MPCI 2020-2021 Activities
Members of the faculty of the Institute have combined to author 1,714 publications since 1998. 90 original articles, commentaries, editorials, and book chapters have been published or have been accepted for publication during the 2020 - 2021 period. Faculty had articles published or accepted in top-tier journals, including *New England Journal of Medicine, Annals of Internal Medicine, and JAMA Internal Medicine*.

- Dr. Jerry Gurwitz continues to serve as PI of the Health Care Systems Research Network (HCSRN)-Older American Independence Centers (OAICs) AGING Initiative. This Initiative, originally funded for 4 years by the National Institute on Aging under an R24 award, was subsequently funded for an additional 5 years under an R33 award. The AGING Initiative brings together the 18 research centers of the HCSRN with the university-based OAICs with the goal of advancing the science of multiple chronic conditions. The AGING Initiative focuses on research methods and approaches, career development activities for early stage investigators, enhancement of patient/family caregiver engagement, and includes a new pilot grant program. A Multiple Chronic Conditions Scholars program has had three cohorts of Scholars (total of >30) drawn from academic institutions across the United States and internationally. The AGING Initiative has applied for funding to the National Institute on Aging to create and disseminate nationally a curriculum on multiple chronic conditions science (in collaboration with the American Geriatrics Society) and has received funding to develop a Roadmap for the creation of a national nursing home clinical trials network to address research questions relevant to the prevention and control of COVID-19 in nursing homes.

- Dr. Kouta Ito has completed a study in collaboration with the Institute of Clinical and Economic Review (ICER) to assess the value of effective treatments for Alzheimer’s disease (“Valuing Treatments to Prevent and Effectively Treat Alzheimer’s Disease”). The work is funded by the National Institute on Aging. A report summarizing the findings of this work is under consideration for publication in *JAMA Network Open*. This work is particularly timely in view of the recent controversial approval of aducanumab by the FDA.

- Dr. Susan Andrade continues to lead Meyers Primary Care Institute efforts relevant to FDA’s Sentinel Initiative. She continues to lead multiple multi-site research efforts to identify challenges to drug safety during pregnancy. Dr. Andrade is developing cutting edge approaches to linking information on mothers and infants and to validate healthcare data on stillbirths. Dr. Andrade is also engaged in a study of COVID-19 in pregnant women under the FDA Sentinel Initiative, which has been designed to mirror a European Medicines Agency study.

- Together with Dr. Robin Clark, Dr. Andrade continues to lead the participation of the Meyers Primary Care Institute in the “Integrating Addiction Research in Health Systems Network,” an endeavor of the Health Care Systems Research Network. In related work, Drs. Andrade and Clark are also leading efforts at MPCI related to a multi-center, multi-year, FDA-funded effort to better understand the epidemiology and risk factors for misuse, abuse,
and addiction associated with long-term use of opioids for chronic pain. These research
efforts are being conducted in partnership with Fallon Health.

- Dr. Mara Epstein completed a study under FDA's Sentinel Initiative which validated an
algorithm to identify Hodgkin’s and Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma in administrative healthcare
records to be used in studies of safety of medications and devices. The findings of this work
have been published in *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety*.

- Dr. Epstein is site PI for a National Cancer Institute-funded project studying the
implementation of Lynch syndrome screening programs in US healthcare systems, with the
goal of increasing screening for Lynch syndrome in cancer patients.

- The Meyers Primary Care Institute, Reliant Medical Group and UMMS continue to
participate in the All of Us research program, a historic effort to gather data from over one
million people across the United States. As of April 2021, 278,365 adults have been
enrolled. Drs. Mara Epstein and Larry Garber are leading the Meyers Primary Care effort,
which will recruit over 11,000 participants in central Massachusetts over five years. The
MPCI-Reliant-based initiative has recruited over 3,000 participants thus far and is
considered a top-performer. The ultimate goal of this research, which includes a major
focus on precision medicine, is to accelerate research and improve health at a population
level. Researchers will use data from the program to learn more about how individual
differences in lifestyle, environment, and biological makeup influence health and disease.
Recruitment activities were on hold relating to the pandemic but have been restarted.

