UC DAVIS HEALTH | Department of Dermatology

DERMATOLOGY NEWS

SUMMER 2024 | NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

UC Davis partners with Caring Cross and the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) to develop immunotherapy for cancer patients.

When Dr. William Murphy learned that his application to the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) was approved for a $4 million grant, he was thrilled. With this grant, he and his UC Davis research team can develop and test a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy to treat B-cell malignancies like lymphomas and leukemias.

Murphy is a Distinguished Professor and the Vice Chair of Research in Dermatology. He also has a joint appointment with the Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Malignant Hematology/Cellular Therapy and Transplantation.

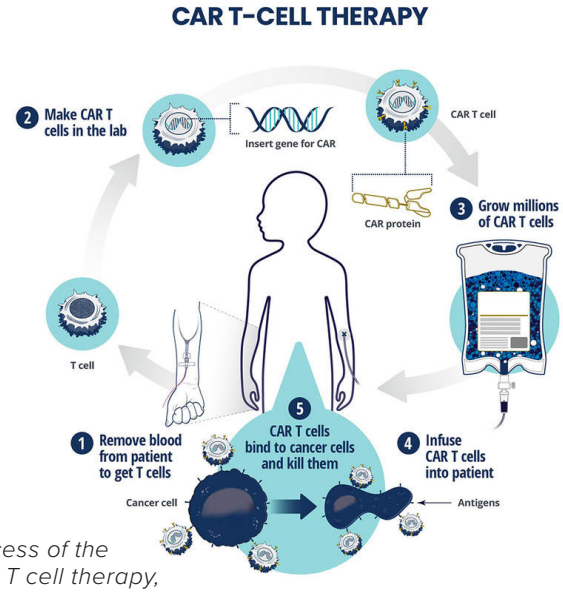
Murphy Research Lab studies various aspects within cancer immunology and immunotherapy

"It is a new and exciting form of immunotherapy," Dr. Murphy said. "CAR T-cells are being used to treat some blood cancers with long-term success."

CAR T-cell therapy uses the body's defenses to fight disease, genetically engineering cancer-killing immune cells (T cells) receptors. They use proteins called antibodies to target specific cancers better. The first approved CAR T-cell therapy was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2017. While its use is growing rapidly and applied to other types of tumors, it is an extremely expensive, intensive, and timely procedure.

> **"While it could be considered a game changer, one of the issues with this therapy is the relapse rate," Dr. Murphy explained. "If we can reduce the relapse rate to negligible, that would be a tremendous advance."**
>
> – WILLIAM MURPHY, Ph.D.

Right now, Dr. Murphy said the relapse rate is around 60% of patients who get CAR T-cell therapy. In CAR T-cell therapy, gene therapy gives a new receptor to signal and direct immune T cells from the patient. However, the cancer may adapt and lose the targeted antigen, allowing it to escape the CAR T-cell attack. Dr. Murphy and his team are using a new vector called DuoCAR, which targets three different tumor antigens at the same time.



Process of the CAR T cell therapy, Source: Cancer.gov

continued on page 6

A note from the Department Chair

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The 2023-2024 academic year is nearing its end, and it has been a very good year coming out of a world-wide pandemic. Dermatologic care, often delayed or postponed during the pandemic, was sought after more than ever. To ensure access, we welcomed new providers to the Department. Dr. Caitlin Peterman, a former Davis resident, and fellowship trained pediatric and adult dermatologist, joined us this past fall at our Community Physicians locations in Roseville, Cadillac Drive, and C Street. Likewise, Dr. Michelle Vy, a board-certified Mohs surgeon, joined us around the same time and practices at Roseville and C Street. Lastly, we welcomed a second physician assistant, Lema Safi, one of our former medical scribes who completed her PA training at OHSU in Portland, started with us in December.

