

Summer 2021

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION

Improving health, function, and well-being.

Inside:

- 1** Welcome from the Chair
- 2** Spotlight on Resident Alumnus Dorothea (Dot) Ellis
- 6** 2021 UNC PM&R Graduating Residents
- 8** 2021 UNC PM&R Incoming Interns
- 10** Matthew Harris Co-Chair of UNC-PM&R DEI Committee
- 11** Updates from our Integrative Medicine Group Visits Program
- 13** Our new COVID-19 Long Haulers Clinic
- 14** New Workshop: Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Disability
- 15** UNC PM&R Fundraising Opportunities
- 17** Hillsborough Hospital Update

Our mission is to improve the health, function, and well-being of people across North Carolina and beyond through excellence in patient care, education, research, and innovation.



THE CIRCLE GAME



Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to say Goodbye and wish Good Luck to our graduating senior residents and, just a few days later, to welcome our next great resident class to Chapel Hill.

One of my favorite parts of academic medicine is supporting our resident trainees as they learn, grow, and turn into physiatrists who are capable of excelling in all areas of our specialty. Year after year, one class graduates, and another comes to begin their journey. Year after year, a new class adds its own mix of personalities, experiences, energy, and skillsets to our department, making us a stronger and more diverse Rehab Family.

We celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates and take pleasure in noting how far they've come during their time with us. Then we turn right around to greet the next group who help renew our faculty by reminding us of why we went into academic medicine and how exciting it can be to watch something you teach be used to provide excellent clinical care, perform novel research, and educate others (patients, medical students) down the line.

In this issue, you'll hear from a former resident, learn about our three graduating residents, and meet our incoming class of four new residents. You'll also have the opportunity to hear from our DEI Committee Co-Chair, learn about innovative department programs like our Integrative Medicine Group Visits, and our system-wide COVID-19 Recovery Clinic, and maybe even sign up to attend our upcoming virtual workshop on the Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Disability.

As we go "round and round and round" in this Circle Game, I am proud of all the Great Work performed by our faculty, our residents, our administration and our staff and am confident that, as the song goes, "there'll be new dreams, maybe better dreams, and plenty" as our department continues to grow, innovate, and educate the next generation of physiatrists.

Be Well,

Joshua J. Alexander, MD
Sidna Chockley Rizzo Distinguished Professor & Chair
UNC Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Spotlight

Alumnus Dorothea (Dot) Ellis, MD, MS



We are grateful for the chance to catch up with Dorothea (Dot) Ellis, MD, MS (UNC PM&R residency graduating class of 2017.) She recently presented during a UNC PM&R residency didactic, “It’s okay to not be okay - making space for self-care when the world is on fire.” Dr. Ellis grew up in Boulder, CO. She attended the Boulder College of Massage Therapy, Reed College, and also spent her junior year abroad in Ireland studying at the University College Cork. She earned a Master’s degree from Georgetown University in Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Physiology and Biophysics. She received her MD from the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences before entering UNC PM&R four-year residency program.



Dorothea (Dot) Ellis, MD, MS
UNC PM&R Class of 2017

Q: What are you doing right now in your professional career?

A: I'm working with The Permanente Medical Group in Northern California as an inpatient rehabilitation doctor at the Kaiser Foundation Rehabilitation Center.

I really love inpatient rehab because of the opportunity it gives us to spend time with people during a really vulnerable and dynamic time in their recovery process. I enjoy having the chance to see patients every day and celebrate their progress back towards independence.

I actually worked in Virginia in inpatient rehab for a couple of years fresh out of residency. I wanted to transition to a physician led company and was excited when I was offered a position with TPMG in the San Francisco Bay area.

Q: What drew you to Physiatry?

A: My background in massage therapy and integrative medicine made PM&R feel like the best fit for my interests and skill set. I thought initially that I would end up working in outpatient musculoskeletal pain management, but the team based model of care in inpatient rehab turned out to be my favorite.

Q: Why did you choose UNC?

A: I loved the warm, close knit family atmosphere of the program when I interviewed. A lot of the upper level residents had kids and they all seemed to genuinely enjoy their work.

Q: Do you recall working with any current faculty?

A: I'm really not that far out from residency, so I remember many of UNC's current faculty. I was even in residency at the same time as Dr. Barrata and Dr. Boyd!

I frequently think back to my time working on Dr. Than's inpatient service and in clinic with Dr. Shuping and Dr. Rauch as some of the most formative in my training. It makes all the difference to have mentors who truly love their work and who also really enjoy teaching.

Q: What do you remember best about UNC PMR?