- The Meyers Primary Care Institute and Reliant Medical Group completed participation in a
$30 million study entitled “A Randomized Trial of an Individually-Tailored, Multi-factorial
Fall Injury Prevention Strategy: The STRIDE Study” funded by PCORI and the National
Institute on Aging. Dr. Gurwitz has served on the Steering Committee of the overall study
and as the Chair of the Clinical Trial Sites Committee. Dr. Larry Garber, Peggy Preusse,
Anne McDonald, Azraa Amroze, and Mary Ellen Stansky implemented the trial at Reliant
Medical Group exceeding our enrollment target of 600 subjects. Results of this pragmatic
clinical trial were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

- The Meyers Primary Care Institute and Reliant Medical Group are completing participation in a
study funded by the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute entitled “Improving
Patient-Centered Communication in Primary Care: A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial
of the Comparative Effectiveness of Three Interventions.” This is a multi-site study being
conducted with collaborators at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute and
the University of California San Diego. Dr. Mazor is leading MPCI involvement, with
collaborators Drs. Yood and Garber from Reliant Medical Group, and Drs. Sonal Singh and
Kim Fisher are from MPCI. The study is a head-to-head comparison of three interventions
intended to improve provider-patient communication about what matters most to patients.

- Dr. Alok Kapoor has exceeded the enrollment target of 500 subjects into a trial funded by
AHRQ through an R18 dissemination grant entitled “Leveraging Evidence-based Practices
for Ambulatory VTE Patients,” to test a pharmacist-based intervention to improve the use
and safety of direct oral anticoagulant medications.
• Drs. Kim Fisher and Kathy Mazor published the findings of the first national survey exploring vaccine hesitancy toward a potential SARS-CoV-2 vaccine in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

• In an effort funded by the Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts and in collaboration with the Worcester Division of Public Health, Drs. Fisher and Mazor are leading a local campaign to promote COVID-19 vaccination to vaccine hesitant populations in the city of Worcester.

• Dr. Kim Fisher has been awarded an R01 grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIH) entitled “Trusted Messengers: Supporting Physicians in Promoting COVID-19 Vaccination.” She and Drs. Mazor and Epstein are also collaborating with investigators at Boston Medical Center on an NIH-funded project entitled “NIH Community Engagement Research Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities.”

• Dr. Mayra Tisminetzky is conducting a study entitled “Multimorbidity and Treatment Related Outcomes in Older Heart Failure Patients” under an R01-type grant from the NIA.

• Dr. David McManus co-leads, with Dr. Jane Saczynski, a landmark study funded by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute entitled Systematic Assessment of Geriatric Elements in Atrial Fibrillation (SAGE-AF). Drs. Gurwitz, Tisminetzky, and Kapoor are collaborators on this important research effort.

• Research teams at the Meyers Primary Care Institute completed an AHRQ-funded study entitled “Improving Safety after Hospitalization in Older Persons on High-Risk Medications” which was a randomized trial being conducted in association with Reliant Medical Group to reduce the risks of important medication-related adverse events in older adults recently discharged from the hospital. The findings of the study were published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

• Dr. Mazor collaborated with investigators at the American Health Care Association, Brown University and Hebrew Senior Life to submit an application to PCORI for a project titled “Increasing COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake Among Skilled Nursing Facility Staff: What Works and Why?”. Dr. Mazor and colleagues, including Drs. Fisher and Antonelli from MPCI, have proposed to conduct a cluster randomized pragmatic trial at 110 skilled nursing facilities across the country.

