

**Annual Report • FY2023**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY**  
*The Future is Bright*



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# Message from the Chair



As I've reflected on the past year, I am pleased to report that the Department of Surgery continues to be strong and growing. We've accomplished a great deal, demonstrating our resilience in the face of ongoing staffing challenges. 2023 was a banner year for recruitment with the onboarding of 12 new clinical and research faculty, bringing the department total to 108 faculty supporting our clinical and research efforts. The Department's OR case volumes have increased by 5% from FY22 to FY23, and we expect to see more growth as the OR staffing and overall capacity returns to normal in FY24.

On the research front, statistics are showing that the number of surgeon scientists in the country is diminishing at an alarming rate. This is due to increasing clinical demand and difficulty in obtaining NIH funding. While NIH funding has been increasing year over year, the number of awards going to surgeons has diminished. I see this decline as a national crisis, and we have strategically set out to recruit and support promising young surgeon-investigators. I am happy to report that our junior investigators all have secured early investigator funding, a testament to the caliber of our new recruits and their faculty mentors. In Fiscal Year 2023, we were awarded 20 new grants and we had a significant increase of first-time grant submitters, a good sign for what's to come.

The Department of Surgery General Residency program continues to see a rise of talented applicants interested in joining our ranks. Last year we experienced another 10% increase in applicants and, in June we welcomed 15 new stellar interns. In addition, we have 11 residents that are in two to three-year dedicated research fellowship who have been extremely productive, publishing their work in high impact journals and presenting at important national meetings. During the 2022-2023 conference season several of our residents were recognized for their outstanding efforts. Please refer to the "Notable National Resident Awards" on page 13 of this report to view those awards. These accomplishments are impressive and we are confident that next year our talented research fellows will continue to be recognized.

This year, we wanted to recognize our dedicated staff who have served the department for more than 20 years. Please join me in congratulating Sandra Bucukovski, our Plastic Surgery and Surgical Oncology Administrator, with special distinction for her 37 years of dedicated service to the Department of Surgery, as well as others with more than 20 years service, shown on page 27. The longevity of these team members speaks volumes for our department and the culture that we foster. We cultivate excellence through keeping our team members challenged, while offering the latitude to grow and develop with practical skills and natural talents that have been developed through experience and advanced education. Our strength is our people and I am grateful for the resilience and commitment of our staff, especially during the challenges that the pandemic brought.

This year, Ana Paula Cupertino, PhD, was appointed our Vice Chair of DEI and research director for SHORE (Surgical Health Outcomes and Reaching for Equity). She has led our efforts in community outreach and engagement and has broadened the outcomes research portfolio to focus on surgical health equity research. Our Supportive Care in Cancer research division has also had great success in recruiting superb junior faculty.

As a team, we continue to thrive and reach for the highest standards of clinical care, research and education. We have made great strides in the last few years despite some challenging headwinds, by maintaining our core value of a relentless focus on the patient. I feel privileged to work with such a remarkable group of faculty, staff and trainees. The future is bright.

Meliora,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Linehan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**David C. Linehan, M.D.**

*Seymour I. Schwartz Professor and Chair  
Department of Surgery  
University of Rochester Medical Center*

# Our Mission

With an unrelenting focus on our patients, we provide extraordinary surgical care; create new knowledge through research; and develop future surgeons, researchers, and leaders across a broad range of specialized expertise.

# Our Vision

We are widely renowned as a vital and enduring source of remarkable talent, capabilities, and ingenuity with the promise of results that offer infinite hope for our patients and communities.

# Our Values

- Patient-and-Family-Centered Care
- Dignity, Respect, Diversity and Inclusion
- Duty to Mentorship and Accountability
- High-Quality and High-Performance
- Collaboration and Camaraderie
- Courage to Innovate
- MELIORA!

# Faculty News

## New Faculty 2023



**Lindsey Mattick, Ph.D., M.P.H.**  
Research Assistant  
Professor  
Supportive Care in Cancer  
February 1, 2023  
University of Buffalo



**Daniel Ziazadeh, M.D., M.Sc.**  
Assistant Professor  
Cardiac Surgery  
July 1, 2023  
University of Rochester  
Medical Center



**Bradley Hensley, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor of  
Clinical Surgery,  
Regional Surgery  
August 1, 2023  
Rochester Regional Health



**Ryan Campagna, M.D., M.Ed.**  
Assistant Professor  
Thoracic Surgery  
August 15, 2023  
University of Michigan



**Maria Durdach, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor  
Bariatric Surgery  
September 1, 2023  
University at Buffalo/Erie  
County Medical Center



**Alaska Pendleton, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Assistant Professor  
Vascular Surgery  
September 1, 2023  
Massachusetts  
General Hospital



**Viktor Clark, Ph.D.**  
Research Assistant  
Professor  
Supportive Care in Cancer  
September 1, 2023  
Virginia Commonwealth  
University, School  
of Medicine



**Chin-Shang Li, Ph.D.**  
Professor  
Supportive Care in Cancer  
September 1, 2023  
University at Buffalo



**Nicholas Bedrin, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor  
Acute Care Surgery  
October 1, 2023  
Oregon Health Science  
University



**Candice Leach, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor  
Plastic Surgery  
October 1, 2023  
University of Kansas  
Medical Center



**Katherine Riera, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor  
Acute Care Surgery  
October 1, 2023  
Atrium Health Wake  
Forest Baptist  
Medical Center



**Angelique Cohen, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.S.**  
Associate Professor of  
Clinical Surgery  
Executive Medical Director  
for Accountable Health  
Partners  
Medical Director, Quality  
Institute  
October 1, 2023  
Ascension Saint Thomas  
Hospital



**Elliott Cohen, M.D.**  
Associate Professor of  
Clinical Surgery  
CT Intensivist,  
Cardiac Surgery  
November 1, 2023  
Tristar-Centennial  
Medical Center

## Promotions



**Derek Bell, M.D.**  
Professor  
Plastic Surgery



**Eva Culakova, Ph.D.**  
Research Associate  
Professor  
Supportive Care in Cancer



**Scott Gerber, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor  
with Tenure  
Surgical Oncology



**Kazuhiro Hisamoto, M.D.**  
Associate Professor  
Cardiac Surgery



**Michelle Janelins, Ph.D.**  
Professor  
Supportive Care  
in Cancer



**Patrick Reavey, M.D., M.S.**  
Associate Professor  
Plastic Surgery



**Derek Wakeman, M.D.**  
Associate Professor of  
Surgery,  
Pediatric Surgery



**Shuichi Yoshitake, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor  
Pediatric Cardiac  
Surgery

# TIDES:

## Transforming-Culture with Inclusion, Diversity and Equity in Surgery



As we collectively recognize the importance of Transforming-Culture with Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Surgery (TIDES), we must acknowledge the long-term nature of the commitment required of our department and all its members. This complex work demands leadership, commitment, resources, and resilience.

Dr. Paula Cupertino, under the direction of Dr. Linehan, founded TIDES. Dr. Cupertino has more than 20 years of experience in the development of community-based participatory research programs at other academic centers. The four areas of focus for TIDES are: Surgical Health Outcomes-Research Reaching for Equity; Inclusivity in Recruitment and Retention, Medical Equity Curriculum, and Informed by Communities, Designed for Community.

### **Surgical Health Outcomes-research Reaching for Equity (SHORE)**

Surgical Health Outcome Research & Reaching for Equity (SHORE) is a center designed to develop new and enhance existing research efforts through one integrated, multi-disciplinary program. This enterprise identifies the most effective ways to organize, manage, finance, and deliver high quality care, while reducing medical errors, controlling costs, and improving patient safety.

Importantly, our unwavering commitment lies in fostering the development of upcoming surgeon investigators and leaders. We provide them with cutting-edge methodologies, immersive research exposure, seminars, grant writing assistance, mentoring, and the seamless integration of a master's curriculum throughout the research years. In the past decade, research fellows from SHORE have collectively authored close to 150 manuscripts spanning diverse fields such as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Surgical Technique and Outcomes; Patient Reported Outcomes and Utilization; Quality Improvement and Standardization; Complications and Adverse Events; Health Economics and Cost-Effectiveness; and Surgical Collaboratives

Our team maintains an extensive compilation of significant national and state-level datasets pertaining to public health research, emphasizing surgical outcomes and equity. We currently possess large datasets from CMS, NCDB, NSQIP, SPARCS, HCUP, NHANES, NAMCS, NHAMCS, NHDS, NNHS, NHHCS, and BRFSS, among others. We employ electronic medical records for the examination of our local institutional patients and the integration of our research discoveries into Electronic Health Records (EHR) as practice guidelines to help clinicians make informed decisions about patient care.

### **Inclusivity in Recruitment, Retention**

The American Academy of Medical Colleges recently reported a nearly 50% drop in Underrepresented in Medicine (URM) scholars entering surgical specialties in the past decade. As a response, the American College of Surgeons and the National Institute of Minority Health Disparities have established a road map to eliminate disparities in surgical health outcomes and enhance diversity in careers in surgery. Within the Department of Surgery, we aim to implement these strategies to foster representation of the communities we serve across all levels of the department and nationally.

Improving recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty in the field of surgery, within our department has



been a priority. The Department of Surgery continues to attract a diverse pool of candidates for work force recruitment and we are proud of the cultural inclusivity amongst our faculty and resident population. In addition, the TIDES committee has been designing and implementing best practices and initiatives to promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and retention efforts.

