

MUSC
Medical University of South Carolina

Changing What's Possible

Department of Medicine

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

DEPARTMENTAL **LEADERSHIP**

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Chair, Department of Medicine

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Vice Chair, Finance and Administration

Elisha Brownfield, M.D.
Vice Chair, Leadership Development

Kimberly Davis, M.D., FACP
Vice Chair, Clinical Operations

Aundrea Loftley, M.D.
Vice Chair, Faculty Engagement

Jim Oates, M.D.
Vice Chair, Research

Cassandra Salgado, M.D., MS
Vice Chair, Wellness and Academic Integration

Richard Silver, M.D.
Vice Chair, Development

Gerard Silvestri, M.D.
Senior Vice Chair, Faculty Development

Divisions

CARDIOLOGY

Thomas Di Salvo, M.D., MBA, MPH
Division Director

Bill Stalvey, MHA
Division Administrator

ENDOCRINOLOGY

Marc-Andre Cornier, M.D.
Division Director

Elizabeth Swan
Division Administrator

GASTROENTEROLOGY AND HEPATOLOGY

Garth Swanson, M.D.
Division Director

Richard "Mac" Houck, MBA
Division Administrator

GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE

Kimberly Davis, M.D., FACP
Division Director

Brian Collins, MHA
Division Administrator

HEMATOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY

A. Craig Lockhart, M.D., MHS
Division Director

Lee Putney, MHA
Division Administrator

HOSPITAL MEDICINE

Marc Heincelman, M.D., MPH
Division Director

Julia Seiden, MHA
Division Administrator

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Cassandra Salgado, M.D., MS
Division Director

Laura Sublett, MHA
Division Administrator

NEPHROLOGY

Joshua Lipschutz, M.D.
Division Director

Adam Greene, MHA
Division Administrator

PULMONARY AND CRITICAL CARE

Dee Ford, M.D., MSCR
Division Director

Richard "Mac" Houck, MBA
Division Administrator

RHEUMATOLOGY AND IMMUNOLOGY

Jim Oates, M.D.
Division Director

Melanie Puckhaber
Division Administrator

COVER:
Top Image: Residents and attending, Dr. Nancy Hagood, on rounds in University Hospital.
Middle Image: Dr. DeAnna Baker Frost with researcher in lab.
Bottom Image: Internal Medicine residents using Point-of-Care Ultrasound.

Acknowledgments:

The Department of Medicine would like to thank the many individuals, especially our leadership, whose collective efforts have helped to complete this year's annual progress report. Additionally, we would like to thank those who are featured within these pages for their continued service to MUSC and contributions to this publication.

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MESSAGE
FROM THE CHAIR



Ben Clyburn, M.D.
Chair, Department of Medicine
Medical University of South Carolina

As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded that excellence is not defined by a single accomplishment. It is built through the commitment to improve, innovate and serve others each day. Throughout FY26, our faculty, staff and trainees demonstrated that commitment across every aspect of our mission.

This was a year of substantial growth. Our 351 faculty members cared for more patients and generated more clinical work than ever before in the department's history, a trajectory detailed further in our Clinical Affairs update. We expanded access across South Carolina, from new outpatient locations to expanded telehealth and rural coverage, and earned national distinction as a center of excellence in pulmonary embolism, bronchiectasis and NTM, scleroderma, and polycystic kidney disease care.

Research remained a cornerstone of our mission. Our faculty secured $53.4 million in new awards, advancing work that spans cardiovascular disease, digestive disease, cancer, kidney disease, infectious disease, and autoimmune conditions. We also celebrated the promotion of 24 faculty members and the appointment of new leadership, including Dr. Kurt Prins as Director of the Gazes Cardiac Research Institute and Drs. Thomas Di Salvo and Garth Swanson as inaugural leads of our Heart & Vascular and Digestive Disease Integrated Innovation Institutes.

Education is at the heart of what we do, and this year our faculty's commitment to teaching and mentorship earned recognition well beyond the department. Ten faculty members received MUSC Faculty Awards or College of Medicine Golden Apple Awards, honors that speak to the strength of our educational mission at every stage, from junior faculty developing as teachers to senior mentors shaping the careers of the physicians and scientists who will follow them.

None of this is possible without our people. Our 108 residents, 114 fellows, and 24 postdoctoral trainees represent the future of academic internal medicine, and the generosity of our donors, from a $3 million gift supporting Dr. Federica del Monte's Heart & Brain Program to sustained philanthropic support for our Scleroderma Center, reflects the trust our community places in this department. As we look to FY27, we remain focused on the work still ahead: improving patient access, supporting our workforce's well-being, and continuing to build a department worthy of the patients we serve.

It is an honor to lead this remarkable team.

INNOVATION | IMPACT | INFLUENCE

FY 2026 BY THE NUMBERS

Our commitment to providing the highest level of compassionate patient care, best-in-class training for the next generation of internal medicine leaders, and cutting-edge clinical, basic science and translational research are Changing What's Possible for our patients.

CLINICAL ACTIVITY

52,735
NEW PATIENTS

1,515,589
wRVU GENERATION

453,701
OUTPATIENT ENCOUNTERS

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

97
NEW AWARDS

$53.5
MILLION
in research awards

37
PIs with Active Corporate Clinical Research

22
PIs with Active Federal Awards and Clinical Research

FACULTY, STAFF AND TRAINEES

351
FACULTY

108 Residents
114 Fellows
24 Postdocs & Trainees

136
Research Staff

167
Management & Support Staff

165
Advanced Practice Providers

VISIONARY **LEADERSHIP**

This year, several of our talented faculty members assumed key leadership roles in the Department of Medicine and across the broader university and health system. Each of these individuals brings invaluable expertise and exceptional dedication to their new positions.



Kevin Becker, M.D.
Associate Chief
Oncology ICCE

Kevin Becker, M.D., has been named associate chief of the Oncology Integrated Center of Clinical Excellence (ICCE) at MUSC Health. In his new role, he will provide leadership for statewide ambulatory and infusion services, with a focus on access, clinical quality, care standardization and operational excellence across the MUSC Health network. His leadership will support MUSC Health's commitment to delivering high-quality, consistent cancer care across the state.

Dr. Becker is a medical oncologist who brings extensive experience in oncology leadership, having previously served as medical director of Maimonides Cancer Center and chief of the Regional Division of Hematology and Oncology for Maimonides and Downstate Health Sciences University.



Nancy Hagood, M.D., MPH
Director of Global Health Education
College of Medicine

Nancy Hagood, M.D., MPH, has been appointed Director of Global Health Education for the College of Medicine. In her new role, Dr. Hagood will help strengthen international partnerships and opportunities for students to engage in global health education.

She also serves as Director of Global Health Education for the Department of Medicine, where she collaborates with the Center for Global Health to advance global health education and support an academic partnership with Muhimbili National Hospital in Tanzania. Her global health experience includes over a decade of work in Haiti, where she has partnered with Haitian leaders to build sustainable medical and nutrition programs.



Marc Heincelman, M.D., MPH
Associate Dean for Career Advising
College of Medicine

Marc Heincelman, M.D., MPH, has been appointed Associate Dean for Career Advising in the MUSC College of Medicine. He also serves as Director of the Division of Hospital Medicine and Co-Vice Chair for Quality Improvement in the Department of Medicine. Dr. Heincelman has a long standing commitment to medical education and career development at MUSC. He served as the Department of Medicine's Clerkship and Sub-internship Director from 2016 to 2024 and was appointed Assistant Dean for Career Advising in 2024 before advancing to his new role.

As Associate Dean, Dr. Heincelman will take on an expanded leadership role in career advising, helping guide medical students as they navigate career planning and professional development.

VISIONARY **LEADERSHIP**



Joshua Neal, M.D.
Chief, Health Wellness and Human Performance ICCE

Joshua Neal, M.D., has been named the inaugural chief of the newly established Health, Wellness and Human Performance Integrated Center of Clinical Excellence (ICCE) at MUSC Health. He also serves as the ICCE's Medical Director for Nutrition.

As a Certified Culinary Medicine Specialist, he was instrumental in the development of MUSC's new culinary clinic through a collaboration with Trident Technical College. The program offers nutrition education in a format that differs from a traditional clinic visit, integrating medicine, nutrition and hands-on cooking instruction.