• Drs. Singh and Gurwitz lead a project entitled D-PRESCRIBE-AD. The goal of this NIA-funded effort is to reduce inappropriate prescribing of sedative/hypnotics, antipsychotics, and strong anticholinergic medications to patients with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. In the first year of the project, the Meyers research team developed and tested educational materials for patients, caregivers and providers to lay the groundwork for multi-year study to be implemented in two national health plans (Humana and Anthem).
In February 2021, Dr. Mayra Tisminetzky submitted an application for an NIH RO1 award that aims to examine the relative contributions of advancing age, sex, race/ethnicity and more importantly, the overall burden of multimorbidity, and the interactions between these different patient characteristics, in regard to clinical outcomes related to COVID-19. Data from the OptumLabs Data Warehouse will be used to answer this relevant clinical question. The OptumLabs Data Warehouse creates an unparalleled opportunity to accelerate population-based research through the efficient identification of large numbers of individuals with COVID-19.

Robert Yood, MD completed a pilot study on dark adaptometry as a screening test for hydroxychloroquine retinopathy.
The 24th annual Health Policy and Practice of Medicine Interstitial, which is a mandatory program for all 3rd year UMMS students, took place virtually on December 7, 2020. It was coordinated by the Meyers Primary Care Institute. Dr. Ronald Adler from the UMMS Department of Family Medicine and Community Health co-led the Interstitial. Several of our Board members served as small group leaders.

The 11th annual Geriatric Interprofessional Immersion Training in the Care of Older Adults (GIIT) Program, a weekend retreat for chief residents, nurse practitioner trainees, and PharmD students, sponsored by Fallon Health and University of Massachusetts Medical School, had been scheduled to take place at Ocean Edge Resort in Brewster, MA on April 24-26, 2020. The event was canceled due to the pandemic. MPCI is working to reschedule the event.

The 23rd annual Geriatric Teaching Days was a virtual Grand Rounds presentation on April 15, 2021, entitled “COVID-19 Beyond the Hospital: A Geriatrics Panel Discussion.” The panel included Gary Blanchard, MD, Randall Morse, MD and Erika Zimmons, MD from the UMMS Division of Geriatric Medicine, as well as Shawn Neville, NHA, Executive Director of Beaumont Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Center.

As detailed above, the Meyers Primary Care Institute coordinates a “Multiple Chronic Conditions Scholars” program under the NIA-funded Health Care Systems Research Network (HCSRN)-Older American Independence Centers (OAICs) AGING Initiative. The program has had three cohorts of Scholars (total of >30) drawn from applicants from academic institutions across the United States and internationally.

Many MPCI faculty members serve in leadership, mentor, and teaching roles, including:

- Mary Antonelli, PhD, RN, MPH teaches several courses including Nursing Advocacy and Leadership, Prompting Optimal Health Outcomes through Improvement Science, and Patient Safety & Quality Improvement. She also mentors several students. And Dr. Antonelli leads program and curriculum development for Nursing & Interprofessional Leadership, and is also involved in the curricula and course development for the revision of AGRN Master’s Program and to a new Master’s Program.

- Sybil Crawford, PhD is an instructor for Advanced Statistical Data Analysis. She is also servers on doctoral dissertation committees for six GSN students, as well as mentoring Jyothi Margapuri in the UMMS Junior Faculty Development Program and two PhD students. Dr. Crawford also works with several DNP students completing QI projects and presentations.

- Sarah Cutrona, MD, MPH serves as mentor to two PhD candidates and six junior faculty members in Population & Quantitative Health Sciences.

- Mara Epstein, ScD is a member of Principles 2 Curriculum Development Committee Build Team, Curriculum ReVolution and Foundations of Medicine -1 Curriculum Committee. She is also part of the Admissions Committee, Department of Population and Quantitative
Dr. Epstein is director of two interprofessional courses: Epidemiology-Biostatistics Course, Department of Medicine and Epidemiology Course, Graduate School of Nursing. Additionally, she has been guest lecturer for Principles of Human Genetics, 162 first-year medical students: “Statistics of Genetic Tests” and Cancer Biology, 12 PhD students: “Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention.” Dr. Epstein is also the primary mentor for Maira Castaneda-Avila, MS - PhD candidate, PQHS Department.