### Medical Equity Curriculum

Drs. Paula Cupertino and Marjorie Arca are implementing a cultural competency curriculum to develop and maintain cross-cultural skills. The curriculum incorporates experiential real-world initiatives in diverse communities. The aim is to enhance the department's skills and knowledge in addressing language barriers with patients. In addition, they are building relationships with community leaders of agencies and coalitions to create a unified front in disengaging health disparities and developing a strong health careers workforce.

### Informed by Communities, Designed for Community

URMC is surrounded by areas of high poverty levels which make up the majority of citizens (84%) These communities experience debilitating health disparities, which culminate in an increase in loss of life which is 150% greater than other areas in the county. The source of morbidity includes above-average incidence of chronic illnesses including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, low birth weights, infant mortality, and high rates of smoking and vaping. Within these communities the multi-sectorial social determinants of health (SDoH) are alarming. The food insecurity rate is 30% compared to 9% in the county; more than 20% of households are vehicle-less; the violent crime rate, citywide, 95% higher than the nation; child abuse and neglect have increased from 9% in 2013 to 18% in 2020;

the incarceration rate of 1,051 per 100,000 city residents is more than five times the rate of New York City. Perhaps the most disconcerting barriers are the lack of access to educational resources and social mobility. Eliminating these inequities is particularly critical as the DoS is surrounded by ethnically and racially diverse catchment areas.

A major area of focus of TIDES has been addressing anti-violence in the community. This past year the DoS, and our Acute Care/Trauma team partnered with EnCompass, a program established in 2004 by Rochester educators and community leaders to develop and provide innovative educational support to students and families. From this collaborative partnership, the Teen Anti-Violence Alliance (TAVA) program was established.

Rochester youth, particularly the 2,400 students EnCompass serves every year, are disproportionately affected by surging community gun violence. Thanks to Health Equity Award funded by Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield, teens in the EnCompass Future Ready program will lead the Teen Anti-Violence Alliance (TAVA), and are poised to discover, influence, and pave pathways to change, hand-in-hand with community stakeholders.

Nine students, in collaboration with URMC's Department of Surgery and the City of Rochester, engaged in nearly 200 hours of educational, mentoring, data collection, and outreach programming and contributed to public health initiatives including Stop the Bleed, Rochester Youth Violence Partnership, and City of Rochester efforts. Rochester students have been meaningfully engaged as "co-creators of solutions" to mitigate the growing violence they experience in their community.



# Research in Surgery

The Department of Surgery excels in cutting-edge, impactful research with a passion for exploration and discovery. Our faculty continue to elevate our basic and translational research programs in addition to expanding clinical trials. We continue to be innovative in our approaches to research and research training. Our future looks bright as we continue to recruit and support young surgeon scientists.

## By the Numbers

TOTAL GRANTS



NEW GRANT AWARDS • 20

FUNDING

\$9,667,800 NIH GRANTS

\$11,245,595 TOTAL SPONSORED RESEARCH



### Faculty research foci include:

**Cancer Control & Psychoneuroimmunology Laboratory (CCPL) (Michelle Janelsins, Ph.D.):** CCPL is at the forefront of cancer control and symptom management science

**Cardiovascular Engineering Lab (CVEL) (Doran Mix, M.D. and Michael Stoner, M.D.):** Challenges in the cardiovascular field are tackled with the expertise of a multi-disciplinary team that spans surgery, cardiology, and engineering.

**Carpizo Lab (Darren Carpizo, M.D.):** Focus of studies include cancer biology with an emphasis on developmental therapeutics.

**Center for Tumor Immunology Research (David Linehan, M.D.; Scott Gerber, Ph.D. and Brian Belt):** Immunotherapy is an innovative approach to spark the body's own immune cells to recognize and destroy the tumor.

**Cole Lab (Calvin Cole, Ph.D.):** Investigating the mechanisms responsible for cancer-related muscle wasting and developing interventions.

**Gerber Lab (Scott Gerber, Ph.D.):** Studies focused "re-activating" immune cells to attack and eradicate the tumor through immunotherapy.

**Leckenby Lab (Jonathan Leckenby, M.B.B.S., Ph.D.):** Research focused on enhancing the regeneration and preventing the degeneration of the peripheral nervous system.

**Moore Lab (Alessandra Moore, M.D., Ph.D.):** Investigates regeneration of a functional adrenal gland from dermal derived induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) in order to address the burden of polypharmacy in cancer patients.

**Physical-Exercise-Activity-Kinesiology (PEAK) Lab (Karen Mustian, Ph.D.):** Research that addresses supporting investigators conducting multidisciplinary and translational (T1-T4) research related to all forms of human movement.

**Surgical Health Outcomes & Reaching for Equity (SHORE): (Paula Cupertino, Ph.D.; Fergal Fleming, M.D.; Larissa Temple, M.D.):** The mission of SHORE is to improve the quality and delivery of surgical care through conducting accurate and meaningful research, while simultaneously promoting the development of the next generation of clinician researchers.

**Redmond Vascular Biology Lab (Eileen Redmond, Ph.D.):** Research with a focus on atherosclerosis and alcohol consumption and its effects on cardiovascular health.

**Wilson ECLIPSe Lab (Nicole Wilson, Ph.D., M.D.):** Studies range from using computational techniques designed to support clinical decision-making to studies aimed at modeling both anatomic and functional characteristics of organ systems.

# Q&A with a Few of Our Surgeon Scientists

## Answering: *why is it important to be a surgeon scientist?*

Written by Lori Barrette



Darren Carpizo, M.D.

As a an oncologist I enjoy taking care of complex cancer problems for patients but, in doing this, encounter problems every day that stem from a lack of understanding of the biology of cancer or a lack of diagnostic or therapeutic tools that limit my abilities to provide

the most effective care I desire. Being a surgeon-scientist allows me the opportunity to use science as a tool to solve these problems. It allows me to be on the frontier of modern medicine with the potential to impact the lives of many, which is exciting.



Jonathan Leckenby, M.B.B.S. Ph.D.

As surgeon-scientists, we have the opportunity to be involved in each step relating to scientific discovery that starts at the bench-side in the laboratory and ends with improving patient care clinically at the bedside. As a surgeon, we offer a

different perspective due to the hands-on nature of our work that often brings new approaches to problem solving. Having the scientific training allows us to critically evaluate the research question and develop rigorous methodology to efficiently answer the question being posed.



Doran Mix, M.D.

As surgeon-scientists, we are given the opportunity to explore translatable research that directly affects the care of our patients and the entire burden of human disease. Surgeons intimately know the destructive power of disease on tissues and organ systems as

we struggle to restore homeostasis in the operating room. Naturally, surgeons continually strive to improve the surgical management of disease as the results of our procedures are as much our patients as they are our own. It is only with the rigorous application of the scientific method that our clinical suspicion can be forged into new treatment paradigms for future patients.



Nicole Wilson, Ph.D., M.D.

Anyone who has been a patient, a loved one, a support person, or even a health care worker knows that medicine isn't perfect. Too often we are asked to treat a condition using imperfect or incomplete information. Your doctor cannot tell you exactly what is going to happen.

Instead we work in likelihoods and probabilities. We hedge our bets.

## Faculty



**Michelle Janelins, Ph.D., M.P.H.,**  
Professor and Chief, Division of  
Supportive Care in Cancer

### *Research Faculty*

**Evelyn Arana, M.S., Ph.D.**

**Javier Baustia, M.S., M.B.A.**

**Viktor Clark, Ph.D.**

**Eva Culakova, Ph.D.**

**Umang Gada, M.S.**

**Nikesha Gilmore, Ph.D.**

**Abdi Gudina, Ph.D.**

**Joe Guido, M.S.**

**Charles Kamen, Ph.D., M.P.H.**

**Lee Kehoe, Ph.D.**

**Chin-Shang Li, Ph.D.**

**Po-Ju Lin, Ph.D.**

**Lindsey Mattick, Ph.D.**

**Jeremy McGuire, Ph.D.**

**Gary R. Morrow Ph.D., M.S.**

**Karen Mustian, Ph.D., M.P.H.**

**Luke Peppone, Ph.D., M.P.H.**

**Hongying Sun, Ph.D.**

**AnnaLynn Williams, Ph.D.**

**Sule Yilmaz, Ph.D.**

# Supportive Care in Cancer

For over 35 years, Supportive Care in Cancer has conducted cancer control and cancer care delivery research locally and nationally investigating the etiology, prevention and management of side effects from cancer and its treatments. Our mission is, “to help good people through lousy times” by working with patients and survivors of cancer and their families and caregivers. The goal is to alleviate cancer-related toxicities and side effects in order to ultimately improve quality of care and quality of life. Our faculty research members are internationally known for their impactful contributions to the field of supportive care and survivorship, for training new supportive care researchers and fostering multidisciplinary collaborations. These faculty are supported by over 50 division staff member colleagues who are integral to our success.

## Highlights

During 2022-2023, our Supportive Care in Cancer division saw many top accomplishments. Our team authored several supportive care in cancer manuscripts, including several of particularly high impact. For example, Dr. Po-Ju Lin, Dr. Karen Mustian and colleagues published “Effect of Yoga and Mediation Influence on Fatigue on Walking, Physical Activity and Quality of Life Among Cancer Survivors” in the *Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network*. Dr. Eva Culakova, Dr. Supriya Mohile and colleagues published “Effects of Geriatric Assessment Intervention on Patient-Reported Symptomatic Toxicity in Older Adults with Advanced Cancer” in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, while Dr. Elizabeth Belcher, Dr. Michelle Janelins and colleagues published “Inflammation, Attention and Processing Speed in Patients with Breast Cancer Before and After Chemotherapy” in the

*Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

Several of our faculty members gave national and internal oral presentations in cancer supportive care research this past year, including Drs. Luke Peppone, Michelle Janelins, Charles Kamen, Karen Mustian, AnnaLynn Williams, Nikesha Gilmore, Eva Culakova, Hongying Sun and T32 faculty fellows such as Drs. Evelyn Arana, Lee Kehoe and Abdi Gudina.