In recent months, our access has improved with the help of these new providers as well as many faculty members adding extra clinics to meet patient demand. But even growth this coming year is expected as we add Dr. Jonathan Rick (a UCSF medical school graduate) and Dr. Boya Abudu (also a UCSF medical school graduate and one of our graduating third-year residents) to our faculty in July (2024) and January (2025), respectively. Growth is essential for us as the Sacramento region is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in California. While growing, we continue to be honored to have many of our physicians recognized in *Sacramento Magazine's* annual list of best doctors.

Concurrent with this growth, we strive to impact the field of dermatology in research as well as clinical care. Our physician-scientists such as Emanual Maverakis have been honored with election into the American Association for Advancement of Science. Additionally, scientists like William Murphy, Ph.D., Vice-Chair of Research Dermatology, who is featured in this issue, have received large federal and state grants. Our clinical researchers, like Dr. Victor Huang, also highlighted in this issue, have sponsored investigations into new treatments for conditions like vitiligo.

We end the 2023-2024 academic year for our residency program on a bright note. Our residents continue to get accepted to top fellowships in Mohs surgery and dermatopathology. Fortunately for the citizens of Sacramento, many of our former and current graduates remain in the area to care for patients here. I thank our staff, faculty, fellows and residents for all their efforts to put UC Davis Dermatology at the forefront of academic programs with a ranking of top 20 in the USA in a recent poll. We welcome our new resident class, highlighted later in this newsletter, and cannot wait to have them join the UC Davis Dermatology Department and community!

Lastly, it is with great pride and gratitude that I share our Inaugural Philanthropy Impact Report for the department. I am honored to share some of the many donors who enhance opportunities for our team and have a significant impact on our department.

Sincerely yours,

Sam T. Hwang M.D., Ph.D.

Chair and Professor of Dermatology
UC Davis School of Medicine
UC Davis Health

2023 PHILANTHROPY Impact Report

Our supporters contributed to some of our most memorable moments and achievements in 2023. Some highlights include:

Drs. Sam and Kathy Hwang contributed **$500,000** to establish the Dermatology Endowed Chair Fund to obtain an endowed Dermatology Department Chair. The endowed funds are invested and maintained in perpetuity, which provides a permanent funding source for the Endowed Chair to support their teaching and research mission. Sam and Kathy also donated **$50,000** to create the Hwang Family Psoriasis Research and Professional Education Fund.

Novy Professor
Alain Brassard, M.D.

Dr. Teri McGillis' $225,000 donation established a Dermatologic Surgery/Oncology Lecture Speaker Series and generously donated an additional **$25,000** to the Alumni Society to enhance and support educational opportunities for residents and fellows.

Denny and Jeanene Dickenson's $60,000 gift allowed for tremendous advancements within psoriasis research. Consecutive donations from 2021 to 2023, which total **$170,000** helped our team come up with the necessary data to qualify for a large NIH psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis grant.

George Costarelis, M.D.
2023 Novy Lecture Speaker

In addition to funding **Dr. Alain Brassard's** salary as the Novy Professor, **$37,500** from the Novy Professorship Endowment helped renovate the conference room. One of the most important updates included adding Webex conference features for grand rounds and resident didactic lectures.

The **Novy Lectureship Endowment's $10,000** helped host our 2023 lecture with speaker **George Cotsarelis**, the Milton B. Hartzell Professor and Chair of the Department of Dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine. Presentation on hair follicle stem cells and alopecia and dinner was enjoyed by many faculty, fellows, residents and local dermatology colleagues.

Artur Henke, M.D.
Class of 2004

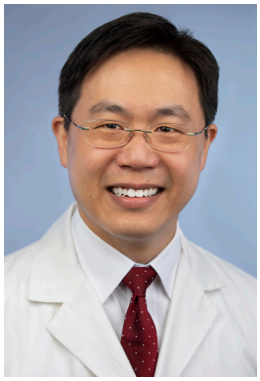
Former Chief Resident and 2004 graduate, **Dr. Artur Henke**, donated **$10,000** to launch the Dermatology Alumni Society. This generous gift also helped us reimburse each resident for their Q Banks memberships, easing their financial burden and enhancing their studies.