A: The last two and half years of my residency were filled with change, both for my family, as I had my first child at the end of PGY-2, and for the program, which had major shifts in leadership. While challenging, those years taught me a lot and helped prepare me for life after residency.

Q: How did UNC PMR prepare you for after graduation?

A: The amount of autonomy and medical complexity (I'm looking at you, Dr. Than!) on the inpatient services really helped prepare me for starting out with my own service. Leading the interdisciplinary team conferences was also very helpful, as these are one of the hallmarks of inpatient rehab.

Spotlight on Alumnus Dot Ellis, MD

Q: What qualities of the UNC PM&R residency program stand out in comparison to others?

A: Having the categorical residency experience is definitely a plus, and the small size really does help keep people connected.

Q: How was living in the Chapel Hill/RTP area?

A: We loved living in Carrboro! Great food, tons to do, and close to excellent hiking and outdoor activities!

Q: How has Covid affected your practice?

A: We're all adapting to the ever changing PPE requirements and do our best to keep everyone safe. I do think that we'll be seeing a lot of patients recovering from Covid with a variety of unique functional issues, so I'm trying to learn as much as I can to help meet the needs of this growing population.

Q: How do you alleviate stress?

A: Spending time with my family. I have a 4 month old son and my oldest is almost 6 years old, so every day is an adventure. I also love hiking, reading, and day trips to the beach.

Thank you for presenting at a recent residency didactic!

It was an honor to be invited to talk with the current group of residents during one of Dr. Thompson's recent classes to discuss physician wellness. In a year filled with so much uncertainty it was a good reminder about the power of connection and camaraderie to help us recenter and find our way back home, even from opposite ends of the country.

Thank you Dr. Ellis!

If you're an alum of our residency program, we'd love to hear from you!

Please contact us at: pmrnews@med.unc.edu and mention our newsletter to be included in a future edition!



2021 UNC PM&R
GRADUATION
Umstead Park, Chapel Hill



Congratulations!

UNC PM&R Class of 2021



Akash Patel, DO

Dr. Akash Patel is a fourth year resident physician in UNC's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residency training program. Dr. Patel currently serves as the 2020-2021 Administrative Chief Resident.

Dr. Patel grew up in Middlesboro, KY. He attended Emory University in Atlanta, GA for his undergraduate studies. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology in 2012. After college, he worked at the University of Kentucky Center for Rehabilitation Sciences in Lexington, KY as a Research Assistant. He received his DO degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine - Georgia Campus in Suwanee, GA in 2017. Upon graduating from the UNC PM&R residency program this summer, Dr. Patel will begin his Sports Medicine Fellowship with UNC's Department of Family Medicine in Chapel Hill, NC.

In his spare time, he enjoys basketball, tennis, table tennis, trying new restaurants, and spending time with his family and friends. He and his fiancé, Puja, are planning to get married in July 2022!

Congratulations UNC PM&R Class of 2021



Daniel Sainburg, DO

Dr. Daniel Sainburg is a fourth year resident physician in UNC's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residency training program. Dr. Sainburg currently serves as the 2020-2021 Academic Chief Resident.

Dr. Sainburg grew up in State College, PA. He attended Pennsylvania State University in University Park, PA for his undergraduate studies. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology in 2012. After college, he worked as a Direct Support Professional for handicapped adults in group home settings. He received his DO from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Erie, PA in 2017. Upon graduating from the UNC PM&R residency training program this summer, Dr. Sainburg will begin the Pain Medicine Fellowship with UNC's Department of Anesthesiology in Chapel Hill, NC.

In his spare time, he enjoys Traveling, Hiking, watching sports, hanging out with his family.



Thai Truong, MD

Dr. Thai Truong is a fourth year resident physician in UNC's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residency training program. Dr. Truong currently serves as the 2020-2021 Academic Chief Resident.

Dr. Truong was born in a refugee camp in Thailand and grew up in a small town outside of Charlotte, NC. He attended the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for his undergraduate studies. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology in 2012. After college, he worked as a Post Bacc IRTA Fellow with the NIH. He received his MD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine (Go Tar Heels!) in 2017. Upon graduating from the UNC PM&R residency training program this summer, Dr. Truong will work as a Physiatrist at Apex Orthopaedics Spine and Neurology in Charlotte, NC.

In his spare time, he enjoys basketball, soccer, lifting weights, eating, cooking, more eating, and traveling around the world. MY LEGGGG



Welcome!