This past academic year, several new grant awards were received encompassing areas of oncology supportive care and symptom management, health equity, translational science, interventions and biologic mechanisms of symptoms and side effects of cancer and its treatment. These included:

- Dr. Karen Mustian is the Rochester principal investigator of a global team

awarded the NCI/ Cancer Research UK Cancer Grand Challenge Award for their project, Cancer Cachexia Action Network (CANCAN).

- Dr. Charles Kamen was awarded an NCI R34 titled, “Adapting the FOCUS Program for Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) Cancer Patients and Caregivers.”
- Dr. Nikesha Gilmore received an NCI K01 titled, “A Phase II Randomized Placebo Controlled Trial of Epi-gallocatechin-3-Gallate (EGCG) on Physical Frailty and Tumor Necrosis Factor-alpha and Associated Immune Markers in Older Cancer Survivors.”
- Dr. AnnaLynn Williams was awarded an NCI R00 titled, “Aging-Related Biomarkers of Neurocognitive Function in Long-term Hodgkin Lymphoma Survivors.”

Other significant updates included:

- Dr. Karen Mustian was appointed Associate Director of Population Science for Wilmot Cancer Institute. Five faculty in the division have leadership roles with Wilmot, including Drs. Karen Mustian, Gary Morrow, Charles Kamen, Michelle Janelins and Po-Ju Lin.
- Dr. Luke Peppone was appointed Co-Director of the UR Clinical and Translational Cancer Control T32 program, along with current Co-Directors Drs. Michelle Janelins and Gary Morrow. The trio submitted their renewal application, with the program entering its 20th year this summer. This program has trained 49 fellows over 20 years; 63% are women and 33% are underrepresented individuals from historically minoritized groups based on race and ethnicity, with several other additional scholars from other minoritized groups. In addition, 90% of our fellows have remained in academia at 21 unique institutions nationwide with over \$100 million in total NIH research grants to former fellows as principal investigators including 23 K Awards and 11 other Career Development Awards. 72% of our fellows are now Associate/Full Professor level and several hold significant leadership roles nationwide and internationally.
- The URCC NCORP Research Base, led by MPIs Drs. Karen Mustian and Gary Morrow, is an outstanding

nationwide program, and has significantly expanded its affiliate site membership by 36% nationwide and tripling our Minority Underserved NCORP affiliates to increase access to our research to diverse patient populations. URCC NCORP Research Base clinical trials recently reported an annual accrual of 946 enrollments, an approximate 90% increase from the previous year, returning to our pre-pandemic success at enrolling cancer patients, caregivers, providers and sites in cancer control and cancer care delivery research in the community setting nationally.

- The division hosted our first annual student seminar, including high school students and undergraduate students, as part of the new Empowering Students Through Research Enrichment Activities in Cancer Control and Cancer Care Delivery (EmREACH) program, developed by Dr. Nikesha Gilmore.



# Surgical Education

As part of a world-class medical center and academic institution, the UR Medicine Department of Surgery is dedicated to advancing excellence in health care. In a continued effort to provide our patients and their families with the highest level of care and service, we also have an unwavering commitment to education. We train the next generation of surgeons to become the healthcare leaders of the future. Our goal is to attract top national and international talent—and to become the place to train in the country.

## By the Numbers

**RESIDENTS:** 37 GENERAL SURGERY • 6 CARDIOTHORACIC •  
12 PLASTIC SURGERY • 8 VASCULAR SURGERY

**FELLOWS:** 12 RESEARCH FELLOWS



### 6 FELLOWSHIPS

- Abdominal Transplant
- Bariatric and Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS)
- Breast
- Cardiothoracic
- Colorectal
- Surgical Critical Care



# Education Program Leadership 2023



**David E. Burns, Jr., M.D.**  
APD for Evaluation, Feedback and Compliance



**Clinton Morrison, M.D.**  
Program Director, Plastic Surgery Residency



**Patrick Reavey, M.D., M.S.**  
APD for Plastic Surgery Residency



**Lisa M. Cannon, M.D.**  
APD for Curriculum and Simulation



**Michael Nabozny, M.D.**  
Acting Internship (Sub-I) Director



**Kristin A. Skinner, M.D.**  
Program Director, SSO Breast Fellowship



**Lauren DeCaporale-Ryan, Ph.D.**  
APD for Resident Wellness



**William O'Malley, M.D.**  
Program Director, Bariatric and MIS Fellowship



**Nicole A. Stassen, M.D.**  
Program Director, Surgical Critical Care Fellowship



**Adam J. Doyle, M.D.**  
Program Director, Vascular Surgery Residency



**Christian G. Peyre, M.D.**  
Program Director, Cardiothoracic Residency



**Koji Tomiyama, M.D.**  
Program Director, ASTS Abdominal Transplant Surgery Fellowship



**Eva Galka, M.D.**  
Surgery Interest Group Liaison



**Grayson Pitcher, M.D.**  
Director of the Third Year Surgery Clerkship



**Nicole A. Wilson, PhD, M.D.**  
APD for Resident Research



**Theodor I. Kaufman, M.D.**  
APD for Programmatic Development



**Gabriela C. Poles, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Program Director, Colorectal Surgery Fellowship



**Tim Xu, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Resident Ombudsman



**Yanjie Qi, M.D.**  
Program Director, General Surgery Residency

**Courtney Anderson, MS**  
*Fellowship Administrator*  
Breast, Colorectal and Surgical Critical Care

**Mariellen Blossom**  
*Administrative Assistant,*  
*Office of Surgical Education*

**Julie K. Burkhart, MS**  
*Program Coordinator,*  
*Medical Student/Grand Rounds*

**Karen Cerretto**  
*Secretary,*  
*Office of Surgical Education*

**Aasa Hovey**  
*Administrative Assistant,*  
*Office of Surgical Education*

**Beth Jocolano, MS**  
*Program Administrator,*  
*Plastic Surgery*

**Amy Mills**  
*Program Administrator,*  
*Office of Surgical Education*

**Michelle Russo**  
*Program Administrator,*  
*Cardiothoracic Surgery*

**Elizabeth Schinski**  
*Program Administrator,*  
*Vascular Surgery*

# Surgical Residency Graduates 2023



## Cardiothoracic Surgery Residency



**Daniel Ziazadeh, M.D.**  
University of Rochester  
Medical Center,  
Rochester, NY

## General Surgery Residency

*Pictured above:*

- Amy Lawrence, M.D.** Pediatric Surgery Fellowship Program at the University of California, Irvine
- Kaci Schiavone, M.D.** Advanced GI & Minimally Invasive Surgery Fellowship at the University of Buffalo
- Katherine Rosen, M.D.** Colon and Rectal Surgery Fellowship at Northside Hospital
- Shawn Hsu, M.D.** Comprehensive Endocrine Surgery Fellowship at Columbia University
- Andreas Giannakou, M.D.** Breast Surgical Oncology Fellowship at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Brigham and Women’s, Massachusetts General Hospital

## Plastic Surgery Residency



**Megan Pencek, M.D.**  
Craniofacial Fellowship,  
University of Pittsburgh  
followed by a  
Microsurgery Fellowship,  
Washington University



**Katy Skibba, M.D.**  
Private Practice  
Des Moines, IA

## The 2023 Fellowship Graduates



**Bariatric and MIS:**  
**Panagiotis Drakos, M.D.**  
Ballad Health  
in Greenville,  
Tennessee



**Breast:**  
**Matthew Miller, M.D.**  
Comprehensive  
Cancer Center  
Las Vegas, NV



**Colorectal:**  
**Monica Carmelo, M.D.**  
UC Riverside  
San Diego, CA



**Surgical Critical Care:**  
**Anna Wu, M.D.**  
Albany  
Medical  
Center



**Surgical Critical Care:**  
**Brian Young, M.D.**  
University  
Hospitals  
Cleveland  
Medical Center

## Vascular Surgery Residency



**Andrew C. Schroeder, D.O.**  
Vascular and  
Interventional  
Specialists of Siouxland  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, NE



**Mark D. Balceniuk, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Jefferson Health,  
Philadelphia, PA

## Notable National Resident Awards 2023:

**James Butterfield, M.D.:** "Body Contouring Research Foundation Researcher's Award Winner" at the *American Association of Plastic Surgeons Annual Meeting*, April 2023.

