, clinical innovation, faculty development, and meaningful contributions to cancer care.

Over the past academic year, faculty published more than 200 peer-reviewed manuscripts, reflecting scholarly productivity and national impact. Our investigators contributed approximately 70% of total patient accrual across the Clinical Trials Unit, underscoring the division's central role in clinical research activity. Faculty also secured multiple competitive grants, including an institutional PCORI award, along with additional federal and foundation-supported funding. Clinically, the division achieved record-high patient volumes, with faculty productivity exceeding the 80th percentile of national RVU benchmarks while maintaining complex, high-acuity academic oncology care.

In 2026, disease-focused programs will remain central to our clinical mission. Expansion across regional academic sites will proceed deliberately to ensure that quality and academic rigor remain foundational. Advanced imaging, molecular diagnostics, and integrated care models will remain standard practice so that innovation reaches patients earlier and closer to home.

Maximizing patient access and satisfaction will be treated as core academic priorities. In 2026, we will strengthen models of care that enhance patient engagement through continuity, clear communication, and timely access to subspecialty expertise. Efforts will focus on reducing complexity for patients, broadening clinical trial availability, aligning scheduling with patient needs, and

cultivating environments where patients feel informed and actively partnered in decision-making.

The division will continue to drive nationally relevant clinical and translational research. Strategic priorities include expansion of precision oncology and genomics programs, continued development of the theranostics and radioligand therapy platform, advancement of microbiome-focused oncology research, and further maturation of the Phase I clinical trials program.

Intentional faculty growth will remain central in 2026. Recruitment will prioritize high-impact disease programs while strategically expanding our regional capacity to strengthen access across the network. In parallel, we will expand our neuro-oncology footprint with focused development in brain metastases and leptomeningeal disease while continuing to integrate advanced molecular imaging with targeted radioligand therapies.

Leadership development will remain a defining priority. The division will emphasize emotional intelligence, accountability, and intentional professional growth. Faculty will be supported in articulating personal vision, identifying strengths, and pursuing individualized career paths aligned with their values. This will allow the division to expand access, elevate patient experience, and sustain academic impact.

The Solid Tumor Oncology Division enters 2026 with strength, momentum, and credibility. Our focus remains on stewarding excellence, developing our people, and advancing innovative cancer care in service of patients and the broader field of oncology.

DIVISION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE & HIV MEDICINE

W. HENRY BOOM, MD | DIVISION CHIEF



The Division of Infectious Disease continues to lead high-impact research through five primary initiatives. Work in HIV/AIDS is facilitated by the AIDS Clinical Trials Unit and the Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), while efforts to combat tuberculosis are led by the Tuberculosis Research Unit (TBRU). We address the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance through the VA CARES program, and our respiratory virology research, specifically regarding immunology and vaccine implementation for Influenza, RSV, and COVID-19, is managed by the CORVETS program. Finally, our commitment to global health is anchored by our enduring partnership in Uganda and the Roe Green Center for Global Health.

Research funding remained robust in 2025, totaling \$18.3 million. Despite this success, the academic infectious disease community faces a tightening federal funding environment. Proposed shifts in U.S. government priorities present a potential headwind. If realized, these adjustments could impact the trajectory of ID research, prevention, and clinical care both locally at UHCMC/CWRU and on a national scale.

As clinical volume across the VA and UH systems continue to trend upward, the division has met this increasing demand through a diverse array of specialized services and strategic leadership. The division provides comprehensive care through traditional ID consultation, transplant ID, HIV/AIDS care, and travel medicine. The division also maintains strong inpatient leadership via the management of the Carpenter Service, our ID-focused internal medicine team at UH CMC. Our regional support has also grown, expanding our footprint through telehealth services at Samaritan

Hospital and the placement of two ID-specialized hospitalists at Elyria Hospital. Beyond direct patient care, the division continues to lead essential initiatives in antimicrobial stewardship and infection prevention.

To support this growth, the division successfully recruited three new faculty members in 2025, with further recruitment slated for 2026.

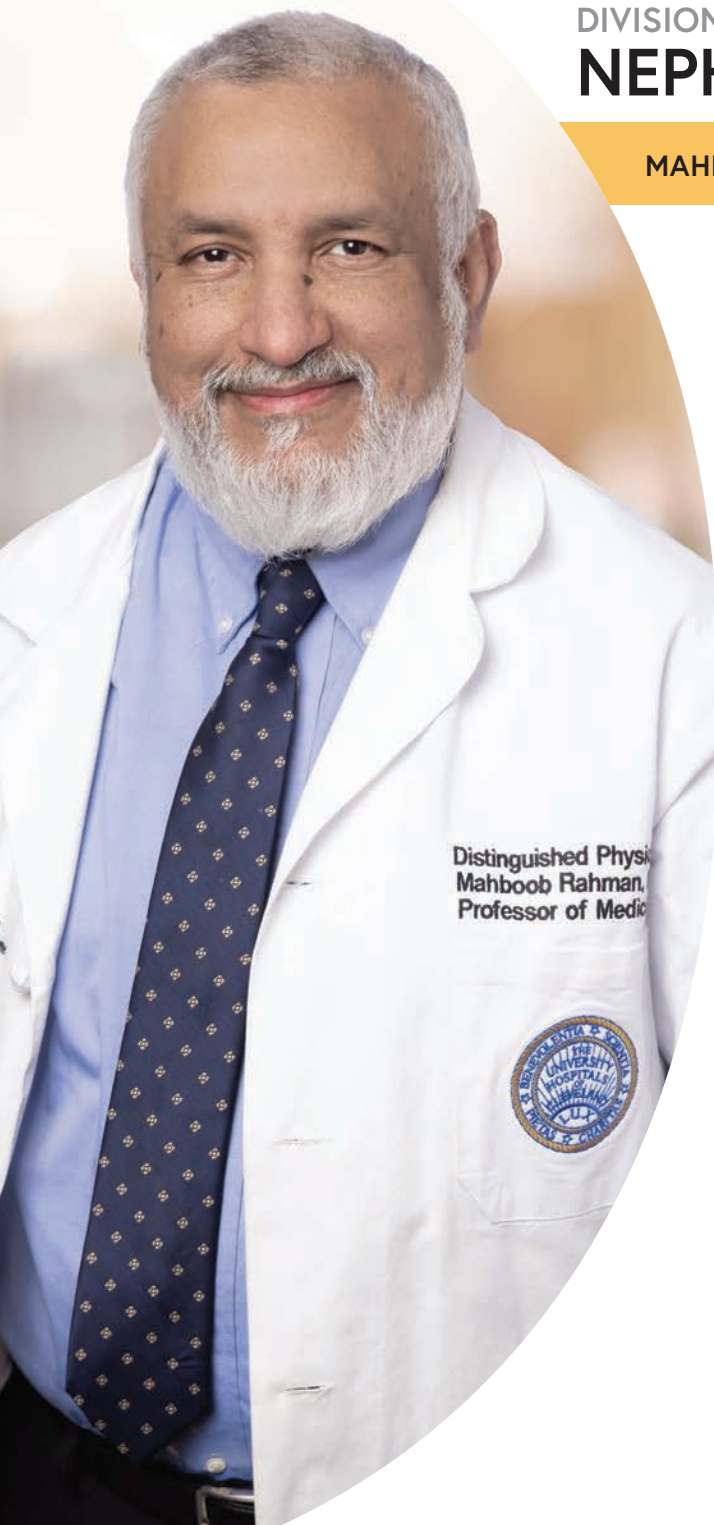
The division remains a cornerstone of the campus's academic culture. The weekly Global Health and Infectious Diseases (GHID) Research Seminar, jointly sponsored with the Center for Global Health and Diseases (CGHD), remains one of the most highly attended seminar series on the UH-CWRU campus.