- Kimberly Fisher, MD serves as a facilitator for core small group, OSD course. She is a member of Mayuko Ito Fukunaga’s Master’s Thesis Committee. Dr. Fisher is also a research mentor to Jeremy Walder, and internal medicine resident.

- Mayuko Ito Fukunaga, MD is mentor to two internal medicine residents, three medical students and one pre-med student.

- Kathleen Mazor, EdD has been guest lecturer for Behavioral Randomized Trial Methodology (CTS717), Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Clinical & Population Health Research, Guest Lecturer in Spring 2020 and Qualitative Methods for Health Research on Qualitative Methods (CTS732), Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Clinical & Population Health Research, Guest Lecturer in Spring 2021. Dr. Mazor is mentor to three PhD candidates, and a faculty mentor to eleven junior faculty.

- Sarah McGee, MD, MPH is co-Facilitator for Massachusetts in the National Nursing Home COVID-19 Action Network. She co-presented the Population Health WINS Webinar “TCM, Transitional Care Management” with Trudy Manchester and Chris Cernack, (sponsored by Office of Clinical Integration at UMass Memorial Healthcare. Dr. McGee is a reviewer for poster sessions for residents and students at the American Geriatrics Society’s Annual Meeting. Dr. McGee is an instructor for the Population Health Clerkship, “Falls and Older Adults” (sponsored by Office of Undergraduate Medical Education). She also provides a lecture series to Geriatric Medicine Fellow entitled “Population Health and Accountable Care Organizations” (sponsored by Division of Geriatric Medicine). Dr. McGee is an Ambulatory Medicine Block preceptor for Medicine residents.

- Sonal Singh, MD, MPH supervises third-year medical students doing their Family Medicine clerkship in the Benedict Clinic. He has also served as a facilitator for small groups for the Epidemiology and Biostatistics course for first year medical students. Dr. Signh mentors Idanis Berriosmorales, Assistant Professor of Neurology, School of Medicine.

- Mayra Tisminetzky, MPH, MD, PhD is an instructor for University of Massachusetts Medical School and Graduate School of Nursing. Epidemiology and Biostatistics (interprofessional) course. She also co-mentors two PhD students.
Dr. Kathleen Mazor serves on the Health Care Systems Research Network (HCSRN) Governing Board.

Dr. Mazor also served as Chair, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), Communication and Dissemination Research Merit Review Panel, 2013 - present.

Dr. Jerry Gurwitz has continued to serve on the Board of Managers of the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute/Department of Population Medicine at Harvard Medical School and as Vice Chair of the Worcester Board of Health.

Sarah McGee, MD, MPH chairs the MassHealth Drug Utilization Review Advisory Board, Commonwealth Medicine

Dr. McGee is serving as the Medical Director of Transitional Care as part of the UMass Memorial Accountable Care Organization and as a member of the UMass Memorial Medical Center Triage Team for Crisis Standards of Care for COVID 19 Pandemic.

Mary Antonelli, PhD, RN, MPH received a Distinguished Faculty Award, Graduate School of Nursing, UMass Medical School (awarded by student body) in 2020.

Mary Antonelli, PhD, RN, MPH serves as manuscript reviewer for Medical Care Journal and International Journal of Older People Nursing


Several articles published by Dr. Crawford were highlighted in print and on-line media, including New York Times, HealthDay, and MedPageToday. Another article was selected as the Journal of the Endocrine Society weekly Featured Article.

Sarah Cutrona, MD, MPH was promoted in March 2021 to Professor, Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences, with secondary appointment in the Department of Medicine.

