

Message from the Chief:

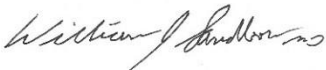
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the Division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology Newsletter for the 1st Quarter issue of FY20. We hope to keep you informed of our latest initiatives in patient care, education, and research within our Division. In this issue, you will meet several new members faculty members such as Dr. Rena Yadlapati, Dr. Pranab Barman and Dr. Heather Patton, as well as two new Nurse Practitioners Mary Kirk & Lysianne Pham. We also are honoring our graduating fellows and their accomplishments. We are proud to present within the newsletter exciting clinical & research updates and a faculty spotlight of Dr. Bernd Schnabl. Additionally, we will be highlighting The San Diego Digestive Diseases Research Center (SDDRC) and are excited for its recent launch. Take a peek inside as we present a glimpse of our patient-friendly Rancho Bernardo Clinic and offer you a look at our new scheduling software, QGenda being implemented this fall.

It has been a successful year and I would like to celebrate all of the Division's many successes and accomplishments highlighted within this edition of our newsletter. The extraordinary accomplishments of the Division are made possible by the hard work of each and every team member. I would like to thank you all for your efforts that makes our Division stand apart. I hope you enjoy reading this quarter's newsletter as our Division and faculty continue to accomplish amazing things, it's a privilege to share but a few of these with you.

Please send suggestions and submissions for future issues to j7jones@ucsd.edu and visit our website to learn more about our compassionate, comprehensive and innovative patient care, research, and educational programs.

Sincerely,



William J. Sandborn, MD
Professor and Chief, Division of Gastroenterology



Upcoming Events:

State of the Division
January 15, 2020
5:30-6:30pm

Advances in GI & Hepatology CME
February 1, 2020

Isenberg Lecture
Speaker: John Pandolfino
February 4, 2020
6:00pm – 7:30pm



Highlight Story



The
**National Pancreas
Foundation**

Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health has been named an NPF Pancreatitis Center by the National Pancreas Foundation. This Designation is for premier health facilities that focus on high-quality, multidisciplinary approaches to pancreatic disease. We are one of only four centers in all of California!

Welcome Rena Yadlapati Motility Faculty

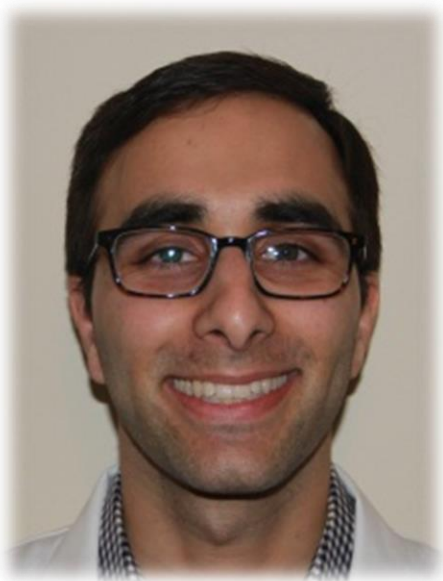
Rena is an esophageal specialist on a physician scientist track with a research focus on health services and outcomes research in esophageal motility, and particularly, complex reflux syndromes such as extra-esophageal reflux and PPI non-responsive GERD. Rena trained at Northwestern for GI fellowship, T32 in GI physiology & psychology, advanced esophageal fellowship, and her masters. She has been on faculty at the University of Colorado for the past two years where she directed the Reflux & Esophageal Diseases Center. Rena received the ACG Junior Faculty Development Award in 2018, and is a Co-Investigator on a multi-site NIH R01 trial. She is active nationally, including serving as a GRADE Methodologist for the ACG Guidelines Committee and a Founding Board Member of the American Foregut Society. Rena is originally from Southern California, and is ecstatic to be moving back home with her husband and two little kids to join the team at UCSD!



Start Date: July 1, 2019

Welcome Pranab Barman Hepatology Faculty

Pranab is a clinical transplant hepatologist with a research interest in pre-transplant disparities and access to care. He trained at the University of Michigan (Internal Medicine Residency), Northwestern (Gastroenterology fellowship) and Duke for his final year of Transplant Hepatology fellowship. He served as a chief medical resident at the University of Michigan and completed the Clinical Scholars Program in Medical Education at Northwestern and through both of these experiences developed a passion for medical education. Throughout his training, he has been involved in hospital-based committees for quality improvement and medical education initiatives at both the medical school and GME level. Additionally, he is currently active nationally involved in the AASLD Public Health/Health Care Delivery SIG and the AST LICOP (American Society of Transplantation Liver Intestinal Community of Practice). Outside of the hospital, he is an avid traveler, a huge fan of all sports, especially his Bay Area teams and loves to play golf. Originally from the Bay Area, he is very excited to move back to California with his wife and join the hepatology group at UCSD!