In his new role, Dr. Neal will advance an integrated approach to health, wellness and human performance, with a focus on comprehensive, patient-centered care and innovative approaches to prevention and healthy living.



Kurt Prins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director of Gazes Cardiac Research Institute

Kurt Prins, M.D., Ph.D., has been appointed Director of the Gazes Cardiac Research Institute at MUSC. Dr. Prins leads an NIH-funded laboratory dedicated to understanding right heart failure and pulmonary hypertension and developing new treatments for these conditions. His research aligns with his clinical expertise in cardiovascular disease, particularly right heart failure, tricuspid regurgitation, dyspnea and pulmonary hypertension.

As Director of the Gazes Cardiac Research Institute, Dr. Prins' expertise and leadership will help advance innovative cardiovascular research and strengthen the institute's efforts to better understand and treat complex heart conditions.

LEADERS OF MUSC'S **INTEGRATED INNOVATION INSTITUTES (I3)**

The I^3 initiative brings together clinical care, education and research across disciplines to foster collaboration, innovation and national prominence in key areas of health care.



Tom Di Salvo, M.D., MPH, MBA
Leader of Heart and Vascular I3



Garth Swanson, M.D., MS
Leader of Digestive Disease I3

In their new roles, Dr. Di Salvo and Dr. Swanson will help advance collaboration across the **Heart and Vascular** and **Digestive Disease** domains, bringing together faculty, staff and partners across the academic enterprise and health system to strengthen clinical programs, research, clinical trials and specialty education.

NEW **FACULTY FY26**


M. Belanger


R. Dowd


K. Prins


S. Rao

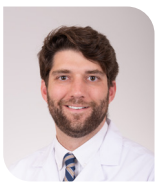

G. Habig


D. Katzka


C. Obineme


A. Podboy


K. Williams


T. Barr


J. Goldstein


E. Nelson


S. Saha


R. Schexnaildre


B. Sullivan


J. Vaught


R. Yeleti

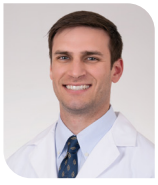

P. Agarwal


M. Alhousani


R. Jenkins


S. Beasley


L. Bendig


A. Dorsey


A. Farooq


C. Lashley


C. Santos


N. Smith


A. White

CARDIOLOGY

- Matthew Belanger, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Rory Dowd, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Kurt Prins, M.D., Ph.D., Professor
- Swati Rao, M.D., Assistant Professor

GASTROENTEROLOGY & HEPATOLOGY

- Gregory Habig, M.D., Assistant Professor
- David Katzka, M.D., Professor
- Chuma Obineme, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Alexander Podboy, M.D., Associate Professor
- Kathy Williams, M.D., MS, Assistant Professor

GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE

- Thompson Barr, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Jennifer Goldstein, M.D., Associate Professor
- Emily Nelson, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Sanjay Saha, M.D., MHS, Assistant Professor
- Ryan Schexnaildre, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Brigid Sullivan, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Jacob Vaught, D.O., Assistant Professor
- Ramya Yeleti, D.O., Assistant Professor

HEMATOLOGY & ONCOLOGY

- Priyal Agarwal, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Mohammad Alhousani, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Russell Jenkins, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor

HOSPITAL MEDICINE

- Sarah Beasley, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Liam Bendig, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Andrew Dorsey, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Awais Farooq, M.D., MHA, Assistant Professor
- Christopher Lashley, D.O., Assistant Professor
- Charles Santos, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Nicholas Smith, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Austin White, M.D., Assistant Professor

NEW **FACULTY FY26** *(continued)*

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- Jordan Jones, Pharm.D., Assistant Professor
- Nikko Tabliago, M.D., Assistant Professor

NEPHROLOGY

- Eily Hayes, D.O., Assistant Professor
- Anthony Kent, M.D., Assistant Professor

PULMONARY & CRITICAL CARE

- Megan Brunckhorst, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Hina Chaudhry, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Stephen Sexauer, M.D., Assistant Professor
- Lumi Tudor, M.D., Assistant Professor

RHEUMATOLOGY & IMMUNOLOGY

- Priyanka Ballal, M.D., Assistant Professor


J. Jones


N. Tabliago


E. Hayes


A. Kent


M. Brunckhorst


H. Chaudhry


S. Sexauer


L. Tudor


P. Ballal

PROMOTIONS

Ruth Adekunle, M.D., *Associate Professor, Infectious Diseases*

Mariam Alexander, M.D., Ph.D., *Associate Professor, Hematology & Oncology*

Anthony Carnicelli, M.D., *Associate Professor, Cardiology*

DeAnna Baker Frost, M.D., Ph.D., *Associate Professor, Rheumatology*

Kevin Baker, M.D., *Associate Professor, Hospital Medicine*

Praneeth Baratam, M.D., *Associate Professor, Hematology & Oncology*

Benjamin Barnette, M.D., *Associate Professor, Hospital Medicine*

Ryan Beyer, M.D., *Associate Professor, Pulmonary & Critical Care*

Hayley Berry, Pharm.D., *Assistant Professor, Infectious Diseases*

Galina Bogatkevich, M.D., Ph.D., *Professor, Rheumatology*

Thai Ho, M.D., Ph.D., *Professor, Hematology & Oncology*

Rachana Krishna, M.D., *Associate Professor, Pulmonary & Critical Care*

Harriet Mather, M.D., MSc, *Associate Professor, General Internal Medicine*

William McManigle, M.D., *Associate Professor, Pulmonary & Critical Care*

John McKinnon, M.D., MSc, *Professor, Infectious Diseases*

Oleksandra Lupak, M.D., *Associate Professor, Hematology & Oncology*

Amanda Overstreet, D.O., *Associate Professor, General Internal Medicine*

Ludivine Renaud, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Rheumatology*

Michelle Spiegel, M.D., *Associate Professor, Pulmonary & Critical Care*

Grace Suppa, D.O., *Clinical Associate Professor, Rheumatology*

Michael Tucker, M.D., *Associate Professor, General Internal Medicine*

Justin Van Beusecum, Ph.D., *Associate Professor, Nephrology*

Leigh Vaughan, M.D., *Professor, General Internal Medicine*

Thomas Werth, M.D., *Clinical Professor, Gastroenterology & Hepatology*

FACULTY **ENGAGEMENT**

MESSAGE FROM THE
VICE CHAIR FOR FACULTY ENGAGEMENT



As vice chair for faculty engagement, I am proud of our department's progress in building meaningful partnerships across MUSC and throughout our community. Faculty and staff participation continues to grow, and trainees remain essential to our outreach. Collaborations with student organizations have expanded mentoring opportunities and helped us cultivate talented future health care professionals within our institution.

We are equally committed to fostering a culture where every team member feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute. This year, we launched our first staff support group to strengthen connections among staff. We expanded Department of Medicine Awards Day recognition with three new awards honoring colleagues who demonstrate MUSC's core values through their work. We also completed a department-wide recruitment database to support internal recruitment and connect candidates with opportunities across the department.

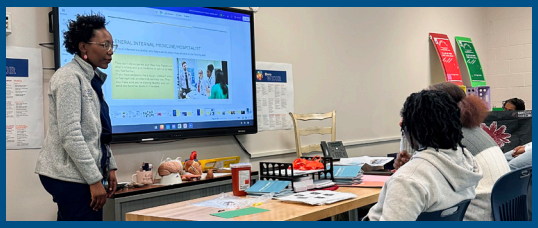
Improving health outcomes starts with understanding the communities we serve. Our faculty, staff and trainees continue to deepen those relationships while advancing patient care, education and research. Our partnerships within the community continue to strengthen and we look forward to new collaborations on the horizon.

It is a privilege to work alongside colleagues who bring such dedication to our shared mission. Together, we are improving health through innovation, education and meaningful engagement.

Aundrea Loftley, M.D.
Vice Chair for Faculty Engagement
Department of Medicine

Medical Students Join Department Mentors to Inspire Burke High School Students

The Department of Medicine is deepening its partnership with Burke High School through mentoring and hands-on learning that encourages students to pursue health care careers. Over the past year, faculty and staff joined second-year medical students for three visits. Activities included blood pressure training for health sciences students and Future Health Professionals Week, when Burke students presented health care research projects and received feedback from our faculty and staff. MUSC's Student National Medical Association, **Aundrea Loftley, M.D.**, and the Department of Medicine Engagement and Excellence Council led the initiative. All graduating seniors in the program plan to attend college and pursue health care careers.