Mara Epstein, ScD was selected as Scholar, HCSRN-OAIC Advancing Geriatrics Infrastructure and Network Growth (AGING) Initiative Multiple Chronic Conditions Scholars Program (National Institute on Aging).

Dr. Epstein has several leadership roles within UMMS and MPCI, including:

- Co-chair, Women’s History Month Event Committee, Women’s Faculty Committee
- Chair, Data Committee, Meyers Primary Care Institute
- Co-lead, Geriatrics Research In Progress (GRIP) seminar series, Meyers Primary Care Institute
- Voting Member, Women’s Faculty Committee, UMMS
- Member, UMass Cancer Center Cancer Population Health Sciences (CPHS) Program, University of Massachusetts Medical School / UMass Amherst
Kimberly Fisher, MD moved into a new leadership role in the Department of Medicine, March 2021 – Research Core Oversight Chair.

Lawrence Garber, MD serves on several OptumCare Committees including:

- National Epic Center of Excellence Cross Clinical Advisory Steering Committee
- CareData Governance Steering Committee
- Genomics Advisory Council

Dr. Garber also serves:

- NIH All of Us Research Program Digital Health Technologies Committee
- Carequality Advisory Council
- National POLST Technology Health Information Exchange Committee
- DirectTrust.org Board Member, representative for Reliant Medical Group, and Strategic Planning Committee and Clinicians Steering Workgroup
- Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative (MAeHC) Board, Chair of Executive Committee
- Panelist, FDA Public Workshop: Roadmap to 2030 for New Drug Evaluation in Older Adults, 2021

Sara Mamo, AuD, PhD, received an Academic Partnership Award, PACE Organization of Rhode Island in 2020.

Dr. Mamo was selected as to the Multiple Chronic Conditions (MCCs) Scholars Program, HCSRN-OAIcs AGING Initiative, NIA, 2020-2021

David McManus, MD was appointed as Chair and Professor of Medicine and Founding Director of the Program in Digital Medicine, and was invested into the Richard M. Haidack Professorship in Medicine in 2021.

Ben Prince received the 2020 NCURA Jula Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award
SELECTED PRESENTATIONS BY MPCI FACULTY

**International**

- Andrade S. “Validation of an ICD-10-based Algorithm to Identify Stillbirth in the Sentinel System,” 36th International Conference on Pharmacoepidemiology & Therapeutic Risk Management


**National**


- Faro JM, Geller AC, Pendharkar JA, Pbert L, Crawford S, Frisard CS, Sadasivam RS, Ockene JK. Medical students personal weight management habits, attitudes and perceived skills
towards weight management counseling. Research Spotlight, 42nd annual Meeting of the Society of Behavioral Medicine, April 2021, Remote.


- Garber L. "The Evolving Role of Medical Assistants in the Digital Health Age" - American Association of Medical Assistants, April 22nd, 2021.

- Garber L. "Conducting a Fully Digital Trial During a Pandemic" – American Medical Group Association (AMGA) 2021 Annual Conference, April 20th, 2021.


- Mamo SK, Wheeler KA, Perry OL. A conceptual framework for engaged communication in adult day services: A mixed methods study. Gerontological Society of America's 75th Annual Scientific Meeting (Online) 2020.


Regional


- Ito Fukunaga M. Implementation of shared decision making of lung cancer screening using text messages. VA Whole Health approach to Implementing Shared Decision Making for Lung Cancer Screening (WISDOM LCS), September 2020


- Ito Fukunaga M. iDAPT Monthly Meeting: Co-production of educational text messages to promote shared decision making for lung cancer screening. iDAPT Wake Forest/UMMS, December 2020


- Ito Fukunaga M. Research in progress: Co-production of educational text messages to promote shared decision making for lung cancer screening. UMass Medical School, Implementation Science Seminar, UMass Medical School, August 2021


- Tisminetzky M. Aging, multi-morbidity and COVID 19: Literature review presentation at the Grants and Research in Progress meeting, UMMS, September 2020


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