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Dear GI Team,

As I reflect on this 2026 quarterly newsletter, I am incredibly proud of what we continue to accomplish together as one unified GI division. The breadth of work highlighted—from our outstanding CME course and impactful research initiatives to operational innovations and national recognitions—truly reflects the strength of our collective mission and our commitment to excellence across clinical care, research, and education.

What stands out most is our culture—one rooted in collaboration, innovation, and shared purpose. Whether it is advancing precision medicine through multi-center NIH studies, strengthening clinical operations across sites, or fostering cutting-edge translational science through the SDDRC, each of you is contributing to a larger vision that continues to elevate UCSD GI on the national and global stage.

I want to extend a special note of gratitude to our trainees, whose curiosity, energy, and commitment to learning continue to inspire us every day. You are the future of our field, and your drive pushes all of us to be better educators, mentors, and clinicians. Equally, I am deeply appreciative of our outstanding administrative team, whose dedication, organization, and unwavering support enable our division to function seamlessly and achieve at the highest level.

Our success is also a reflection of our strong alignment and close partnership with the Department of Medicine, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, and UC San Diego Health System. Together, we are building something truly special—an ecosystem where innovation thrives and where a shared commitment to excellence drives meaningful impact for our patients and the broader community.

Thank you for your passion, your teamwork, and your relentless pursuit of excellence. It is a privilege to lead this extraordinary group.

Best wishes,

Rohit Loomba, MD, MHS

Professor of Medicine
John C. Martin Endowed Chair
Director, MASLD Research Center
Chief, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology
University of California at San Diego



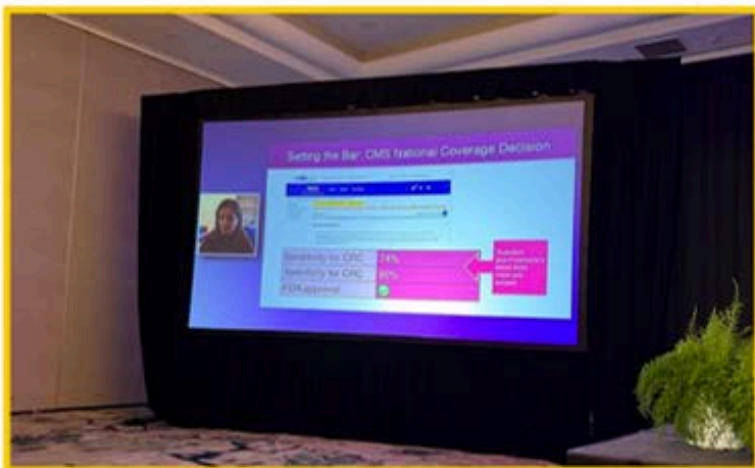
UC San Diego #1 for
Gastroenterology &
Hepatology Research



#28
Gastroenterology
& GI Surgery

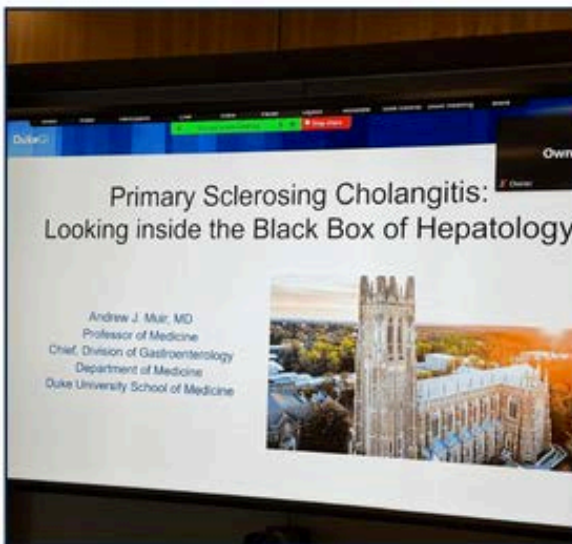
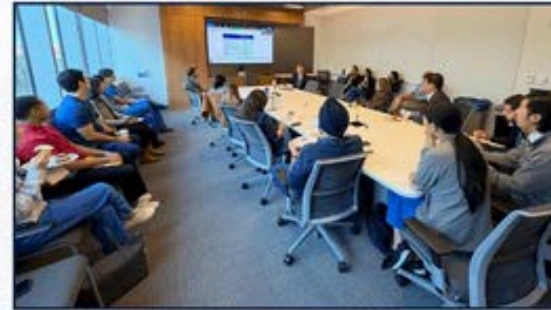
DIVISION EVENTS

