



# UNC Family Medicine Patient Newsletter

Issue Date: June 2021

## Exciting Changes to the Family Medicine Center Leadership Team



**Rita Lahlou, MD**  
Medical Director of FMC Chapel Hill



**Ashley Rietz, MD**  
Assistant Medical Director of FMC Chapel Hill



**Karen Halpert, MD**  
Vice Chair for Clinical Excellence



**Dana Neutze, MD, PhD**  
Director of Quality Improvement and  
Population Health



**Justin Lee, MD**  
Director of Clinical Operations for Sports  
Medicine



**Rayhaan Adams, MSW, LCSW**  
Director, Population Health Clinical Services

**Rita Lahlou** is the new Medical Director of the Family Medicine Center in Chapel Hill. She brings new ideas from her experience in Oregon and is committed to making the Family Medicine Center a welcoming place for staff, faculty, learners, and patients.

**Ashley Rietz** is the new Assistant Medical Director of the Family Medicine Center in Chapel Hill. She will partner with Dr. Lahlou with innovative leadership with a special focus on the experience of women and children in our clinic.

**Karen Halpert** has the new title of Vice Chair for Clinical Excellence which better reflects her expanded portfolio of responsibilities in the clinics and across multiple service lines and locations. She will serve as the clinical leader and will work collaboratively with our service

line leaders to continue our tradition of excellence and to integrate our many clinical missions through her role as manager of faculty time.

**Dana Neutze** will continue as Director of Quality Improvement and Population Health with a physician leadership focus on metrics, system goals, and contractual metrics. She will partner with our Director of Population Health Clinical Services and continue to lead the resident and medical student curriculum in quality improvement.

**Justin Lee** is the new Director of Clinical Operations for Sports Medicine. He will help with schedules of the sports medicine team across both the Chapel Hill and Durham site, and oversee other operational issues related to sports medicine.

**Rayhaan Adams'** role has expanded to Director, Population Health Clinical Services for UNC Faculty Physicians. In this role he will continue to lead Population Health services in Family Medicine while also guiding development of related services in Internal Medicine and Geriatrics.

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## Updates from the FMC

### New Process for Respiratory Patients

Thanks to vaccines being widely available and our community's defense against COVID-19 growing, the Respiratory Diagnostic Center (RDC) that has operated over the past year to diagnose and treat patients with any symptoms such as cough, sore throat, and congestion will be closing. As the RDC closes and we pivot back to seeing all patients in our clinic, we want to assure everyone that it is still perfectly safe to come for an in-person visit. Patients with respiratory symptoms will be kept separated from others in the clinic. This also means if you develop any new respiratory symptoms such as a cough, you can make an appointment to be seen at the FMC. We encourage these patients to schedule in advance or call ahead before coming to the clinic. Respiratory patients will only be seen M-F, 8am – 4:40pm.

### Questions About Getting Your Child a COVID Vaccine?







The FDA recently approved the COVID vaccine for anyone 12 years and older, which is very exciting news as families get back to the activities they enjoy and we look forward to a more normal school year ahead! We understand parents may have questions regarding getting their children vaccinated. There are lots of helpful tips and informative links about vaccines for children on the [CDC's website here](#).

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## MyChart Tips

Did you know there are lots of ways to communicate with us via [MyUNCChart](#)? You can schedule an appointment, check your lab results, view your doctor's visit notes, and ask your provider team a question! If you happen to get locked out of your MyChart account, you can always reset your password using the "forgot password" function.

### Find Care

-  Talk To A Doctor
-  Schedule an Appointment
-  View Care Team
-  Search for Provider
-  Find Urgent Care
-  E-Visit

### Communication

-  Messages
  -  Ask a Question
  -  Letters
-

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## Department of Family Medicine & UNC School of Medicine Receive Top Rankings

In their annual rankings of “America’s Best Graduate Schools,” U.S. News & World Report ranked our primary care program among the top 3 programs in the country! Numerous UNC-Chapel Hill graduate programs received high rankings once again — more than 30 were among the top 10 overall or among public universities in their respective categories.

In the category of overall research, the UNC School of Medicine is ranked 24th.

Check out these and other rankings at [U.S. News & World Report](#).

In another report released May 6th, the UNC Health brand was ranked as the **#4 healthcare brand** in the United States overall and the **#2 most trusted healthcare brand**, just after Johns Hopkins and before Mass General. The rankings come from a joint project between the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the Society for Health Care Strategy & Market Development (SHSMD).



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## Tobacco Treatment & Weight Management with UNC Family Medicine

Becoming tobacco-free is one of the best things you can do for your overall health. The **UNC Tobacco Treatment Program** has been providing tobacco treatment counseling since 2008. We recognize that it can be very challenging to become tobacco-free and know that receiving counseling and using tobacco cessation medications can increase someone’s chances of being successful by 2-3 times. If you, or someone you know, is interested in working with a counselor to become tobacco-free, please reach out to us (984-974-4976 or [ttp@med.unc.edu](mailto:ttp@med.unc.edu)). By working with each person to create an individual treatment plan, we can tailor it specifically to the individual’s goals increasing the chance of success. Learn more here: [Tobacco Treatment Program](#).

