

Neuro News

The latest news from the Department of Neurology

October 2022

A message from the Chair

It is a very significant honor and pleasure to be writing to you on behalf of the Department of Neurology. One of our colleagues, Mikhail Vydrin, commented to me that the Department is “more powerful and versatile than it ever was in the past,” and I have to agree. When I visited with our group over the journey to onboard this month, I was impressed with growing strength and breadth of education, research and clinical activity.

I had heard about UMass and its neurology achievements many times over the years—as a medical student at NYU, I was first acquainted with the work of your first Neurology Chair, David Drachman, and his twin brother Daniel, eminent NYU School of Medicine alumni. David Drachman, like me, trained and practiced in behavioral neurology and cared for patients with Alzheimer Disease and other memory disorders. Although my work followed after different Massachusetts neurology pioneers (my mentor Ken Heilman, and also Edith Kaplan, Martin Albert and the Boston and VA neuropsychology school), who studied focal neurologic disorders, I observed Dr. Drachman to have an indelible influence on cognitive neurology, including the Behavioral Neurology section of the American Academy of Neurology, which in the past I led as Chair and as current Vice Chair.



As a neurology resident I had the opportunity to learn about Dr. Brown’s work through my Chair at Columbia, Lewis P Rowland, who was also a neuromuscular and ALS scientist; Dr. Brown was also a foundational teacher and inspiration to a number of my colleagues in behavioral neurology and neurorehabilitation alike. It was amazing to be part of the Columbia neurology department when I was a resident; Dr. Rowland, who also led, previously, the Neurology Department at UPenn, was a warm, humanistic leader like the leaders here at UMass. Audrey Penn, Richard Mayeux and Karen Marder, whose work in myasthenia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease

and Huntington's Disease, respectively, was fascinating to me, were also some of my first teachers.

After my fellowship (with Ken Heilman, as I noted above), I followed the current group of UMass researchers and neurologists from a distance with great interest, guided partly by the applause of my mentor from my first faculty job at Penn State, Luanne Thorndyke. I was also swayed by your excellent and solid training activities, your towering research achievements and excellent Blue Ridge research ranking, because of your amazing retention record for staff and faculty alike, and because of the great outcomes reported by your patients. I feel so excited to be part of the UMass community at last, and as we get to know each other over the first month or two of my time here, I look forward to speaking with each of you about your experience and suggestions.

Thank you for all that you do, and all that we do together.

A.M. Barrett

Editor's Note: I wanted to take a moment to thank the Department of Neurology for allowing me to put together this monthly newsletter for the past year. It has been a pleasure and an honor to learn about all the amazing projects and research that goes on in this department. And it has been wonderful to share their news near and far. I am leaving UMass Chan Medical School at the end of the month pursuing an endeavor outside the university, but I am so grateful for the colleagues I have met and the friends I have had made throughout the organization. I have worked at UMass Chan for nine years and am so thankful for my time spent in Neurology, Human Resources, serving on committees with the Diversity & Inclusion Office and the Office of Well-Being. Thank you all!

~ Jennifer Shimer, web communications content specialist, UMass Chan Neurology

IN THE NEWS

Susanne Muehlschlegel leads study on first-of-its-kind neuro ICU decision aids



Susanne Muehlschlegel, MD, MPH

A pilot clinical trial led by UMass Chan Medical School and Yale School of Medicine may have unlocked an important tool that allows families to review all treatment options for patients in the neuroscience intensive care unit incapable of making their own decisions.

The results of the National Institutes of Health-funded study, led by Susanne Muehlschlegel, MD, MPH, professor of neurology at UMass Chan, and David Y. Hwang, MD, previously at Yale, now at University of North Carolina, were published in [Neurology](#) this month.