2026 Advances in GI & Hepatology Conference



The 14th Annual Advances in Gastroenterology and Hepatology CME Course was a tremendous success, bringing together faculty, fellows, visiting experts, and community gastroenterologists for a dynamic and engaging educational event. Co-course directors Drs. Pranab Barman and Brigid Boland led an outstanding program that was clinically relevant and intellectually stimulating. The meeting highlighted the strength of the UC San Diego GI community, with vibrant discussion, collaboration, and contributions from distinguished visiting speakers. Special thanks to the FocusMed team for their exceptional coordination in making the event seamless.

2.25.26
Grand Rounds
Dr. Andrew Muir



MASLD Research Center Work in Progress WIN Meetings

Discussing emerging data for upcoming
EASL and DDW meetings.



Pictured:
Dr. Luis Diaz-Piga
Dr. Federica Tavaglione
Dr. Veeral Ajmera
Dr. Monica Tincopa
Dr. Rohit Loomba



Mary Lee Krinsky's Retirement Party



The Center for Circadian Biology's 16th Annual Symposium



The Center for Circadian Biology's 16th annual symposium gathered about 100 researchers, clinicians, and industry partners to showcase the newest developments in circadian science. Co-director Amir Zarrinpar opened the event with a compelling overview of how time-keeping mechanisms are reshaping our understanding of health and disease. In her closing remarks, co-director Paula Desplats announced the renaming of the institute to the Center for Circadian Biology and Medicine and unveiled the new center logo, underscoring the expanded mission that bridges fundamental chronobiology with clinical translation. The program featured a slate of cutting-edge keynote talks and a vibrant poster session, sparking interdisciplinary conversations that highlighted the center's growing role as a hub for innovative research and future collaborations across campus and beyond.

3.25.26
Grand Rounds
Dr. Coelho-Prabhu



Dr. Nayantara Coelho-Prabhu of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, recently delivered an insightful presentation on the detection and management of colitis-associated neoplasia.

GLOGE
EVENT





San Diego
DEFEAT COLORECTAL CANCER



FELLOWS LUNCH



Dr. John Chang on the new Ambient AI Notetaker App - Nabla

Nabla is a new ambient AI notetaker app that became available in January 2026. It can be used in both the outpatient clinic and inpatient settings. I now routinely use Nabla for every outpatient clinic visit, both in-person and telehealth. I have found that using Nabla enables me to spend more time engaging with patients without needing to simultaneously take detailed notes. Importantly, using Nabla has also substantially reduced the amount of time needed to complete my documentation after the clinic visit, though of course the AI-generated summaries are not always perfect and require provider review. Implementation is fairly simple and just requires downloading the app. Nabla may not be helpful to every provider, but I encourage everyone to try it. The only reason not to try it is if you prefer to spend your evenings and weekends finishing your EPIC notes.