Furthermore, our faculty are deeply embedded in the educational mission, leading medical student education (Core Involvement in Block 5) and clinical and research mentorship for ID Fellows within the UHCMC Internal Medicine residency.

In 2025, the Division of Infectious Diseases further solidified its position as a national leader in high-impact research, clinical excellence, and interdisciplinary education. Despite a shifting national funding landscape, the division maintained a robust research portfolio driven by core strengths in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, antimicrobial resistance, and respiratory virology. This fiscal resilience supports a sprawling collaborative network across CWRU, University Hospitals, and the VA.

DIVISION OF NEPHROLOGY & HYPERTENSION

MAHBOOB RAHMAN, MD | DIVISION CHIEF



The Division of Nephrology and Hypertension continues to excel in providing care to patients with kidney disease throughout Northeast Ohio. In addition to excellence in patient care, the division has innovative programs in optimizing care of patients with advanced kidney disease, improving blood pressure control, and care of complex patients with glomerular disease.

Collaboration between University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center and the Louis Stokes Cleveland Veterans Affairs Medical Center continues to be strong, as does the longstanding relationship with the Centers for Dialysis Care. Members of the division play key leadership roles in the kidney and pancreas transplant programs at the University Hospitals Transplant Institute, which remains active and successful. The Onco-Nephrology program at UHCMC is nationally recognized for the care of patients who have cancer and kidney disease. A new specialty clinic to evaluate and manage patients with kidney stones was established last year in collaboration with urology.

The division has provided major leadership for key National Institute of Health sponsored multicenter research trials including the Systolic Blood Pressure Intervention Trial and the Chronic Renal Insufficiency Cohort Study. Other areas of research include factors that influence the progression of chronic kidney disease and studying the association between kidney and cardiovascular disease. Our faculty continues to publish papers in high profile journals that contribute to growing knowledge in the field.

Faculty members are highly active in national professional organizations and contribute to shaping our specialty for the future. Dr. Rahman serves as

the Editor in Chief of Kidney Medicine, the official journal of the National Kidney Foundation. Dr. Negrea was recognized as “Person of the Year” by the Kidney Foundation of Ohio.

The Division has a successful training program for clinical nephrology fellows and participates in a National Institute of Health training grant for the training of physician-scientists. We are also accredited by the American Society of Transplantation to train fellows in transplant nephrology. Our trainees benefit from both bench and translational opportunities in a multidisciplinary environment encompassing the Departments of Medicine, Pathology, Physiology, and Biophysics.

The ultimate goal of the division is to prepare tomorrow’s academic physicians, scientists, and clinician-educators to continue our mission: To Heal, To Teach, and To Discover.

DIVISION OF

PULMONARY, CRITICAL CARE, & SLEEP MEDICINE

FRANK JACONO, MD | DIVISION CHIEF



“Breathing Better, Sleeping Well”. We strive to be a diverse and inclusive division with research, teaching, and clinical activities aligned to provide innovative, value-based, and patient-centered care throughout the communities we serve.

The Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine has worked to sustain quality, implement new programs and expand our clinical footprint over recent years. Under the leadership of Frank J. Jacono, MD, the division continues to strengthen our role as a national leader in the delivery of quality care through our integrated clinical practice, disease-focused centers of excellence, innovative research, and professional education.

We continually seek to enhance the care we provide throughout Northeast Ohio. Our clinical expertise includes asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, lung nodule, lung cancer, pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary vascular disease, allergic lung disease, interstitial lung disease, lung transplantation, sleep disorders, interventional pulmonology, pulmonary rehabilitation, and advanced pulmonary function testing.

The MICU team is integrating multidisciplinary critical care teams across our healthcare system, with outcomes and quality metrics exceeding expectations. Our system-wide AASM-accredited Sleep Medicine program provides multi-disciplinary care, while our adult Cystic Fibrosis program, accredited by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Center Committee continues to provide nationally recognized care for adults with CF for over 60 years. Our bronchoscopy team has implemented a system-wide program that continuously expands with new locations and cutting-edge technologies. This includes the adoption of the Intuitive ION Robot

and the Siemens CiosSpin 3D C-arm, two strategic investments specifically chosen to enable earlier diagnosis and treatment for our patients. Finally, our Interstitial Lung Disease, Lung Transplantation and Pulmonary Hypertension programs continue to support patients with advanced lung diseases.

The division maintains three ACGME clinical fellowship programs: Pulmonary/Critical Care Medicine, Sleep Medicine, and Allergy/Immunology. Our goal is to produce excellent clinicians trained in the art and science of medicine, with a strong research component, ready to succeed as leaders in academic and clinical settings. Our clinical training is supported by innovative, hands-on training in areas including ultrasound, mechanical ventilation and difficult airway management.

The division boasts a broad-based research enterprise with numerous active investigations in clinical, translational, and basic research at UHCMC, the VA Medical Center, and Case Western Reserve University, resulting in multiple publications and grant support. Major areas of research emphasis include sleep apnea, infection prevention, sepsis, acute lung injury, neural control of breathing, pulmonary immunology and inflammation, immune monitoring, brain-organ interactions and developing bio-surrogates of disease progression and patient trajectory, as well as numerous clinical trials focused on investigational therapies to treat a range of diseases including COPD, pulmonary hypertension, sleep disordered breathing, sepsis and ARDS.

DIVISION OF RHEUMATOLOGY

MARINA MAGREY, MD | DIVISION CHIEF



The Division of Rheumatology at University Hospitals experienced a year of substantial growth and achievement, marked by meaningful advances in patient care, research innovation, and medical education. Through the collective efforts of our faculty, staff, and trainees, the division continues to strengthen its impact while expanding its national presence.