Ruth Adekunle, M.D., with Burke High School students



L-R: Leigh Vaughan, M.D.; KeAnjane Govan, MS2; Ashley Duckett, M.D.; DeAnna Baker Frost, M.D., Ph.D.; Melissa Cunningham, M.D., Ph.D.; Angela Yang, MS2, Ruth Adekunle, M.D.

WELLNESS

MESSAGE FROM THE
VICE CHAIR FOR WELLNESS



Well-being often begins with listening and acting on what we hear. This year, the Annual People Survey and division listening sessions gave us a clearer view of the factors that shape our employees' daily experience. Across the Department of Medicine, faculty and staff consistently identified work-life harmony as our leading shared challenge. They described difficulty disconnecting after hours, communication gaps, high inpatient workloads, heavy ambulatory Epic inbox volume, inefficient paging and expectations of constant availability.

We used those insights to focus on changes that make work more sustainable. Through Getting Rid of Stupid Stuff, an initiative to eliminate unnecessary work, we are simplifying workflows, reducing after-hours Epic tasks and strengthening operational support. We also expanded Stress First Aid for Leaders, which helps managers recognize strain early, build trust and connect team members with support.

Support should be easy to find. We expanded our peer support network to include more physicians and basic science faculty, while Orange Huddle offers another way to seek help. Lyra Health will give MUSC employees and their families around-the-clock access to mental health professionals, coaching, counseling and work-life resources, including on-site support after critical incidents.

These advances move us from identifying challenges to addressing them. In the coming year, we will continue to use employee feedback to guide practical improvements, help leaders support their teams and make care easier to access. Well-being strengthens our work in patient care, education and discovery. Together, we are creating a department where people feel heard, valued and supported, a department where everyone matters.

Cassandra Salgado, M.D., MS
Vice Chair for Wellness and Academic Integration
Department of Medicine

> "By investing in the health of our people, we strengthen the foundation for excellence in patient care, education, and discovery."
>
> -Cassandra Salgado, M.D.



EXCELLENCE IN **CLINICAL CARE**

Expanding Access, Advancing Care

Across 10 divisions, the Department of Medicine delivers nationally recognized subspecialty care for patients with complex diseases while expanding access to coordinated, responsive care throughout South Carolina. Our clinical innovators translate discovery into advanced treatments and meaningful improvements in patient outcomes statewide and beyond.

MESSAGE FROM THE **VICE CHAIR FOR CLINICAL OPERATIONS**



In FY26, Department of Medicine faculty, advanced practice providers, nurses and staff met growing demand while improving care across outpatient practices, hospitals and communities throughout South Carolina.

Our teams grew new patient volume by 15% and outpatient encounters by 11.3% over FY25, while clinical productivity increased 11.0% year-over-year. Since FY21, new patient volume has grown 63.8%, and clinical productivity has grown 62.4%.

This growth reflects a deliberate, department-wide commitment to meeting patients where they live. The department has significantly expanded its geographic reach across South Carolina since 2021, as shown in the map below, extending care into new communities from the Upstate to the Lowcountry. This expansion, paired with continued recruitment of clinical faculty and advanced practice providers across every specialty, is central to our mission of better access, better care and healthier communities statewide.

Technology sustains this growth without compromising quality or provider well-being. AI-powered in-basket tools and MyChart Direct Scheduling helped our teams manage a 10% increase in in-basket messages in FY26. Telehealth and remote patient monitoring also expanded through new rural telehospitalist coverage and programs serving federally qualified health centers and free clinics statewide, growing telehealth encounters by 32.7% over FY25 and extending MUSC expertise beyond our clinic walls.

None of this growth happens without our people. Across our ten divisions, clinical faculty and staff opened new clinics and access points, adopted new technologies, and reimagined care delivery for their patients. I am privileged to lead this dedicated team and look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

Kimberly Davis, M.D., FACP
Vice Chair for Clinical Operations
Department of Medicine

Clinical Growth Highlights



Growing to Meet South Carolina's Needs

The Department of Medicine has achieved substantial clinical growth over the past five years, driven by advanced clinical and research capabilities that distinguish us among academic medical centers.

In FY26, the department welcomed **38 new faculty members** and **45 advanced practice providers (APPs)**, supporting the continued expansion of our clinical footprint across the state.