Start Date: September 1, 2019

Welcome Heather Patton, Hepatology Faculty

Heather Patton will be rejoining the division in September with a full-time hepatology appointment at the VAMC. Heather completed medical school at the University of Michigan, residency at Northwestern, and GI/Hepatology training at Scripps Clinic and UCSD. She was on faculty at UCSD in transplant hepatology from 2007-2015. During this time, she started the transplant hepatology fellowship program, participated in clinical research with the NASH CRN and the North American Consortium for the study of End Stage Liver Disease (NACSELD), and (along with Denise Kalmaz and Sheila Crowe) co-founded GLOGE. She subsequently spent four years working at Kaiser Permanente where she built a care pathway for management of NAFLD, helped to develop an HCC tumor board, and participated in epidemiological research on NAFLD in Kaiser's Southern California population. Heather serves on the Clinical Practice Update Committee for the AGA and on the Maintenance of Certification Committee for the AASLD. Outside of work, Heather enjoys spending time with her husband Mark, son Andrew (13) and daughter Audrey (10). She practices yoga and enjoys making pottery.



*Start Date:
September 1, 2019*



*Start Date:
May 14, 2019*

Welcome Lysianne Pham, IBD Nurse Practitioner

Lysianne (Liz-e-ann) Pham is a Family Nurse Practitioner, born and raised in San Diego. She finished her undergraduate in Pharmacological Chemistry at UCSD and began her nursing career at UCSD in Hillcrest as a Clinical Nurse II. Started working with UCSD GI IBD and enjoying it! She has learned a lot thus far and is continuously excited to be an intricate part of the team! Her boyfriend's name is Jeremiah and she has two step-children, Giada (9) and Sebastian (5). They love doing outdoor activities together, such as: paddle boarding, Padres games, Kayaking, hiking, ect. Her new goal for is to read 19 books in 2019, currently she is on book #7. She looks forward working with everyone and is excited to be a part of the team.

Welcome Mary Kirk, Motility Nurse Practitioner

Mary Kirk Clarke earned her bachelor's in Nursing from Xavier University and Masters as a Nurse Practitioner from University of Cincinnati. She has worked in psychiatry, Med/Surg and in the perioperative setting in her nursing career. She has been working at UCSD in the Department of Minimally Invasive Surgery in program development and assessing pre and post-op esophageal, general surgery and bariatric patients. She has also assisted in surgery as RNFA (Registered Nurse First Assistant). She has authored patient educational materials and provides teaching to patients regarding management of their diseases. In addition, she lectures at the annual conference for California Association of Nurse Practitioners on bariatric, esophageal and common surgery disorders, and has lectured to physicians and other health care providers on recruiting patients for research as well as management of patients.



*Start Date:
June 3, 2019*

Welcome New Fellows/Adv Fellows



Aws Hasan
Clinical Fellow



Fady Youseff
Clinical Fellow



Waseem Ahmed
Clinical Fellow



Joseph Meserve
Research Fellow



Sushrut Jangi
Advanced IBD Fellow



Armen Eskandari
Advanced Endoscopy Fellow

Retirement



Good-bye and thank you to Norman Goldberg who retired at the end of June 2019. He has been with the program and in service to the Division for over 20 years. Dr. Goldberg provided the program with valuable mentorship, knowledge, and advice to the fellows. Many past trainees and faculty from as far back as 1991 offered words of praise. He made an enormous impact on the lives and careers of many in the Division and will be missed.

