



SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

Newsletter

Term: Fall | Issue 1 | November 13, 2020

INTERIM CHAIR

CONGRATULATIONS

AWARDS

UPDATES

NEW FACULTY



First some Halloween Fun!!





MESSAGE FROM INTERIM DEAN DR. MARTHA MCGREW

Dear Surgery Faculty,

I am pleased to announce the appointment of John Marek, M.D., as the Interim Chair of Surgery beginning January 1, 2021. Although many of you were at the Surgery faculty meeting when this was announced I wanted to make sure you were all aware.

Dr. Marek has been working closely with Dr. Russell as the Vice Chair and is very familiar with the aspirations and operations of the department and is widely respected within the department, the SOM and the health system. I am delighted to be working with Dr. Marek and I am certain of his commitment to embrace this role and move the department forward. A full announcement will be coming out to the UNMSOM community next week.

Dr. Bronwyn Wilson in the Office of Faculty Affairs and Career Development will lead the search committee for the next Surgery chair. She will work with Mr. Gurule to find a time to begin the process of developing a leadership statement by the department and stakeholders that will form the basis for the national search for a chair. I will ask Mr. Gurule to work with her to find a time during a Surgery faculty meeting where she can explain the process going forward.

Congratulations, Dr. Marek!

Martha Cole McGrew, MD
Interim Dean
The University of New Mexico School of Medicine



MESSAGE FROM INTERIM CHAIR

Hello everyone and welcome to the Department of Surgery 2020 Newsletter.

This year has clearly been filled with challenges and change. Our country has been through 8 months of COVID-19 and it's hard to believe these next few months may be the most difficult with now a 3rd wave of cases. Here at UNM cases have surged straining our hospital capacity with now cohorting patients in ICU rooms, patients in halls, and the clinical neuroscience center, urgent care and PACU becoming inpatient wards. One week ago there were 66 patients with COVID-19 in UNM and as of this writing there are 88 patients in UNM and 25 at SRMC. COVID fatigue has become a real issue and impacts us, our families and our patients. This all with the uncertainty of when cases will plateau, when a vaccine will be ready, and when life get back to some semblance of normality.

Here is what I want you to know. You all are incredible and the work you do matters and is saving lives. We are uniquely positioned and prepared for this surge. We have been through this before. Our Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) have been meeting and diligently planning. Our PPE committee made the crucial choices early in this pandemic that have protected our staff and ensured your PPE levels remain in good condition. The hospital has hired approximately 100 traveler nurses to arrive this week to help relieve stress on our nursing staff (this is in addition to the already hired 200 travelling nurses). We continue to have some surge capacity in our ICU's and progressive care units. The recently announcement of the Pfizer vaccine is 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 (typical flu vaccines are 40-50% effective) and plans for vaccine dissemination here at UNM are being developed.

Currently our outpatient clinics and elective surgical cases will continue except for Tier 1 cases (those that can wait >90 days) at the main OR. SRMC is also decreasing Tier 1 cases that would require inpatient stay due to bed shortages. OSIS and BBRP are still functioning for all level cases. This is clearly a very fluid process and I will strive to keep you up to date on all changes. While our department has redeployed 6 surgical APP's to the zinc and critical care services I do not currently expect any redeployment of surgery faculty or residents unless elective cases are significantly diminished or we exceed 96 ICU patients (currently stable at 81 ICU patients) and again need to open additional ICU areas.

I want to thank you for your resolve and resiliency. I also want you to know that I am here for you and support you. I know this is a tough time but we will rise to this challenge and come out stronger. Please be patient with the OR staff and colleagues and staff from other departments and thank them for the work they are doing. We are all in this together, lean on one another and let's help one another through this time. Have a wonderful and safe holidays. Spend time with family and each other and let's make sure all of our residents and staff have a place to go for thanksgiving dinner and the holidays.

This next year I plan on a quarterly newsletter to update our department staff, residents and faculty on ongoing departmental plans, awards, new hires, research and education projects as well as clinical projects. The majority of the newsletter as seen in this issue will be uplifting positive news of all the great work coming out of our department. I will continue to ask staff, residents and divisions for updates to be included and feel free to volunteer thoughts and stories. I will send updates more often as needed to keep you as updated as possible with changes related to COVID-19.

Last but not least I want to thank Dr John Russell for his 14 years of service as Chair of the Department of Surgery. His leadership has been steadfast and I can assure you I will strive to model his commitment to this department as I transition into the interim chair position January 1st. I am happy to announce Dr Russell will continue with the department and take the role of Vice Chair of Education. I would also like to congratulate Dr Tim Nelson on his new role as Chair of Surgery at OU-TU School of Community Medicine in Tulsa and Dr. Rohini McKee in her role as UNM Chief Quality and Safety Officer respectively. We will miss them but are looking forward to our new hires including Dr. Anna Lise Koenig, Dr. Regan Berg, Dr. Ben Ferguson, Dr Ross Clark and Dr. Baila Maqbool.