AT A GLANCE

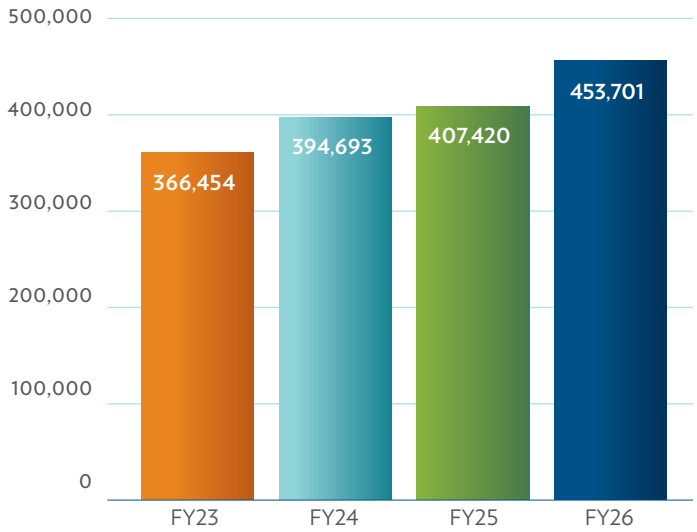
FY26 CLINICAL CARE BY THE NUMBERS

453,701
Outpatient Encounters

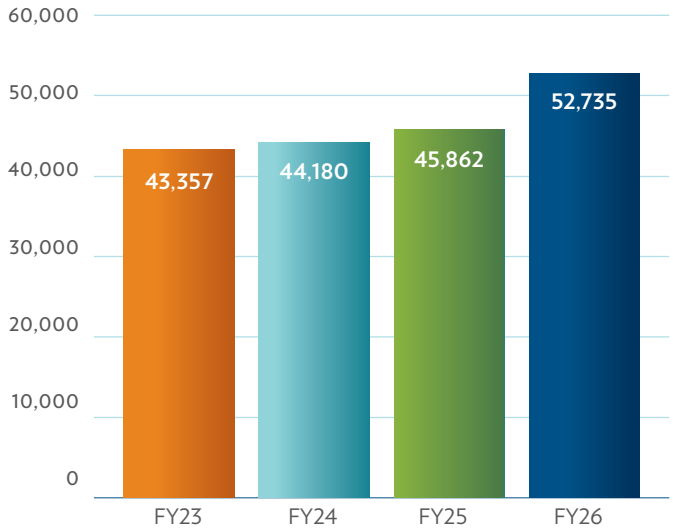
52,735
New Patient Visits

1,515,589
wRVUs

Outpatient Encounters



New Patient Visits



Changing What's Possible in South Carolina

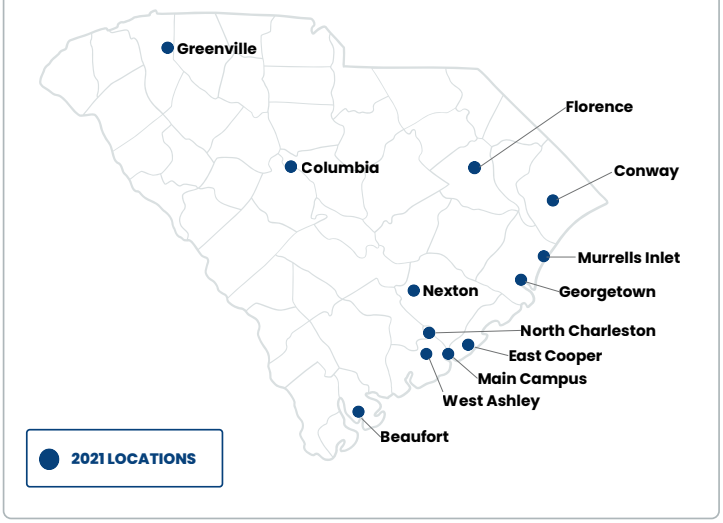
2021 ⟶ 2026



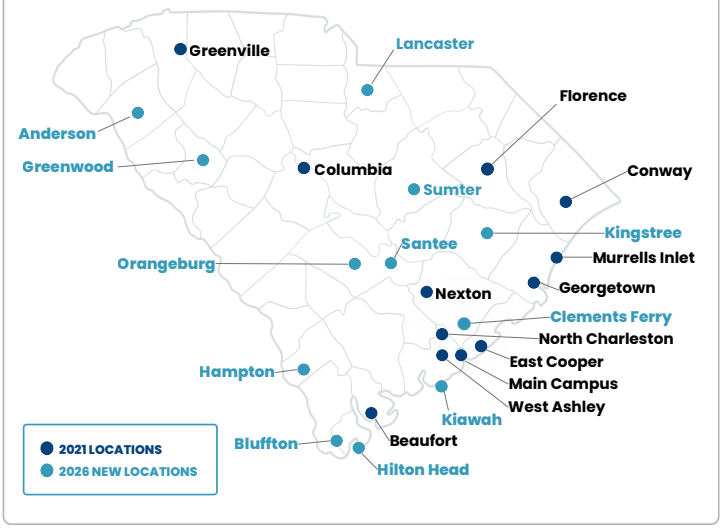
Better Access, Better Care, Healthier Communities

Department of Medicine clinics served patients in **24 South Carolina counties in FY26**, up from **12 counties in 2021**. This expansion is part of MUSC Health's broader statewide growth, from **a single hospital in 2016** to **18 hospitals in 2026** spanning all **46 counties**.

2021 DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE LOCATIONS



2026 DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE LOCATIONS



12 LOCATIONS IN 2021

12 NEW LOCATIONS ADDED BY 2026

24 TOTAL LOCATIONS BY 2026

MUSC Health's new Clements Ferry Pavilion is expanding access to Department of Medicine expertise for residents of Berkeley and Charleston counties. The four-story, 80,000-square-foot multispecialty clinic offers coordinated care in adult primary care, heart and vascular care, gastroenterology, oncology and infusion services, rheumatology, endocrinology, and more.



NATIONAL DISTINCTIONS in Specialized Care

From pulmonary embolism treatment to complex lung disease and scleroderma, MUSC Health continues to earn national recognition for clinical excellence, multidisciplinary collaboration, and research innovation.

PULMONARY EMBOLISM CARE



The PERT Consortium, an international organization dedicated to improving pulmonary embolism (PE) care through multidisciplinary response teams, accredited MUSC Health as a Comprehensive PE Center of Excellence, one of only 18 institutions internationally and the only one in South Carolina to hold this distinction. Led by Denise Sese, M.D., and building on the foundational work of Thomas Todoran, M.D., MUSC's multidisciplinary team delivers the swift, coordinated care that this life-threatening condition demands.

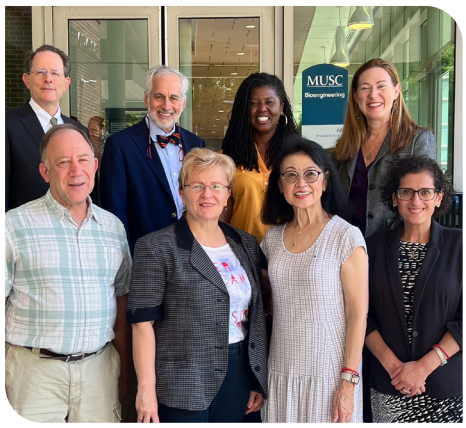
COMPLEX LUNG DISEASE CARE



The Bronchiectasis and NTM Association re-designated MUSC Health as a Bronchiectasis and NTM Care Center Network site, one of only a select few programs in the country and the only one in South Carolina, recognizing MUSC's expertise in diagnosing and treating these two chronic, complex lung conditions.

Patrick Flume, M.D., director of the MUSC NTM program, leads a multidisciplinary team that includes pulmonologists Christina Mingora, M.D., and Lauren Sullivan, M.D.; infectious disease specialists Susan Dorman, M.D., and Yosra Alkabab, M.D.; and a broader group of advanced practice providers and support staff.

SCLERODERMA CARE AND RESEARCH



The National Scleroderma Foundation designated the MUSC Scleroderma Center as a Scleroderma Research and Treatment Center, an honor held by only a select group of institutions nationwide and the only one in South Carolina, recognizing MUSC's strength in multidisciplinary care and translational research for this rare, complex autoimmune disease.

Richard Silver, M.D., leads the center's specialists across rheumatology, pulmonology, cardiology, dermatology, and gastroenterology in providing coordinated care, alongside research led by Carol Feghali-Bostwick, Ph.D., and colleagues studying fibrosis, disease progression, and potential anti-fibrotic therapies.

POLYCYSTIC KIDNEY DISEASE CARE

The Polycystic Kidney Disease Foundation renewed MUSC's designation as a Center of Excellence for another three years, one of only 39 such centers nationwide, recognizing the division's sustained commitment to exceptional PKD care.

Read More *about the Advances in Patient Care across our divisions in the division profile sections beginning on* ***page 28.***

RESEARCH **AND INNOVATION**



Research Excellence

The Department of Medicine advances human health through fundamental, translational, clinical and implementation research. Across 10 divisions and four research centers, investigators address disease mechanisms, evaluate new diagnostics and therapies, and translate evidence into more effective care.

MESSAGE FROM THE **VICE CHAIR FOR RESEARCH**



Research in the Department of Medicine begins with a clinical problem that has no good answer yet.

This year, these problems included a heart muscle stiffened by misfolded protein, a liver quietly scarring in a patient who came in for something else, and a lupus flare that has not responded to any of our medications. Our investigators pursue these questions because they encounter them in clinic, and because the distance from the laboratory bench to the patient's bedside is short here, often a single corridor.

Fiscal Year 2026 was a demanding year for biomedical research nationally. Federal competition intensified, and review cycles grew less predictable. Despite this, our enterprise held and then grew. Total research funding reached a departmental record, and our faculty sustained a portfolio spanning basic mechanisms, first-in-human trials, and the health of communities across South Carolina. Specifics of these accomplishments appear on the following page. What they represent is harder to tabulate: grant applications written after clinic, protocols revised for the eleventh time, and patients who consented to a trial without knowing whether it would help them.

Three commitments shape how we intend to build from here. We will protect time for early-career investigators, because a K award defended today is an R01 a decade from now. We will keep our trials open to the patients most often excluded from them, including those with comorbid disease and those who live far from Charleston. And we will keep asking questions that cross division lines, because the biology rarely respects them. The work described in these pages belongs to our faculty, our trainees, and the people who trusted us with their care.

Jim Oates, M.D.
Vice Chair for Research
Department of Medicine

AT A GLANCE

FY26 RESEARCH FUNDING & ACTIVITY

$53.48M
New Research Funding

97
New Awards

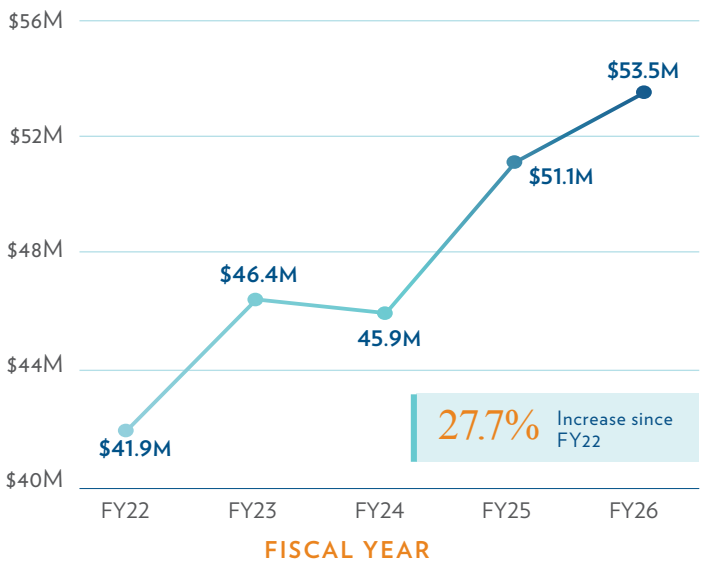
208
Total Awards

500+
Publications

433
Active Clinical Trials

FY26 research funding reached **$53,477,259**, an **increase of 4.6% from FY25** and **27.7% from FY22**. The portfolio combined federal awards with substantial corporate, foundation, institutional, state and other support.