In 2025, the division expanded its clinical services and established new centers, enhancing access and care for patients with complex rheumatologic conditions. One achievement was the establishment of the Osteoporosis and Metabolic Bone Center, expanding care for patients with complex metabolic bone disorders and advancing interdisciplinary models of care. Dr. Sarah Keller is leading the center. Under Dr. Chaudhary's leadership, the division established a Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Clinic to advance patient care and improve diagnostic precision. The division also added new faculty, strengthening its capacity to deliver high-quality rheumatologic care across Northeast Ohio.

The division remains at the forefront of rheumatologic research. Our faculty and trainees had a strong presence at the 2025 American College of Rheumatology meeting. The division presented 25 abstracts across diverse areas of rheumatic disease, addressing multiple clinically relevant questions. Further strengthening our research profile, data from the international CLASSIC Inception Cohort—a pivotal study on classification in patients with axial spondyloarthritis, in which Dr. Magrey participated, were presented in a plenary session at the ACR Annual Meeting.

The year's most notable advancement in rheumatologic research was a collaborative initiative with Hematology

and Oncology to introduce CAR-T cell therapy as a novel treatment approach for rheumatic diseases.

Our clinical trials program continues to expand, now including new studies in psoriatic arthritis, myositis, and lupus, further advancing our mission to translate scientific discovery into improved patient care. The division continues to lead large-scale, multi-center initiatives, including longitudinal data collection in registries in collaboration with major centers nationwide, to generate critical insights into long-term management of complex rheumatic diseases.

In addition to our clinical and research achievements, we continue to make significant contributions to medical education. Our division remains an integral part of the Block 5 rheumatology lectures at the medical school, while our faculty and fellows actively mentor MD and MD-PhD students in clinical settings. Our fellows have been instrumental in shaping the educational experiences of the next generation of rheumatologists.

In 2025, the Division of Rheumatology made significant strides in patient care, research, and education, fulfilling the missions of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and University Hospitals to improve patient outcomes and train the next generation of rheumatology leaders.

A circular portrait of Jonathan S. Stamler, MD, President of Harrington Discovery Institute. He is a middle-aged man with dark, wavy hair, wearing glasses, a white shirt, a dark tie, and a blue suit jacket. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

HARRINGTON DISCOVERY INSTITUTE

JONATHAN S. STAMLER, MD | PRESIDENT

Because heart disease remains the leading cause of death globally, new treatments for the condition remain a major unmet need. Years ago, 2015 Harrington Scholar-Innovator Barry Collier, MD, The Rockefeller University, endeavored to develop a drug to treat heart attacks. In 2025, the company he co-founded received the results of its pivotal Phase 3 clinical trial showing that his years-long commitment had paid off; the drug zalunfiban saves the lives of patients during the critical early window of a heart attack. Designed for use by first responders and ER teams, zalunfiban is a next-generation subcutaneous GPIIb/IIIa inhibitor designed for rapid clot reduction in STEMI patients.

Dr. Collier credits his Harrington therapeutics development advisors for helping him advance his work to where it is today. Specifically, he references the access to experts in multiple disciplines, which led his team to reconsider the route of administration and initiate much-needed reimbursement strategies. The positioning of the drug at the time was instrumental in attracting new funding and advancing it into clinical trials.

This is the type of drug discovery success that, when launching Harrington Discovery Institute in 2012, our founding team knew could take place: Our community's and our nation's corps of physician-scientists could catalyze a steady stream of successes that would benefit patients.

Today, in addition to lifesaving stories like zalunfiban's success, we have lifesaving numbers. Harrington has 227 medicines in the making (36 in Cleveland), 46 companies launched (8 in Cleveland), 24 medicines in the clinic, and 15 licenses to pharma.

On average, every two months a scholar or innovator Harrington supports hits an important milestone for a new medicine that may benefit patients. Either a new company is formed to commercialize a therapeutic, a breakthrough medicine moves into the clinic, or a pharmaceutical company licenses a drug discovery. Also, the pace of these successes is accelerating.

At Harrington Discovery Institute, we know that discovering one drug, never mind the hundreds in development, is a complex process. Hence, the purposeful simplicity of our lifesaving mission—to accelerate promising discoveries into medicines for unmet needs.

DIABETES & METABOLIC CARE CENTER

BETUL HATİPOĞLU, MD | MEDICAL DIRECTOR & VICE CHAIR, UH SYSTEM CLINICAL AFFAIRS



This year, the Diabetes & Metabolic Care Center continued to pursue its mission to empower individuals with diabetes, obesity, and related metabolic conditions to live longer, higher-quality lives. We expanded access to care through the addition of a new endocrinologist operating in Westlake, and the opening of a new office in the Cleveland MidTown Collaboration Center in January of 2025. This new office has been in the making for some time, and we are incredibly excited to be able to broaden access to care in this area.

We continued to support the development of new treatment and education for diabetes patients. We were one of the testing sites for the new Tandem insulin pump recently approved by the FDA and published in the New England Journal of Medicine. We were also featured in the Plain Dealer for being the first center in Northeast Ohio to infuse Tzield for Type I Diabetes prevention. In addition to these achievements, we continue to work with the Hemsley Foundation on educational materials for patients with Type I Diabetes. We received a \$2.5 million grant to sponsor yearly educational events regarding insurance literacy and the role of Artificial Intelligence in diabetes care.

We also collaborate with Blue Circle Health and T1D Exchange. Through Blue Circle Health referrals, we ensure patients receive integrated clinical care, insurance navigation, peer support, and address their social and structural barriers to type 1 diabetes management. Through the T1D Exchange Quality Improvement Collaborative we can leverage a national research and quality improvement network, utilizing shared learning and data-driven benchmarking to advance more equitable care outcomes.

These efforts have garnered much attention, maintaining a high degree of visibility in national and international meetings. We had oral and poster presentations at the American Diabetes Association and was featured as a Center on their ADA TV, several of our team members were invited to speak at the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology (AACE) as well as AACE Middle East and North Africa, we had a poster presentation at the Endocrine Society, and some of our team spoke at the Advanced Technology and Treatment for Diabetes conference.

We wrote a supplement for the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Medicine. The supplement, titled Guidebook for Providers on Comprehensive Diabetes Care, is available online and in print. Dr. Hatipoğlu served as guest editor for this issue, and the entire supplement was written by our excellent team.

Through these combined efforts in clinical expansion, cutting-edge research, and global advocacy, the Diabetes & Metabolic Care Center has solidified its role as a leader in metabolic health. We remain steadfast in our commitment to innovation and look forward to building this momentum to further improve the lives of the patients we serve.

VETERAN AFFAIRS

SHERRIE D. WILLIAMS, MD, MHS | SERVICE CHIEF OF MEDICINE



ACUTE MEDICINE

The year 2025 marks a period of significant growth and academic excellence for the Acute Medicine Division. Leadership remains a cornerstone of this success, highlighted by the upcoming promotion of Dr. Attila Nemeth to Professor and Dr. Paul Shaniuk to Associate Professor at CWRU.