Volunteer clinical faculty member **Dr. An Yen** donated **$10,000** to host a 2023 dinner and lecture, "Basic and Clinical Research Utilizing the Uniqueness of Skin," given by **Kenji Kabashima**, MD, PhD, Professor and chair of Dermatology at the University of Kyoto.

2023 An Yen Lecture Speaker
Kenji Kabashima, M.D., Ph.D.

The **Bass Lynch Endowment's $900** earned interest helped purchase resident jackets.

If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation to support any program or research project, please contact our Development Consultant, Reese Scherber, at tmscherber@ucdavis.edu or 916.291.5775. You can also donate online at give.ucdavis.edu/MDER. THANK YOU for your consideration and for supporting our growing success.



Faculty & Patient Spotlight

Victor Huang, M.D. and grateful patient Lexi McNally

"KINDNESS IS NEVER WASTED." It's the biggest lesson Dr. Victor Huang has learned in his career, and he applies it to his everyday patient care philosophy.

Dr. Huang currently serves as Director of the Vitiligo Clinic and Director of Phototherapy at UC Davis, with a research focus on the clinical, epidemiological, and translational understanding of the autoimmune condition.

Dr. Huang's interest in vitiligo was a gradual discovery. At UCSF medical school, Dr. Huang realized he was drawn to immunology and cancer. While training under the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Research Scholars Program at the National Institutes of Health, he discovered the skin as a model for understanding the immune system. During his training in the lab of Dr. Rachael Clark at Brigham and Women's Hospital, where he also completed his postdoctoral fellowship, Dr. Huang found a fascination with vitiligo. After serving as Director of the Vitiligo Clinic there, Dr. Huang joined UC Davis in 2018.

"UC Davis Dermatology has historically been very highly regarded regarding the breadth and depth of the research happening at the institution. I was excited to join that tradition and the shared mission to improve clinical care through science and understanding."

– VICTOR HUANG, M.D.

Dr. Huang also feels there's a lot of excitement in the future. He pointed to the FDA's recent approval of the first targeted cell therapy for vitiligo treatment as his team continues a clinical study. They've recently performed the first autologous skin transplant for vitiligo at UC Davis, and he looks forward to continuing those transplants while improving results.

In early 2023, Lexi McNally joined Dr. Huang's clinical study. The 22-year-old developed vitiligo ten years ago after

Lexi before clinical trial with Dr. Huang and then after clinical trial.

falling and scraping her knees. Her skin healed, but vitiligo emerged and spread. It was a sign, as she later learned, of hypothyroidism. She got her thyroid levels under control, but the vitiligo never went away.

"Obviously, I'm 12 years old at the time, and being 12 already sucks. This was the worst thing ever," Lexi reflected. Over time, Lexi learned to embrace her condition. She graduated college, got engaged, and is now in grad school at San Jose State to become a teacher. She felt it was time to look into a clinical trial, but only because she was already happy with who she was. "If it works, yay. If it doesn't work, yay," Lexi said. "I'm happy where I am."

Lexi got into the trial quickly. Over the next three months, she visited UC Davis every two weeks, where she would get abdominal subcutaneous injections of an IL-15 inhibitor. Following the shots, Lexi used a light therapy machine at home three times a week and has seen a lot of improvement in her vitiligo. While it didn't all go away, the spots on her face, which was her biggest insecurity, did. It's caused some mixed emotions for Lexi, something few people understood. Dr. Huang was one of those people.

"When my vitiligo went away, everyone else was like, 'Wow, that's amazing.' But for me, it was something I've had for the past 10 years, and suddenly it's gone. It felt very uncomfortable. I honestly thought it'd be more disappointing if it didn't go away, but I felt kind of disappointed that it was gone."

"Dr. Huang was the only person who asked me how I felt about it. He seemed to be the only person besides my fiancé who even considered that maybe it wasn't good for me. He seems like he genuinely cares about his patients. I felt like we were friends and that I was cared for there. If I had to have anyone give me a biopsy, it would be Dr. Huang. It was just so pleasant!"