5-Year Research Funding Trend



FY26 Funding Sources

FUNDING SOURCE	FY 26 SUPPORT
Corporate	$25.8 Million
Federal	$18.5 Million
College or University	$4.3 Million
Foundations	$3.5 Million
State of South Carolina and other support	$1.4 Million

Funding source amounts are rounded as reported in the source material. The precise FY26 total is $53,477,259.

Major Funding Milestones and Grant Portfolios

The FY26 portfolio included investigator-initiated R-series awards, large center and cooperative agreement mechanisms, training grants, career development awards and Veterans Affairs support. New NIH R01 awards to Andrew Schreiner, M.D., MSCR, and Betty Tsao, Ph.D., expanded the department's work in metabolic liver disease detection and the genetic basis of systemic lupus erythematosus. A new NHLBI K23 award to Michele Esposito, M.D., strengthened the cardiovascular clinician-scientist pipeline.

Center and Training Infrastructure

Active mechanisms included the SCTR UM1, the Telehealth Center of Excellence U66, P30 centers in digestive diseases and rheumatic diseases, and a portfolio of T32, TL1, R25 and UE5 programs. These awards provide shared research capacity, multicenter coordination and structured training across career stages.

FUNDING **HIGHLIGHTS**

FY26 FEDERAL AWARDS

Melissa Cunningham, M.D., Ph.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- R01 – "The Role of Estrogen Receptor Alpha Variant Size and Localization in Modulating TLR7-Induced Inflammation," NIH/NIAMS

Kristine DeLeon-Pennell, Ph.D., *Cardiology*

- R01 – "Temporal effects of CD8 T-cells post-MI," NIH/NHLBI

Federica del Monte, M.D., Ph.D., *Cardiology*

- R01 – "Red Blood Cells Shuttle Beta Amyloid Between Brain and HEART: IMPLICATIONS for the Pathogenesis and the Progression of Alzheimer's and Cardiomyopathy," NIH/NHLBI

Susan Dorman, M.D., *Infectious Diseases*

- R01 – "Tuberculosis Trials Consortium," CDC
- R34 – "Novel Strategies for Treatment of Mycobacterium Abscessus Pulmonary Disease," NIAID

Carol Feghali-Bostwick, Ph.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- R25 – "ASCEnD - A National Program of Academic Support and Coaching for Entrepreneurial Development," NIH/NIGMS
- R33 - "Peptides for the Treatment of Pulmonary Fibrosis," NIH/NHLBI
- T32 - "Pulmonary-Focused Foundations in Innovation and Scholarship (PUFFINS)," NIH/NHLBI
- TL1 - "NRSA Training Core," NCATS

Patrick Flume, M.D., *Pulmonary & Critical Care*

- UM1 – "The South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research Institute (SCTR)," NIH/NCATS

Dee Ford, M.D., *Pulmonary & Critical Care*

- U66 – "Telehealth Center of Excellence," HRSA

Gary Gilkeson, M.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- U01 – "A Phase II Controlled Trial of Allogeneic Mesenchymal Stromal Cells for the Treatment of Refractory Lupus (MiSLE)," NIH/NIAID
- T32 – "Training Grant in Inflammatory and Fibrosing Diseases," NIH/NIAMS

Brian Hess, M.D., *Hematology & Oncology*

- R01 – "Assessing Metabolically Reprogrammed and Purified CD19-CAR-T in NHL and CLL," NIH/NCI

Russell Jenkins, M.D., Ph.D., *Hematology & Oncology*

- R37 – "Dissecting the Tumor-intrinsic and -extrinsic Roles of TBK1 in Tumor Immunity," NIH/NCI

Donald Menick, Ph.D., *Cardiology*

- R01 – "Biomimetic Nanomaterials for the Immunomodulation of the Cardiosplenic Axis Post Myocardial Infarction," NIH/NHLBI

Jim Oates, M.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- P30 – "Improving Health in Rheumatic Diseases (ImHeaRD)," NIH/NIAMS

Kurt Prins, M.D., Ph.D., *Cardiology*

- R01 – "GP130 Antagonism in Porcine RV Pressure Overload," NIH/NHLBI
- R01 - "Multi-scale Investigation of Sex Differences in Right Ventricular Function via Estrogen-Microtubule Interactions," NIH/NHLBI

Don Rockey, M.D., *Gastroenterology & Hepatology*

- R01 – "A Molecular Approach to the Pathogenesis of Portal Hypertension," NIH/NIDDK
- UE5 - "Medical University of South Carolina Mentoring Program in Digestive and Liver Diseases," NIH/NIDDK
- P30 - "MUSC Digestive Disease Research Core Center," NIH/NIDDK
- R25 - "MUSC GI and Hepatology Medical Student Training Program," NIH/NIDDK

FUNDING **HIGHLIGHTS**

FY26 FEDERAL AWARDS

Andrew Schreiner, M.D., *General Internal Medicine*

- R01 – "Advanced Fibrosis Detection and a Predictive Diagnostic Model for Metabolic Dysfunction-associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD) in Primary Care," NIH/NIDDK (new in FY26)

Garth Swanson, M.D., *Gastroenterology & Hepatology*

- R01 – "The Impact of Circadian Misalignment on Colonic Barrier Homeostasis in Ulcerative Colitis," NIH/NIDDK

Ryan Tedford, M.D., *Cardiology*

- R01 – "Phenotyping Net Immune State with MicroRNAs in Cardiac Transplantation, Inova Center for Personalized Health" (sub award), Inova Center for Personalized Health

Betty Tsao, Ph.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- R01 – "Identify Rare Pathogenic Variants and their Functional Consequences in SLE," NIH/NIAMS (new in FY26)

Jeffrey Winterfield, M.D., *Cardiology*

- R44 – "Eliminating Ventricular Tachycardia: First in Human Clinical Trial using the Durablate™ Catheter," (sub award), Thermedical, Inc.

John Wrangle, M.D., *Hematology & Oncology*

- HT9425– "Leveraging Lineage Addiction: Nuclear Delivery of Therapeutic Transgenes Responsive to Oncogenic, Transcription Factor Over-Expression," DOD/USAMRAA
- R21 – "Exploiting Lineage-Specific Dependencies in Solid Tumors: Using Transcription Factors to Drive Therapeutic Effect In Situ," NIH/NCI

FY26 ACTIVE NIH K AWARDS

Yosra Alkabab, M.D., *Infectious Diseases*

- K23 – "Metabolic Syndrome Outcomes Among Patients with Tuberculosis in Tanzania," NIH/NIAID

DeAnna Baker Frost, M.D., Ph.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- K08 – "The Role of Hormonal Dysregulation in Systemic Sclerosis," NIH/NIAMS

Michele Esposito, M.D., *Cardiology*

- K23 – "Regional Disparity of Skeletal Muscle Microvascular Dysfunction in Systolic Heart Failure," NIH/NHLBI (new in FY26)

Carol Feghali-Bostwick, Ph.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- K24 – "Scleroderma Twin Study and Analysis of Estrogen in Patients with dcSSc," NIH/NIAMS

Ludivine Renaud, Ph.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- K01 – "Epigenetic Regulation of KLF4 in SSc-Associated Lung Fibrosis," NIH/NIAMS

FY26 ACTIVE SCTR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE K12 AWARDS

Charles Terry, M.D., *Pulmonary & Critical Care*

- K12 – "Prospective Identification and Characterization of ARDS Using Computational Phenotypes."

Jessica English, M.D., *Rheumatology & Immunology*

- K12 – "Pregnancy Outcome Disparities Among Women with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus"

Michele Esposito, M.D., *Cardiology*

- K12 – "Mechanisms of Skeletal Muscle Microvascular Dysfunction in Systolic Heart Failure." (new in FY26)

High Impact Interdisciplinary Breakthroughs

FY26 research advanced new therapeutic platforms, earlier detection strategies and evidence-based improvements in care delivery. The following studies illustrate how department investigators connected laboratory science, clinical trials, data science and implementation research to address complex disease.

CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCE



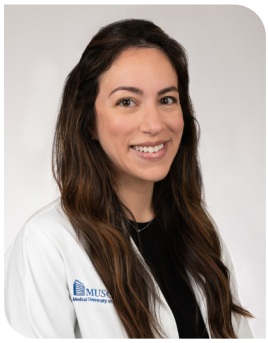
Expanding the Therapeutic Pipeline for ATTR-CM

Daniel Judge, M.D., and the MUSC amyloidosis team continue to lead ATTR-CM treatment research, having been the first site internationally to test acoramidis (Attruby) and now studying several emerging therapies, including the gene-editing treatment NTLA-2001 — the only trial site of its kind in South Carolina — along with the monoclonal antibody ALXN2220 and the RNA-targeting drug nucresiran. The division's long-running trial participation continues to expand treatment options for patients with this once-untreatable condition.



Reading the Heart for a Disease of the Brain

Federica del Monte, M.D., Ph.D., found that the amyloid plaques and tangles that define Alzheimer's disease in the brain also accumulate in the failing heart. She is now studying patients with heart failure, patients with Alzheimer's disease and healthy volunteers to determine whether echocardiography can detect amyloid as reliably as PET imaging—and whether the heart registers the disease first.



Advancing Heart Failure Research Through an NIH K23

Exercise intolerance is among the most disabling features of systolic heart failure, and cardiac measurements do not fully explain it. Michele Esposito, M.D., received an NIH/NHLBI K23 award to study regional skeletal muscle microvascular dysfunction in systolic heart failure. Her patient-oriented research examines peripheral vascular and skeletal muscle mechanisms that may contribute to exercise intolerance beyond conventional measures of cardiac function. The award extends preliminary findings from her K12 work.

GENOMIC MEDICINE AT POPULATION SCALE

Extending Population Genomics Across South Carolina

Led by principal investigator Daniel Judge, M.D., In Our DNA SC has enrolled more than 50,000 adults from all 46 South Carolina counties, including rural and socially vulnerable communities. A *JAMA Network Open* study found that flexible collection options, community partnerships and implementation science can extend population genomic screening statewide. Approximately one in 65 participants has an actionable variant associated with hereditary cancer syndromes or familial hypercholesterolemia and is offered no-cost genetic counseling.

In Our DNA SC
A Community Health Research Project

High Impact Interdisciplinary Breakthroughs (continued)

CANCER AND PULMONARY SCIENCE

Defining Delays in Precision Oncology

Adam Fox, M.D., and Gerard Silvestri, M.D., quantified the interval from biopsy to biomarker results across solid tumors, with emphasis on non-small cell lung cancer. Published in *JCO Oncology Practice*, the study found that median turnaround time improved from 36 days in 2018 to 27 days in 2024, largely through faster laboratory processing. Ordering delays persisted and varied substantially across sites, identifying an actionable systems barrier to appropriate first-line therapy.



Building Cellular Therapy Capacity for Solid Tumors

Mariam Alexander, M.D., Ph.D., is building the clinical infrastructure to deliver immune-based cellular therapy for solid tumors at MUSC, supported by an Early Career Cancer Clinical Investigator Award from the National Cancer Institute. Working across hematology-oncology, pharmacology and cardiothoracic surgery, she is establishing bispecific T-cell engager and tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte programs so patients need not travel out of state.



Personalizing Therapy for Breast Cancer and Heart Disease

Abirami Sivapiragasam, M.D., is leading a response-adaptive trial for women with stage 2 or 3 triple-negative breast cancer who have cardiomyopathy or elevated cardiac risk. Open at Hollings, MUSC Health Florence and Tidelands Health, the study uses MRI after 12 weeks to determine whether patients proceed to surgery or receive six additional weeks of therapy. The design seeks to preserve efficacy while limiting avoidable toxicity.



AUTOIMMUNE AND CELLULAR THERAPIES

Reprogramming Immunity in Lupus

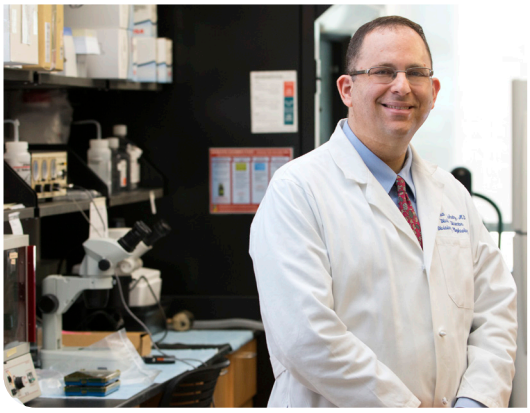
Gary Gilkeson, M.D., Melissa Cunningham, M.D., Ph.D., and Michelle Hudspeth, M.D., are testing whether the immune system can be modulated rather than suppressed. MUSC was the lead site for a completed phase 2 placebo-controlled trial of umbilical cord-derived mesenchymal stromal cells in 81 patients across eight lupus centers and is now adapting CAR-T therapy from oncology toward the same objective: durable remission.



High Impact Interdisciplinary Breakthroughs (continued)

LIVER AND METABOLIC DISEASE

Repurposing Formoterol for Metabolic Liver Disease



Josh Lipschutz, M.D., Jessica Hartman, Ph.D., and Don Rockey, M.D., reported that formoterol reversed liver injury in a mouse model of metabolic dysfunction associated steatohepatitis. Published in *npj Metabolic Health and Disease*, the study documented improvement at histologic, ultrastructural and functional levels and identified changes in cellular energy pathways. Because formoterol is already used for asthma and COPD, positive human studies could support an accelerated repurposing pathway.

Detecting Advanced Liver Fibrosis in Primary Care



Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease is common, progressive and usually undetected in primary care until fibrosis is advanced. Andrew Schreiner, M.D., MSCR, holds a new NIDDK R01 to test an unobtrusive electronic health record alert across primary care practices in a stepped-wedge, cluster-randomized design, and to build a predictive diagnostic model that identifies at-risk patients earlier.



PUBLICATIONS

Scan the QR Code to view our **high impact publications** in FY26.

INNOVATION DAY

Investing in Ideas that Move Medicine Forward



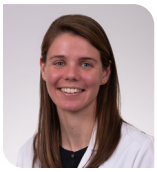
On July 16, the MUSC Department of Medicine held its inaugural Innovation Day, spotlighting faculty projects that are advancing medical education, accelerating research and improving patient care. Launched in 2025 by Department Chair Ben Clyburn, M.D., the initiative draws on departmental resources and philanthropic support to invest in the people and ideas driving the future of academic medicine.

"One of our greatest responsibilities as an academic medical center is to create an environment where great ideas can flourish," Clyburn said. "By investing in our faculty, we're not only supporting innovative research and education today — we're building the foundation for the discoveries, physicians and models of care that will shape the future of medicine."

Recipients of the Chairman's Education Innovation Program, the Chairman's Research Innovation Program and the Ben Clyburn, M.D., Clinician Educator Award shared how that support is turning ideas into advances.

Expanding how—and where—physicians learn

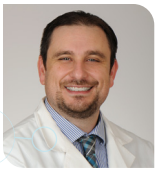
Chairman's Education Innovation Award:



Nancy Hagood, M.D., MPH, assistant professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine and director of Global Health Education in the College of Medicine, received the award for developing a longitudinal global health curriculum for Department of Medicine trainees. Through a partnership with Muhimbili National Hospital in Tanzania, residents gain immersive global health experience. Early participants reported improved clinical reasoning, cultural awareness and readiness to care for patients in resource-limited settings.

Accelerating discovery and clinical improvement

Chairman's Research Innovation Award:



Toros Dincman, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Hematology & Oncology, presented research on sphingosine kinase 2 as a potential therapeutic target in gastric cancer. Early findings are laying the groundwork for preclinical studies and, ultimately, clinical trials.



Ellen Esposito, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine, presented an electronic medical record alert that helps clinicians identify hospitalized patients with tobacco use disorder and connect them with evidence-based treatment, without adding to alert fatigue.

Building confidence for difficult conversations

Ben Clyburn, M.D., Clinician Educator Award:



Harriet Mather, M.D., MSc, associate professor and section head of Palliative Care in the Division of General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics and Palliative Care, completed advanced faculty training through the national VitalTalk program. She is developing a curriculum to help MUSC physicians navigate difficult conversations with seriously ill patients and their families.



Denise Sese, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Allergy & Sleep Medicine, presented a communication program that teaches fellows to discuss goals of care with patients who have pulmonary arterial hypertension and to respond to their emotional needs. She also completed VitalTalk training, and the work is part of a larger project to address barriers to palliative care, including primary palliative care delivered by pulmonologists.

Although each initiative addresses a different challenge, together they illustrate what becomes possible when faculty receive the resources, training and encouragement to explore new approaches. Through continued departmental and philanthropic investment, Innovation Day is helping create a pathway from a promising idea to meaningful impact—for learners, patients and communities.

MEDICAL **EDUCATION**

The Department of Medicine continues its investment in advancing educational programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Department faculty contribute extensively to medical student education in both the basic science and clinical clerkship years and directly supervise the training of over 200 residents and fellows each year.

UNDERGRADUATE **MEDICAL EDUCATION**



Under the leadership of Clerkship Director Maggie Thomas, M.D., MPH, MS, Department of Medicine faculty help more than 300 third- and fourth-year medical students each year build the knowledge, confidence and clinical judgment needed to care for patients. As teachers, mentors and advisers, faculty create meaningful learning experiences in the classroom and alongside patient care teams.

That commitment continues to inspire interest in internal medicine. In the 2026 Match, 28 graduates, or 17.5%, entered categorical internal medicine, internal medicine-pediatrics or internal medicine-psychiatry programs.

CURRICULUM INNOVATION



- **More active clinical learning.** The third-year clerkship reduced lectures, expanded interactive subspecialty-led sessions and adopted an Academic Half-Day model that preserves afternoons for patient care.
- **Stronger assessment and support.** Course objectives and the end-of-clerkship clinical skills examination were updated to align with AAIM recommendations with greater emphasis on clinical reasoning. An early AMBOSS quiz helps identify students who may need additional support before the subject examination.
- **Skills across the curriculum.** Point-of-care ultrasound expanded into a longitudinal experience during the Immersion phase (year 3), and students now complete a rapid response experience after earning ACLS certification.
- **Evidence-based practice and artificial intelligence.** The evidence-based medicine requirement now introduces AI-supported search tools while teaching students to recognize their clinical care limitations.
- **Expanded sub-internship experience.** A pilot program adds direct patient care teams to the competitive fourth-year sub-internship, increasing one-on-one attending learning for FY27.

ADVISING

Under the leadership of Marc Heincelman, M.D., MPH, associate dean for career advising in the College of Medicine, six funded Careers in Medicine specialty advisors support students: Kathryn Anderson, M.D.; Jamel Brown, M.D.; Susan Evenhouse, M.D.; Aundrea Loftley, M.D.; Keri Holmes-Maybank, M.D.; and Andrew Schreiner, M.D., MSCR.

Leadership

Ashley Duckett, M.D.
Program Director, IM Residency

Benjamin Kalivas, M.D.
Program Director, Medicine/ Psychiatry Residency

Sarah Mennito, M.D., MSCR
Program Director, Medicine/ Pediatrics Residency

Maggie Thomas, M.D., MPH
Clerkship Director and Associate Program Director

Kathryn Anderson, M.D.
Associate Clerkship Director

Theresa Cuoco, M.D., FACP
Associate Clerkship Director

Courtney Harris, M.D.
Associate Program Director

Brad Keith, M.D.
Associate Program Director

Aundrea Loftley, M.D.
Associate Program Director

Eric Palecek, M.D.
Associate Program Director

Skip Schumann, M.D., MSCR
Associate Program Director

William Shelley, M.D.
Associate Program Director

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION



The Internal Medicine Residency Program, led by Ashley Duckett, M.D., expanded its curriculum, strengthened its core faculty, and broadened community-based training during the 2025-2026 academic year. In FY26, the program trained 108 residents, including 16 in medicine-pediatrics and 10 in medicine-psychiatry.

SUCCESSES AND HIGHLIGHTS

- **Enhanced Community Engagement**
  The program expanded the Health Disparities elective and continued its collaboration with the Shifa Clinic, pairing longitudinal learning with direct service to communities that have limited access to care.
- **Faculty and Leadership Growth**
  Thompson Barr, M.D., and Nancy Hagood, M.D., MPH, joined the program's core faculty, and Courtney Harris, M.D., was named associate program director.
- **Recruitment Success**
  The program sustained recruitment initiatives that attract applicants from a wide range of academic, geographic, and personal backgrounds.
- **Comprehensive POCUS Training**
  The curriculum integrates Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS) across rotations, delivering hands-on training in intensive care units, inpatient wards, pulmonary consult services, and ambulatory blocks.
- **Innovative Clinical Electives**
  Residents partner with faculty to design electives aligned with their career interests, including new rotations in global health, ultrasound, hospital medicine, and the cardiovascular ICU.
- **Dedicated Research Opportunities**
  Residents who identify a mentor and a defined project may pursue a dedicated research block, which regularly yields regional and national conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications.
- **2026 Residency Match Day**
  The program filled its 2026 Match with 35 incoming residents, who began training at MUSC in the 2026-2027 academic year.





2026 RESIDENCY MATCH DAY
INCOMING CLASS

26 Medical Schools Represented	17 States Represented
1 International Candidate	5 MUSC COM Graduates

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION *Continued*

Post-Residency Career Paths

Graduates of the program compete successfully for the nation's most rigorous fellowships or enter practice as general internists. In the 2025 fellowship match, for a July 2026 start, **23 residents** matched into competitive subspecialty programs nationwide, including 10 who continued their training at MUSC.

To see our complete list of graduates and learn about the next steps in their careers, scan the QR Code or visit https://bit.ly/CareerDevelopment26



2025-2026 Resident Graduating Class

RESIDENT RESEARCH

Resident Scholarship on a National Stage

Department of Medicine residents shared their research and clinical scholarship at regional, national and international meetings throughout FY26. Collectively, they delivered **89 presentations** at **29 scientific meetings**, including **66 poster presentations** and **23 oral presentations**, and contributed to **60 publications**.

Residents presented at leading conferences hosted by the American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, American Society of Clinical Oncology, Society of General Internal Medicine, European Society for Medical Oncology and American Thoracic Society, among others.

Conference Highlights

2026 Society of General Internal Medicine Southern Regional Meeting: 17 residents presented their work and engaged with peers from across the region.

2025 American College of Physicians South Carolina Chapter Annual Scientific Meeting: 12 residents delivered poster and oral presentations. Three residents were named abstract competition finalists:

- Danny Nixon, M.D.: "Hidden in the Herb: A Case of Liver Injury Complicated by Acute Renal Failure"
- Taylor Davis, D.O.: "Act Fast: PEN-FAST Utilization for Penicillin Allergy Evaluation in a Case of Ocular Syphilis"
- Scott McCraney, M.D.: "Tacrolimus-Induced Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation: First Reported Case in Transplant Medicine"

2025-2026 RESIDENT SCHOLARLY PRODUCTIVITY BY THE NUMBERS

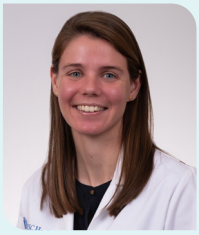
29	89	66	23	60
Scientific Meetings	Total Presentations	Poster Presentations	Oral Presentations	Research Publications



SGIM Regional Meeting 2026



SC ACP Chapter Meeting



SPOTLIGHT: NANCY HAGOOD, M.D., MPH

Advancing Global Health Education

Nancy Hagood, M.D., MPH, developed and implemented a new Global Health Education Curriculum for the Department of Medicine, built in partnership with Muhimbili National Hospital in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The curriculum gives residents and fellows structured, longitudinal training in global health, helps attract trainees drawn to the field, and expands MUSC's international collaborations. Dr. Hagood received the inaugural 2025 DOM Chairman's Education Innovation Award to support the project.

Dr. Hagood joined the Division of Hospital Medicine in 2024 as an academic hospitalist and assistant professor. She now directs Global Health Education for both the College of Medicine and the Department of Medicine, serves as a Master Clinical Skills Teacher and Associate Director of the Longitudinal POCUS Curriculum, and belongs to the College of Medicine Academy of Medical Educators. She brings more than a decade of global health experience in Haiti.





