



# THE PROGRESS NOTE



## Welcome from the Program Director:

Dr. Matt Blackwell

Greetings from Charlotte! The world has certainly changed since the publication of our last issue of the Progress Note. I hope that you and your loved ones have remained safe and healthy during these uncertain times. As no doubt you can imagine, nearly every facet of our clinical and educational operations has been affected dramatically by the COVID pandemic. I have been so impressed with the ways in which our residents, faculty, students, and staff have risen to this unprecedented challenge. Everyone has demonstrated incredible fortitude, resiliency, and

stamina. Indeed, the remarkable way in which our department has responded over the past several months has reminded me of all the reasons that I am so proud to be affiliated with this organization.

In this issue of the Progress Note, we will highlight how our department has adapted to the COVID pandemic, recognize the accomplishments of our most recent graduates, celebrate Dr. Robert Heyer on his recent retirement, and introduce our new intern class. Please feel free to forward this issue of "The Progress Note" to other alumni and friends of the program. Anyone who would like to receive an electronic copy of this biannual newsletter can send his/her contact information to [IMAlumni@atriumhealth.org](mailto:IMAlumni@atriumhealth.org). In addition, we encourage you to contact us with updates on your accomplishments and/or other changes in your professional life. Please note the alumni accomplishments included throughout the pages of this newsletter, and we would be delighted to highlight your news in a future issue!

Finally, I hope that you will consider giving back to your former residency program through a tax-deductible monetary contribution to the Dr. Laszlo Littmann Department of Internal Medicine Education and Research Fund. The donated funds are used to support residency education efforts including residency wellness events to prevent physician burnout, resident research efforts, and other special events. Your contributions will allow us to continue our current outstanding educational programs as well as offer exciting new opportunities for professional development. Information about donating to the Internal Medicine Education and Research Fund is included below. Thank you so much for your consideration!

Matt Blackwell, MD, FACP  
Program Director, CMC Internal Medicine Residency  
CMC Alumnus, Class of 2006

## Contents

Program Director Welcome... (pg.1)

### Resident Highlights

- ...COVID-19 Response (pg. 2 )
- ...Career Paths (pg. 3)
- ...Scholarly Activity (pg. 3)
- ...Intern Orientation (pg. 4)
- ...Incoming Residents (pg. 5)
- ...ABIM Exam (pg. 8)

### Faculty Highlights

- ... Dr. Heyer Retirement (pg. 6)

### Alumni News

- Updates ... (pg. 7)

## Stay Connected!

For future publications, we would like to publish updates shared with us from our alumni. Please email us at:

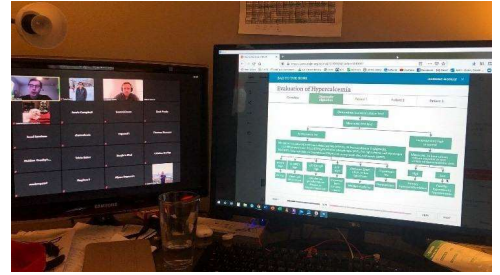
[IMAlumni@CarolinasHealthcare.org](mailto:IMAlumni@CarolinasHealthcare.org)

to share memorable moments such as marriage and birth announcements, career milestones, awards and achievements.

We would love to include these in future publications.

## Residency Program Updates: COVID-19 Response

When the COVID pandemic initially hit our area in mid-March, our residency program was forced to adapt quickly to provide ongoing clinical service and resident education under a new paradigm. Our Chief Residents, faculty, and administrative staff did an exceptional job of transitioning our resident case conferences and didactic lectures to a virtual space using Microsoft Teams. As a result, our ability to provide daily resident instruction has continued uninterrupted, and resident participation in these virtual conferences remains strong and enthusiastic. In addition, we have modified our simulation center training sessions to allow for appropriate social distancing while still providing the same educational content and experience for our residents.



In the clinical space, our Chief Residents have done an outstanding job of creating multiple back-up coverage schedules, and our residents have responded without hesitation when called upon to help a colleague or service in need. Moreover, our Myers Park Clinic leadership team quickly shifted most of our patient appointments to phone or virtual visits for our primary care population. Our residents were given a crash-course in telemedicine, and they quickly learned to provide effective care to our Myers Park patients in a virtual space.