Clinical innovation reached new heights with the expansion into a state-of-the-art Emergency Department and the January 2026 launch of the POCUS consult team. Our faculty continue to earn prestigious accolades; Drs. Kevin Murray and Victoria Sandoval were named Teachers of the Year, while Dr. Sarah Augustine received the inaugural Salata Humanitarian Award.

Research and funding remain robust, with over a dozen major publications spanning infectious disease, mental health, and point-of-care ultrasound. Notable grants include Dr. Nadim El Chakhtoura's \$639,136 award for infectious disease testing, Dr. Amy Hise's BLRD Merit extension, and Dr. Cody Rutledge's Zoll Foundation grant for cardiac research. From Dr. Yasmin's work on Klebsiella to Dr. Nemeth's focus on faculty development, the division continues to shape the future of medicine through rigorous inquiry and clinical dedication.

CARDIOLOGY

The year 2025 has been a landmark period for Cardiology, characterized by groundbreaking research and clinical "firsts." Our division solidified its global

reputation through a series of high-impact late-breaking clinical trials. At HRS 2025 in San Diego, the Transform AF study—exploring GLP-1 agonists for secondary prevention in atrial fibrillation—was recognized among the top six late-breaking sessions. This momentum continued at the ESC Heart Failure Association in Belgrade, highlighting GLP-1 agonists in HFrEF, and concluded the year at the CVCT Forum in Washington, D.C., with the DeCIDE CRT trial.

Under the leadership of Dr. Varun Sundaram, our clinical epidemiological research continues to set world-class standards. Clinically, the program reached a historic milestone by performing the highest number of Leadless CRT (WiSE-CRT) implants in the country, marking the first-ever successful implementations within the VA Healthcare system.

Beyond these innovations, our routine operations remain robust. We continue to provide comprehensive Interventional, Electrophysiology, and Heart Failure services, including complex TAVR, Mitral Valve Edge-to-Edge Repairs, and Left Atrial Appendage Occlusions. Our EP lab leads the field in high-complexity procedures, including Pulsed Field Ablation (PFA) for AF, VT ablations, and expert lead extractions.

ENDOCRINOLOGY

The year 2025 has been a period of strategic growth and clinical modernization for the Endocrinology Division at the VA, characterized by a dual focus on academic leadership and cutting-edge metabolic care.

Under the guidance of Division Chief Dr. Laure Kassem,

the Endocrinology fellowship program continues to flourish. Dr. Kassem's vision centers on cultivating the next generation of specialists through a rigorous, evidence-based curriculum. Beyond the VA, she leads the Endocrinology and Metabolism curriculum for the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine (SOM), ensuring a seamless integration of clinical excellence and academic theory for medical students and residents alike.

The division remains at the forefront of the rapidly evolving metabolic landscape. Endocrinology is currently championing the Joint Commission accreditation for Inpatient Diabetes Management, maintaining the highest safety standards for hospitalized Veterans.

On the outpatient front, the practice has integrated the latest FDA-approved obesity management medications and advanced insulin pump technologies, providing Veterans with "game-changer" tools for personalized glycemic control.

Research remains a cornerstone of the division's mission. Endocrinology is currently building upon its robust cardiometabolic risk profile through participation in the VA-IMPACT study. This significant trial evaluates the efficacy of metformin in reducing cardiovascular risk for patients with prediabetes and established cardiovascular disease, potentially reshaping long-term preventative care for the Veteran population.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

In 2025, the Gastroenterology Division at the VA Medical Center sustained national leadership in clinical care, research, and education. Faculty held prominent national roles, with Drs. Yngve Falck-Ytter and Davitkov serving as senior methodologists and co-chairs of two major American Gastroenterological Association clinical practice guidelines on hepatitis

B reactivation and Barrett's esophagus surveillance. While Drs. Faulx and Linz advised national VA leadership through the Field Advisory Board on endoscopy quality and IBD. Dr. Faulx is Trustee of the ASGE Foundation too. The division maintains a robust federally funded research portfolio, including a Department of Defense-funded Barrett's screening trial selected for Distinguished Plenary presentation at Digestive Disease Week 2026 led by Dr. Greer and presented by Dr. Sharma, a new VA Merit Award to Dr. Blum, ongoing VA Cooperative Studies Program and industry-sponsored hepatocellular carcinoma screening trials led by Drs. Davitkov and Falck-Ytter, and an National Cancer Institute-funded study on polyp surveillance led by Drs. Linz and Davitkov. The division's academic mission remains strong, highlighted by Dr. Mansoor's promotion to Associate Professor and national educational contributions by Drs. Hayat, Sharma and Sheriff through content development and questions writing for the ASGE. Collectively, these achievements reflect sustained excellence, national influence, and a strong commitment to advancing Veteran care.

GERIATRIC MEDICINE

The year 2025 has been a transformative one for Geriatric Medicine at the VA, defined by a commitment to the Age-Friendly Health Systems 4Ms (What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility) and pioneering education.

A primary focus this year is the Geriatric Surgery Verification (GSV) program. Dr. Smilovich is directing pre-surgical comprehensive assessments, while Dr. Kresevic champions the initiative toward official accreditation. Complementing this is the Geriatric Heart Failure program, led by Dr. Ramamurthi, which utilizes a multidisciplinary approach with pharmacy and nutrition to maximize quality of life while reducing polypharmacy.

Dr. Dolinar continues to lead the Memory Care Coordination team, expanding access for rural veterans via Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT). Her leadership extends to the VISN 10 Dementia Care Committees alongside Dr. Kresevic, who is also investigating the links between OSA and dementia with Dr. Pallaki. Notably, Dr. Kresevic collaborated with the National Aging Cognition Group to develop veteran-specific dementia resources for the VA library.

The division remains a powerhouse of academic growth:

- Dr. Dolinar, Dr. Smilovich, and Dr. Singh launched KowalSAGE, an inaugural program educating faculty and MS1 students on geriatric principles.
- Selena Finch directs the CCNE-accredited Geriatric Nurse Practitioner Residency, introducing a unique collaborative rotation with the surgery service.
- Dr. Smilovich recently published on leveraging AI for age-friendly care in JMIR Aging, while Dr. Kresevic continues to serve as a content expert for PCORI-funded dental research.

PALLIATIVE CARE

In 2025, the Palliative Care division at the VA has distinguished itself through a robust commitment to clinical education, interdisciplinary leadership, and the advancement of trauma-informed care for Veterans.