**Miranda Chacon, M.D.:** First place for a resident research paper competition at *New York State Committee on Trauma*

**Ariana Goodman, M.D.:** "Ethics Scholarship" *American Association of Thoracic Surgery*

**Baily Hilty, M.D.:** "Wangensteen Scientific Forum Excellence in Research Award" at the *American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress*

**Peter Juviler, M.D.:**

- "Quality Safety and Value Award" *American Pediatric Surgical Association*. Best quality improvement abstract and manuscript submitted to American Pediatric Surgical Association annual meeting.
- "Best paper" regional *Committee on Trauma*, 2023

**Anthony Loria, M.D.:**

- "Best in Surgery" distinction for his paper "Implementation of a new definition for acute kidney injury in the National Surgical Quality Improvement Project: What is the impact?"
- "Writers scholarship award" from *Surgical Society of the Alimentary Tract*

**Brittany Rocque, M.D.:**

- "Young Investigator Award" at both the *American Transplant Congress* and the *International Liver Transplantation Society Clinical Congress*
- "People's Choice Best Plenary Session Presentation", Plenary Abstract Session #2, 2023 *American Transplant Congress*, San Diego, CA, USA
- "Poster of Distinction Award", *American Society of Transplant Surgeons*

**Giap Vu, M.D.:** "Best Paper Award" from the *Association of Asia Pacific Physical Societies*

**Travel scholarships:**

**Paul Burchard, M.D.:** Medical Faculty Council Travel Award in Basic Science Research, Spring 2022

**Kash Desai, M.D. & Ben Ford, M.D.:** *Pacific Northeast Endovascular Conference* summit

**Ben Ford, M.D.:** *Vascular and Endovascular Surgical Society* meeting and *Eastern Vascular Society* annual meeting

**Josh Geiger, M.D.:** *International Aortic Summit* meeting

**Irina Kanzaforova, M.D.:** *Introduction to Academic Vascular Surgery* meeting

**Brittany Rocque, M.D.:** "Sherilyn Gordon Memorial Travel Award", *American Society of Transplant Surgeons* Recognition Award



Baily Hilty, M.D.

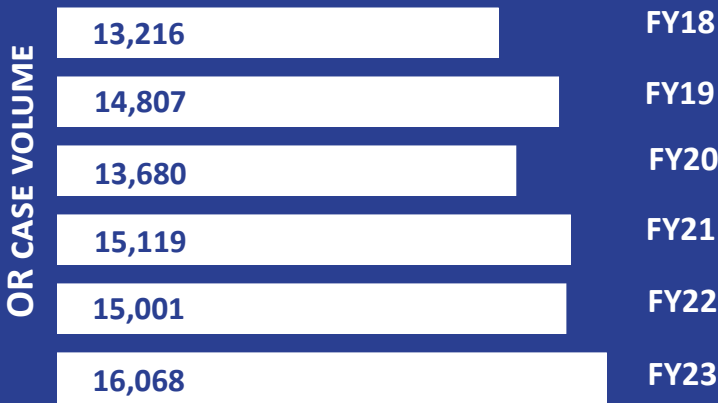
# Clinical Divisions

The Department's mission is derived from its long-standing tradition and legacy of innovation and health care excellence. Our reputation for superior clinical programs, cutting-edge research and an unwavering commitment to education is centered on an unrelenting focus on our patients. We engage all team members – faculty, clinical, administrative and support staff – in understanding and living this non-negotiable value. Complementary to this focus is our commitment to create and sustain a prosperous culture, resulting in high-functioning teams and supportive programs that delivers great healthcare. Our clinical divisions share top accomplishments from Fiscal Year 2023 and demonstrates that our diverse and inclusive teams produce high quality care for our patients and the communities we serve.

## By the Numbers: Fiscal Year 2023

### PEOPLE

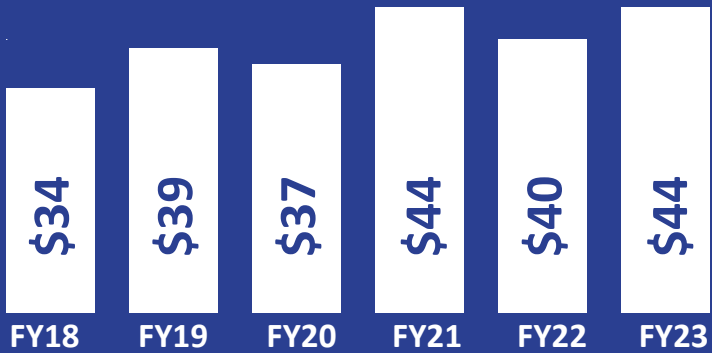
100+ FACULTY • 400+ STAFF



NUMBER OF  
DIVISIONS • 11

NEW PATIENT  
VISITS • 28,258

### NET PATIENT SERVICE REVENUE (IN MILLIONS)



NEW FACULTY  
45 FROM 2020-2023

## Abdominal Transplant & Liver Surgery

The Division of Abdominal Transplant and Liver Surgery provides advanced and compassionate care to patients with serious liver, kidney or pancreatic disease. Our transplant surgeons are national and international leaders who use the most advanced technology and techniques and, as a result, patients come to us from throughout Upstate New York and across the country to receive their care at UR Medicine.

### Highlights

The Division of Transplantation and the Liver Transplant program are national Leaders in Transplant Oncology, having completed 18 Live Donor Liver Transplants for colorectal metastases, the highest number per center in North America with great results.

The Kidney Transplant Program performed 118 transplants in Fiscal Year 2023 - a record number for the program which has been continuously operating since 1966. In addition, the kidney transplant program continues to be a leader in the Northeast for Robotic Transplant surgery. The program has performed 62 robotic donor nephrectomies and 33 recipient robotic implantations.

We are the second largest LDLT (Live Donor Liver Transplant) program in NYS and our volumes are increasing while demonstrating exceptional 1 year patient survival of 100%.

Dr. Roberto Hernandez-Alejandro was elected as a member of the American Surgical Association, the oldest and most prestigious Surgical society in the nation. He also honored to receive the "REAL Advancing Liver Transplant" Award from the ILTS due to his work in Liver Transplant education in Latin America and South East Asia, areas of low access for Liver Transplant. In addition, he was named Chair of the ATC Scientific program Committee for 2024.

Nancy Metzler, Transplant Administrator, was elected as the UNOS Region 9 Councilor. She is also a member of the New York State Department of Health Transplant Council and Co-Chairs the NYS DOH Committee on the NASEM Report which aims to improve the transplant system for residents of New York.

Our division has more than 18 peer reviewed publications in the field of abdominal organ transplant with high impact factor journals including Annals of Surgery, JAMA Surgery, American Journal of Transplantation and Journal of Hepatology. We opened a certified ASTS Transplant Fellowship program and recruited our first clinical fellow for 2024.



**Roberto Hernandez-Alejandro, M.D., F.A.C.S.,**  
Professor of Surgery and Chief,  
Division of Abdominal Transplant  
and Liver Surgery

#### *Clinical Faculty*

**Randeep S. Kashyap, M.D.**

**Amit Nair, M.D.**

**Mark Orloff, M.D.**

**Paritosh Prasad, M.D.**

**Karen Pineda-Solis, M.D.**

**Koji Tomiyama, M.D.**

## Faculty



**Mark L. Gestring, M.D., F.A.C.S.,**  
Professor of Surgery and Chief,  
Division of Acute Care Surgery

### *Clinical Faculty*

**Nicholas Bedrin, M.D.**

**Julius D. Cheng, M.D.**

**Michael Nabozny, M.D.**

**Yanjie Qi, M.D.**

**Katherine Riera, M.D.**

**Michael Rotondo, M.D.**

**Nicole A. Stassen, M.D.**

**Michael Vella, M.D.**

## Acute Care Surgery

The Division of Acute Care Surgery (ACS) is proud to provide state-of-the-art injury care to the citizens of the Finger Lakes Region of Western New York. Verified by the American College of Surgeons and designated by the N.Y. State Department of Health as a Level one trauma center, the hospital serves a population of over 1.5 million residents spanning 16 counties.

### Highlights

This past year, 31 hospitals in 22 counties referred patients to the Kessler Trauma Center for injury care, resulting in 3,500 trauma patient contacts and 2,300 trauma patient admissions last year. Trauma patient outcomes are in the top 10% of trauma centers nationally for overall major hospital events including mortality as reported by the American College of Surgeons.

We are the regional leader in trauma education. This includes Rural Trauma Team Development Course (RTTDC®), Mobile Skills, Disaster Management and Emergency Preparedness (DMEP®) and are the largest Stop the Bleed® training center in the Northeast with courses offered throughout the region on a continuous basis. Our team also led the inaugural Fundamentals of Critical Care Support-Crisis Management (FCCS- CM) course. Through a generous grant from the Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM), it was the first time the course has been offered in Western New York.

Our ACS faculty have been appointed to surgical leadership positions at both the state and national level. In addition, our Trauma Program Manager and Injury Prevention/ Outreach Coordinator were both recognized for excellence by New York State American Trauma Society (ATS). This fall, after a competitive national search, we welcomed two new fellowship-trained surgeons, Drs. Nicholas Bedrin and Katherine Riera to the division.

The Responsible Gun Ownership Program, developed in partnership with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, is now part of the extensive array of community outreach programs delivered throughout the region on a regular basis. Our faculty continue to have leadership roles in the development of the University-wide Gun Violence Prevention and Firearm Safety Program. We also worked closely with the students from EnCompass to provide education and support as they developed and implemented their Teen Anti-Violence Alliance program.

Our Acute Care Surgery (ACS) division is leading the way in departmental quality initiatives including: reduction of inpatient lab and imaging orders, continued development of Enhanced Recovery after Surgery protocols, continued focus on reducing opioid use post-surgery, antibiotic stewardship and surgical instrument standardization. We also participate in the American College of Surgeon's Trauma Quality Improvement Program (ACS-TQIP®).

The division has twenty-four peer-reviewed publications by ACS faculty over the last year.

## Bariatric & GI Surgery

The Division of Bariatric and GI Surgery at Highland Hospital provides the area's most advanced approach to both weight loss surgery and to a wide range of other general surgical conditions. Our division is the area's first bariatric surgery program to be accredited by the American College of Surgeons. Our bariatric program is one of the busiest in the region, having helped over 6,500 patients achieve and maintain significant weight loss. We also perform all types of general surgery and have an extensive experience in all types of hernia surgery.

### Highlights

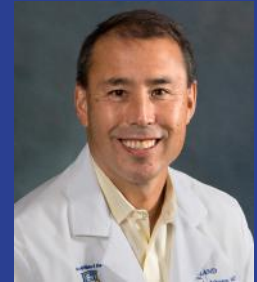
Our program was reaccredited by the American College of Surgery MBS as a Comprehensive Bariatric Surgery Center with newly added Obesity Medicine Qualifications. We offer the most comprehensive bariatric program in the area with extensive pre and postoperative consultations, counseling, and nutritional support. We perform over 500 bariatric procedures per year, making us one of the busiest programs in New York State. Research shows that surgeons who perform the highest volume of operations have the best outcomes. Our incredible staff of physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, technicians and administrative staff make our bariatric program run very efficiently and smoothly.

Dr. Maria Durdach, a recent URM surgery resident, and fellowship trained in robotic bariatric and minimally invasive surgery returns to Rochester to join Dr's. David Burns, Joseph Johnson, and William O'Malley. Dr. Durdach will bring robotic bariatric surgery to Rochester and with Dr. Burn's will expand our ability to treat hernia's robotically.

This past year we said goodbye and good luck to Kathy DiBella, RD who retired after 17 years of service to the program.

The Bariatric Surgery Fellowship program graduated its fifteenth physician, Panagiotis Drakos, M.D.

The 2022-2023 General Surgery Residents awarded David Burns, M.D. the *Excellence in Teaching Award*, while Highland's Jessie Wilson, P.A. was awarded *Advanced Practice Provider of the Year*.



**Joseph A. Johnson, M.D., F.A.C.S.,**  
**Associate Professor of Surgery**  
**and Chief of Bariatric and**  
**GI Surgery**

*Clinical Faculty*

**David E. Burns, Jr., M.D.**

**Maria Durdach, M.D.**

**William E. O'Malley, M.D.**

## Faculty



**Peter Knight, M.D., F.A.C.S.,  
Dr. Jude S. Sauer Family  
Distinguished Professor and Chief,  
Division of Cardiac Surgery**

### *Clinical Faculty*

#### **Adult Cardiac Surgery:**

**Igor Gosev, M.D., Ph.D.**

**Kazuhiro Hisamoto, M.D.**

**Bartholomew Simon, M.D.**

**Katherine L. Wood, M.D.**

**Daniel Ziazadeh, M.D.**

#### **Pediatric Cardiac Surgery:**

**George M. Alfieris, M.D.**

**Michael Swartz, Ph.D., P.A.**

**Shuichi Yoshitake, M.D.**

#### **Cardiac Intensivists:**

**Elliot Cohen, M.D.**

**Ryan Magnuson, M.D.**

#### **Professor Emeritus:**

**George L. Hicks, M.D.**

## Cardiac Surgery

The Division of Cardiac Surgery offers patients the most options, the most expertise, and the most comprehensive care in Upstate New York. Our division provides many services that are not available anywhere else in the region. We are the only area center performing heart transplants, and the only one that is a national leader in the development and use of artificial heart pumps. Our Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Program is the only program in Upstate and the second largest in New York State.

### Highlights

The pediatric cardiac surgery program had 7 publications in peer reviewed literature and was a major contributor to “STRESS” study published in New England Journal of Medicine. Dr. Shuichi Yoshitake has become an integral part of our pediatric cardiac surgery team alongside of Dr. George Alfieris.

The Advanced Heart Failure program continues to garner national and international recognition of our contributions to ventricular assist therapy. In FY23 the program recorded our largest number ever of Cardiac Transplants, 31, and performed our first DCD heart transplant at URM. The program has 1 year survival rate of 93% for LVAD patients despite high number of INTERMACS (Interagency Registry for Mechanically Assisted Circulatory Support), level 1 patient.

Within the Structural Heart and Revascularization program Dr. Bart Simon has become the main revascularization surgeon. In FY23, volumes have increased 30%. The program will be launching sternal sparing CABG surgery. Several publications including a JAMA article describing the disparities in use of minimally invasive mitral valve surgery highlights the divisions commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Dr. Kazuhiro Hisamoto has expanded the HCM program in collaboration with Dr. Christopher Cove allowing us to offer the most advanced diagnostic and therapeutic options available for patients.

The division welcomes Dr. Daniel Ziazadeh to the faculty after graduating from the integrated cardiothoracic resident program at URM. The division also looks forward to the fall arrival of Dr. Elliott Cohen from Nashville, to be Director of CICU.



## Colorectal Surgery

The Division of Colorectal Surgery is dedicated to using the best technologies available for our patients and consistently perform the most challenging and complex colorectal surgeries that are not available at any other area center. We are also international leaders in research, which helps give our patients the widest range of treatment options. We provide true multidisciplinary care, bringing together a team of specialists who meet regularly to discuss each patient's case.

### Highlights

During the past year, our division enhanced patient care by increasing clinical, endoscopic and operative volume. We expanded our clinical services at Highland Hospital and Wilmot Cancer Institute in Webster. Innovative surgical techniques such as robotic surgery for transanal procedures and bowel preserving surgery, including novel anastomoses (Kono-S) for complex Crohn's disease, were also utilized. Additional highlights included the reaccreditation of our rectal cancer program through the Commission on Cancer and its National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer, as well as impactful quality improvement initiatives at Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital that helped reduce opioid use by 43% and the need for blood work by more than 35%. A Geriatric Verification Program was also rolled out during the year.

Our education initiatives included mentoring research residents and medical students using research awards, a national presence in video-based technical and peer-to-peer mentorship through ASCRS and participating in the mentoring of the Surgical APP Fellowship and Perioperative APP Fellowship. We also graduated the 6th trainee from our ACGME residency program. Research undertakings remained strong thanks to the CHI Core Grant for QOL in Stomates study, Career Development Award through ASCRS and completion of ASCRS robotic and AHRQ grants.

As always, we remained dedicated to our community with our ongoing support program for ostomates. In conjunction with GI, we participated in planning and presenting at the IBD Symposium and served in leadership roles for national and regional organizations including ACS, ASCRS, ASA, AWS, CoC, NSQIP, NAPRC and the Upstate NY Surgical Quality Improvement Program. We took part in STEM programs at local high schools – and 25 colorectal staff and faculty participated in 5K Strollin' for the Colon event. Our active community engagement continued with Colon Cancer Awareness Month at Greece Ridge Mall, community conversations, employee events and local news, plus our support of "BarberED then Screened", initiative, addressing barriers to colorectal cancer screening uptake experienced by Urban Black men.



**Larissa K.F. Temple, M.D.,  
M.Sc., F.A.C.S., F.A.S.C.R.S.,  
Professor of Surgery and Chief,  
Division of Colorectal Surgery;  
Director of the Colorectal  
Fellowship; Vice Chair, Care  
Transformation**

#### *Clinical Faculty*

**Lisa Cannon, M.D.**

**Christina Cellini, M.D.**

**Fergal J. Fleming, M.D.**

**Gabriela Poles, M.D.**

**Rabih M. Salloum, M.D.**

**Jenny R. Speranza, M.D.**

**Zhaomin (Tim) Xu, M.D.**

## Faculty



**Marjorie J. Arca, M.D., F.A.C.S.,  
Joseph M. Lobozzo II Professor of  
Pediatric Surgery and Chief,  
Division of Pediatric Surgery;  
Surgeon-in-Chief, Golisano  
Children's Hospital**

### *Clinical Faculty*

**David Darcy, M.D.**

**Walter Pegoli, Jr., M.D.**

**Derek S. Wakeman, M.D.**

**Nicole Wilson, Ph.D., M.D.**

## Pediatric Surgery

Golisano Children's Hospital (GCH) at the University of Rochester Medical Center offers the finest surgical services for children. Our Pediatric Surgery Division is composed of a specialty team of surgeons and advanced practice providers who manages surgical problems in infants and children to age 15 years. We have an average of approximately 1,100 ambulatory visits. We perform about 1000 operative procedures a year. Our division works closely with all programs and services throughout the hospital including to have the best outcomes for our patients. Our team understands that, "Your child needs surgery" may be some of the most frightening words a parent ever hears. We provide high-quality, compassionate and family-centered care for infants, children and adolescents. We help counsel and reassure families every step of the way.

## Highlights

Clinical highlights include a 15% increase in the number of cases from the prior year. Led by Dr. Derek Wakeman, GCH received Level I Pediatric Trauma Certification from the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Nicole Wilson started a Comprehensive Chest Wall Anomalies Program. Dr. David Darcy created a comprehensive congenital colorectal program, including having our hospital be engaged in national clinical collaboratives included the Pediatric Colorectal and Pelvic Learning Consortium and Hirschsprung Research Collaborative.

Standardized, evidence-based care is the hallmark of high quality and safe surgical care. We also developed a standardization of care of surgical patients for common diagnoses such as appendicitis, pyloric stenosis, pectus excavatum, solid organ injury, adhesive bowel obstruction, and neonatal surgical procedures. Additional multidisciplinary guidelines include button battery management and congenital diaphragmatic hernia management.

Divisional research initiatives throughout the past year yielded two patent applications, 16 journal articles, 20 poster and podium presentations and four investigator awards. Our initiatives include novel basic science methods to fight infection and scarring, use of artificial intelligence to predict severity of trauma patient injuries, and using community mentoring to improve resource utilization of patients discharged with gastrostomy tubes.

Elemeno is an educational app for developed by Dr. Arca for surgery residents and the GCH Operating Room (OR) nursing team. The app is readily available to our surgical trainees for ready information to help care for our patients. In the operative environment, Elemeno provides curated information to our nurses to facilitate all surgical procedures, whether elective or urgent.

Under Dr. Arca's guidance, GCH OR increased number of operative cases and efficiency on a year by year basis. The culture in the GCH OR is one of collaboration, dedication, and safety. A monthly yoga session is available to our nursing staff.

Community engagement includes partnering with Day Star to help care for children with complex medical care and participating in events to increase trauma awareness.

# Plastic Surgery

The Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery offers a full range of services, from cosmetic surgery, craniofacial surgery, pediatric plastic surgery, gender affirming surgery, hand surgery to running the regions only American Burn Association Verified Burn Center. We believe in offering the most advanced techniques and procedures available, while also helping the patient approach plastic surgery with complete understanding and realistic expectations. Our highly trained and experienced plastic surgeons are nationally recognized in their specialties.

## Highlights

Joseph Serletti '82M (MD), '88M (Res) and Bonnie Serletti '90M (MD), '94M (Res), recently made a generous pledge to endow the Serletti Family Cleft and Craniofacial Humanitarian Outreach Initiative at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC). The Serletti's generosity will initially support local and international outreach and advocacy efforts of the Pediatric Cleft and Craniofacial Center within URMC's Division of Plastic Surgery at Golisano Children's Hospital. In the future, this endowment will fund the Serletti Family Professorship, which will help attract, retain, and honor exemplary faculty clinicians in the plastic surgery division.

Dr. Jonathon Leckenby received NIH funding to further study cancer treatment for induced sensory neuropathy. The Leckenby lab primarily focuses on enhancing the regeneration and preventing the degeneration of the peripheral nervous system. The lab's research aims to improve the quality of lives of cancer survivors through the prevention and/or reversal of the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy induced by cancer treatment.

As part of UR Medicine's Strong Memorial Hospital, the Kessler Family Burn Center serves as a resource for patients throughout New York State and Northern Pennsylvania. Our dedicated team continues to provide a wide range of outreach and education initiatives to not only educate the community about the Center's services, but to also prevent devastating burns from happening.

Dr. Howard Langstein was appointed President for the North Eastern Society of Plastic Surgeons.

During the most recent renovation project within the Department of Surgery, a new state of the art conference room was created. The new room is named in honor of Robert McCormack, MD, who was the Chair of Plastic Surgery at URMC for over 30 years.

The Division is pleased to welcome Dr. Candice Leach to the faculty as of October 1, 2023. Dr. Leach comes to us from the University of Kansas Medical Center where she has completed her Microsurgery Fellowship.



**Howard N. Langstein, M.D.,  
F.A.C.S., Professor of Surgery and  
Chief, Division of Plastic and  
Reconstructive Surgery**

### *Clinical Faculty*

**Derek E. Bell, M.D.**

**Jose G. Christiano Neto, M.D.**

**Candice Leach, M.D.**

**Jonathan I. Leckenby, M.B.B.S.,  
Ph.D.**

**Clinton S. Morrison, M.D.**

**Sara Niemanis, M.D.**

**Patrick Reavey, M.D., M.S.**

## Faculty



**Theodor I. Kaufman, M.D., F.A.C.S.,**  
Associate Professor of  
Clinical Surgery, Chief  
Division of Regional Surgery

### *Clinical Faculty*

---

#### *Regional General Surgery:*

**Bradley Hensley, M.D.**

**Asfandiyar Khan, M.D.**

**Du Nguyen, M.D.**

**Andrew Powers, M.D.**

**Svetlana Yudina, M.D.**

#### *Community General Surgery:*

**John P. Risolo, M.D.**

## Regional General Surgery

When patients need general surgery, they don't need to drive to Rochester or elsewhere to get expert care. The UR Medicine Regional and Community General Surgery Team provides surgery at our affiliate hospitals throughout the region, including UR Medicine's F.F. Thompson, Jones Memorial, Noyes Memorial, St. James and Strong West.

Our well-trained general surgeons are working together to better serve patients at UR Medicine affiliated hospitals and outpatient surgery centers. The surgical expertise and collaboration that this team brings to our communities will allow patients to receive quality care in a smaller, comfortable hospital setting – and in a location close to home.

### Highlights

Our team continues to grow with the recruitment of Dr. Bradley Hensley, the sixth surgeon within the regional general surgery program. Dr. Hensley, a former URM resident, will focus his clinical effort at FF Thompson and St. James hospitals.

FY23 brought the launch of the American College of Surgeons' National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) to FF Thompson, Jones Memorial, Noyes Memorial and St James hospitals. In addition, we established a "UR Med Small/Rural Collaborative" within NSQIP to look at results across our system. We are the first rural surgery NSQIP collaborative established and look forward to reporting and sharing our experiences. Our regional QA team attended the ACS's Quality and Safety Conference and presented our poster "University of Rochester's Systems Approach to Community Hospital National Surgical Quality Improvement Program Implementation".

With a focus on training the next generation of rural surgeons, we are proud to be the only surgery residency program in the United States to garner new and fully funded residency slots through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Section 126 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act. The newly funded slots are geared towards training residents in rural and underserved areas. As our regional program continues to grow and expand, we are developing robust resident rotations at R5 and R3 levels at UR Medicine affiliate hospitals to continue to foster resident/medical student interest in pursuing rural general surgery.

Our community general surgery team of Dr. John Risolo and Samantha Johnson, PA welcomed Catherine Benjamin, PA to our practice. We continue to provide high quality outpatient general surgery services to our west side catchment area at Strong West Ambulatory Surgery Center as well as continuing to see patients at Strong and operating at Sawgrass Ambulatory Surgical Center in Rochester. Our team continues to perform the largest volume of laparoscopic cholecystectomy surgery at free standing surgical centers in the Rochester area.

## Surgical Oncology

The specialists and staff of the Division of Surgical Oncology make it our mission to provide care to cancer patients that is truly conducive to healing. As the only full-service oncology program in the region, we have access to all of the resources of the University of Rochester Medical Center – including the Wilmot Cancer Institute, one of the nation's leading cancer research facilities.

### Highlights

During 2023, our division hired two new faculty members: Dr. Anna Weiss, Associate Professor, Director of the Multidisciplinary Pluta Breast Program and leader of Breast Surgery and Dr. Alessandra Moore, Assistant Professor, surgeon-scientist.

Under the direction of Dr. Jacob Moalem, the use of opioids in surgical patients was further reduced throughout the year. Dr. Moalem has led the University of Rochester's post-operative opioid stewardship program – a comprehensive program that is the product of an extensive collaboration between the Department of Surgery, the Quality Institute and the Recovery Center of Excellence, which has been supported by Medical Faculty and HRSA grants. This groundbreaking work involves a holistic approach to eliminating opioid over-prescription through patient, family and provider education, as well as innovative modifications to the medical records that allow prescriptions to be matched to patient needs. Surgical teams establish evidence-based prescription targets and dashboards, allowing them to monitor variations in prescribing behavior by any clinical or demographic factor, so that significant outliers and additional opportunities for improvement can be identified. Since the inception of this project, our team has dramatically reduced variability in prescribing across our department and increased the proportion of opioid-free discharges from 39% to 58%. Simultaneously, we reduced the average discharge quantity from nine to three pills, all while decreasing the number of patient calls for pain medications after discharge. This means we have successfully reduced the risk of opioid misuse among our patients, their families and communities.

Our breast program saw a 17% increase in total cases, with the initiation of a breast health program that manages high-risk patients and other benign breast diseases. The survivorship program, also started in 2023, focuses on patients who are five years out or more from their diagnosis, including seeing new patients who have completed their care elsewhere. During the year, our division also established a multidisciplinary pancreatic and biliary cancer clinic with the goal of seeing new patients by both medical and surgical oncology within one week from referral.

Additionally, our division submitted the Department of Surgery's first NIH P01 program project grant "Targeting Both Tumor Intrinsic and Extrinsic Barriers to Treat Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer." With a project budget of \$10 million over five years, the program will feature three projects, two of which involve clinical trials of novel therapeutics.



**Darren Carpizo, M.D., Ph.D.,  
F.A.C.S.,  
Professor of Surgery and  
Chief, Division of Surgical Oncology**

#### *Clinical Faculty*

**Eva Galka, M.D.**

**Jessica Gooch, M.D.**

**David C. Linehan, M.D.**

**Jacob Moalem, M.D.**

**Alessandra Moore, M.D.**

**Ann Olzinski-Kunze, M.D.**

**Luke O. Schoeniger, M.D.**

**Kristen Skinner, M.D.**

**Anna Weiss, M.D.**

#### *Research Faculty:*

**Calvin Cole, Ph.D.**

**Scott Gerber, Ph.D.**

**Chris Harris, Ph.D.**

**Jian Ye, Ph.D.**

#### *Professor Emeritus:*

**James L. Peacock, M.D.**

## FACULTY



**Carolyn E. Jones, M.D., F.A.C.S.,  
Associate Professor of Surgery  
and Chief, Division of Thoracic and  
Foregut Surgery**

### *Clinical Faculty*

---

**Ryan Campagna, M.D.**

**Paul Feingold, M.D.**

**David C. Kaufman, M.D.**

**Michal J. Lada, M.D.**

**Christian G. Peyre, M.D..**

## Thoracic & Foregut Surgery

The Division of Thoracic and Foregut Surgery offers the most advanced treatments for diseases of the esophagus, stomach, lungs and chest cavity, provided by nationally and internationally renowned experts. Our team takes a highly progressive approach to surgery. Rather than dividing problems that occur between the chest and the abdomen, we look at them as a whole. We are one of the few facilities in the nation to do this – and are comfortable working on both sides of the diaphragm to correct problems associated with a wide range of diseases. Our true multidisciplinary approach to patient care involves oncologists, pulmonologists, gastroenterologists and other top specialists, allowing us to offer state-of-the-art therapies across disciplines.

### Highlights

This past summer, we welcomed Dr. Ryan Campagna to our thoracic team. Originally from Buffalo, NY, Dr. Campagna's medical education began at the Ohio State University College of Medicine, where he graduated magna cum laude as a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. He later completed a General Surgery residency at McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University in Chicago, IL. His training included a postdoctoral research fellowship, where he focused on clinical outcomes and translational device applications in patients with functional esophageal disorders. Dr. Campagna also took interest in surgical education and obtained a Masters in Medical Education to further develop his aptitude in the field. He completed a Cardiothoracic Surgery fellowship at University of Michigan, where he trained extensively in robotic thoracic surgery and obtained a thoracic robotics certification from the American Association for Thoracic Surgery (AATS).

As a pioneer in developing innovative procedures, our division leads the way in research and treatment options. We offer procedures and therapies that are only available at premier thoracic and foregut surgery centers worldwide, including curative en bloc esophagectomy for esophageal cancer, vagal sparing removal of the esophagus, laparoscopic Nissen fundoplication and esophageal myotomy and endoluminal therapies for GERD. Plus, we provide the latest technological advancements that help to reduce post-operative pain and speed recovery.

## Vascular Surgery

The Division of Vascular Surgery provides patients in our region with unsurpassed vascular care. Our division has long been recognized as one of the nation's pioneers in vascular surgery. We were instrumental in creating and perfecting treatments that are now used around the world. In many cases, we provide surgical options that are not available at other area centers.

### Highlights

This past year was full of significant highlights and happenings for our division. Under Dr. Michael Stoner's leadership, we completed our 300<sup>th</sup> TCAR, the largest vascular surgery minimal-access carotid program in New York State. TCAR is now routinely performed at Highland Hospital – and, with the guidance of Dr. Karina Newhall, we also expanded this capability to F.F. Thompson Hospital to assist with regional load balancing and local care delivery. This is the first full-year with an acute vascular surgery service, which has improved consult-to-OR time, decreased length of stay, increased block time utilization and improved surgeon wellness. In 2024, we look forward to increasing minimal-access complex aortic surgery volume regionally by establishing a regional aortic group.

Our educational and research initiatives in 2023 included mentoring young surgeons, as Dr. Adam Doyle continues to evolve the integrated vascular training program. Dr. Doran Mix was awarded an NIH KL2 Research Program grant and Dr. Grayson Pitcher was named Reviewer of the Year for the *Journal of Vascular Surgery – Cases, Innovation and Techniques*. The division maintains a robust clinical trials program, offering cutting edge investigational therapy to our patients.

Additionally, our division continued to enhance patient care with Dr. Roan Glocker assuming the role of Chief of Surgery at Highland Hospital. Drs. Glocker and Pitcher are also actively involved in the UR Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students (MAPS) program. The outpatient vein center led by Dr. Jennifer Ellis remains the only accredited academic vein center in upstate NY. For the third consecutive year, Dr. Newhall chaired a regional scholarship committee for first generation college students (Walentas Scholarship, UVA) and is also a scholarship committee member for the New York City region. Plus, Dr. Stoner volunteered for Junior Achievement and Dr. Mix continued to serve the University on its Medical School Admissions, Medical School Distinction in Research and Office of Medical Education Summer Research Committees. In addition to presenting at the national and international levels and authoring numerous publications, all of the providers in our division remained actively engaged in research throughout the year.



**Michael C. Stoner, M.D., F.A.C.S.,**  
Professor of Surgery;  
Chief, Division of Vascular Surgery;  
Program Director, Vascular Surgery  
Integrated Residency Program

#### *Clinical Faculty*

**Adam Doyle, M.D.**

**Jennifer L. Ellis M.D.**

**Roan Glocker, M.D.**

**Doran Mix, M.D.**

**Craig Narins, M.D.**

**Karina Newhall, M.D.**

**Alaska Pendleton, M.D.**

**Grayson Pitcher, M.D.**

#### *Research Faculty:*

**Adnan Hirad, M.D., Ph.D.**

## Advanced Practice Providers Highlights

Our Advanced Practice Providers (APP) team has made remarkable contributions across various disciplines, showcasing their dedication to patient care, research, and community engagement.

### Innovation in Patient Care:

The Pediatric APP Team collaborated to develop programs enhancing patient education, standardized booking procedures, and reimagined support systems like the G-tube Buddy Program, ensuring a seamless experience for patients.

### Community Engagement:

Members of the APP team expanded our commitment to social welfare and healthcare literacy by being active participants in community initiatives. We collaborated with the EnCompass program, Teens Against Violence Alliance (TAVA), and Stop the Bleed. Notably, Holli Swanson, NP and Quarnisha White, NP contributed to the "BarberED then Screened", initiative, addressing barriers to colorectal cancer screening uptake experienced by Urban Black men.

### Research and Publications:

APP members made significant contributions to research, with Todd Chennell, NP publishing on outpatient endocrine surgery practices. NPs Holli Swanson and Quarnisha White's paper on postoperative opioid stewardship protocols was published in the *Journal of Surgery*. Holly Swanson also produced a paper on patient engagement technology following elective colorectal surgery that was recently accepted for publication. In addition, Carly Densmore, RD, co-authored a paper addressing unique needs in long-term home enteral nutrition.

### Leadership and Advocacy:

Several team members took on leadership positions in national organizations, demonstrating our dedication to shaping the future of healthcare and advocating for the highest standards of patient care.

Plastic Surgery's Melisande Ploutz, NP was elected for a 3-year term on the Board of Directors for the *American Cleft Palate Craniofacial Association (ACPA)*. In addition, she is the acting Chair of ACPA's *Care Coordination special interest group* and presents at national meetings.

Todd Chennell, NP spoke on thyroid disease and safe medication disposal practices at the 2022 and 2023 *New York Nurse Practitioner Association Annual Conference*. Todd is also a co-chair of the *Region 2 New York Nurse*

*Practitioner Association* and sits on the membership committee of the *American Association of Endocrine Surgeons*.

Pediatric Surgery appointed Jess Elbaz, NP as the lead APP

### New Programs and New Team Members:

In the Department of Surgery, the Thoracic Surgery team was able to role out a new program, *NOURISH*, which offers a standardized treatment pathway for nutritional needs of esophageal cancer patients.

In addition, the *Breast Health Program* which evaluates risk in order to reduce breast cancer, was launched, with Crystal Regis, NP as the lead.

Pediatric Trauma developed a new program appointing Lauren Person, NP as lead.

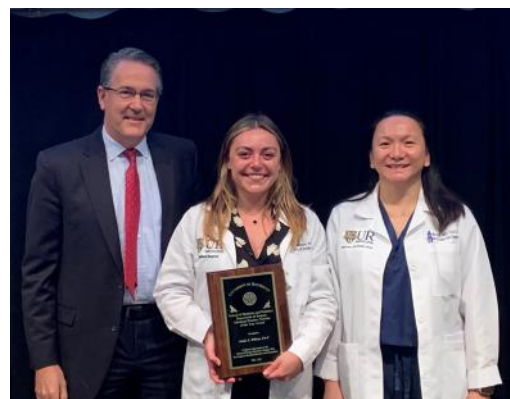
During fiscal year 2023, the department was able to launch and complete the first *Surgical APP Fellowship* educational program.

Several new APP members joined the team with Amanda Battoglia, NP joining the hepatobiliary team in Surgical Oncology and Jenna Dobbins, NP joining the Pediatric Surgery team.

### Awards:

In 2023, Jennifer Wilson, PA, won the Surgical Resident appointed *Advanced Practice Provider of the Year Award* for her excellence and mentorship in the operating room.

In summary, the APP team's achievements in 2023 reflect our commitment to excellence in patient care, education, research, and community engagement. These efforts not only showcase our team's expertise but also underline our dedication to improving healthcare outcomes and making a positive impact on the communities we serve.



Jennifer Wilson, PA receiving the *Advanced Practice Provider of the Year Award*

# Staff Recognition

We like to recognize our long-standing team members in the Department of Surgery with more than 30 years of service within the Department:

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Q & A: What has been your biggest accomplishment working in the Department of Surgery?



37 years: **Sandra Bucukovski**

*Division Administrator,  
Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
and Burn; Surgical Oncology*

"...acquiring knowledge from amazing mentors who have shown me how grow and adapt to the ever-changing environment here at UR while enjoying all of the friendships forged along the way."



35 years: **Mariellen Blossom**

*Assistant to the Office of  
Surgical Education &  
the Enrollment Expeditor for the  
Department of Surgery*

"...is confidence in my self to complete tasks in an accurate and timely manner and have efforts appreciated with a 'thank you'."



30 years: **Beth Jocolano**

*Administrator, Plastic Surgery  
Resident Program*

"...are the lasting friendships I have made with faculty, staff, and the residents, through the years."



30 years: **Carole Dill**

*Administrator, Transplant Program*

"...the knowledge that we give to people to get their lives back. Many of these patients are still going strong. I love that we follow our patients for as long as they have their organs. I marvel at how our program has grown so much. Proud to be a Transplant Lifer!"

## More than 20 years:

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27 years: **Daphne Sesnie**, *Thoracic Surgery*

26 years: **Tammy Hubbard**, *Pediatric Cardiac Surgery*

24 years: **Amy Mills**, *Surgical Residency*

23 years: **Jennifer Maggi**, *Plastic Surgery*

22 years: **Kerry Kehoe**, *Central Administration*

21 years: **Al LaVigueur**, *Central Administration*

20 years: **Corrine Fowler**, *Central Administration*

20 years: **Marjorie Roberts**, *Thoracic Surgery*

# ICARE

Our ICARE Stars program highlights faculty and staff who went above and beyond in their jobs. Stars are written by patients, staff and faculty to recognize and promote the efforts of those who truly shine.

During the 2023 fiscal year, there were 267 ICARE Stars received by 152 unique individuals from the Department of Surgery.

55% of ICARE Stars were submitted by patients, here are a few samples of what patients had to say about our faculty, residents and staff:

"He remained engaged, compassionate, and creative in his care. His most differentiating quality is listening to the input of others, balancing various inputs, and prioritizing patient success."

"Every time we speak I can hear your smile through the phone!"

"She held my hand because I was nervous and she showed deep compassion and empathy."

"Thank you for coming to speak with our staff regarding the loss of one of our long time patients. Our nursing staff spent a lot of time with him, and became very close. Having you come down to speak with everyone, and go through the events of that day, and his hospital course meant a lot to all of us, and help our grieving process immensely."



## ICARE Super Stars in the Department of Surgery

Silver: (10-14 ICARE Stars)

Catriona Braun, AC2 – Motility Lab  
Stephanie Laird, Quality Assurance

Molly Poinan, Quality Assurance

Bronze: (5 ICARE Stars or submitted 5 or more nominations)

Derek Bell, M.D., Plastic Surgery  
Florence Bortle, Surgical Oncology  
Adam Doyle, M.D., Vascular Surgery  
Kristy Ellsworth, Central Admin,  
Surgery Program  
Tashika Farrell, Plastic Surgery,  
Wound Center

Martha Gogos, Thoracic Surgery  
Angela Iacchetta, Central Admin  
Bryan Listowski, Pediatric Profusion  
Ryan Magnuson, D.O., Cardiac Surgery  
Alexis Phillips, Plastic Surgery,  
Wound Center  
Timothy Rigdon, Pediatric Profusion

Tammy Roman, Plastic Surgery  
Wound Center  
Heather Shelley, Vascular Surgery  
Nicolas Smioldo, Plastic Surgery

# Team Spotlight

## Platinum Award for Team Excellence *from* Greater Rochester Quality Council Post-Operative Opioid Prescription Management Team

In 2019, in response to the opioid crisis being declared a national public health emergency, and with mounting evidence that the majority of prescribed opioids are not necessary; the Department of Surgery declared opioid reduction its highest priority quality improvement project.

The Post-Operative Pain Management Team (members pictured below) was established in July 2021, with a grant from the University of Rochester Medical Faculty Group (URMFG) with the goal of reducing post-operative opioid prescribing by 20 percent within two years.

Secondary goals included patient-centered efforts to manage post-operative pain: Engaging patients in shared decision-making about analgesic options, reducing the number of opioids sent home, reducing unused prescribed

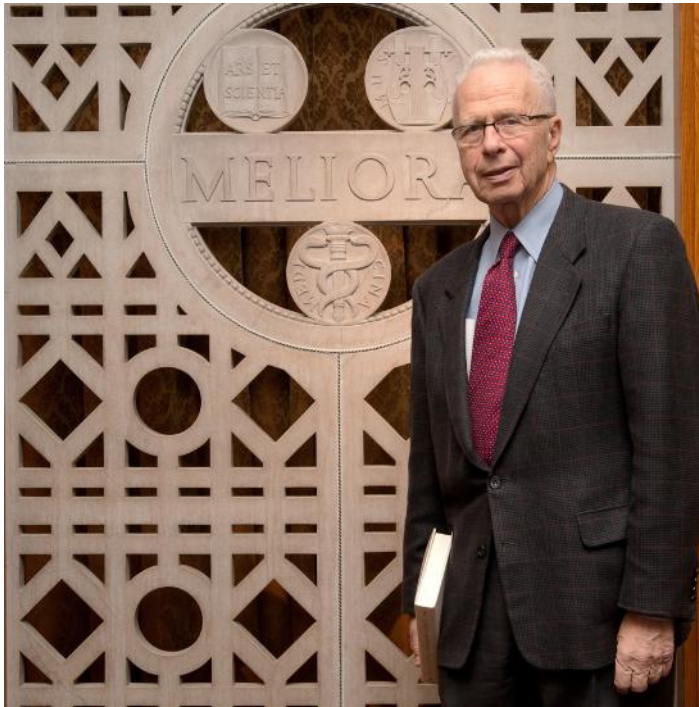
opioids in patient homes after a surgical procedure, and avoiding an increase in patient requests for pain medication post-discharge.

To meet these goals, the team created a patient and provider toolkit that included information on prescribing recommendations, performance-tracking tools, information on post-op pain expectations, opioid and analgesic pain management options, a video about post-operative pain management, and Detera bags for disposing of excess opioids. With an initial proof of concept established within a year, the team expanded so the program could be disseminated across URMG surgical service lines and to rural affiliate hospitals



# Advancement

## Dr. Seymour I. Schwartz General Surgical Residents Educational Enhancement Fund Impact Report



The Dr. Seymour I. Schwartz General Surgical Residents Educational Enhancement Fund was established in recognition of Dr. Seymour I. Schwartz, one of America's most distinguished surgeons and a vocal advocate for the critical role that education plays in preparing the next generation of surgical leaders. Schwartz, the University of Rochester's former chair of surgery, served as director of surgical research for 20 years. Today, the Schwartz General Surgical Residents Educational Enhancement Fund continues to promote the value of continuing education by funding immersive, experiential research opportunities for today's surgical residents.

### Education in Action

This year, the Schwartz General Surgical Residents Educational Enhancement Fund awarded critical financial support and stipends for surgical residents who interrupted their training to devote time to basic and translational re-

search in surgical sciences. With your support, we continue to encourage these leaders to explore new frontiers in research, taking an active role in the discovery of new knowledge that has the potential to solve some of the greatest challenges in medicine and science.

Here is a look at what your support has made possible:

Through a two-year research fellowship, Luis Ruffolo, MD, was able to enhance his educational experience by helping to open a new clinical trial aimed at evaluating the combination of immunotherapy and chemotherapy on pancreas cancer. Under the mentorship of David Linehan, MD, the Seymour I. Schwartz Professor in Surgery and chair of the Department of Surgery, Ruffolo served as co-investigator for the study which aimed to improve survival rates for patients with pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC), the third leading cause of cancer related deaths. The study, which is ongoing, has the potential to do more than inform future studies in this increasingly relevant area; it could help uncover effective therapies for treating PDAC, a significant unmet medical need at present.





“Only with disciplined scientific inquiry and the translation of basic knowledge to the bedside will we improve outcomes for patients with surgical disease. This overarching desire to create knowledge and to continuously improve defines who we are. An emphasis on continued excellence in scholarship is of paramount importance to our mission to train the next generation of academic surgeons.”

— YANJIE QI, MD

Associate Professor, Department of Surgery General Surgery Residency Program Director University of Rochester Medical Center

“Dr. Schwartz’s impact is one that will stand the test of time. Even after his death, his presence—here at URMCC and throughout our field—is undeniable. Our residents understand what an honor it is to carry on his legacy by furthering the work that he believed so deeply in. Dr. Schwartz understood that achieving excellence is only possible when you place curiosity, innovation, and intellect above all else. It is an honor to continue his work to enhance resident and fellow education to the fullest degree.”

— DAVID C. LINEHAN, MD

Seymour I. Schwartz Professor in Surgery Chair, Department of Surgery University of Rochester Medical Center

## By the Numbers



**71** total residents



**84** clinical faculty



**12,000+** operative cases per year



**1,100** total major cases  
(resident average)



**57** peer reviewed publications by  
UR Surgery residents in 2022

## Strengthening a Legacy of Excellence

Alumni support does more than open doors to experiential, hands-on research experiences for today’s residents—it allows us to build on the foundation established by Dr. Seymour I. Schwartz, preparing future surgeons who will advance knowledge and save lives. Consider a tax-deductible gift to the Dr. Seymour I. Schwartz General Surgical Residents Educational Enhancement Fund. Gifts of all amounts play a huge role in creating opportunities for our

doctors, researchers and staff, and for the community to receive the best care possible. As we look to the future, we are truly grateful for your support and your shared belief in the role our medical students will play in creating a healthier future for us all.

For additional information about giving, please contact Kerrie Merz, senior director, URMCC Clinical Advancement at (585) 260-4379 or [kerrie.merz@rochester.edu](mailto:kerrie.merz@rochester.edu).

**For more information about the Department of Surgery, contact:**

**David C. Linehan, M.D.**

*Seymour I. Schwartz Professor and Chairman*

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|                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
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| Acute Care Surgery           | 585-275-3022 |
| Bariatric Surgery            | 585-341-0366 |
| Cardiac Surgery              | 585-275-8880 |
| Colorectal Surgery           | 585-273-2727 |
| General Surgery              | 585-276-7874 |
| Pediatric Surgery            | 585-275-4435 |
| Plastic Surgery              | 585-275-1000 |
| Surgical Oncology            | 585-275-1611 |
| Thoracic and Foregut Surgery | 585-275-1509 |
| Vascular Surgery             | 585-279-5100 |



MELIORA



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