– LEXI McNALLY

Lexi still highly praises her experience, but she advises people with skin conditions not to enter a clinical trial unless they're already in a good place. "Clinical trials are very hit or miss. They're going to work or not. I would tell people that you have to love yourself first and then see what happens. For me, it wasn't that I needed to change, but rather, this would be cool if science did this."

A recent photo of Lexi captures one of her latest achievements in receiving a masters in teaching from San Jose State.

Did you KNOW?

The UC Davis Department of Dermatology is ranked in the top quartile of the Blue Ridge NIH grant funding rank list for US dermatology departments. Our faculty and researchers conduct innovative, rigorous, and high-impact clinical studies to discover novel therapies to benefit patients.

Research Spotlight continued from page 1

"Our strategy is to target multiple antigens by the CAR simultaneously to reduce the potential for relapse since the tumor cannot adapt that quickly," Dr. Murphy said. "As long as the tumor has one of the three antigens, then there's little chance for the tumor to escape all three."

This treatment would not just be for patients who relapse from previous CAR therapy but also as a new frontline therapy for all patients. UC Davis is one of the first medical systems in the country to do everything in-house with CAR therapies. Immediate onsite production means less cost, more efficiency, and time saved for patients. Dr. Murphy and his team work closely with Dr. Jan Nolta at the Institute of Regenerative Cures, Dr. Mehrdad Abedi at the UC Davis Alpha Stem Cell Clinic and the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP facility) to do so.

The CIRM grant received will allow Dr. Murphy's team to prepare their Investigational New Drug Application for submission to the FDA. The funding will also help address safety and production issues before attempting clinical translation and establish UC Davis as a one-stop shop. The work also collaborates with Caring Cross, a scientific foundation seeking to make cancer therapies more accessible worldwide.

House production of CAR T cell at UC Davis Good Manufacturing Practice Facility

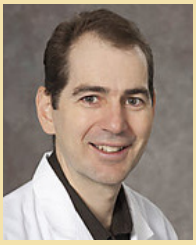
"The goal is to help generate the data for preclinical, go through the FDA for clinical approval, do the trials here and then expand it," Dr. Murphy said.

Dr. Murphy expects the study to go very quickly. The clinical trials are almost outpacing the basic science. UC Davis is also looking at CAR for HIV, autoimmunity, and other disorders.

"We're hoping for clinical trials in 2025," Dr. Murphy said. "This way, we continue to improve it, learning from what happens in the patient. There is no going back in CARs. Soon, it will be a matter of whether we can apply it to more kinds of cancer and make it more efficacious and less costly."

Doctors' Day Recognition

Doctors' Day took place on **March 30, 2024** to honor our healthcare heroes that make a difference. The following faculty were recognized by our grateful patients.

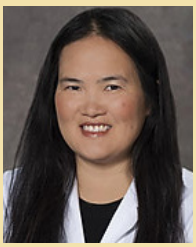


Daniel Eisen, M.D.
Professor of Clinical Dermatology, Director of Dermatologic Surgery

"Thank you for giving me my life back." – Paul Sander

Ilana Breen, M.D.
Chief Resident

"I had a wonderful experience with Dr. Bayne. Her warmth and kindness were exceptional, and she made me feel genuinely heard and understood. I highly recommend her for her compassionate approach to patient care." – Erika Adams



Philina Lamb, M.D.
Associate Physician

"Best eyes for spotting skin issues I've known. You ROCK!" – Jim Kuchar

Victor Huang, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Clinical Dermatology

"Thank you for your hard work and selfless dedication. Your skills, expertise, and compassion change lives." – James Lyons & Stan Haleb

Emanual Maverakis, M.D.
Professor in Residence

"You have made a difference in my life. Thank you." – Trudy Engeldinger

Marc Silverstein, M.D.
Health Sciences Clinical Professor

"Honoring you! Thank you for being so dedicated to patient care." – Steve & Terry Burns

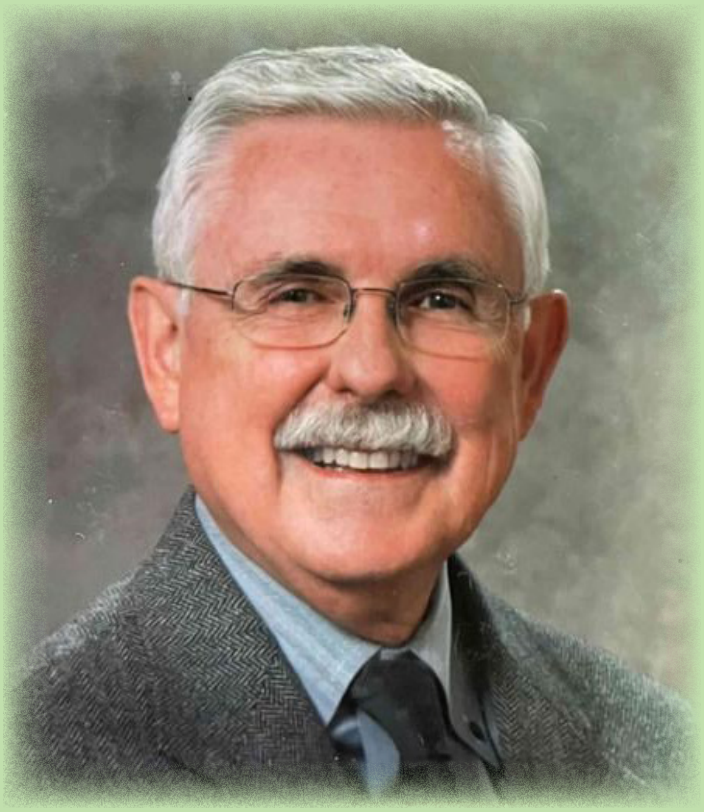
IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Dr. Peter J. Lynch, former UC Davis Dermatology Chair, on February 19th, 2024.

Dr. Lynch was born on October 22, 1936, in Minneapolis, MN, and earned his medical degree from the University of Minnesota. He completed his dermatology residency at the University of Michigan, where he met his wife, Barbara Ann Lanzi. The two married in 1964, and later that summer, Dr. Lynch was drafted into the Army, where he honorably served until 1968. Over the next several decades, Dr. Lynch worked at several Dermatology departments across the country, including the University of Michigan and the University of Arizona, where he first served as Department Chair. After leading the Dermatology department at the University of Minnesota, Dr. Lynch was recruited out west in 1995 to UC Davis. He stepped down as chair in 2000 but remained active at UC Davis as Professor Emeritus.

Dr. Lynch contributed to the dermatologic community as Vice President of the American Academy of Dermatology and served on the Board of Directors of the American Board of Dermatology. He earned worldwide recognition for his work and research, having authored or co-authored more than 125 medical journal publications, 50 book chapters, and 9 dermatology textbooks. Dr. Lynch was a nationally recognized scholar and clinician whose role emphasized clinical education. He received numerous awards, including the American Academy of Dermatology Pearson Memorial Education Award and the Army Commendation Medal. Of all his awards, however, the one that possibly embodies him best is an honorary membership to the American Academy of Dermatology. This honor has been bestowed upon fewer than 50 of the 13,000 American dermatologists.

Dr. Lynch loved music, cars, wine and being outdoors. He had retired to the Casco Bay shores in Maine. Dr. Lynch is survived by his wife Barbara Ann Lynch, daughter Deborah Riddell, son-in-law Ian Riddell, son Timothy Lynch and daughter-in-law Caroline Lynch, grandchildren, Elise and Lawson Riddell and Katherine, Matthew, Sophia, Olivia and Elizabeth Lynch, and his sister Mary Hanranhan. He is preceded in death by his brother Tom Lynch.



In lieu of flowers, Dr. Lynch's Family wishes that contributions be made to the Bass Lynch Endowment Fund. The check can be made payable to the UC Davis Foundation: PO Box 160186 Sacramento, CA 95816, with the check memo line allocation 114858.

ALUMNI CORNER

Susan Teri McGillis, M.D.

Director of Skin Cancer Treatment
Lancaster DermaSurgery Center (DSC)

Board Certified Dermatologist

Fellowship-trained MOHS surgeon (Cleveland Clinic)

DR. TERI MCGILLIS GREW UP WITH A DERMATOLOGIST FATHER, but she didn't always think she'd follow in his footsteps. "As a kid, I found the diseases on the covers of Cutis magazine that he left around the house to be fascinating, if not a bit gross," said Dr. McGillis. "Little did I know this would be my career path."

Dr. McGillis did, however, always want to be a physician. She grew up spending many summers volunteering in hospitals or clinics and even completed her junior year of college in Israel while researching at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. "I saw it as a way to combine my interest in science and helping people," said Dr. McGillis. "I never faltered on this interest."

After studying Cellular Biology and Art History at UC Santa Barbara, Dr. McGillis completed medical school and her dermatology residency at UC Davis. She was drawn to UC Davis for its broad range of patient demographics, diverse disease entities, and reputation for excellent primary care training. As Chief Resident, Dr. McGillis often escorted visiting guest speakers. It was a full-circle moment when she escorted Dr. Victor Newcomber, a UCLA professor who once also taught her father, who did his residency at UCLA. After her residency, Dr. McGillis became a fellowship-trained Mohs surgeon, and she was the first UC Davis resident to do a Mohs fellowship when there were only a few training centers. She continued her academic career at the Cleveland Clinic for almost 20 years, concentrating on cosmetics, laser procedures, and skin cancer treatment. In 2007, she moved to Pennsylvania and took over the practice of a friend who had passed away.

She wanted to continue providing Mohs to the community. "It meant leaving academics and learning the business side of medicine," said Dr. McGillis, who has remained in private practice ever since.

As a visual learner who enjoys using creativity to solve complicated cases, Dr. McGillis finds that the field of dermatology offers something new and different every day. She's excited about the future, especially as dermatologists find more innovative ways to diagnose and treat skin disease and to add more armamentarium to the treatment of cutaneous malignancies. She has also enjoyed teaching others both locally and internationally.

Other highlights of Dr. McGillis' career include her time as guest editor of Dermatologic Clinics and treating the Royal Family in Saudi Arabia. She is internationally recognized, having spoken in countries like Singapore, Indonesia, Brazil, and Germany. She joined the steering committee for UC Davis' Dermatology Alumni Society and just donated to the society and an endowment for a lecture series on surgical dermatology. Dr. McGillis defines her philanthropic philosophy as a "love of humankind."

> ***"I certainly would not be where I am today without the foundation built at UC Davis," said Dr. McGillis of her generosity. "I am eternally thankful for all the mentors and encouragement I received. I want future students to feel the same. It's a way to give back."***
>
> – TERI McGILLIS, M.D.

On a professional front, her dermatologist father gave her the best advice by encouraging her to try everything, including a dermatology rotation.

"So I did," said Dr. McGillis. "I discovered a specialty that sees all ages, does surgery, is creative with off-label use of medications, and for the most part has positive outcomes. I was sold!" For those looking to enter the field now, Dr. McGillis recommends a healthy work-life balance and advises doctors never to forget they are treating patients, not conditions. "Never stop asking questions," adds Dr. McGillis. "And stay involved with your specialty at all levels!"

If you are interested in joining Dr. McGillis in giving back to advance opportunities for our residents and fellows, please visit give.ucdavis.edu/MDER/ALUMGFT.

For more information on how to get involved in the Alumni Society, please contact Dr. Danielle Tatar by email at dtartar@ucdavis.edu.

Getting to know Dr. McGillis

If you weren't a Dermatologist, what would you be?

I would be involved with food and wine from a culinary medicine perspective. I'd also love to be an opera singer, but alas, I cannot carry a tune!

What is your favorite book?

I don't have a favorite, but I have learned that living in the moment brings peace. Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now* and Michael Singer's *The Untethered Soul* helped me understand this concept.

What are your favorite hobbies?