CLICK HERE

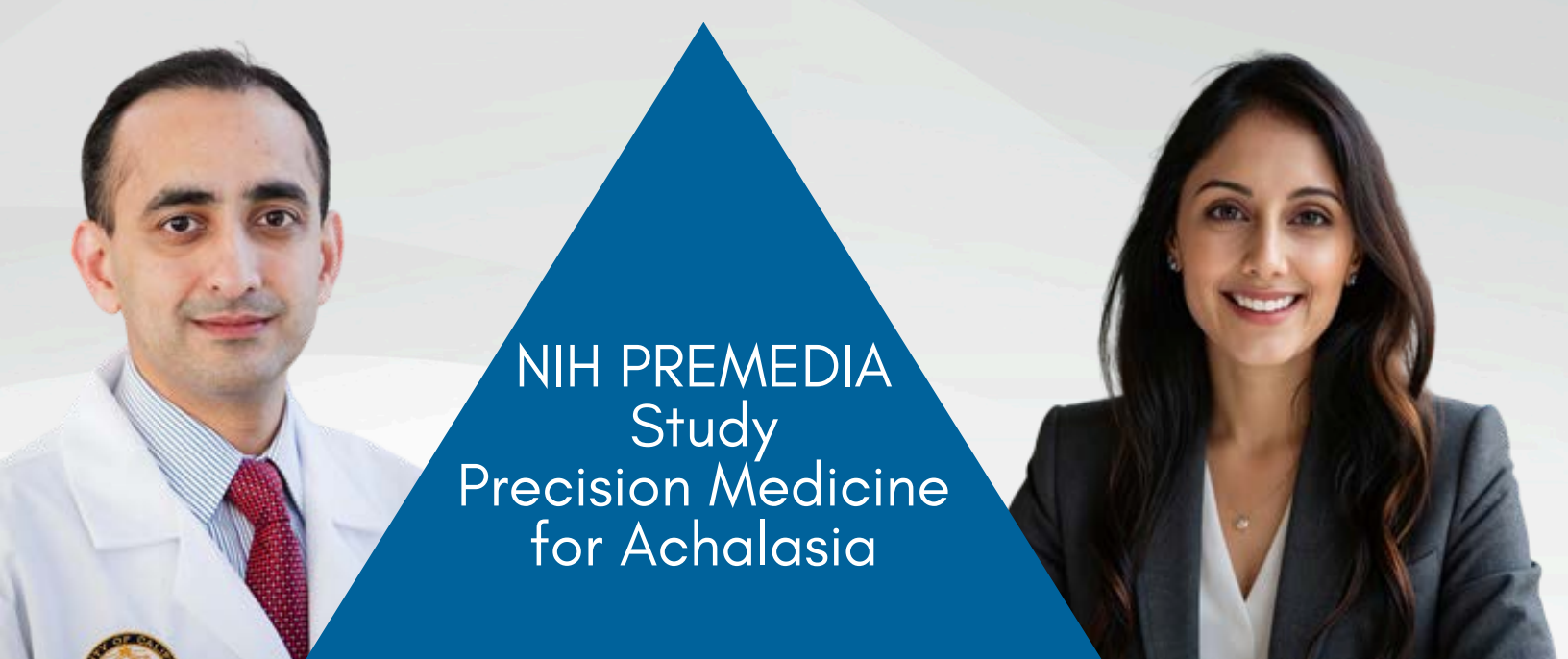
for more info. on how to
download the app



Judith L. Swain, MD, and Edward W. Holmes, MD
Chancellor's Endowed Chair



Congratulations to John Carethers, MD, Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences at UC San Diego Health, on his appointment as the inaugural holder of the Judith L. Swain, MD, and Edward W. Holmes, MD Chancellor's Endowed Chair in the UC San Diego School of Medicine. Established in 2024, this distinguished endowed chair recognizes Dr. Carethers' outstanding leadership and contributions to academic medicine. His appointment, approved by Pradeep Khosla, is effective March 1, 2026 through February 28, 2031.



NIH PREMEDIA Study Precision Medicine for Achalasia

Dr. Rena Yadlapati and Dr. S. Abbas Fehmi are pleased to announce the PREMEDIA study. This multi-center NIH U01 research initiative is aimed at advancing precision medicine approaches for achalasia and esophageal motility disorders. The study will include a randomized controlled trial to determine the optimal POEM approach for achalasia as well as evaluate other significant treatments, patient reported outcomes and underlying causes of these conditions. The initiative is among 16 Esophageal centers of excellence in the US, with Northwestern University as the primary site. Enrollment is anticipated to begin summer 2026.



Research Spotlight: Dr. Rohit Loomba Dr. Federica Tavaglione

A recent U.S. News & World Report article highlights research led by Dr. Rohit Loomba and Dr. Federica Tavaglione that could improve how clinicians detect alcohol-related liver disease.