Weight-related illness are the number two contributor to preventable death, second only to tobacco use. Since its start in 2015, the **UNC Family Medicine Weight Management Program** has offered behavioral counseling to help people with greater risk for weight-related health problems lose weight, lead healthier lives and maximize their well-being. Participants with four visits or more on average demonstrate improvements in measures like weight, blood pressure, and blood sugar. We offer individual and group counseling with a focus on both eating healthier as well as developing a healthy relationship to food. Learn more here: [Weight Management Program](#).

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## Let's Talk Health with Dr. Neutze

### Topic #1: Blood Pressure

Did you know that 1 in every 3 Americans has high blood pressure? High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a **leading factor** for death across the world, causing heart attacks and strokes.

Hypertension occurs when your blood pressure stays higher than a normal level for a long period of time. This puts a continuous strain on your heart. **2.7 million adults** in North Carolina have been diagnosed with hypertension, and each year hypertension contributes to **28% of deaths** in North Carolina.

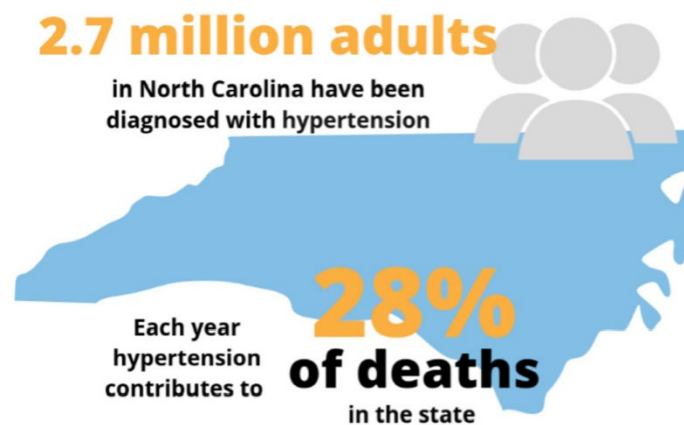
Hypertension is sometimes called “the silent killer.” The condition does not usually present any signs or symptoms, and some people go years without realizing they have it. That’s why it is so important to have your blood pressure checked by your provider.

Keeping your blood pressure at a normal level helps prevent against dangerous cardiovascular events that can lead to death.

Fortunately, you can lower your risk for serious health problems by controlling your blood pressure. There are several medications available to treat high blood pressure. You can work with your doctor to figure out if and what medication might be right for you. If you have been prescribed blood pressure medication, taking it regularly will help you stay healthy and avoid heart attack and stroke.

There are also changes you can make at home to control your blood pressure, or to avoid having high blood pressure in the future:

- Eating a diet that is low in salt, fat and cholesterol, and high in fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Being active
  - Maintaining a healthy weight
  - Getting adequate sleep
  - Avoiding tobacco use and quitting smoking if you are a smoker
- Talk to your doctor today about what you can do for your blood pressure.



### Topic #2: Cervical Cancer Screenings

Anyone with a cervix — women or transgender men who have not had a hysterectomy — is at risk of cervical cancer. About 13,000 individuals are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year. The main cause of cervical cancer is Human papillomavirus (HPV), a very common virus that is transmitted from person-to-person during sex. Most cases of HPV clear up on their own, but certain strains sometimes cause cancer.

Cervical cancer can be caught early through screening tests, and if caught early, it is very treatable. There is also a [vaccine](#) that protects against some strains of HPV, thus protecting against cervical cancer! Adolescents of any gender should receive this vaccine as early as age 11 or 12 (which is highly recommended). You can still get this vaccine covered by your insurance until you are 26.

In a new study recently reported on by the Associated Press, screening and the HPV vaccine have led to drops in cervical cancers over the last two decades in the U.S.

## Importance of screening

Cervical cancer is the only gynecological cancer to have a screening test: the Pap smear. A Pap smear looks for cell changes on the cervix and can find these cells early before they turn into cervical cancer, when treatment is most effective.

Patients should begin getting Pap smears at age 21, and should continue to get tested every 3 years. Starting at 30 years of age your screening will include HPV testing, which may mean you only need a pap smear every 5 years.

## What to expect at a Pap smear

A Pap smear is a short and easy type of pelvic exam. Your doctor will use a medical tool called a speculum to examine your cervix, where they will use a special brush to collect some cells from your cervix.

These cells will then be sent to a lab, where they will be checked for abnormalities or the types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

Since cervical cancer can be easily treated if found early, getting screened regularly is very important. If you are concerned about the exam, talk to your provider—they can make sure you feel safe and as comfortable as possible.

GROCERIES ✓

HAIRCUT ✓

CALL MOM ✓

PAP SMEAR

Are you due for a **pap smear**? You can check this box and **prevent cervical cancer!**

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## UNC Family Medicine

[uncfamilymedicine.org](http://uncfamilymedicine.org)

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