The division serves as a premier training site under the direction of Dr. Persaud, who became the site director for Hospice and Palliative Medicine fellows from CCF and MetroHealth. Alongside Dr. Meyerson, the team provided intensive precepting for medical students and residents at the Heroes Harbor hospice unit and the Akron palliative clinic. Faculty members were also instrumental in shaping the next generation of clinicians at CWRU and CCLCM, leading workshops on "Breaking Bad News" and serious illness conversations.

2025 was a significant year for scholarly contributions and national recognition for the division. Dr. Meyerson emerged as a leading voice in specialized palliative care, contributing chapters to the APA Clinical Manual of Palliative Care Psychiatry and publishing in the Journal of Palliative Care. Her work on trauma-informed care and suicidality in serious illness was featured at a UH Grand Rounds and national VA webinars. The team's interdisciplinary strength was further highlighted by nurse practitioner Cathy Bonko's presentation at the Annual Social Work Symposium and Josie George's contributions to Morbidity and Mortality reviews.

This year, the division systems innovation was underscored by Dr. Pallaki's leadership in the launch of the Geriatric Surgery Verification (GSV) pilot, a strategic initiative moving the facility toward prestigious certification by the American College of Surgeons. Beyond surgical excellence, Dr. Pallaki also serves as the GRECC Director and Co-PI for the Cleveland VA ADRC, where he continues to chair regional and VISN-level committees dedicated to advancing complex dementia care and enhancing institutional standards.

HEMATOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY

The 2025 academic year has been defined by significant advancements across our clinical, research, and educational missions. A primary highlight is the strategic expansion of our ambulatory footprint; the October 2025 opening of the Kent infusion center, followed by the upcoming 2026 inauguration of the Youngstown facility, ensures timely, localized care for Veterans throughout the region. Furthermore, Dr. Treasure's selection for the University of Michigan Integrative Oncology Fellowship will catalyze a new integrative care model in collaboration with Whole Health.

Our research portfolio continues its upward trajectory. Under the leadership of Dr. Charles Nock, our clinical trials program remains a distinguished site for the

NCI-VA NAVIGATE initiative. We are also pleased to announce Dr. Evi Stavrou as Section Chief of Hematology, bringing extensive expertise in hemostasis and thrombosis. Faculty research excellence was further evidenced by new NIH and VA BLR&D funding, Dr. Stavrou's prestigious Clinician Scientist Investigator Award, and numerous high-impact publications.

Finally, our commitment to academic development remains persistent. This includes Dr. Mohamed Hag's participation in the CWRU FRAME program, robust medical school instruction, and the mentorship of PhD candidates. Notably, our faculty provide critical clinical supervision for 75% of the fellows within the Hematology-Oncology fellowship continuity clinics.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

2025 marked a period of exceptional growth and national leadership for the Cleveland VA Infectious Diseases faculty. Our research enterprise flourished with 99 peer-reviewed publications covering critical frontiers, from molecular epidemiology to health disparities.

In terms of research and innovation, major funding milestones underscored our clinical impact. Dr. Curtis Donskey secured a VA Merit Review Award for *C. difficile* resistance, further cementing his status as the world's second-ranked scholar in infection control, while Dr. David Canaday received funding to investigate mRNA vaccine immunology. Additionally, Dr. Robert Bonomo was honored as a 2025-26 Harrington Scholar-Innovator.

The Cleveland VA distinguished itself by renewing its IDSA Center of Excellence designation for Antimicrobial Stewardship, a multidisciplinary triumph co-led by Dr. Usha Stiefel. Our clinical reach expanded through the new VA Travel Clinic and the growth of the Long COVID Clinic. Notably, Dr. Puja Van Epps' HIV telemedicine outreach achieved a staggering 200% increase in PrEP uptake.

Our faculty continues to shape national policy:

- Dr. Federico Perez: President of the VA Society of Practitioners in ID (VASPID).
- Dr. Robert Bonomo: Director of the National Coordinating Center for VA SHIELD.
- Dr. Usha Stiefel: Lead for the VISN 10 Antimicrobial Stewardship Community of Practice.

From mentoring junior faculty through the FRAME program to driving rapid detection of emerging threats, our team remains at the forefront of Veteran care.

NEPHROLOGY

The Division of Nephrology continues to make strides in clinical excellence, healthcare delivery, interdisciplinary collaboration and education.

The division has developed a strong collaborative relationship with the primary care department to streamline the management of chronic kidney disease (CKD). This is through the development of a CKD-primary care dashboard that allows for the early identification of CKD, timely institution of preventive strategies and improved referral times to nephrology.

The division is a leader in educating the next generation of nephrologists, being in the unique position of contributing to the training of all major nephrology fellowship programs in the region. Our educational efforts are not limited to nephrology alone – we continue to lead the way in educating medical students, residents as well as physiology graduate students. Dr. Niraj Desai took over as the program director for the University Hospitals/CWRU Nephrology Fellowship program. Through Dr. Desai's efforts, an additional spot was added to the fellowship program, bringing us to 7 fellows. Drs. Ahlawat and Zhao are critical members of the nephrology program and provide clinical supervision for all fellows in the inpatient



and outpatient settings. Dr. Malik runs the renal board review lecture series, with excellent results in board pass rates. Dr. Desai also leads the renal block for first year medical students at CWRU SOM. All full-time faculty are active participants in the CWRU SOM Immersion week that focuses on introducing medical students to the clinical side of dialysis and chronic kidney disease. Dr. Desai and Dr. Zhao are also engaged in didactics with the Masters in Physiology program.

On the research end, Dr. Desai is the site PI for 2 major industry run clinical trials – ZEUS and AMPLITUDE. He also has been active in his work on lupus nephritis, with 2 papers published in the last year as well as a discussant on American Journal of Kidney Disease Blog Podcast on lupus nephritis. Dr. Rahman continues to be a source of pride with his prolific research in CKD and hypertension. His continued service as the editor-in-chief of Kidney Medicine and grant reviewer of the NIH Kidney Precision Medicine Program highlight only a few of his accomplishments and contributions. With Dr. Augustine conducting crucial research on chronic antibody mediated rejection in kidney transplants and Dr. Ahlawat writing book chapters on calcium disorders, the nephrology division continues to further the educational and research mission of the VA.

A major highlight for the division this year has been the advancement of our faculty. This was exemplified by Dr. Malik's appointment as the permanent Division Chief of

Nephrology and her subsequent selection for the CWRU FLEX leadership program, where she will engage in specialized training designed for high-potential faculty.

RHEUMATOLOGY

The VA Rheumatology Division remains a cornerstone of clinical excellence and academic innovation, consistently advancing the standard of care for our Veterans through a robust “bench-to-bedside” approach.

A key highlight of our clinical mission is the Combined Dermatology–Rheumatology Clinic. By bridging these two specialties, we have streamlined the management of complex autoimmune diseases, ensuring Veterans receive coordinated, high-level expertise for multisystemic conditions in a single setting.