Sincerely,

John Marek, MD
Interim Chair and Vice Chair of Clinical Affairs
The University of New Mexico School of Medicine, Department of Surgery

CONGRATULATIONS!



**Dr. Russell is a
Grandfather!!**

**Welcome,
Henry John
Walker!**



CONGRATULATIONS!



Dr. Rohini McKee named Chief Quality & Safety Officer

It is with great pleasure that I announce Dr. Rohini McKee, associate professor in the Department of Surgery, will assume the role of Chief Quality and Safety Officer at UNMH as of Sept. 21, 2020. Dr. McKee attended medical school at The St Johns National Academy of Health Sciences in India. She completed her general surgery residency and colorectal fellowship training at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. After 3 years in private practice, she joined the Surgery Department at UNMH in January 2011.

Dr. McKee is dual boarded in General Surgery and Colorectal Surgery and obtained a Master's in Public Health degree in 2012. She is an Associate Professor and has served as Vice Chair of Quality and Patient Safety in the Department of Surgery and Surgeon Champion of UNMH for the National Safety Quality Improvement Program since 2015.

Dr. McKee is focused on creating systems that reduce variability and fostering an environment where frontline workers are valued. She is excited to work collaboratively with quality consultants, providers and leadership to create a safety focused culture at UNM Hospital. On a more personal note, Dr. McKee is married to Dr. Jason McKee, a pediatric surgeon at UNMH. They have three children aged 15, 13 and 10 and enjoy music, hiking, board games and long walks with their two dogs in the wide-open spaces of New Mexico.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. McKee and wishing her the best of luck in her new role!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Becker". The script is cursive and fluid.

Kate Becker, JD, MPH
CEO, UNM Hospitals

CONGRATULATIONS!



Dr. Nathan Boyd Incoming Chief of Staff for UNM

Dr. Nathan Boyd has been elected UNM Chief of Staff and will begin a two year term starting on Jan 1st, 2020. Dr. Boyd is an Associate Professor with the Department of Surgery.

He received his medical degree at the University of New Mexico (UNM) School of Medicine, completed residency in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at Kaiser-Permanente in Oakland, and completed a fellowship in head and neck oncology and microvascular reconstruction at the University of Iowa.

Dr. Boyd strongly supports collaboration and mutual trust between the medical staff and hospital as the way to move us forward as an institution and will work hard to ensure that the faculty's voice is

always heard. He is proud of the UNM health system and its mission of serving all New Mexicans. He believes in the possibility of change and is excited about the new leadership currently occurring at many levels of our organization. He is committed to representing our medical staff during this important transition period."

Dr. Edward Auyang Division Chief of General & Gastrointestinal Surgery

I am most pleased to announce that, as of November 1st, Dr. Edward D. Auyang now serves as Division Chief of General and Gastrointestinal Surgery. Since September he served in the role of Interim Division Chief.

Please join me in congratulating Edward on his new role and in wishing him success in the recruitment of new faculty to the division.

Thanks,

Dr. R



AWARDS



**Victor and Ruby Hansen Surface
Endowed Professor of Complex
Surgical Oncology**

First Holder of the
**Elsie P. Barry/Cowboys for Cancer
Research**
Endowed Profesor in
Hepato-Panceatico-Biliary and
Oncology Surgery





VESSEL

The Vascular and Endothelial Surgical Sciences Laboratory (VESSL) seeks to address challenging clinical and translational problems in vascular disease and wound repair.

Our basic science arm investigates the role of hydrogen sulfide in wound healing and angiogenesis, a potentially promising avenue in early studies. In order to translate primarily in vitro work into small animal models of wound revascularization, we are developing a biocompatible, 3D-printed, drug-eluting scaffold matrix for implantation and manipulation of healing parameters. This novel research tool will allow us to delineate further the role of sulfide molecules in wound repair and to investigate the optimal drug and dose combination to support wound healing locally, paving the way for a future therapeutic device.

We are collaborating with a private sector partner to develop a micro-engineered, wearable device to deliver sulfide therapies to wounds of all types including surgical, traumatic, chronic, ischemic and diabetic. The proceeds of this partnership have yielded a portfolio of provisional patent applications and we are preparing submissions for extra-mural funding support to further these efforts.