Read
More

Mary Munson named assistant vice provost of health equity at UMass Chan

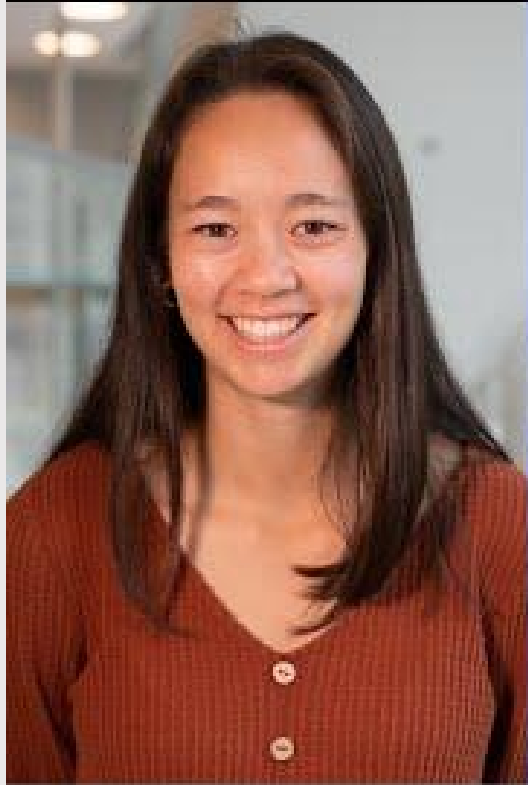


Mary Munson, PhD

Mary Munson, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular biotechnology, an accomplished scientist, mentor and educator, has been appointed assistant vice provost for health equity. In her new role, Dr. Munson will support the mission of the Office of Health Equity under the direction of Milagros Rosal, PhD, the Imoigele P. Aisiku, MD'97 Chair in Health Equity and Diversity and vice provost for health equity at UMass Chan Medical School.

[Read
More](#)

Second-year medical student helps epilepsy patients in Bolivia via the Global Health Pathway program

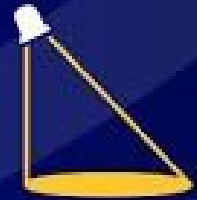


Megan Lo

T.H. Chan School of Medicine



student spotlight



Megan Lo is a second-year student in the T.H. Chan School of Medicine at UMass Chan Medical School with an appetite for adventure, whether she's snowboarding in Massachusetts or tracking patients in Bolivia.

[Read
More](#)

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Chan](#)



CLINICAL TRIALS



The 1st neuro oncology clinical trial for patients with recurrent glioblastoma has been activated. This is now open to enrollment. Please share with any patients with this diagnosis.

In summary this is for glioblastoma patients (IDHwt) who have evidence of progression of disease (1st recurrence) and who are at least 3 months out from completion of chemoRT. Below is schema.

First recurrence of glioblastoma after frontline therapy

Surgical resection NOT clinically indicated

↓

Tocilizumab*

-or-

Atezolizumab + Tocilizumab

↓

Fractionated Stereotactic Radiotherapy (FSRT)

(3-7 days after dosing)

↓

(starting 4 weeks from first dose)*

Tocilizumab every 4 weeks x 2 years

-or-

Atezolizumab + Tocilizumab every 4 weeks x 2 years

[Click here for more information about the clinical trial](#)

IN RECOGNITION



“
WE DON'T KNOW
THEM ALL, BUT WE
OWE THEM ALL

”

WITH RESPECT HONOR AND GRATITUDE
THANK YOU VETERANS

Honoring those who served

In November, we would like to honor the Veterans who work in our department and those who have Veterans in their family. Our country would not be what it is today without the service and dedication of those who answered the call and honor those who have served.

Annie Ferris is the stroke fellow in Neurology and served in the Army National Guard during the conflicts in Iraq and Kosovo.

David DeMarzio, fellowship coordinator for the Neurology Department was active duty with the Coast Guard from 2011-2019.

The following Neurology Department members have families who are Veterans. They are:

- Dr. AM Barrett, Neurology Department Chair and Chief of Neurology at VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare: her father, Benjamin Barrett, served in the Army during the Korean War and has since passed away.
- Dr. Daryl Bosco, Neurology Professor: her grandfather Colonel Darrell Williams served in the US Airforce in World War II. His plane was shot down in Northern Italy, and a group of Italian peasants saved him. He survived the war, but has since passed.
- Tina Pittman, Operations Supervisor in Neurology: her husband Shawn Pittman and her son Robert Pittman are both Marine Veterans.
- Jeanne Lawrence, Neurology Professor: her husband was a Viet Nam Veteran, but died of cancer 20 years ago.
- Michelle Landry, Academic Administrator: Her maternal grandfather, Aristide Blais, served in the US Army Air Corp (now Air Force) in WWII, he was deployed to England where he served as a radar technician and thankfully returned home safely.

- Megan Fowler-Magaw, a PhD student, shared her great-grandfather served in the Army (Big Red 1) during World War II and earned a Purple Heart. He was involved in Omaha Beach, Battle of the Bulge and many others. Her grandfather Oliver Fowler served in the Navy on the USS Oriskany Aircraft Carrier during the Korean Conflict. Her other grandfather Jared Murphy served in the Navy on the USS Goodrich Destroyer and served during the Korean Conflict. Her brother Christopher Fowler is currently serving in the Navy as a fighter jet pilot.
- Jennifer Shimer, web communications content specialist, has great uncles who served in World War II. Her great-grandmother prayed to Saint Anthony for their safe return. They all came home safe and every year her family has a Mass to honor Saint Anthony and those who served.

Veterans Day is observed on Friday, Nov. 11. Please take a moment to thank those who have served and if you are a Veteran in need of services, please reach out to the [VA Outpatient Clinic on the UMass Chan Campus](#).

The clinic provides veterans with access to primary and specialty health care in a new space designed for patient-aligned care teams. It augments services provided at the VA's Plantation Street clinic and folds in services that had been provided at Lincoln Street and Lake Avenue clinics. The new site is equipped to serve 16,800 enrolled veterans in Worcester County and opened to its first patients December 2021.

Read More about the VA Outpatient Clinic



Our employees work so hard every day in our department. We're so thankful for all you do every day. Below are some specific shout-outs submitted.

- Dr. Bosco shared the following shout-outs:
 - **Salome Funes**, Morningside GSBS graduate student in the Bosco Lab and affiliated with the Translational Science program. Thesis Title: "INVESTIGATING CELL-AUTONOMOUS MECHANISMS OF MICROGLIA DYSFUNCTION IN PFN1-ALS"
 - **Meenakshi Sundaram (Sundar) Kumar**, Morningside GSBS graduate student in the Bosco Lab and affiliated with the Biochemistry and Molecular Biotechnology Program. Thesis Title: "Aberrant interactions between FUS and the nucleoporin Nup62: Implications for nucleocytoplasmic transport decline in FUS-mediated ALS"

If you'd like to share a shout-out, please email Michelle.Landry@umassmed.edu.



Neurology Articles published:

- **Dr. Mehdi Ghasemi**, [*Targeting NMDA Receptor Complex in Management of Epilepsy*](#)
- **Dr. Medhi Ghasemi**, [*Impact of COVID-19 on Neuropsychiatric Disorders*](#)

WELCOME TO THE NEUROLOGY DEPARTMENT



Welcome Dr. AM Barrett as the Neurology Chair and the Chief of Neurology at VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare.

We'd like to welcome You Zhou as a post doctoral associate in Neurology.

Welcome to the team!

UMASS CHAN UPDATES

Save the Date

Upcoming Neurology Events

4th Annual UMass Chan Department of Neurology Clinical & Research Update Program

Friday, November 18, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

4th Annual UMass Multiple Sclerosis Center Clinical & Research Update Symposium

Friday, December 9, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Details to follow

November DoM Clinical Research Symposium

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Time: 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Lazare Auditorium, S1-607

-or-

Zoom

(link is forthcoming)

Please join us in person if you are able. Refreshments will be available.

[DOM Calendar](#)

[Grand Rounds
Archives](#)

UMASS MEMORIAL HEALTH UPDATES

Please Submit Your COVID-19 Booster Status

To better understand the need for more booster clinics and to comply with a federal regulation that requires us to document and report on the booster status of all health care workers, we are asking all caregivers who received a booster shot outside of UMass Memorial Health to submit appropriate documentation. Please submit a picture of your vaccination card to the following inbox, depending on the entity where you work:

Entity	Email
Medical Center, Medical Group, Division 40	employee_health_covid-19_mailbox@umassmemorial.org
Community Healthlink	chlemployeehealth@communityhealthlink.org
HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital	HA-C_EmployeeHealthServices@umassmemorial.org
Marlborough Hospital	medworks@umassmemorial.org

In the next few days, this message will be translated into Albanian, Portuguese, Spanish and Twi. You will be able to find those translations on [the Hub](#) soon.

NOW HIRING

The Brown Lab is hiring multiple positions. They include:

- [Research Associate \(2022-41592\)](#)
- [Research Associate \(2022-41594\)](#)
- [Research Associate \(2022-41532\)](#)

The Neurology Department is hiring. We're offering a \$2,000 sign on bonus for all positions. Click the links below to apply and share.

- [Research Scientist, Sr.](#)
- [Research Associate](#)
- [Research Associate I](#)

We are seeking a highly motivated and goal-oriented individual to join our gene therapy lab in learning and working with cutting edge vector research and development to treat neurodegenerative diseases affecting children and adults. The candidate, under the direction of Dr. Miguel Sena-Estevés, and working as part of the Li Weibo Institute for Rare Diseases Research and the Horae Gene Therapy

Center, will be working to develop gene editing methods to inactivate or correct the disease-causing version of the genes at the DNA level. Our lab is currently researching Neurofibromatosis type I, GNAO1, TNNT1 nemaline myopathy, as well as Dravet Syndrome and Diffuse intrinsic pontine gliomas, among others. The Research Associate will work closely and interact with other lab members to design and execute in-vitro and in-vivo experiments testing the toxicity and biodistribution of new vectors. The ideal candidate will have a strong background in molecular biology, including PCR, Western Blots, and tissue culture, as well as have strong record keeping and organizational skills.

The Neurology Department is also hiring the following positions. To learn more and to apply, click the link below.

- [Neurologist specializing in Headache](#)
- [Neurologist specializing in Epilepsy](#)
- [Neurologist specializing in Movement Disorders](#)

LOCAL EVENTS

'Alzheimer's Reflection' Concert

The Salisbury Singers will be opening their 49th season with a "Light Shines in the Darkness: Alzheimer's Reflection" concert to be held on Sunday, November 6th at 4 p.m. at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 114 Main Street, Worcester. See the link below for more details.

[Telegram & Gazette Article](#)

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION NEWS



MD/PhD student Bethany Berry

Bethany Berry represents UMass Chan students on UMass Board of Trustees

MD/PhD student tackles meningioma in the lab and advocates for diversity

MD/PhD student Bethany Berry plans to champion diversity and advocacy as UMass Chan Medical School's student representative on the UMass Board of Trustees. On the heels of her first board meeting in September, Berry said that progress is a process.

"Moving the needle starts with advocating continuously for things that help every single student find the success that they came here for," Berry said. "I've already learned so much from the more senior board members. To see the regard that everyone has for each other is remarkable. Some people have been working together for 10 or 20 years to make our institution the best of the best."

[Read More](#)

Upcoming Diversity events at UMass Chan

American Medical Women's Association Women Leaders in Medicine panel

The American Medical Women's Association will host a panel featuring five physicians at UMass Chan Medical School: Shlomit Schaal, MD, PhD, MHCM; A.M. Barrett, MD; Matilde Castiel, MD; Amy Costigan, MD; and Tara Kumaraswami, MD. All students and faculty are welcome to attend. Pizza and drinks will also be provided for attendees.

Nov. 1, 7 p.m.

Albert Sherman Center Auditorium

[Register](#)

UMass Chan Veterans Day Event

The UMass Chan Medical School community is invited to join a virtual Veterans Day event featuring former U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert A. McDonald on Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 9 a.m.

McDonald will speak on the topic of veterans in the workforce, with a special focus on those who work at UMass Chan. This event will kick off the new Veterans Affinity Group at UMass Chan.

Nov. 2, 9 a.m.

[Register](#)

Diversity Interest Group November meeting

The Diversity Interest Group (DIG) is a group of students and post-doctoral scholars committed

The Power of Joy Series

The Power of Joy Series explores how joy is used as a mechanism to foster unity, change and resilience in marginalized communities. Through an equity and inclusion lens, we discuss how celebrations, holidays and community gatherings allow marginalized groups to affirm their humanity.

The first conversation will highlight the celebration and significance of Diwali through stories of traditions, experiences and expressions of joy.

Nov. 2, noon

[Register](#)

Speakers:

Kiran Guntupalli, deputy managing director, solutions engineering & operations at UMass Chan, on memories of celebrations in India

Raj Heda, expert associate partner at Bain & Company on keeping traditions alive in the U.S.

The Value and Impact of Disability Inclusive Health Care Systems

Featuring the UMass Chan Medical School Work Without Limits program and Office of Management, this discussion will highlight the value and impact of disability-inclusive health

to developing a community at UMass Chan, advocating for diversity and inclusion on campus. DIG meets every second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. The first monthly general meeting of the year will be hybrid.

Nov. 8, 5:30 p.m.

Hybrid: ASC6.2072 and Zoom

[Register](#)

Password: 735581

care initiatives from a triangulated lens of education, insurance and direct care. This discussion will include a review of UMass Chan's reasonable accommodation policies and procedures for students, faculty and staff.

Speakers:

Kathy Petkauskos, director, Work Without Limits

Colleen M. Moran, director, workforce integration, Mass General Brigham

Laura Z. Stout, director, contract operations, president Empowering Abilities, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Heather Finlay-Morreale, MD, assistant professor of pediatrics

Katrina Durham, MS, accommodation services director

Nov. 10, noon

[Register](#)

Foundation workshops at UMass Chan

UMass Chan Medical School is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable learning and work environment. The Diversity and Inclusion Office's training program conducts high-impact diversity, equity and inclusion workshops that utilize innovative instructional design to support DEI professional development and capacity-building efforts across UMass Chan Medical School. The foundations workshops are intended for staff, faculty and learners of all levels to provide a foundation in DEI to support building more advanced skills.

Inclusive Communication: The Language of Belonging

This interactive virtual workshop will review common terminology and concepts used in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and examine how to promote inclusion and belonging through intentional language and communication.

Nov. 1, noon

[Register](#)

Addressing Unconscious Bias at UMass Chan

In this interactive virtual workshop, we will explore how unconscious bias impacts our relationships, decision making and experiences. By the end of the workshop, you will identify strategies to mitigate biases in your interactions, increase self-awareness and foster inclusive practices at UMass Chan Medical School.

Nov. 8, noon

[Register](#)

[Register for any of our 2022 workshops](#)

CAMPUS LEARNING

Professional Staff Development Website & Calendar

Professional Staff
Development website
Calendar

Professional Staff
Development website
Registration

Professional Staff
Development website
homepage

Email the UMass Chan
Helpdesk for LMS SSO
Support

LET'S GET SOCIAL

The UMass Chan Neurology Department is getting social. Take a moment and like our page on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram. Stay on top of the latest neurology news and click the links below.



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