## Residency Program Updates: Graduation 2020

Due to the COVID pandemic, we pivoted to a virtual graduation ceremony this past June. Although we missed being able to gather in person, the event was no less meaningful as we had the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our outstanding graduating class. One benefit of having a virtual ceremony this year was that our graduates' extended families were able to participate in the festivities for the first time. Prior to the virtual ceremony, our graduates were treated with take-out from Maggiano's Little Italy in SouthPark. Award winners that were announced at the virtual ceremony included...

**Marvin McColl Most Outstanding Resident(s) Award:** Dr. Jamie Campbell and Dr. Travis Denmeade (tie)

**Laszlo Littmann Scholarly Activity Award:** Dr. Brad Harrison

**Ambulatory Clinic Award:** Dr. Alyssa Kuprenas

**Arnold Frazier Intern of the Year Award:** Dr. Julia Funck

**UNC School of Medicine Teaching Award-Resident:** Dr. Brooks Keene

**UNC School of Medicine Teaching Award-Faculty:** Dr. Bennal Perkins

**Chief Resident Award:** Dr. Alyssa Kuprenas

**Jim Horton Compassionate Care Award:** Dr. Heather Tarantino

**Ray Bianchi Attending Teacher of the Year:** Dr. Lane Jacobs

## Career Paths: CMC Internal Medicine Class of 2020

**Jamie Campbell, DO** – Chief Resident, CMC Department of Internal Medicine; Charlotte, NC

**Travis Denmeade, MD** – Locums Hospitalist, CMC Department of Internal Medicine; Charlotte, NC

**Chris Diaz, DO** – Hospitalist, Carolinas Hospitalist Group; Charlotte, NC

**Brad Harrison, MD** – Heme-Onc Fellowship, CMC/Levine Cancer Institute; Charlotte, NC

**Chance Lewis, MD** – Pulm-Critical Care Fellowship, Wake Forest University; Winston-Salem, NC

**Kaitlyn O’Keefe, DO** – Heme-Onc Fellowship, CMC/Levine Cancer Institute; Charlotte, NC

**Emily Ost, MD** – Ambulatory Care, Charlotte Internal Medicine & Specialty Group; Charlotte, NC

**Jessica Sang, MD** – Gastroenterology Fellowship, Carolinas Medical Center; Charlotte, NC

**Victoria Shada, MD** – Geriatrics Fellowship, Wake Forest University; Winston-Salem, NC

**Tom Shuman, MD** – Chief Resident, CMC Department of Internal Medicine; Charlotte, NC

**Sara Skavroneck, MD** – Ambulatory Care, Myers Park Internal Medicine Clinic; Charlotte, NC

**Ana Snelling, DO** – Hospitalist, Augusta Health; Fishersville, VA

**Cory Gunn, PGY-4 Chief Resident 2019-2020** – Pulm-Critical Care Fellowship, University of Alabama-Birmingham; Birmingham, AL



## Residency Program Updates: Scholarly Activity and Accomplishments

**Drs. Travis Denmeade, Will Smith, Banks Kooken, and Michael Leonard** had an abstract entitled “Musculoskeletal Tuberculosis in a Large Healthcare System” accepted for presentation at ID Week 2020

**Drs. Brooks Keene, Shadi Saboori, Deanna King, Chris Polk, and Michael Leonard** had an abstract entitled “The Impact of Medically Assisted Therapy for Opiate Use Disorder in Staphylococcus aureus Bacteremia Patients within a Large Hospital System - A Retrospective Cohort Study” accepted for presentation at ID Week 2020

**Dr. Banks Kooken, Michael, Leonard, and Chris Polk** had an abstract entitled “Critically ill patients receiving tocilizumab compared with those not receiving tocilizumab for treatment of COVID-19” accepted for presentation at ID Week 2020

**Drs. Shadi Saboori, Brittany Seminara, and Baharak Moshiree** presented an abstract entitled “Assessment of Procedural Performance and Compliance with Standardized Interpretation of High-Resolution Esophageal Manometry Studies Post-Quality Improvement Initiative at a Large Community Hospital” at Digestive Disease Week 2020

**Drs. Tony Dang and Laszlo Littmann** published an article entitled “Wide QRS Complex Tachycardia in an Apparently Healthy Man” in JAMA: Internal Medicine

**Drs. Alyssa Kuprenas, Chris Polk, and Michael Leonard** published an article entitled “Cryptococcal Meningitis Mimicking Cerebral Septic Emboli” in BMC Infectious Disease

**Drs. Travis Denmeade, Jessica Sang, and Shadi Saboori** all presented research abstracts at the American College of Gastroenterology meeting

## Residency Program Updates: New Intern Class



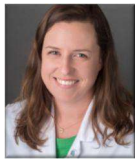
## Residency Program Updates: Intern Orientation 2020



Our intern orientation activities also had to be dramatically revised this year in response to the COVID pandemic. One new tradition that was created was the Charlotte Mural Scavenger Hunt. For this team-building event, the new intern class was divided into small, socially-distant groups. The groups were given clues that helped them identify and locate seven prominent murals throughout Charlotte. The groups had a great time racing through the city, snapping team-selfies in front of each mural, and attempting to be the first team to return to the finish line at Freedom Park.