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Bernd Schnabl



Dr. Bernd Schnabl is Professor of Medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology at UC San Diego School of Medicine. Trained as a physician scientist in gastroenterology and hepatology, he is combining his expertise in clinical medicine with basic science in the field of chronic liver diseases. He completed a clinical fellowship in Gastroenterology at Columbia University in New York City. Since his appointment to the UC San Diego faculty in 2008, the major focus of his laboratory is to investigate the pathogenesis of alcoholic and non-alcoholic fatty liver diseases. Within this primary focus he mainly investigates functional changes in the intestinal microbiota and in the mucosal immune system during liver disease. A very important part of his laboratory is a translational aspect to identify targets for microbiota-centered therapies. He pioneered work using engineered bacteria and bacteriophages to edit the intestinal microbiota and to treat chronic

liver disease. Dr. Schnabl has published extensively (more than 125 publications) in journals including *Cell*, *Nature*, *Nature Medicine*, *Cell Host & Microbe*, *PNAS*, *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, *Nature Communications*, *Gastroenterology*, *Hepatology* and *Journal of Hepatology* in recent years. He has authored multiple reviews and book chapters.

Throughout his career, he has been honored with a number of awards and distinctions. These include a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award from the German Research Foundation, a Schering-Plough Unrestricted Educational Award from the European Foundation for the Study of Liver Diseases (EASL), an American Gastroenterological Association (AGA)/Astra Zeneca Fellowship - Faculty Transition Award (FFTA) and a NIH K08 Career Development grant. He was elected as full member to the prestigious American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) in 2016. He was privileged to present the Hans Popper Basic Science State-of-the-Art Lecture at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) and the keynote lecture at a Gordon Research Conference in 2017.

Dr. Schnabl is principal investigator of a VA Merit Award, multiple NIH grants, foundation awards and industry-sponsored projects. He recently became the Director of the first NIH-supported P30 Silvio O. Conte Digestive Diseases Research Core Center in San Diego, which he co-directs with Dr. Lars Eckmann.

He has continuously served as member on multiple local, national and international committees. In particular, he is currently Steering Committee member and Co-Chair of the Translational Sub-committee of the NIH/NIAAA funded Alcoholic Hepatitis Network (AlcHepNetwork) that was launched in 2018. He is Editorial Board member of major GI journals including *Gut*, *Hepatology* and *Journal of Hepatology*.

For a full listing of publications, lab members and research activities of the Schnabl lab, please visit his lab website. <https://medschool.ucsd.edu/som/medicine/divisions/gastro/research/labs/schnabl-lab>

Awards & Recognitions



Congratulations to Dr. Thomas Savides for receiving the 2019 American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy “Master Endoscopist” Award at DDW in San Diego. This award recognizes clinicians who spend the majority of their time in patient care and are recognized regionally or nationally for their expertise and contributions to the practice of GI endoscopy.

Congratulations Erik Contreras for recently completed his master’s degree in Nursing and became a Nurse Practitioner. We are very proud of him and want to wish him luck in his new career!

Each year the graduating fellows award a member of the clinical faculty the clinical teaching award for consistently providing superior clinical teaching. The 2019 Clinical Teaching Award went to Dr. Irine Vodkin.



Dr. Kim Barrett has been selected as Director of the Division of Graduate Education at the National Science Foundation in Washington DC. Congratulations on this opportunity to contribute to national priorities for graduate education and training.

Dr. Kim Barrett was also honored with the Hans Ussing Lectureship of the American Physiological Society this past spring 2019.

Congratulations to Dr. Nedret Copur-Dahi for receiving the Medicine 401 Excellence in Teaching Award for academic year 2018-2019 from 3rd year medical students!

Awards & Recognitions Continued



Congratulations Beth Stanton on receiving your CGRN certification in May! Beth has been a part of the UCSD Hillcrest GI team since February of 2018. She has been a GI nurse for 14 years and recently decided it was time to get certified in the field that she has devoted most of her nursing career to. Beth is only the 3rd nurse at Hillcrest to gain certification in GI and we want to say Congratulations to her on a job well done!



Dr. Gobind Anand was appointed the new Associate Fellowship Program Director starting in July 2019.



Alan Hofmann, Emeritus Professor, was given a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. The award was for his scientific contributions to gastroenterology and Hepatology. Hofmann graduated from the medical school in 1955.

NPF Designation

Congratulations on becoming a National Pancreas Foundation center of Excellence. These centers are at premier healthcare facilities that focus on multidisciplinary treatment of pancreas disease, in which patients are being treated holistically with a focus on the best possible outcomes and improved quality of life. According to Dr. Wilson Kwong, UCSD offers a multidisciplinary pancreatitis clinic which allows patients to see an interventional gastroenterologist who specializes in pancreatic disease as well as a surgeon who specializes in pancreas surgery in the same visit so that the patient is offered the complete spectrum of treatment options.