Our commitment to the next generation of physician-scientists is reflected in our dedicated mentorship of fellows, residents, and medical students. Faculty professional growth remains a strategic priority:

- Dr. Mattar successfully completed the REFRAME Program, focusing on the unique leadership and strategic challenges of mid-to-late career faculty.
- Dr. Kostadinova is currently completing the FRAME Program, designed to support the development and transition of our junior faculty.

SECTION HEADS

PICTURED ABOVE - LEFT TO RIGHT:

ANUM MALIK, MD, NEPHROLOGY

MAYA MATTAR, MD, RHEUMATOLOGY

MURALIDHAR PALLAKI, MD, GERIATRICS & PALLIATIVE CARE

MOHAMMED OSMAN, MD, CARDIOLOGY

IGHO OFOTOKUN, MD, CHAIRMAN, DEPT OF MEDICINE, UH

SHERRIE WILLIAMS, MD, MHS, SERVICE CHIEF OF MEDICINE

MICHELLE TREASURE, MD, ONCOLOGY

LAURE SAYYED-KASSEM, MD, ENDOCRINOLOGY

EVI STAVROU, MD, HEMATOLOGY

LAURA BROWN, MD, ACUTE MEDICINE

NOT PICTURED:

RAWAD EL GHOUL, MD, SLEEP

CORINNA FALCK-YTTER, MD, PRIMARY CARE

YNGVE FALCK-YTTER, MD, GASTROENTEROLOGY

MOHAMMAD SHATAT, MBBS, PULMONARY

USHA STIEFEL, MD, INFECTIOUS DISEASE

On the research front, Dr. Donald Anthony continues to lead vital investigations into the molecular drivers of health outcomes. His current work identifies blood-based predictors of cardiovascular and all-cause mortality, providing critical insights into the long-term management of patients with autoimmune rheumatic diseases.

GRADUATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

KEITH ARMITAGE, MD, MACP | VICE CHAIR, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



The Internal Medicine residency program at Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, and the Cleveland Veterans Affairs Medical Center is based on two primary themes: career development and patient care. While engaging in their professional development our residents continue to provide outstanding care to patients at UH and the Cleveland VA.

The IM residency has grown to include 146 trainees. In addition, there are four Medicine-Genetics and seventeen Medicine Pediatric Residents. The total number of resident trainees is the largest in our history. There are ten Associate Program Directors (five based at the VA) who share the management of this large training enterprise, along with five Chief Residents and an outstanding administrative staff.

Fourteen 2025 residency graduates will be staying at UH/VA for fellowship or faculty positions. In addition, our residents continue to excel in the Subspecialties match- with residents matching into many of the most competitive programs in the most competitive subspecialties.

Our fellowship programs are also highly successful with the department sponsoring fellowships in thirteen subspecialties. All subspecialty programs received full accreditation from the ACGME in 2025.

Upon the retirement of Dr. Debra Leizman, Clerkship Director, and Director of Undergraduate Education, Dr. Lily Tranchito assumed the role as Clerkship Director at University Hospital. Dr. Shikhil Kharotia is the Clerkship Director for the VA- assuming this role in 2024 upon the retirement of Dr. Clifford Packer. The student programs at UH and VA remain

the highest ranked among the optional sites for CWRU students.

University Hospitals and the Cleveland Veteran Affairs Hospital remain the most popular sites for Case Western Reserve University students to complete their acting internships in internal medicine. Drs. Abbass Mandviwala and Jamie Tomko lead the Acting Intern Program.

The continuing education component of the educational program remains strong. Highlights include weekly Grand Rounds and Morbidity & Mortality Conferences which provide outstanding education for students, residents, and faculty while also providing type 1 CME for faculty. We moved to a hybrid Zoom/in person format for large conferences. We continue to offer ABIM MOC Part 2 credit for faculty who attend Grand Rounds.

The department is prepared to meet ongoing health care challenges through the strength and balance provided by the excellence and expertise of our faculty in fulfilling our mission of exemplary medical care, development and application of new knowledge, as well as superior training of health care professionals.

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

LILY TRANCHITO, DO | CLERKSHIP DIRECTOR, MEDICINE CLERKSHIP, UH



Faculty within the Department of Medicine serve as dedicated mentors and educators for medical students at the Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) School of Medicine.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, University Hospitals (UH) faculty contributed 5,762 hours of instruction, while our VA partners provided an additional 4,608 hours. Essential to this mission are our Internal Medicine residents, who provide vital student support on the wards and lead clinical skills and small-group sessions across both the medical school and hospital settings. UH faculty members are also deeply committed to the growth of Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) College of Medicine medical students. Beyond providing core teaching and mentorship, we actively integrate students into the frontiers of research and innovation, fostering a culture of discovery alongside clinical excellence.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, our academic endeavors extended to numerous medical students:

- 96 CWRU medical students were offered core clerkship spots during their 3rd year Internal Medicine (IM) core clerkship at UH/VA.
- 93 medical students (77 from CWRU (55 at UH and 22 at VA), 1 from Technion, 2 from NEOMED and 13 from other medical schools) completed a 4th year acting internship in Internal Medicine at UH/VA.
- 202 CWRU medical students completed electives at UH CMC in the Department of Medicine. 37 CWRU medical students completed electives at the VA.
- 24 students completed the popular CWRU Internal Medicine boot camp created by our residents in the Leaders in Medical Education track of our IM residency.
- Approximately 22% of the 2025 CWRU graduating class (48 students) committed to careers in Internal Medicine. Several graduates secured preliminary Internal Medicine positions and we were thrilled to have three CWRU graduates join the residency program here at UH.
- Over 100 letters were submitted by the Department of Medicine on behalf of medical students in support of their residency applications.

The Department of Medicine sponsors and advises the CWRU School of Medicine Internal Medicine Interest Group which hosts events throughout the academic year. These events provide venues for students to interact with residents, fellows and attending faculty in the department and to learn about research, clinical opportunities and potential careers in Internal Medicine. This past year we continued to offer a POCUS workshop and an amazing lecture on finances and business in relation to medicine.

The Department of Medicine's commitment to scholarship, excellence in patient care and research allows us to offer exceptional educational opportunities for future health care professionals.

A circular portrait of W. Henry Boom, MD, a middle-aged man with light brown hair, wearing a dark blue V-neck sweater over a light blue button-down shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

RESEARCH

W. HENRY BOOM, MD | VICE CHAIR, RESEARCH PROGRAMS

The Department of Medicine continues to advance a robust research program, supported by 40 grants that span multiple divisions.

A comprehensive strategic planning process conducted in 2024 identified a critical priority for the department: the need to accelerate the recruitment and development of early-career physician-scientists. The appointment of Dr. Igho Ofotokun as Chair brings new optimism for the department. Joining us from Emory University, Dr. Ofotokun has a proven track record in research mentorship. Under his guidance, the department is poised to reinvigorate its recruitment efforts and strengthen the infrastructure supporting physician-researchers over the coming years.

While the broader academic biomedical research environment continues to present challenges, the outlook for 2026 is increasingly stable. The significant fiscal concerns initially raised in early 2025 have been largely mitigated by the proposed NIH budget increase (>1%) for 2026. This modest yet critical growth provides a baseline of stability for our investigators to pursue high-impact discovery. Despite external headwinds, research awards totaling \$72.3 million, across our three primary affiliate institutions remained steady in 2025.

The Department of Medicine continues to have the largest research portfolio at both UH and VA. The renewed affiliation between UH CMC and CWRU has allowed for continued growth in clinical research funding through UH. During 2025, the department saw continued growth in basic and translational science research programs. The VA continues to build robust research programs in medicine with a goal of strengthening collaborations across the Cleveland

biomedical research community through VA CARES, the Case Comprehensive Cancer Center, and the Cleveland Digestive Diseases Core Center.

The 15th annual Research Day held in May at the Tinkham-Veale University Center's Grand Ballroom, was well attended by faculty, fellows, residents, and students. Three very diverse and excellent faculty presentations led the event, followed by a highly interactive poster session with 65 posters (43 by residents, 6 by fellows and 16 by students and post-doc researchers). The Department of Medicine's successful Team Science Initiative has been rolled into a larger initiative through the UH Research and Education Institute to fund interdisciplinary research across departments at UH and CWRU.

The Harrington Physician-Scientist Pathway recruited 2 new residents. This track provides residents aspiring to research careers direct admission to research training in the subspecialty of their choice after two years of training in general internal medicine. Drs. Proweller and Armitage lead this program, now in its 12th year.

2025 stands as a testament to the resilience and intellectual vibrancy of the Department of Medicine. With the largest research portfolio at both University Hospitals and the VA, the department remains the cornerstone of the Cleveland biomedical research ecosystem.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

KIMBERLY SANDERS, BSN, MBA | ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR, MEDICAL SERVICES



2025 marked a period of significant growth and transition for the Department of Medicine. In August, we were honored to welcome our new Chair, Dr. Igbo Ofotokun, MD, MSc, FIDSA, an internationally renowned clinician, mentor, and translational researcher. Dr. Ofotokun succeeds the late Dr. Robert Salata, whose enduring legacy of collaboration and innovation shaped our department into the empowering environment it is today. We celebrated this transition with a series of “Meet & Greet” events throughout Cleveland, giving our staff and faculty the opportunity to connect with Dr. Ofotokun and share our vision for the future.

CLINICAL

This was a landmark year for clinical expansion. In January, we proudly launched the Diabetes and Metabolic Center in partnership with the UH Midtown Collaboration, with generous support from the Cleveland Foundation. We also introduced Endocrinology services at the UH SOM Willoughby Health Center, with plans to further expand access at this location. By Q2 2026, the Willoughby center will host four medical specialties, including Rheumatology, Pulmonary & Sleep Medicine, and Endocrinology. We also expanded our westside presence with a dedicated multispecialty medicine clinic that continues to grow.

This strategic expansion translated into robust year-over-year growth in patient volume. In 2025, 8 of our 11 divisions realized growth in visit volume, such as Cardiology, Hematology and Oncology, Gastroenterology, Pulmonary & Sleep Medicine, Infectious Disease, and Nephrology.

Supporting our expansion, the Department had a successful year for recruitment. We filled 67 Physician and APP positions (36 new and 31 replacements). 18 of our recruits for 2025 came from our Residency and Fellowship programs. Notably, nearly 40% of these new hires were dedicated to Pulmonary Medicine, a critical investment to bolster ICU coverage across the entire UH system.

RESEARCH

Beyond clinical expansion, this past year was marked by several significant research milestones. The first being The Cleveland Digestive Diseases Research Core Center (DDRCC) being awarded \$6 million to fund its third consecutive cycle (2025–2030). This renewal ensures continued infrastructure support for investigators across Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, Cleveland Clinic, and the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center. Physicians in Infectious Disease secured a five-year, \$4M+ R01 grant to study human T cells specific for Mycobacterium tuberculosis antigens, aiming to design new and more effective TB vaccines. The Pulmonary and Critical Care team secured two major NIH grants, one to study sepsis in pediatric patients and the other to evaluate hemolysis-driven immune dysregulation in sepsis, critical illness, and sickle cell disease.

The 15th Annual Department of Medicine Research Day, which highlights the investigative talents of our residents, fellows and post-doctoral trainees, was held May 9th at the Tinkham-Veale University Center’s Grand Ballroom. Several poster presentations were given on a variety of topics. The primary goal of the

Department is to facilitate the success of our faculty. In pursuit of this objective, departmental academic administration is focused on increasing our extramural research footprint, continuing our intramural and team-based support, assisting in recruiting exemplary faculty, and continuing to support the Department's exemplary educational programs.

QUALITY

The 2025 Medicine Quality Summit in Memory of Dr. Robert A. Salata was held on Saturday, September 27, at the Tinkham-Veale University Center Grand Ballroom. This in-person event, titled Professionalism in Practice: Advancing Quality, Safety, and Accountability, successfully drew over 150 registrants dedicated to improving clinical standards.

The summit featured William Cooper, MD, MPH, from Vanderbilt University, who delivered a compelling keynote address. His presentation, "Pursuing and Promoting a Culture of Safety, Quality and Respect," drew on his extensive expertise in patient advocacy and faculty affairs to set the tone for the day's focus on professional accountability.

GLOBAL HEALTH & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Our Global Health initiatives continued through the Roe Green Center for Travel Medicine and Global Health. We remain deeply grateful to philanthropist and world traveler Roe Green, whose visionary support allows the Center to leverage technology and community engagement to improve health outcomes both globally and within our own community.

The center was excited to help support the Tiny Feet, Big Steps Neonatology Conference in Tanzania and Ethiopia which is an educational conference for clinicians across many countries. Our support helps offset the cost for training and education of these clinicians to ensure they are up to date on the latest

clinical care for patients. We also supported the work of our newly named Roe Green Scholar through the support of a nutrition coordinator in Burundi through Village Health Works. Our faculty's international reach also extended to West Africa, where a department member served as a Visiting Professor at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital and the University of Ghana Medical School.

Big impacts were made on a local level too. In May, we sponsored the keynote luncheon at the 2025 Global Health Symposium, hosted by the CWRU Center for Global Health and Diseases. The center also named Dr. Jennifer Furin as the new Roe Green Scholar. Dr. Furin joins a growing community of scholars funded by the Roe Green Scholar Fund, each working to push the boundaries of their field and create lasting global impact.

We look forward to continued growth in 2026. We've had a successful year of physician and APP recruitment that will lead to expanded access to care throughout Northeast Ohio. In 2026, we'll continue to strive to reduce wait times for new patient visits and provide exceptional care to all patients.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

USHA STIEFEL, MD | VICE CHAIR, FACULTY DEVELOPMENT



Despite the challenges facing academic healthcare institutions in the present era, Department of Medicine faculty have continued their advancement, investment, and engagement in the department.

The Department of Medicine continues to serve as a model for formal academic advancement. In 2025, 18 accomplished Department of Medicine faculty were recognized with a promotion to either Associate Professor, Full Professor, or received Tenure at Case Western Reserve University. This group encompassed 7 women, 6 VA faculty, and 12 faculty based at University Hospitals. Nine different divisions were represented by these promotions, highlighting the support across the department for faculty advancement. Most promoted faculty took advantage of the Department's Committee on Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure (DCAPT). This committee offers pre-reviews of curriculum vitae, which provides valuable portfolio feedback to faculty considering academic promotion. Additionally, the entire DCAPT voluntarily participated in formal bias training to ensure equity and fairness while conducting reviews. Looking forward, at least 13 senior-level advancements to promotion or the Award of Tenure are anticipated in July of 2026 alone.

Faculty participation in career development programming continues in the hospital, School of Medicine, and the University. This year, several junior faculty from the department were supported to the 2025-2026 FRAME (Faculty Reaching for Academic Medical Excellence) class at the School of Medicine. FRAME provides junior faculty participants with a year-long curriculum that includes the tools and time for individualized career self-reflection. Other junior faculty

have participated in the NACES (Navigating Academia for Clinician-Educators Series) hosted by a senior faculty member at the VA, and in FAME-R (Fellowship in Academic Medicine-Research) a training program focused on clinical study design. Both the VA and University Hospitals also support departmental senior faculty members who are pursuing professional training opportunities. In 2025, two senior faculty members participated in REFRAME, a career visioning program for mid-to-senior level faculty through the Office of Faculty Affairs at the School of Medicine.

Finally, members of the Department of Medicine continue to pay it forward to their colleagues. The President of the Women Faculty School of Medicine (WFSOM) organization is a member of the Department of Medicine this year. Other department faculty members serve in leadership roles on the School of Medicine's Faculty Council, the Committee on Medical Student Promotion and Advancement, the Biomedical Research Committee, and the CWRU Faculty Senate. Many of our faculty serve as members of these and other committees as well as participate in endeavors to enhance the professional lives and environment for their colleagues. This volunteerism exemplifies the robust culture of mentorship modeled and embraced by the Medicine faculty and leadership at all levels.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

DIVISION OF CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICINE

- Expand regional access to advanced cardiovascular and structural heart services.
- Advance precision cardiometabolic and obesity-focused research initiatives.
- Strengthen clinical trial enrollment and translational science collaborations.
- Recruit and develop the next generation of cardiovascular physician-scientists.
- Continue to improve outcomes through innovative, data-driven care models.

DIVISION OF CLINICAL ENDOCRINOLOGY

- Launch dedicated thyroid and pituitary specialty programs.
- Expand the Diabetes On-Demand and digital health platforms.
- Advance integrated obesity, diabetes, and metabolic disease management.
- Strengthen collaboration with hepatology through a comprehensive MASLD/MASH program.
- Grow clinical and translational research focused on metabolic health.

DIVISION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY & LIVER DISEASE

- Build upon the success of the renewed NIH P30 Digestive Disease Research Core Center.
- Expand translational research in inflammatory bowel disease and liver disease.
- Advance innovation and commercialization of endoscopic technologies.
- Strengthen the physician-scientist pipeline through mentorship and career development.
- Enhance access to advanced digestive health services throughout the region.

DIVISION OF GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE

- Continue strategic expansion of academic primary care services.
- Improve care transitions and reduce avoidable readmissions through innovative care models.
- Enhance patient access and continuity across ambulatory and inpatient settings.
- Strengthen educational experiences for residents and students.
- Develop new models of integrated and team-based primary care.

DIVISION OF GERIATRICS & PALLIATIVE CARE

- Expand age-friendly care initiatives across the health system.
- Advance the Geriatric Surgery Verification Program.
- Increase access to geriatric consultation and palliative care services.
- Strengthen interdisciplinary care models for older adults and patients with serious illness.
- Continue development of nationally recognized fellowship training programs.

DIVISION OF HEMATOLOGY & CELLULAR THERAPY

- Expand cellular therapy, CAR-T, and gene therapy programs.
- Strengthen regional leadership in hematologic malignancies and sickle cell disease.
- Advance translational research in transplantation and immunotherapy.
- Improve access to specialty care for rural and underserved populations.
- Continue recruitment and development of academic leaders in hematology.

DIVISION OF SOLID TUMOR ONCOLOGY

- Expand precision oncology and molecular diagnostics programs.
- Grow Phase I and investigator-initiated clinical trials.
- Advance theranostics and radioligand therapy capabilities.
- Strengthen disease-focused programs across the UH network.
- Enhance patient access, experience, and participation in clinical research.

DIVISION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE & HIV MEDICINE

- Recruit additional faculty to support continued growth across clinical and research programs.
- Expand research in HIV, tuberculosis, antimicrobial resistance, and respiratory viral diseases.
- Strengthen antimicrobial stewardship and infection prevention efforts.
- Grow telehealth and regional infectious diseases consultation services.
- Advance global health partnerships and translational research initiatives.

DIVISION OF NEPHROLOGY & HYPERTENSION

- Expand innovative programs focused on chronic kidney disease and hypertension management.
- Strengthen transplant nephrology and onco-nephrology services.
- Advance clinical and translational kidney research.
- Enhance multidisciplinary care for patients with complex kidney disease.
- Continue developing future academic nephrologists and physician-scientists.

DIVISION OF PULMONARY, CRITICAL CARE & SLEEP MEDICINE

- Continue expansion of the system-wide pulmonary and critical care model.
- Advance interventional pulmonology and lung cancer diagnostic capabilities.
- Expand research in sleep medicine, sepsis, lung injury, and pulmonary vascular disease.
- Enhance multidisciplinary care for patients with advanced lung disease.
- Strengthen fellowship training and physician-scientist development.

DIVISION OF RHEUMATOLOGY

- Expand specialty programs in osteoporosis, metabolic bone disease, and musculoskeletal ultrasound.
- Advance clinical trials in lupus, myositis, psoriatic arthritis, and related disorders.
- Develop novel cellular therapy approaches for autoimmune diseases.
- Strengthen national and international research collaborations.
- Continue growth in patient access, education, and translational research.

LEADERSHIP

DEPARTMENTAL LEADERSHIP

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