UNC PM&R 2021 Interns

Welcome 2021 Interns



Taylor Baker, DO

Taylor Baker grew up in Plano, TX. He attended Brigham Young University for undergraduate studies and graduated in 2016. Taylor received his DO degree from Touro University Nevada College of Osteopathic Medicine, D.O. in April 2021. In his spare time, Taylor enjoys spending time with his wife and 3 boys, playing basketball, watching Dallas sports, and playing board games. He is looking forward to exploring the Triangle area and seeing everything it offers, and being a part of such a supportive community.



Hagar Elgendy, MD

Hagar Elgendy grew up in Alexandria, Egypt and Monterey, California. She attended Tulane University for undergraduate studies and graduated in 2012. She also attended Tulane University for graduate studies in Neuroscience and graduated in 2013. Hagar received her MD degree from University of Cincinnati's College of Medicine, M.D. in May 2021. In her spare time, Hagar enjoys spending time with four kids and husband, keeping up with four kids and husband, vacation time at the Beach, movie date nights, and spending time with friends! She is looking forward to "the big move" to North Carolina, building many new friendships, gaining mentorships, and finding her place in making an impact!



Sierra McLean, MD

Sierra McLean grew up in Orem, UT. She attended the University of Utah in Salt Lake City for her undergraduate studies and graduated in 2015 with a BS in Biology. Sierra received her MD degree from the University of Utah School of Medicine in Salt Lake City in May 2021. In her spare time, Sierra enjoys biking, hiking, skiing, and exploring new places. She is looking forward to traveling after COVID and finding new bike trails in North Carolina.



Raveen Sugantharaj, DO

Raveen Sugantharaj was born and raised in Staten Island, NYC He attended McGill University in Montreal, QC, Canada for his undergraduate studies and graduated in 2014 with a degree in BSc – Nutritional Sciences. He received his DO degree from Marian University- College of Osteopathic medicine in Indianapolis, IN on May 8th 2021. In his spare time, Raveen enjoys having an active lifestyle, exploring nature, reading, and playing with his cat Puma. He is looking forward to meeting his co-residents and faculty in person as well as integrating with the surrounding community to determine their needs and serving them to the best of his abilities.

The Tokyo 2020/21 Olympics Promotes Diversity & Inclusion and other Large Platforms Collaborating for Diverse Causes



Matthew Harris, PhD
Assistant Professor
Committee Co-Chair

Currently, given Coronavirus surges in Japan, there is a heated debate over whether the Tokyo Olympics will take place as scheduled (starting on July 23). Fortunately, this has still not stopped Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) from having some of the spotlight. The Tokyo Olympics has chosen to emphasize their commitment with the tagline “Know Differences, Show Differences.” Their website states that these games are committed to incorporating D&I into every aspect of the planning and operations. They are implementing various D&I activities and efforts from elements in their logo and pledge, to more active events such as Diversity & Inclusion assistance training.

These efforts could not be timelier, with #stopasianhate gaining notoriety. Stop Asian Hate is the name of several anti-Asian-violence rallies held across the US in response to racism against Asian Americans related to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially after the killing of Vicha Ratanapakdee and a series of shooting at three Atlanta spas. Asian hate has also been tied directly with the Olympics, including a recent hate-filled rant against an Asian American competitor.

Although efforts like the Tokyo Olympics’ D&I emphasis could seem empty to some, others would disagree. The Olympics is a very large stage, and any message it promotes will be seen and heard by millions and millions. The more different-but-related movements can collaborate, the more powerful the message will be. This idea seems to be gaining some traction. For example, Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate have made attempts to stand together despite a complicated history, and are even impacting other diversity movements.

On a more local level, UNC and our PM&R Department’s DEI committee have made efforts to stand with a variety of D&I causes as well. Our committee has made statements about our support for BLM and stopping police brutality. The University chancellor released a statement again Asian hate here. We strongly encourage all students, faculty, staff, and anybody else related to the University learn more about this. The Office of Inclusive Excellent has outline it’s plan forward, with ways for us to get involved. The PM&R DEI committee has made efforts to broaden it’s reach by holding table talks and other discussion groups. By having different groups working for diversity and inclusion at different levels, from our own department all the way up to the Olympic Committee, and by encouraging collaborations between groups in all ways possible, we can hope to tackle problems with a strong, united front.

There is obviously a long way to go, but I do think some of these elements provide some hope for the future and evidence of momentum for diversity and inclusion causes. I am very hopeful that more collaboration between BLM, Stop Asian Hate, and other causes will continue in the future and that our UNC groups will work on as much collaboration as possible with each other and outside groups, as acceptance of diversity can beget more acceptance of diversity, and so on.