“UCSD has been offering cutting edge high quality pancreatitis care for many years and the NPF designation allows patients to identify UCSD as a center they can get high quality comprehensive pancreatitis care with the latest treatment options” -Dr. Wilson Kwong

GI Jeopardy

The results are in and out of 149 GI training programs competing, we are proud to announce that our GI fellows made the top 5 teams in GI Jeopardy. This means a 2-person team will represent UCSD in front of a live audience at the GI Jeopardy competition at ACG 2019 Annual Meeting and Postgraduate Course in San Antonio, TX on October 26, 2019.

If you are planning on attending ACG, please make sure to attend and cheer on our UCSD team and congratulate our fellows when you see them for a job well done!!!



Congratulations Summer Collier on receiving a 2018 Nursing Excellence Clinical Award, “Overall Advanced Practice Nurse of the Year”

Clinical Updates



In August of 2019, the Division of Gastroenterology expanded its clinical footprint to the new outpatient pavilion **Rancho Bernardo** located at 16950 Via Tazon San Diego, CA 92127. This allows us to have a patient centered focus and bring our care locally to the patients we serve in that area. Dr. Bortniker is providing General Gastroenterology care on Wednesdays currently and we hope to continue to expand our access as the patient population grows.

Care Navigation Hub

Over the past year all the subspecialties of Gastroenterology have transitioned the call center to a Care Navigation Hub model. This model has centralized, and cross trained our call center reps so they are better equipped to schedule patients in real time. This has also provided us the opportunity to hire more staff to actively manage provider schedules and do outbound calls to ensure patients are getting the earliest visit possible. The Care Navigation Hub also has nurses and techs readily available to take patient calls on the spot to address patients concerns in real time. This initiative allowed us to use a team approach to fill our no show and late cancellation appointments while also optimizing our providers time while in clinic and putting the patients' needs first. In September, we are taking a deep dive into the Hepatology scheduling model to transition to a Care Navigation Hub model next.

As we continue to grow our clinical footprint, the Procedural Team is busy preparing for our opening of additional outpatient procedure space at **Koman Family Outpatient Pavilion** with a target opening date of October 2019. This will allow our patients to be seen sooner and have more availability in scheduling their procedures while also providing additional access for our hospital patients so they can be on the road to recovery and back to their daily lives sooner.



In November, we will be rolling out a new physician scheduling software called QGenda. QGenda builds provider schedules with the highest quality, transparency, flexibility and, fairness possible. It is an integrative scheduling engine that solves conflicts as the schedule is built while maintain proper coverage and equal distribution. QGenda will allow our providers to have access to their schedules at their fingertips. Providers will have the ability to swap shifts and open and close clinical sessions all in a mobile app. As we continue to build out the platform, we will have a provider in service so providers can learn how to view their schedules, request time away, and make swaps within the system.

Research Spotlight: The San Diego Digestive Diseases Research Center (SDDRC)



We are proud to announce the launch of the San Diego Digestive Diseases Research Center (SDDRC). Made possible by a \$6 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, the SDDRC is the only one of its kind in the San Diego region, with just 17 similarly funded centers throughout the nation. The center will act as a hub for catalyzing and promoting research on inflammatory diseases of the digestive tract, drawing upon the expanding biomedical research enterprise in San Diego and fostering increased interaction between leading academic investigators whose work complements the focus of the SDDRC.

The SDDRC involves investigators from UC San Diego, Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology and Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute. Bernd Schnabl, MD, and Lars Eckmann, MD, both professors of medicine at UC San Diego School of Medicine, are co-directors of the SDDRC.

“We are continuously searching for better therapeutic targets for these diseases that can severely impact a patient’s quality of life. The work that will be done in this new center will lead to identifying targets that we can propose for clinical trials with the ultimate goal of improved treatment options.”

“It has been our vision for the past 30 years and it is now coming to life,” said Schnabl.

SDDRC investigators will conduct research related to inflammation, immunity and host-microbial interactions in both the gastrointestinal tract and liver. Research will range from basic mechanisms governing inflammation and the role of infection, immune and inflammatory responses in preclinical studies to translational studies with human tissues and clinical trials.

The center will also offer pilot and feasibility grants, enrichment programs, seminars and symposiums and is focused on three main cores.

The Human Translational Core will provide access to specimens from patients with gastrointestinal and liver diseases. The Preclinical Models Core will facilitate and assist in characterizing and understanding gastrointestinal and liver diseases using animal models. The Microbiomics and Functional Genomics Core will offer cutting-edge and cost-effective access to sequencing-based technologies in microbiomics and functional genomics. Each core is led by outstanding leaders in their fields.

For more information on the SDDRC or to become a member, please visit sddrc.ucsd.edu or email sddrc@ucsd.edu

SDDRC headquarters in the Biomedical Research Facility in the UC San Diego Medical School



Gastroenterology Fellowship Graduation 2019



On June 1, 2019, faculty, fellows and staff gathered to celebrate the training completion of our third-year fellows: Yash Mittal, Frances Onyimba, Janki Patel, and Matt Tsai.

Tom and Wendy Savides again hosted the event in their home and we thank them for allowing us to come into their home every year. Another tradition is Wendy baking the graduation cake. This year there were 13 diseases with a common theme that the graduating fellows had to identify as part of their graduation requirements. We are happy to say with some assistance all passed. Can you identify the diseases?



Yash Mittal came to the program from Yale Residency program. Yash is joining the practice at Scripps Mercy in San Diego.



Frances Onyimba came to us from Johns Hopkins. Frances is joining the faculty of University of Maryland.



Matt Tsai came to us from University of Miami. He is staying on at UCSD to finish his research training.



Janki Patel came from our own Internal Medicine Residency program. Janki is joining the faculty of Scripps Encinitas.

We wish our graduating fellows the best of luck!



Recent Events

Research Seminar: *Precision Medicine in Gastroenterology and Hepatology*

June 7, 2019



Pictured (L to R): Veeral Ajmera, Niels Vande Casteele, Rohit Loomba, Stephan R. Targan, Larry Smarr, Jason Sicklick, Yujin Hoshida, Samir Gupta, Yuko Kono, and William Sandborn.

Dr. Veeral Ajmera and Dr. Niels Vande Casteele secured the participation of internationally renowned experts from diverse disciplines to cover the role of existing and omics-based biomarkers for clinical research, drug development and clinical practice in the areas of inflammatory bowel diseases, liver diseases and gastrointestinal malignancies.

UC San Diego NASH Preceptorship

July 16, 2019

NASH Preceptorship was hosted by the UC San Diego NAFLD Research Center and Course Directors Dr. Rohit Loomba and Dr. Veeral Ajmera. It was a state-of-the-art one day preceptorship with participants from Intercept which provided a combination of advanced training in clinical assessment of NAFLD, short didactics, a CPC presentation, hands on experiences and a patient panel.



Altman Clinical and Translational Research Institute Building



Rohit Loomba, MD, gave a lecture titled, "How Do I Treat NASH Now and Why?" to Intercept participants inside the ACTRI Auditorium



UC San Diego School of Medicine

Established in 1968, University of California San Diego School of Medicine is consistently ranked among the top medical school programs in the country for primary care and research by *U.S. News & World Report* and among the top 10 medical schools for National Institutes of Health total funding. The school is internationally recognized as a place where discoveries are delivered — bringing breakthroughs from the research lab to patients' bedsides. Faculty members care for patients at UC San Diego Health, where primary care is available at several convenient locations throughout San Diego County and our advanced specialty care consistently ranks among the nation's best. For more information, visit medschool.ucsd.edu.

Our Mission

The UC San Diego Gastroenterology & Hepatology Division will provide the best clinical care to those afflicted with gastrointestinal and liver diseases, investigate at the clinical and basic levels the best way to improve those diseases, and educate trainees on how to best approach the care of patients with those diseases. The UC San Diego GI Division will strive to be nationally recognized through its faculty as well as innovations that will improve the care of patients with gastrointestinal and liver diseases nationwide. The UC San Diego GI Division was founded in 1970 by Henry Wheeler, MD, who served as its first division chief. Later, Jon I. Isenberg, MD, led the division from 1979 to 1993, followed by C. Richard Boland, MD, from 1995 to 2003, John M. Carethers, MD, from 2004 - 2009 and William J. Sandborn from 2011-present. The GI Fellowship Training Program commenced in 1974 and the NIH Training Grant was initially funded in 1976. The division has trained several local gastroenterologists in San Diego, as well as developed several academicians at University based medical schools, including some with leadership and administrative positions.

Charitable Donations

You may contribute directly to UC San Diego GI by visiting our website at <http://www.gastro.ucsd.edu> and clicking on the **GIVE** tab on the right-hand side. Remember: if you itemize, you may be able to receive a charitable deduction for 2019 for your gifts received on or before December 31.