[US News Article](#)

CO-DIRECTORS OF UCSD GI ENDOSCOPY



Michael Chang, MD
Associate Clinical Professor



Wilson Kwong, MD, MS
Associate Clinical Professor

At Thornton Special Procedures and the Hillcrest/McGrath Outpatient Pavilion, Clinical Medical Directors Michael Chang, MD and Wilson Kwong, MD have played a key role in strengthening collaboration across sites while advancing operational excellence. Rather than functioning as separate entities, the two leaders have worked intentionally to align Thornton and Hillcrest as a unified team, fostering shared goals, consistent practices, and a culture of partnership that benefits both staff and patients.

Both physicians have also taken an active role in financial stewardship, providing thoughtful oversight of supply utilization and helping ensure that resources are used efficiently without compromising the quality of care. Their engagement in reviewing workflows and materials has contributed to more sustainable operations across the procedural areas.

Scheduling improvements have been another area of focus. By refining block schedules and improving coordination across services, Dr. Chang and Dr. Kwong have helped optimize procedural access while supporting a smoother daily flow for clinical teams. These efforts have improved predictability for staff and enhanced the overall patient experience. One example of these improvements has been working with Dr. Aleck to provide dedicated Anesthesia on Sundays for our weekend call teams at Thornton.

Equally important is their responsiveness when urgent or unexpected issues arise. Whether addressing operational challenges, clinical needs, or last-minute schedule adjustments, both leaders consistently step in to help resolve problems quickly and effectively. Their commitment to transparent communication ensures that teams stay informed and aligned, creating trust across departments.

Above all, Dr. Chang and Dr. Kwong are known for their willingness to lean in and help wherever needed—demonstrating leadership through action and collaboration. And while their operational contributions are significant, one thing staff may quietly agree on: Dr. Chang also happens to drive a very cool car.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS



John Carethers, MD, MACP, FAACR

Recent Publications:

- Tseng-Rogenski SS, Venugopal A, Koi M, **Carethers JM**. Prevalence of germline MSH3 polymorphisms in Ulcerative Colitis and early-onset colorectal cancer patients that potentiates inflammation-to-cancer transformation. Hum Mol Genet 35:ddaf181, 2026.
- **Carethers JM**, May FP. Next-generation noninvasive colorectal cancer screening. Annual Rev Med 77:161-175, 2026.
- Fritz C, George M, **Carethers JM***, Cao Y*. Approach towards early detection and prevention of early-onset colorectal cancer. Annual Rev Med 77:147-159, 2026. *co-senior authors

Awards/Recognitions:

- Judith L. Swain, MD and Edward W. Holmes, MD Chancellor's Endowed Chair appointment

Funding:

- Gift from the Yosemite Group for research proposal "Mitigating loss-of-function of MSH3 in colorectal cancers" for \$400,000.



Rena Yadlapati, MD, MSHS

Awards/Recognitions:

- Dr. Rena Yadlapati: One of five gastroenterology leaders in the US who have made a positive impact on their organizations and the profession.
[5 GI leaders to watch in 2026 - Becker's ASC](#)

Recent Publications:

- **Yadlapati R**, Robles L, Clarke MK, Low EE, Walsh E, Krause AJ, Kaizer A. Randomized Controlled Trial of Upper Esophageal Sphincter Assist Device in Laryngopharyngeal Reflux Disease. Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2025 Dec 22:S1542-3565(25)01062-6. doi: 10.1016/j.cgh.2025.12.015. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41443523.