The Surgical Hydrodynamics, Visualization and Fabrication arm of our lab has taken on the challenge of prognostication of the durability of complex aortic and vascular reconstructions with an eye toward optimization through iterative modeling. Through a collaboration with the UNM School of Engineering, we are developing a novel technology, Simulation-Assisted Reconstructive Modeling (SARM), which involves the creation of high-fidelity 3D models derived from CT Angiogram studies followed by analysis by computational flow dynamics informed by a machine learning neural network. Our aim is to eventually predict hemodynamic flow patterns and one day identify graft configurations which are at-risk for failure, allowing clinicians to intervene prior to the development of a bad outcome. The technology may also be applied to the development of the next generation of fenestrated and branched endografts, streamlining the research and development phase and optimizing patient outcomes. This work is currently supported by two intra-mural grants and we are preparing an NIH submission for next year.

Our 3D Printing and Fabrication team has been called upon to assist with many clinical problems including creation of intraoperative models for vascular reconstruction, custom nasal prosthetics, chest wall and rib fixation surgical planning, educational and simulation models and the rapid production of parts needed for PPE to support front-lines workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.



I would like to nominate Dr. Sundeep Guliani for patient safety intervention awards related to the same event which took place last week. The events, as they were relayed to me, are as follows:

There was a trauma patient in the Main Operating Room with multiple injuries. After a positioning change of the patient, the patient quickly decompensated and coded.

The code was run in the OR for roughly 45 minutes. The team was about to call the code and pronounce the patient deceased because resuscitation efforts were not successful. When a code is called throughout the hospital, a normal chain of resources and consults are activated (Lucas, ECMO cannulation team). When a code is called in the OR, this house wide process is rarely utilized because codes are run independently within the surgical department.

During the code Dr. Guliani had stopped by the Main OR front desk to check on the status of his add-on surgery which was unrelated to the patient being coded. While explaining that his case would be delayed, Yolanda Romero informed him of the code in progress. ECMO is one of the possible interventions during a code. Because he learned about the code in progress from Yolanda, Dr. Guliani initiated the ECMO consult which would be standard outside the OR environment. He entered the OR with the code in progress, and cannulated the patient who was then stabilized enough to get a stent placed in the Cath Lab, then be transported to the ICU. The patient continued to improve enough to undergo subsequent surgeries and was assessed to be neurologically intact. Due to Yolanda, Dr. Guliani and the subsequent interventions which were made available to the patient, this patient had access to a better outcome than was in progress in the OR at the time.

This positive outcome also shines a light on some of our potential areas for improvement within the department.

Jennifer A Richmond, BFA, BSN, RN, CNOR, CST
Main Operating Room Unit-Based Educator

UPDATES

04/01/2019 - 03/31/2020

ACS NSQIP Interim Semiannual Report: Site Summary

University of New Mexico Hospital

Site Number: 2450

All Cases

	Total Cases	Observed		Pred Obs Rate**	Expected Rate	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.		Outlier	Decile	Adjusted Percentile	Adjusted Quartile	Assessment*
		Events	Rate				Lower	Upper					
ALLCASES Mortality	1708	18	1.05%	1.13%	1.21%	0.92	0.64	1.31		3	39	2	As Expected
ALLCASES Morbidity	1708	165	9.66%	9.62%	9.07%	1.07	0.91	1.27		7	58	3	As Expected
ALLCASES Cardiac	1708	5	0.29%	0.38%	0.51%	0.74	0.41	1.32		2	28	2	As Expected
ALLCASES Pneumonia	1705	15	0.88%	0.95%	1.22%	0.77	0.49	1.20		3	30	2	As Expected
ALLCASES Unplanned Intubation	1704	18	1.06%	0.95%	0.80%	1.19	0.81	1.76		9	68	3	As Expected
ALLCASES Ventilator > 48 Hours	1702	19	1.12%	1.05%	0.83%	1.31	0.84	2.03		8	68	3	As Expected
ALLCASES VTE	1708	17	1.00%	1.07%	1.19%	0.89	0.62	1.29		3	37	2	As Expected
ALLCASES Renal Failure	1708	4	0.23%	0.36%	0.53%	0.68	0.38	1.21		1	22	1	Exemplary
ALLCASES UTI	1703	38	2.23%	2.15%	1.63%	1.33	0.97	1.82		8	71	3	As Expected
ALLCASES SSI	1692	78	4.61%	4.57%	4.17%	1.11	0.88	1.39		7	59	3	As Expected
ALLCASES Sepsis	1697	22	1.30%	1.32%	1.45%	0.91	0.62	1.33		4	41	2	As Expected
ALLCASES C.diff Colitis	1708	5	0.29%	0.30%	0.30%	0.99	0.54	1.81		5	48	2	As Expected
ALLCASES ROR	1708	68	3.98%	3.81%	3.27%	1.18	0.94	1.47		9	73	3	As Expected
ALLCASES Readmission	1708	123	7.20%	7.04%	6.43%	1.11	0.93	1.31		8	69	3	As Expected