Updates from Integrative Medicine Group Visits Program

In September of 2020, we launched the Integrative Medical Group Visit program for patients with chronic pain. Three cohorts of patients participated in the program for 9 weeks each. More than twenty patients have now participated in the program, and have been eager to share about their experiences with the wider community. This quarter we are excited to share with you some reflections from group members.



"I learned so many things, how to be mindful of body, how to be aware of your body, how to take time, stop, meditate..."
sonix.ai/clips/TQGUEQVtBmZ8URJgZmeTgEv



"I've learned how to listen to myself and it's OK to express myself."
sonix.ai/clips/uW7rmtL8MxueN8S1ZQDft8uK



"Once I came into this group and I found my people..."
sonix.ai/clips/p2tf71NLBjKHopFfb3og1Zp



"I try to use meditation with the deep breathing...[to] take the pain off my mind."
sonix.ai/clips/UMrDoqSDnijmLLvJBKS22t5V



"...from day to day, it's helped me cope."
sonix.ai/clips/VAyXnEo7hkQM7yzkKUYRWN5z



"Patients may not realize how meditation or yoga or acupuncture or acupressure or information about diet can be helpful and can change their lives. But it really, really can."
sonix.ai/clips/iuJvJWwHeQrRqbc4jZotueGJ

Continued...Updates from the Integrative Medical Group Visit Program



Since our last update in Fall 2020, we have been fortunate to have Dr. Aisha Chilcoat, ND join our team. Dr. Chilcoat is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Program on Integrative Medicine in PMR. She has a particular interest in researching the connection between the gut microbiota, illness and health. Bethany Kavalakatt, student intern, and Malik Tiedt, research assistant, are also on our team.

“Patients may not realize how meditation or yoga or acupuncture or acupressure or information about diet can be helpful and can change their lives. But it really, really can.”

— Clinic Participant

Bethany Kavalakatt is a medical student at Lake Eric College of Osteopathic Medicine. She has an interest in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the management of chronic pain. We are fortunate to have her join us virtually from her home campus in Florida.

Malik Tiedt is a research assistant in the Program on Integrative Medicine. He is a UNC-CH undergraduate with an interest in the field of integrative medicine. His contributions to this program and other PIM research are greatly appreciated.

Work is currently underway to launch the first Integrative Medical Group Visit for people with Post-Acute Sequelae of COVID. The current curriculum for patients with chronic pain will be adapted to address common PASC symptoms including “brain fog” and fatigue. We think the majority of the curriculum will be relevant to PASC patients as the topics cover foundational tenets of Lifestyle Medicine such as nutrition, sleep, and stress reduction. We anticipate that the group medical visit format will provide support and validation for PASC patients as it has for those with chronic pain. We will test our hypothesis by way of pre and post participant interviews, survey measures, and weekly feedback. The group will serve patients seen at the UNC COVID Recovery Clinic.

To refer patients to either Individual Integrative Medicine Consults or Integrative Medicine Group Visits, healthcare providers should refer to Dr. Jessica Barnhill in EPIC.

For questions about the program, please contact either:

Dr. Jessica Barnhill at jbarnhil@email.unc.edu

or Dr. Isabel Roth at iroth@email.unc.edu



UNC COVID Recovery Clinic

UNC PM&R Assistant Professor, JM Baratta, MD, has led the way for the creation of the UNC COVID-19 Recovery Clinic, a new and collaborative approach to serve the growing number of patients facing multiple health issues following their COVID-19 Infection.

This multidisciplinary COVID-19 Recovery Clinic opened in February 2021 and has already seen 250+ patients. The clinic is co-directed by UNC PM&R Assistant Professor, John M. Baratta, MD, and Louise King, MD, Assistant Professor, with the Department of Internal Medicine.

Read more about the clinic [here](#).

SAVE THE DATE

Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Disability: A Training Workshop for Health Professionals

AUGUST 6, 2021

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM



Individuals with disabilities have unique cultural and psychosocial experiences that impact functioning, quality of life, and full participation in medical, rehabilitation, and mental health treatment.

Healthcare professionals can improve clinical and life outcomes for persons with disabilities by incorporating these unique psychosocial and cultural factors into their assessment and treatment process. Traditionally, however, medical, mental health, and related healthcare professionals with knowledge, understanding, and expertise in working with people with disabilities and their caregivers and families can be difficult to find.

The purpose of this workshop will be to provide healthcare professionals – physicians, nurses, OTs, PTs, SLPs, recreational therapists, licensed clinical mental health counselors, certified rehabilitation counselors, licensed clinical social workers, psychologists, and others – with the knowledge they can use to provide more informed and effective person-centered care for persons with disabilities.