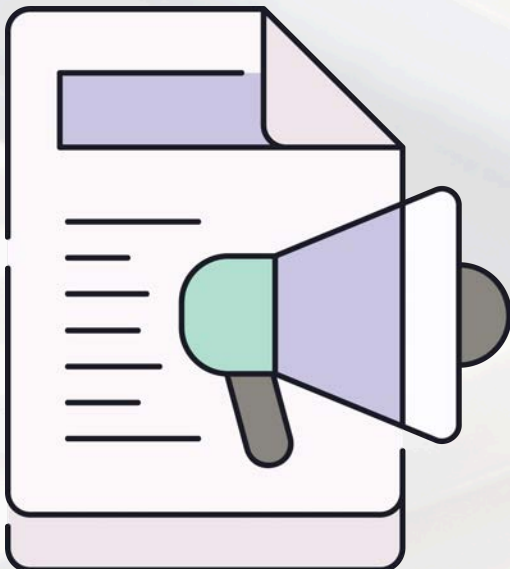
FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS



Barbara H. Jung, MD

Recent publications or research advancements:

- Wiley MB, Bauer J, Alvarez V, Kolics Z, Cheng W, Church DN, Kerr DJ, Kerr RS, **Jung J**. Activin A Affects Colorectal Cancer Progression and Immunomodulation in a Stage Dependent Manner. Sci Rep. 2025 Mar 12;15(1):8509. doi: 10.1038/s41598-025-91853-9. PMID: 40075112; PMCID: PMC11903883.
- Wiley MB, Bauer J, Wang Y, Intihar S, Fors R, Bialkowska AB, and **Jung B**. Activin A Promotes Progression of Pancreatitis into Pancreatic Cancer. American Clinical and Climatological Journal. Under Review.
- Bauer J, Wiley MB, Alvarez V, Intihar S, and **Jung B**. Activin A is associated with a reduction in stromal activity, memory T-cell and macrophage recruitment in PDAC. Poster presentation, DDW annual meeting. May 2025
- Wiley MB, Bauer J, Alvarez V, Kolics Z, Cheng W, Sarraf P, Papachristou G, Bialkowska A, Yazici C, and **Jung B**. Identification of Activin A as a Targetable Biomarker for Acute Pancreatitis. Poster presentation, DDW annual meeting. May 2025
- Wang Y, Wiley MB, Bauer J, Sarraf P, Papachristou G, Bialkowska A, Yazici C, and **Jung B**. Identification of Activin A as a Targetable Biomarker for Acute Pancreatitis. Poster presentation, APA annual meeting. November 2025
- Wiley MB, Bauer J, Wang Y, Sarraf P, Papachristou G, Bialkowska A, Yazici C, and **Jung B**. Activin A Promotes PDAC Progression via Immunosuppression and Non-Canonical Signaling. Poster presentation, APA annual meeting. November 2025





FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS



John Chang, MD

Recent Publications:

- Reina-Campos M, Monell A, Ferry A, Luna V, Cheung KP, Galletti G, Scharping NE, Takehara KK, Quon S, Boland B, Lin YH, Wong WH, Indralingam CS, Yeo GW, **Chang JT**, Heeg M, Goldrath AW. Functional Diversity of Memory CD8 T cells is spatiotemporally imprinted. *Nature* 2025. 639(8054):483-492.
- Dziegielewski C, Yuan Y, Ma C, Boland BS, **Chang JT**, Syal G, Vuyyuru SK, Peyrin-Biroulet L, Jairath V, Singh S. IL-23p19 Antagonists vs Ustekinumab for Treatment of Crohn's Disease: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *American Journal of Gastroenterology* 2025. 120(10):2260-2267.
- Hsu P, Choi EJ, Wong WH, Lin YH, Vandeburgh SA, Liu YC, Yao P, Indralingam CS, Yeo GW, Zuniga EI, Goldrath AW, Wang W, **Chang JT**. Foxo1 regulates intestinal tissue-resident memory CD8 T cell biology in an anatomic compartment- and context-specific manner. *Science Immunology* 2025. 10(106):eadn1894.
- Lee HH, Yuan Y, Boland BS, **Chang JT**, Jairath V, Singh S. Efficacy of Advanced Therapies in Achieving Remission by Disease Location in Crohn's Disease: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* 2025. S1542-3565(25)00615-9.

Funding:

- VA Merit Award entitled "Regulation of T cell immunity."
- R21 entitled "Immune adaptations in acute pouchitis." Dr. Brigid Boland is a co-investigator.
- R01 entitled "Role and regulation of tissue-resident CD8 T cells during persistent viral infection."
- Gates Foundation Award entitled "Novel approaches to quantify polio immune status." Dr. Brigid Boland is a co-investigator.
- Department of Defense Award entitled "Multi-omic approaches for non-invasive prediction of inflammatory bowel disease exacerbations." Dr. Brigid Boland is a co-investigator.



Updates from the San Diego Digestive Diseases Research Center (SDDRC)

The overall mission of the SDDRC is to support basic, translational, and clinical research aimed at improving the treatment and prevention of major inflammatory diseases of the gastrointestinal tract and liver. The Center continues to thrive in its seventh year of operation. Drs. Schnabl and Eckmann have led the Center since its establishment in 2019. The SDDRC currently provides the following services:

Core Services and Updates

Human Translational Core provides:

- Access to well-characterized human biospecimens for patients with Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) and Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).
- Access to archival clinical (GI/liver) tissue samples (stained or unstained slides) from the Pathology Department.
- Consultation in pathology, biostatistics, and protocol design.
- Weekly virtual office hour for biostatistics consultation with Xinlian Zhang, PhD, via Zoom, every Monday from 09:00 am - 10:00 am.

Preclinical Models Core provides:

- Services in histology and microscopy including tissue preparation, help in establishing proper fixation, routine and specialized staining, slide scanning, multiplex immunofluorescence, state-of-the-art microscopy, second harmonic generation collagen imaging, intravital imaging, and image analysis.
- Access to germ-free and gnotobiotic mice, and murine models of liver and gastrointestinal disease.
- Access to Human Liver Resource services, which include primary liver cells and liver tissue.
- Monthly virtual histopathology office hours with Kenneth Kim, DACVP, 3rd Thursday of the month from 12:00-1:00 pm.
- Monthly virtual histology office hours with Zbigniew Mikulski, PhD, 2nd Tuesday of the month from 1:00-2:00 pm.
- Proteomics services through the Collaborative Center for Proteomics led by Dr. David Gonzalez.

Microbiomics & Functional Genomics Core provides:

- Sample processing for microbiomics studies.
- Sequencing-based assays: Microbiome sequencing, RNA-seq, Single-cell sequencing (RNA, ATAC, Multiome), other sequencing-based assays (e.g. miRNA-Seq, ChIP-Seq).
- Spatial transcriptomics.
- Bioinformatics support:
 - ▶ Microbiomics (e.g. OTU, α/β diversity, shotgun metagenomics, archiving)
 - ▶ Functional genomics (e.g. transcript quantitation, systems biology interpretation)
 - ▶ Consultation and training in specific experimental and analytical techniques related to microbiomics and functional genomics.

Congratulations to the 2025-26 Pilot & Feasibility Awardees

The Pilot & Feasibility program has awarded a total of \$120,000 to the following investigators with promising research projects in digestive diseases:



Urtecho, Guillaume, PhD

**Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology,
UC San Diego**

Project Title: *"Exploring the Microbial Determinants of Region-Specific Inflammation in Crohn's Disease"*



Rivera-Chavez, Fabian, PhD

**Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics,
UC San Diego**

Project Title: *"Mechanisms of Immune-Metabolic Disruption by Bacterial Toxins in the Neonatal Gut"*



Reina-Campos, Miguel, PhD

**Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacology,
La Jolla Institute of Immunology**

Project Title: *"Understanding T Cell Adaptations to a Two-Front Nutrient Supply Environment"*

The next round of Pilot & Feasibility grants for the academic year 2026-27 will be announced in the summer/fall of 2026.

**SDDRC
Seminar**

Date/Time:

Wednesday 4/27/26, 12:00 – 1:00 pm, PT,
Leichtag-107 (Conference Room)

Speaker:

Samar H. Ibrahim, M.B.Ch.B

*Lipotoxic Endotheliopathy in MASH:
Mechanistic Insights and Therapeutic
Opportunities*

Science at Lunchtime

Date/Time:

Monday 4/13/26, 12:15 – 1:15 pm, Pacific Time,
BRF2- 5A03 (Conference Room)

Presenter:

Rena H. Yadlapati, M.D.,
Professor of Clinical Medicine, Department of Medicine,
Division of Gastroenterology, UC San Diego

SDDRC WORKSHOP

Intermediate level R-Support

Date/Time: Friday, April 24, 2026
10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Location: BRF2 – 5A03
(Conference Room)



**SDDRC
Symposium**

The 7th Annual SDDRC Symposium took place on Friday, February 6, 2026 and was a great success. Faculty, trainees, and staff came together for an afternoon of science, collaboration, and new ideas.

We were honored to welcome two outstanding keynote speakers, Dr. Helen Hobbs and Dr. June Round. Their talks were inspiring and highlighted important advances in biomedical research. The 2024-2025 SDDRC Pilot & Feasibility awardees also presented their innovative projects, showcasing the strength and creativity of our research community.

In addition, representatives from the SDDRC Cores shared updates on new resources and services available to investigators. Overall, the symposium highlighted the strong momentum of the SDDRC and the exciting work happening across our Center.



If you have used the Center services, please remember to cite the SDDRC in your publications, “This work was supported by the San Diego Digestive Diseases Research Center (P30 DK120515).”

Please visit our website <http://sddrc.ucsd.edu> for up-to-date information about the Center and its upcoming events.

Follow us on X (Formerly known as Twitter):

<https://twitter.com/SDDRC>

Direct all questions to sddrc@health.ucsd.edu, or the SDDRC Coordinator, Victoria Shokrollah vshokrollah@health.ucsd.edu

Upcoming Events

Save the Date

DIVISION OF GI AND HEPATOLOGY

DDW Reception

Sunday
May 3, 2026
5:30 PM to 7:30 PM

Robert's Pizza & Dough Company
465 N McClurg Ct.
Chicago, IL

SAVE THE DATE

THE DIVISION OF
GASTROENTEROLOGY & HEPATOLOGY

17TH ANNUAL RESEARCH RETREAT

Precision Medicine in Steatotic Liver
Diseases & Early GI Cancer Detection

COURSE DIRECTORS

Luis Antonio Diaz Piga, MD
Assistant Adjunct Professor

Samir Gupta, MD
Professor in Residence

Bernd Schnabl, MD
Professor, Medicine

QUESTIONS?
GIADMIN@HEALTH.UCSD.EDU



WEDNESDAY
MAY 13



ESTANCIA LA JOLLA
HOTEL & SPA



7:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Upcoming Events

UC San Diego
School of Medicine

Hosted by the
UCSD IBD Center

SAVE THE DATE

May 18, 2026

IBD CITY-WIDE
QUARTERLY CONFERENCE

UCSD Altman Clinical and
Translational Research Institute

5:30pm - 6:00pm Breakout Session	6:00pm - 7:30pm General Session
-------------------------------------	------------------------------------

Meet with several representatives from pharmaceutical companies during the Breakout Session.

The General Session includes case study presentations.

Light Refreshments Provided

UC San Diego
DIVISION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY & HEPATOLOGY

SAVE THE DATE

22ND ANNUAL ISENBERG LECTURE

HARVEY J. ALTER, MD

2020 NOBEL LAUREATE IN PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE
DISTINGUISHED NIH INVESTIGATOR
FORMER CHIEF OF INFECTIONS DISEASES
FORMER ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH
SENIOR SCHOLAR (EMERITUS)
NIH CLINICAL CENTER

WEDNESDAY
SEPT 16, 2026

RECEPTION: 4:30 PM
LECTURE: 5:30 PM

LOCATION: TBD

E-MAIL INVITATION
WITH REGISTRATION
TO FOLLOW

Gastroenterology & Hepatology News is distributed by the
Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology.
If you have any questions/comments or wish to be
removed from this list, please contact
gadmin@health.ucsd.edu

Other Events

- Fellows Graduation
June 20, 2026
- IBD City-Wide
2026: Oct, Dec