## Class of 2023: Newest Internal Medicine Categorical Residents



**Jennifer Herington, MD**  
University of North Carolina



**Chirag Patel, MD**  
East Carolina University



**Anna Jacobs, MD**  
University of Central Florida



**John Rainwater, MD**  
Medical University of South Carolina



**Banks Kookan, MD**  
University of North Carolina



**Milan Shah, MD**  
University of South Carolina



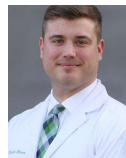
**Alyssa MacKay, DO**  
Campbell University Osteopathic



**Sable Skewes, DO**  
VCOM-Carolinas



**Gray Magee, MD**  
University of Kentucky



**Devin Stives, DO**  
Lake Erie Osteopathic



**Cam Mitro, MD**  
University of South Carolina



**Vivian Vu, MD**  
Mercer University

## Class of 2021: Newest Internal Medicine Preliminary Residents



**Levi Avner, MD**  
University of Chicago



**Morgan Moore, MD**  
University of North Carolina



**Krissi Fajgenbaum, MD**  
University of North Carolina



**Ashley Riddle, MD**  
University of North Carolina



**Jane Harrell, MD**  
University of Florida



**Seth Russell, MD**  
Medical University of South Carolina



**Akhil Kolluri, MD**  
Virginia Commonwealth University

## Department of Internal Medicine Faculty: Dr. Heyer's Retirement



This past spring, our department recognized the long, illustrious career of Dr. Robert Heyer on the occasion of his retirement. Dr. Heyer joined the Department of Internal Medicine in 2002 serving in both the Division of Pulmonary Medicine and the Division of General Internal Medicine. Prior to joining our department as a clinician-educator, Dr. Heyer was in private practice for many years at Charlotte Medical Clinic. Perhaps most notably, Dr. Heyer also served as the lead team physician for the Carolina Panthers beginning with the inception of the team in 1995 and as president of the NFL Physicians Society.

Dr. Heyer received numerous awards over the course of his distinguished career including, most recently, the Atrium Health Teal Acorn Award for Patient Satisfaction in 2019. Dr. Heyer also was given the honor of serving as the on-field "Keep Pounding" drummer prior to a Carolina Panthers game last season. During his retirement party this past February, Atrium Health announced the creation of the Robert A. Heyer, MD, Pulmonary Medicine Fund which supports medical student education, lectureships, and other educational programs that promote meaningful patient-physician relationships.

Dr. Heyer will long be remembered for his outstanding quality of care, his dogged commitment to the comprehensive physical exam, his staunch patient advocacy, and his unwavering dedication to his patients and the learners around him. As his longtime colleague, Dr. Ray Bianchi, noted, "When it comes to fighting for a patient (their life or their rights), Dr. Rob Heyer is unparalleled."

One of our newest faculty members (and CMC Internal Medicine Residency Class of 2019 graduate), Dr. Tony Dang, recently penned this humorous tribute to Dr. Heyer.

"One of the many things for which Dr. Heyer was known in our residency program was a thorough physical exam. Before he started as the attending for my team, I pulled the team aside to inform them of his expectations. I told them, "you better perform every physical exam maneuver you know on all the patients you admit." On the first post-call morning with Dr. Heyer, one of my interns (who was a dermatology prelim) had admitted a patient for a COPD exacerbation. She was presenting the HPI and you could tell that Dr. Heyer was getting a little bored. This was, in fact, a very routine, straightforward COPD exacerbation. When she got to the physical exam, I peered over at him and you could tell he was paying more attention. My intern went head to toe presenting her very meticulously performed physical exam: "nasal septum without deviation" ... "molar tooth with possible cavity" ... "no epitrochlear lymph nodes palpated" .... "PMI non-displaced" ... "Liver edge palpated 2 finger breaths below the diaphragm" ... "prostate enlarged with irregularity". When she was done, you could tell that Dr. Heyer was amazed and lit up with excitement. Later during rounds, we asked the patient about urinary symptoms and he, in fact, did have lower urinary tract symptoms. Dr. Heyer absolutely LOVED this intern thereafter. She was regarded as the gold standard for an intern for the rest of the time that we were together. She was literally never wrong afterwards.