04/01/2018 - 03/31/2019

ACS NSQIP Interim Semiannual Report: Site Summary

University of New Mexico Hospital

Site Number: 2450

All Cases

	Total Cases	Observed		Pred Obs Rate**	Expected Rate	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.		Outlier	Decile	Adjusted Percentile	Adjusted Quartile	Assessment*
		Events	Rate				Lower	Upper					
ALLCASES Mortality	1913	24	1.25%	1.15%	1.03%	1.14	0.81	1.61		9	67	3	As Expected
ALLCASES Morbidity	1913	181	9.46%	9.36%	7.78%	1.25	1.06	1.47	High	8	75	3	Needs Improvement
ALLCASES Cardiac	1913	14	0.73%	0.66%	0.50%	1.33	0.82	2.15		8	70	3	As Expected
ALLCASES Pneumonia	1905	33	1.73%	1.62%	1.01%	1.65	1.17	2.33	High	9	83	4	Needs Improvement
ALLCASES Unplanned Intubation	1910	17	0.89%	0.84%	0.75%	1.13	0.75	1.70		8	61	3	As Expected
ALLCASES Ventilator > 48 Hours	1905	13	0.68%	0.72%	0.85%	0.83	0.50	1.35		3	35	2	As Expected
ALLCASES VTE	1913	36	1.88%	1.58%	1.04%	1.55	1.14	2.10	High	10	92	4	Needs Improvement
ALLCASES Renal Failure	1911	12	0.63%	0.58%	0.50%	1.16	0.72	1.87		8	62	3	As Expected
ALLCASES UTI	1911	40	2.09%	2.01%	1.38%	1.47	1.08	2.01	High	9	77	4	Needs Improvement
ALLCASES SSI	1888	70	3.71%	3.66%	3.18%	1.16	0.92	1.48		7	64	3	As Expected
ALLCASES Sepsis	1885	26	1.38%	1.36%	1.27%	1.08	0.75	1.55		6	55	3	As Expected
ALLCASES C.diff Colitis	1913	12	0.63%	0.52%	0.37%	1.42	0.86	2.34		9	76	4	Needs Improvement
ALLCASES ROR	1913	89	4.65%	4.34%	3.13%	1.42	1.16	1.75	High	10	91	4	Needs Improvement
ALLCASES Readmission	1913	131	6.85%	6.67%	5.97%	1.13	0.96	1.34		8	72	3	As Expected

Great improvement in our outcomes compared to year prior! Some good news and appreciate all the work you have been doing! Thanks again, Dr. Marek

Snapshots of our current (October 2020) NSQIP report and the one from a year ago below. Wanted to congratulate all of you on this achievement. We have much to do, but we can be proud of our progress. Dr. Rohini McKee



PAG Update

As with everything else in 2020, the Physician Advisory Group (PAG) had the challenge of engaging members of a discussion based forum into a virtual platform.

The PAG started about 10 years ago to improve physician engagement/satisfaction and communication between frontline providers and leadership.

The voting members are made up of physician representatives from each Department at UNMH and the UNMMG Medical Directors.

The Studer Group and the PAG White Papers have been the primary initiatives of the group. As many of you know, our leadership has changed quite substantially over the last decade, both in sense of structure and personnel.

One huge change over the nearly 5 years that I have served on the PAG, is the actual presence of leaders at our meetings. For example, Kate Becker and Drs. Mike Richards, Rob McLean and Irene Agostini, among others, regularly attend and participate in the meetings.

This year Dr. Selina Silva served as our PAG Chair and she initiated the Department Chairs presentations, which have been extremely informative and much appreciated.

In 2021, we are hoping to bring back and improve upon some discussion elements during the meetings, narrow the focus of Chair presentations and continue pushing for White Paper successes and updates.

The Department of Surgery needs a second representative, so please approach myself, Jessica Serna or Dr. Marek if you are interested.

As the incoming Chair, I hope to improve communication between the Division/Department faculty and the PAG and increase the transparency between the UNM Health Sciences Leadership and the faculty.

Karen Hawley, MD

Pediatric Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery

Assistant Professor - The University of New Mexico School of Medicine



Perspectives from the Learning Environment Office

When Dr. Marek asked me for a short piece with updates from LEO, it gave me the chance to reflect on the last few months.

The opportunity the LEO Education Fellowship has provided has been amazing, and I continue to learn about all the work that has been and is being done. As an office, LEO is now expanding its perspectives and outreach to address a multitude of issues that involve the learning environment. The office has also continued to work with various departments on issues surrounding the learning environment, and I will be bringing those materials and discussions back to the Department of Surgery.

With the SECOND trial, there has been recent attention on the mistreatment of surgery residents nationwide.

The initial study demonstrated that 65% of women trainees reported gender-based mistreatment, 17% of all trainees reported race/ethnicity-based mistreatment, and 32% of all trainees reported verbal/physical abuse. It also found that these rates of mistreatment were associated with significantly higher risk of burnout and suicidal thoughts, and noted that 39% of surgical trainees reported symptoms associated with burnout. Despite this there continues to be a dearth of information regarding these challenging issues in the surgical learning environment and concrete methods by which to improve it.

Working with LEO allows me to gain insight into the challenges that face medical education and to apply what we learn to the surgical learning environment. As I continue to educate myself, I aim to develop comprehensive interventions to improve the learning environment for learners, faculty, and staff within our department.

As part of that development, I encourage you to utilize the resources being provided by LEO. One of the resources that exemplifies this is the **LEO fall speaker series**, which has a focus on “Suggested Practices for Facilitating Conversations on Race, Ethnicity, and Racism in the Learning Environment.” If you have not had the opportunity to attend, I highly recommend you sign-up for future sessions via November 9 at the link listed below.

I look forward to continuing to serve as a liaison between LEO and the Department of Surgery, sharing updates on mistreatment data and exemplary teaching. In the meantime, please consider signing up for the LEO Speaker Series and check out the LEO website at the links below:

[LEO Speaker Series sign-up](#) [LEO Website](#)

Joyce Pang, MD, PGY-3
Department of Surgery
Learning Environment Education Fellow
The University of New Mexico School of Medicine

1. Hu Y-Y, Ellis RJ, Hewitt DB, et al. Discrimination, Abuse, Harassment, and Burnout in Surgical Residency Training. N Engl J Med. 2019;381(18):1741-1752. doi:10.1056/NEJMs1903759

NEW FACULTY



The Department of Surgery at The University of New Mexico School of Medicine is pleased to announce that **Benjamin D. Ferguson, MD, PhD** has joined our department.

Dr. Ferguson is originally from Chicago, IL. He earned his medical degree from the University of Chicago and also completed his surgical residency at the University of Chicago. During that time he also earned his PhD in Cancer Biology from the University of Chicago. Dr. Ferguson received his fellowship training in Surgical Oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, NY.



The Division of General and Gastrointestinal Surgery would like to welcome **Anna Lise Koenig, MD, PharmD** to the faculty at SRMC.

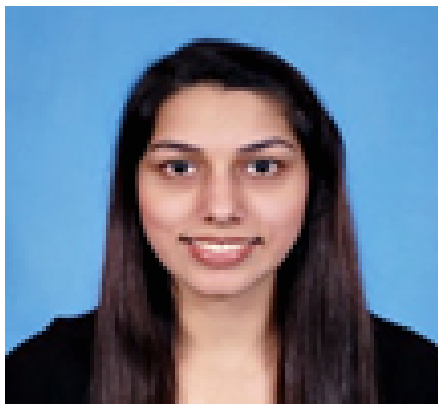
Dr. Koenig completed medical school at the University of Arizona and her general surgery residency at the University of Arizona-Phoenix. Her clinical practice will include general and acute care surgery. Welcome Dr. Koenig!

The Division of Acute Care Surgery welcomes two new faculty in December:



Dr. Regan Berg joins the division from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine where he has practiced as an acute care surgeon since 2015. He completed his surgical residency at Kingston General Hospital in Ontario, Canada in 2010, and went on to complete a Trauma and Critical Care Fellowship at LA County Medical Center at USC in 2012 followed by a Hepatobiliary Fellowship at USC from 2012-2013.

He was awarded the American College of Surgeons MacLean Fellowship in Medical Ethics from 2015 to 2016. Dr. Berg joins the University of New Mexico along with his wife, Rebecca Gerlach, MD, FRCPC, who will start this month in the Department of Anesthesia.



Dr. Baila Maqbool joins the division after completing her surgical residency at The University of New Mexico School of Medicine in 2019 followed by the surgical critical care fellowship at UNM last year.

She returns from a 3 month hiatus in Pakistan where she volunteered at a local hospital to provide free general surgical care and ICU coverage of COVID patients before returning to join the faculty at UNM.