Yoga, bike riding, cooking. I just returned from a bike trip through Normandy and Brittany in France. This was an especially poignant trip as it was an immersion into WWII history. I also enjoy cooking, especially ethnic dishes. I recently returned from a trip to Morocco and am now learning how to cook with a Tagine and unique spices.

What is your favorite season?

Spring because it heralds the end of winter and the 'rebirth' of greenery and flowers.

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

On a beach in Bali, with sunscreen, of course!

Join Us in Celebrating Our Class of 2024 Graduating Residents & Fellows

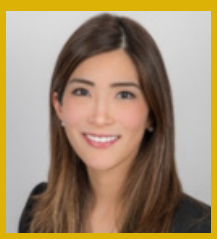
Boya Abudu M.D., M.P.H. (Chief Resident)
Undergraduate: Pittsburg State University: Biology (B.S.)
Medical School: University of California, San Diego (M.D.)
Graduate: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health: Master of Public Health (M.P.H.)
Internship: Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center

Zachary Kwapnoski, M.D. (Chief Resident)
Undergraduate: University of Nebraska: Biochemistry, Biology (B.S.)
Medical School: University of Nebraska College of Medicine (M.D.)
Internship: University of Nebraska Medical Center

Mimi Nguyen, M.D. (Chief Resident)
Undergraduate: University of California Los Angeles: Physiological Science (B.S.)
Medical School: University of California, Davis (M.D.)
Research Fellowship: University of California, Davis, Department of Dermatology

Nicholas Love, M.D.
Undergraduate: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Biology (B.A.)
Graduate: University of Manchester: Development Biology (Ph.D.)
Medical School: Stanford School of Medicine (M.D.)
Research Fellowship: Stanford School of Medicine

Mary Smith, M.D.
Undergraduate: Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service: Biotechnology and Global Health (B.S.)
Medical School: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, (M.D.)
Research Fellow: University of California San Francisco, Psoriasis and Skin Treatment Center
Internship: Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Transitional Year



Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology Fellow Keemberly Kim, M.D.
Undergraduate: Rice University: Psychology (B.A.)
Medical School: Texas A&M School of Medicine (M.D.)
Internship: University of California San Diego, San Diego (Internal Medicine)
Residency: The University of Texas Medical School at Houston and MD Anderson Cancer Center

Meet our 1st Year Residents, who began on July 1, 2024

Joyce Chen, M.D.

Undergraduate: Northeastern University: Biochemistry (B.S.)
Medical School: Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine, (M.D.)
Internal Medicine: California Pacific Med Center

Ted Jacoby, M.D.

Undergraduate: University of Hawai'i at Manoa: Biochemistry (B.S.)
Medical School: University of Hawai'i, John A. Burns School of Medicine (M.D.)
Internal Medicine: University of Hawaii
Research Fellow: Massachusetts General: (Dr Kerry Reynolds), (Dr Steven Chen)

Elanee Simmons, M.D.

Undergraduate: Washington University: Anthropology (B.S.)
Medical School: Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine (M.D.)
Transitional Year: St Joseph's Medical Center
Research Fellow: University of California, Davis: (Dr. Maija Kiuru)

Samuel Stetkevich, M.D.

Undergraduate: University of California, Irvine: Biological Sciences (B.S.)
Medical School: University of Toledo, College of Medicine and Life Sciences (M.D.)
Internal Medicine: Olive View UCLA Medical Center

Danielle Yee, M.D.

Undergraduate: University of California, Berkeley: Molecular and Cellular Biology (B.S.)
Medical School: Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine (M.D.)
Internal Medicine: Olive View UCLA Medical Center
Research Fellow: University Southern California, Keck School of Medicine: (Dr. April Armstrong)

2024 Fellow starting August 1, 2024

Bobak Hedayati, M.D.

Undergraduate: University of Southern California: Business Administration (B.S.)
Medical School: University of California, Irvine School of Medicine (M.D.)
Internship: Riverside Community Hospital (Internal Medicine)
Residency: University of California, Irvine, Department of Dermatology

2024 Resident Graduation and Staff Awards

PUBLICATIONS
January 1, 2023 to present

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continued on page 14

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