Dr. Heyer always went over expectations before the month started to make sure we were all on the same page. He printed off model H&Ps, progress notes, and discharge summaries to give us an idea of his expectations. On our first day, he gave us an H&P example that was the best H&P that I had ever read. The funny thing was that he had attempted to black out the patient's and author's names; however, if you tilted the paper to the right angle, you could still read the author's name despite the overlying darkened ink. The H&P was written by none other than Dr. Nancy Jo Gritter. Needless to say, we had a very high bar to meet that month.

Dr. Heyer seemed to be concerned that our medical training has gotten soft and people were not motivated to be their best anymore. Dr. Heyer liked to share a story involving one of his former upper level residents that he referred to as his "a-- kicker". At the beginning of his internship at Parkland Hospital, Dr. Heyer recounted not performing at his top potential which prompted his upper level resident to pull him aside. The so called "a-- kicker" told him, "Rob, I already have one surgical intern. I don't need two." That was the moment that Dr. Heyer said he never slacked off again.

We are all fortunate to have learned from such a knowledgeable physician. He has taught and modeled to countless physicians how to strive to be their best and not to accept mediocrity.

## CMC Residency Alumni: Updates and Accomplishments

I completed the IM Residency in 1995. I would say to anyone without hesitation that my training prepared me for a very satisfying career. By the time I graduated, I felt comfortable managing the common illnesses and conditions that internists encounter. On a more personal note, my residency colleagues were good people. Our faculty was dedicated and readily accessible. I trust that has not changed over time.

I would like to share that my full time position is dedicated to hospice. I supervise multiple teams at Queen City Hospice in Cincinnati, OH and Day City Hospice in Dayton, OH. I have found hospice work to be most satisfying. I believe that is the case for two reasons. First, everyone who is under hospice care is there by choice. Secondly, without exception our patients and families have a primary expectation and that is comfort. Hospice is able to accomplish that.

I enjoy receiving these newsletters, and I want to say again that I consider myself most fortunate to have received my training in this program!

**Paul L. Blanchard, M.D., M.S.**  
**Class of 1995**

Paxton McLeod Dang was born on 8/26/2020 @ 4:45am. He came into the world weighing 7lbs., 5oz.  
Mom and baby are both healthy and doing well.



**Tony Dang, M.D.**  
**Rene McLeod, M.D.**  
**Class of 2019**

I graduated from CMC-Class of 1997. I am presently a full time locum tenens hospitalist. My wife and I became "empty nesters" this summer. We reside in Wilmington, NC.

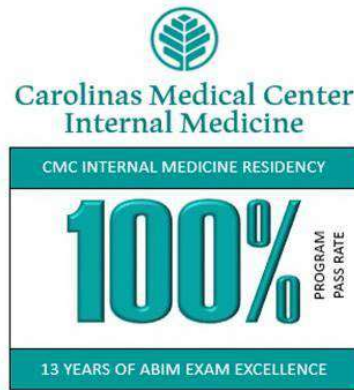
**Jay Beckett, M.D.**  
**Class of 1997**

Here is a shameless picture of my daughter, Maira Eden Bailey! Much has changed!



**Iain Bailey, M.D.**  
**Prelim Class of 2018**

# Residency Program Updates: ABIM Board Exam



We are thrilled to announce that each member of our residency class of 2020 passed the ABIM certification exam! This marks the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that our program has achieved a 100% ABIM pass rate. We are the only internal medicine residency program in the nation (out of over 500 programs) that can claim such a streak!

Our graduates' success on the exam is a testament to their hard work, the strength of our training program, and the dedication of our faculty and staff.



## ***Department of Internal Medicine Education and Research Fund In Honor of Laszlo Littmann***

Those interested in making a tax-deductible donation to the Department of Internal Medicine Education and Research Fund can do so in two convenient ways:

Online via the Atrium Health Foundation website: [HERE](#)

(<https://fundraise.atriumhealthfoundation.org/give/255931/#!/donation/checkout>)

— or —

Supporters can mail checks to the CMC Internal Medicine Education and Research Fund  
*Atrium Health Foundation, P.O. Box 32861, Charlotte, NC 28232-2861.*