Register Now!

www.gahec.org/courses-and-events/66033/psychosocial-and-cultural-aspects-of-disability-a-training-workshop-for-health-professionals

Credits: AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™, Nursing Contact Hours, NC Psychology (category A) CE, NBCC, NCBPTE, Contact Hours, and CEUs

UNC PM&R Rehabilitation Center Funding Opportunities



Plans are underway to move the UNC Hospitals' Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation (AIR) Center from its long-time home in the Medical Center in Chapel Hill to a new state of the art facility currently under construction at the UNC Hospitals-Hillsborough Campus. The new, 40-bed AIR Center will be located on the third and fourth floors of the new Hillsborough Hospital Bed Tower Two and is expected to open in February 2022. Several philanthropic opportunities have been identified in association with this move and the following are our top fundraising priorities needed to reach our target goal of \$500,000.

Residency Program

The goal of our ACGME-certified residency program is to help medical graduates develop into outstanding practicing physiatrists. Our residency program offers a wide range of clinical, educational and research opportunities that include wide ranging clinical experiences, targeted educational programs and close, daily interactions with experienced faculty. The long-term success of our program and its graduates is tied to our ability to cultivate a culture of teamwork, resilience, and sense of purpose in our faculty, residents, students and staff. With the move to UNC Hospitals Hillsborough Campus, our Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation facility will add an additional 10 beds. This increase in capacity has allowed us to grow our PM&R residency program from 12 to 16 residents over the next four years. Funds will enable us to upgrade our resident room in the new hospital and provide additional educational and support services to our growing program.

UNC PM&R Rehabilitation Center Funding Opportunities

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)

The Hillsborough Hospital Center for Complementary and Alternative Health will provide holistic, complementary health-care services and education to patients and care providers throughout the hospital. These services and educational offerings will be designed to enhance the health-care experience and outcomes for patients and their families, as well as for the health-care personnel who serve them. Funding will enable the Center to offer individual treatments such as acupuncture, instruction in Mindfulness, biofeedback, art therapy, therapeutic yoga, tai chi, qigong, as well as other complementary medicine topics such as nutritional therapeutics, functional medicine, aromatherapy, and healing touch.

Outdoor Space

The site plan for the new Hillsborough Tower Two provides a unique opportunity to create a welcoming outdoor setting to further support our patients and their loved ones through the rehabilitation process and toward their journey home. The goal of rehabilitation is to help the patient become as independent as possible and to ensure they and their loved ones have the best tools to succeed once they return home. Funding for this dedicated outdoor space will enable us to offer mixed terrain walking paths, social, educational and meeting spaces, adaptive sporting activities, and opportunities for gardening and recreation. The outdoor experience combines the emotional and social benefits of being outside in nature, with recreational activities and opportunities navigate obstacles that may be encountered as our patients re-enter their communities.

Maker Space

The new Rehab Makerspace will be the first of its kind in the country to be located within an inpatient rehabilitation center and will benefit all inpatients at the UNC Hospitals Hillsborough Campus. Similar to the BeAMaker program on UNC's main campus (<https://beam.unc.edu/>) funding for this innovative program will go towards purchasing 3-D laser printers, resin printers, handheld 3D scanners, mobile maker carts, and other innovative tools and software that will help create on-demand, personalized adaptive equipment, supplies, and products for our patients. Funding will also create new educational opportunities for UNC biomedical engineering undergraduate students as well as for UNC health care providers and will ultimately benefit all the patients they serve. This new space will create custom-made equipment, great stories, great training opportunities, and great outcomes.

Virtual/Augmented Reality

With the use of immersive headsets, we can offer tailored therapy for complex real-world tasks in a safe environment that is easy to control and replicate. Virtual therapy has been shown to improve balance, gait, and upper extremity use in patients who have suffered strokes, brain or spinal cord injuries, or who have MS, Parkinson's, or acquired limb deficiencies. The headsets can also be used by patients on our inpatient rehab unit to reduce anxiety and pain through guided imagery using programs such as Heart Math. Funding will also be used to perform research on the efficacy of these various approaches to help determine future best practices across our Health Care System.



**UNC Inpatient Rehabilitation Center
at Hillsborough Campus
Expected Opening February 2022**

UNC
HEALTHSM
Foundation

Make a Gift

For more information on how to support the Hillsborough Hospital project and the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, please contact **Ryan McGuirt**, 919-843-3963 or email ryan_mcguirt@med.unc.edu.

You may also make a gift online here: go.unc.edu/dpmr

STAY CONNECTED

 @uncpmr  @unc_pmr  @uncpmr **Website:** med.unc.edu/phyrehab

Sign up for newsletter: med.unc.edu/phyrehab/about-us/newsletter

UNC Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation