UMass Chan MEDICAL SCHOOL | Lupus Center

LUPUS PULSE

Research, Resources & Community at the UMass Chan Lupus Center

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER · SUMMER 2026

Dear Lupus Community,

We're delighted to share the second edition of Lupus Pulse, a quarterly newsletter created for you by your UMass Chan Lupus Center team. Our aim is to keep you informed, engaged, and connected with the latest research, clinical opportunities, patient resources, and events. Together, we're building progress in lupus care and research - one step at a time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Inflammatory Arthritis & Digital Health Symposium

From AI-driven diagnosis to single-cell transcriptomics to the future of spondyloarthritis, the field is moving fast. The 2nd Annual Symposium brings together the people leading that work - a full day of expert sessions, exhibitors, and a poster hall, capped by a wine-and-cheese reception and cross-disciplinary conversation.

When: Friday, October 16, 2026
Where: AC Hotel by Marriott, 125 Front Street, Worcester, MA
Register: iad-symposium-2026.netlify.app

Free admission — registration required.

PAST EVENTS

Annual Lupus Symposium Success!

The 8th Lupus Day at UMass Chan Medical School was a great success, bringing together patients, families, advocates, clinicians, researchers, and trainees for a program defined by scientific excellence, patient engagement, and an outstanding spirit of collegiality.

SAVE THE DATE · Next Lupus Symposium — May 12, 2027

Patients, families, clinicians, and researchers gathered for the 8th Lupus Day.

Held in collaboration with the Lupus Foundation of New England, this year's symposium featured an exceptional lineup of world-class lupus investigators. Anne Davidson, a leading authority in lupus nephritis and immune mechanisms; Virginia Pascual, internationally recognized for transformative work in lupus immunobiology and single-cell science; and Saira Sheikh, a national leader in lupus clinical trials and patient-centered care, delivered outstanding presentations — underscoring the growing stature of this event and the strength of the lupus community it convenes.

The patient perspective session added a particularly powerful dimension to the day. Talaya Reid shared her personal journey living with severe lupus, the burden of refractory disease, and her experience undergoing CAR T cell therapy at UMass Chan. Her conversation brought authenticity, courage, and hope to the program, reminding everyone in attendance that scientific innovation has its greatest meaning when viewed through the lived experience of patients.

The poster session showcased impressive work across basic, translational, and clinical lupus research — in an atmosphere that was warm, engaged, and deeply collaborative. Lupus Day continues to reflect the best of what UMass Chan can offer through partnership, scholarship, and commitment to improving the lives of people living with lupus.

PATIENT COMMUNITY & SUPPORT

Lupus Support Group

Join our monthly lupus support group, offered virtually through Zoom. Connect with others, share stories, gain helpful insights, and find encouragement as you navigate your journey to better health.

A summer note: for July and August, our sessions will take a more relaxed, informal format. Rather than a structured topic, we'll keep things casual with open conversation, connection, and space for members to share what's on their minds.

Meets: Every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:00 PM
RSVP: Ruth.Wilson@umassmed.edu

Upcoming Support Group Topics — 2026

MONTH	TOPIC & SPEAKER
September	*Lupus Nephritis* Guest speaker: Dr. Arun Chutani, Nephrology, UMass Memorial — Sept 16, 6:00 PM
October	*Clinical Research & Communicating With Your Healthcare Team* Meet our Lupus Center Research Coordinators
November	*Understanding Your Lupus Care: Blood Tests & Treatments* Presented by Dr. Gkrouzman
December	*Managing Uncertainty and Holiday Stress With Lupus*

Our Support Group at the Annual Lupus Symposium

Some familiar faces from our support group came together at the Annual Lupus Symposium — always wonderful to see this community connect in person.

NEW PROGRAM — PALS

Patient Advocates for Lupus Studies

PALS is a peer-to-peer clinical trial education program co-designed by the Lupus Research Alliance and its clinical affiliate, Lupus Therapeutics.

The goal: Improve clinical research awareness and increase participation diversity.

How it works: Patients living with lupus who have previously participated in a clinical trial are trained as peer educators (PALs). They are paired with patients who are considering a trial but have never participated in one.

Value: These mentors offer emotional connection and share their firsthand experience of the risks and benefits of studies, empowering others in their healthcare decisions.

Interested? Contact us at lupus@umassmed.edu.

SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

The Lupus Center at UMass Chan is actively recruiting for clinical trials and observational studies, including promising new treatments for patients with active or refractory lupus. Find out if you're eligible and how you can contribute by reaching out to our team at lupus@umassmed.edu.

The Lupus Center is a LuCIN (Lupus Clinical Investigators Network) site — an academic-based clinical trials network comprised of some of the most prestigious medical research centers and experienced lupus physician-scientists throughout North America.

Clinical Trials Now Open

Cell therapies for active severe lupus or refractory lupus nephritis

- **Cabaletta Bio RESET-SLE:** A Phase 1/2 open-label study evaluating the safety and efficacy of CABA-201 (CAR T) in active systemic lupus.
- **Nkarta Ntrust-1:** An open-label, multi-center, non-randomized Phase 1 study of NKX019 (allogeneic CAR NK cells targeting CD19) in participants with active lupus nephritis.

Active Registries Recruiting Patients

We are currently enrolling in several registries for lupus and antiphospholipid syndrome. Your participation helps researchers discover better treatments and understand these conditions more deeply.

Lupus Landmark Study

A groundbreaking initiative led by the Lupus Research Alliance to accelerate the development of personalized treatments for people living with lupus — the most unique observational study of its kind, following 3,500 patients over time to enable major breakthroughs in lupus treatment.

APS ACTION Registry

An international network of physicians and scientists studying patients with persistently positive antiphospholipid (aPL) antibodies and/or antiphospholipid syndrome (APS), following patients for at least 10 years to better understand the clinical characteristics of APS.

Bacterial Curli Study

Looks at blood and urine samples from patients with lupus to determine whether bacterial curli (a protein made by certain bacteria strains) correlates with disease severity and lupus flares.

Why should I participate in research? Learn more here

CENTER UPDATES & RESOURCES

Meet Our Incoming Rheumatology Fellows — Starting July 1

A rheumatology fellow is a fully licensed physician who has completed medical school and an Internal Medicine residency, and is now undergoing 2 to 3 years of specialized training to become an expert in diagnosing and treating autoimmune diseases, musculoskeletal conditions, and arthritis.

Tania Chiha, MD
IM Residency: Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, MA

Vishwas Hosur Ravishankar, MD
IM Residency: St. Vincent's Hospital, Worcester, MA

Mauricio Leitao, MD
IM Residency: BronxCare Hospital, Bronx, NY

Trusted Lupus Education & Resources

- UMass Chan Lupus Center — www.umassmed.edu/lupuscenter/
- American College of Rheumatology — Lupus — www.rheumatology.org/I-Am-A/Patient-Caregiver/Diseases-Conditions/Lupus
- Lupus Research Alliance — www.lupusresearch.org/
- Lupus Foundation of New England — lupusne.org/
- NIAMS — Lupus — www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/lupus

Thank you for your ongoing partnership. We're here to support you and would like to hear from you — please reach out with thoughts, questions, or suggestions for future newsletter topics.

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With warm regards,
Elena Gkrouzman, MD · Co-Director, Lupus Center · UMass Chan Medical School