FELLOWSHIP **TRAINING**



Natalie Freidin, M.D. and Fellows

The Department of Medicine offers fellowship programs across nine divisions, providing advanced subspecialty training for careers in clinical practice, medical education, and research. In FY26, our faculty trained **114 fellows** across **18 ACGME-accredited** and **4 non-accredited** programs.

Expanding Opportunities in High-Impact Fields

Over the past two years, the department added four fellowships in **Diabetes, Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), Interventional Pulmonology, and Transplant Infectious Diseases**, strengthening training in areas of rising clinical need and creating new pathways for specialized expertise and discovery. The department also expanded faculty mentorship and established fellowship interest groups for trainees considering subspecialty careers, and incorporated program signaling into fellowship recruitment.

NOTABLE **AWARDS AND HONORS**



Ashley Duckett, M.D.
IM Residency Program Director, received the **2026 MUSC Teaching Excellence Award** (Educator Lecturer category)

Golden Apple Award Winners



Aundrea Loftley, M.D.
Preclerkship Teaching Excellence Award (HRR Theme)



Paul McDermott, Ph.D.
Teacher of the Year & Preclerkship Teaching Excellence Award (SFP Theme)



Maggie Thomas, M.D., MPH, MS
Clinical Preceptor Excellence in Teaching Award – Faculty



Michael Vinzani, M.D.
Clinical Preceptor Excellence in Teaching Award – Resident

CARDIOLOGY

Led by **Thomas Di Salvo, M.D., MPH, MBA**, the Division of Cardiology continues to strengthen its clinical, research, and educational impact regionally and nationally. In FY26, the division welcomed five new faculty — Matthew Belanger, M.D. (General Cardiology); Swati Rao, M.D., and Rory Dowd, M.D. (Electrophysiology); Payton Kendsersky, M.D. (Interventional); and Kurt Prins, M.D., Ph.D. (General Cardiology) — with six more joining in FY27. Dr. Prins also became Director of the Gazes Cardiac Research Institute, one of the nation's leading heart failure research centers, where investigators bridge basic science and clinical practice using single-cell biology, proteomics, metabolomics, and genetic analysis. In his first year, Dr. Prins and the Gazes team increased research funding, published high-impact manuscripts, and forged new collaborations.

Professor and Division Director
Thomas Di Salvo, M.D., MPH, MBA

Distinguished University Professors
Michael Gold, M.D., Ph.D.
Ryan Tedford, M.D.
Michael Zile, M.D.

Professors
Jan Basile, M.D.
Amy Bradshaw, Ph.D.
Robert Biederman, M.D.
Valerian Fernandes, M.D.
Federica del Monte, M.D., Ph.D.
David Gregg, M.D.
Brian Houston, M.D.
Daniel Judge, M.D.
Paul McDermott, Ph.D.
Donald Menick, Ph.D.
Pamela Morris, M.D.
Christopher Nielsen, M.D.
Terrence O'Brien, M.D.
Sergio Pinski, M.D.
Eric Powers, M.D.
Kurt Prins, M.D., Ph.D.
Daniel Steinberg, M.D.
Thomas Todoran, M.D.
Adrian Van Bakel, M.D.
John Wharton, M.D.
Jeffrey Winterfield, M.D.

Associate Professors
Nicholas Amoroso, M.D.
Catalin Baicu, Ph.D.
Anthony Carnicelli, M.D.

Associate Professors (cont'd)
Kristine Deleon-Pennell, Ph.D.
Chakradhari Inampudi, M.D.
Gregory Jackson, M.D.

Assistant Professors
Jessica Atkins, M.D.
Isabel Balachandran, M.D.
Matthew Belanger, M.D.
John Ciccone, M.D.
Bishnu Dhakal, M.D.
Rory Dowd, M.D.
William Edwards, M.D.
Michele Esposito, M.D.
Kenneth Hanger, M.D.
Rachel Kaplan, M.D.
Payton Kendsersky, M.D.
Fred Krainin, M.D.
Anne Kroman, D.O.
Kristen Nawabi, M.D.
Swati Rao, M.D.
Vishal Rao, M.D.
Daniel Silverman, M.D.
Graham Smith, M.D.
Chau Vo, M.D.
Ashley Waring, M.D.

FY27 Recruits
Molly Silkowski, D.O.
Colin Blumenthal, M.D.
Merna Hussien, M.D.
Cole Buchanan, M.D.
Jeanne du Fay de Lavallaz, M.D., Ph.D.
Eugene Storozynsky, M.D., Ph.D.

BY THE NUMBERS

135,375
Outpatient Visits

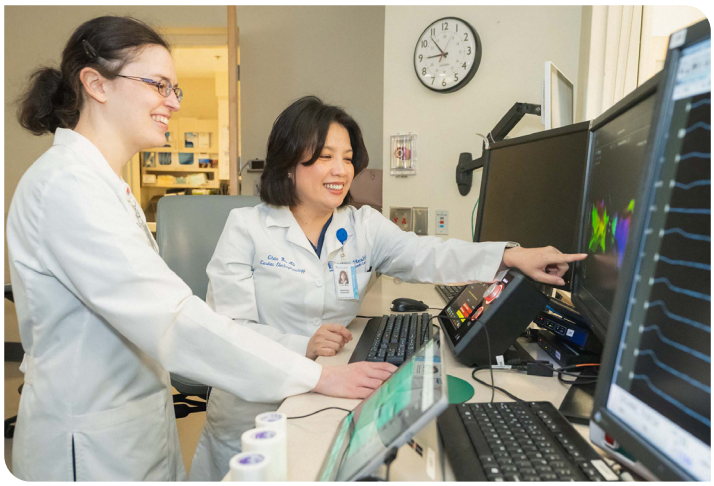
10,288
New Patient Visits

3,418
Telehealth Visits

77
Heart Transplants in CY25

CARDIOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

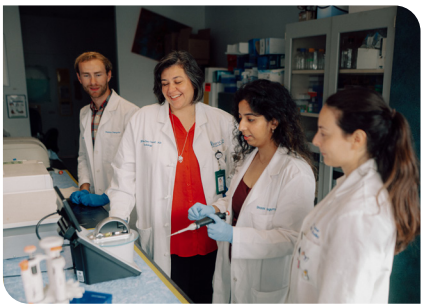
CLINICAL EXCELLENCE



Rachel Kaplan, M.D., and Chau Vo, M.D.

- **Growth and Access:** The division saw 32% growth in new patient visits from FY25 to FY26. Two new outpatient locations — MUSC Health Clements Ferry Pavilion and Kiawah Partners Pavilion — opened in FY26, bringing heart and vascular specialty care to the Cainhoy and Sea Islands communities of South Carolina.
- **New Ambulatory Surgery Center**: MUSC Health opened South Carolina's first ambulatory surgery center dedicated to heart care at the MUSC Health West Ashley Medical Pavilion. Electrophysiologists Chau Vo, M.D., and Rachel Kaplan, M.D., now perform same-day procedures for patients with heart rhythm disorders.
- **Transplant Program Recognition:** Led by Ryan Tedford, M.D., MUSC's heart transplant program received national recognition as one of 15 centers in the American Heart Association's research network.

RESEARCH



Kristine DeLeon-Pennell, Ph.D. (second from left) and fellows in the lab.

- Kurt Prins, M.D., Ph.D., was inducted into the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and served as Chair of the Pulmonary Hypertension Association's Scientific Sessions Committee.
- The division grew its annual research funding from $2.41M to $3.81M, a 58% year-over-year increase. Major new grants include Dr. Ryan Tedford's award from the AHA's MUSC Transplant Research Network and Dr. Michele Esposito's K23 NHLBI grant studying regional disparities in skeletal muscle microvascular dysfunction in systolic heart failure. Dr. Esposito also received funding from the Rural Health Transformation Program Tech Catalyst Fund for Pressiant Health.
- Division faculty also gained national recognition through senior editorial and leadership roles: Kristine DeLeon-Pennell, Ph.D., was named a Fellow of the American Physiological Society (Basic Cardiovascular Section); Michele Esposito, M.D., joined the SCAI Emerging Leaders Mentorship Program; and Brian Houston, M.D. (Associate Editor, *Journal of Cardiac Failure*), Ryan Tedford, M.D. (Deputy Editor, *Circulation*), and Kurt Prins, M.D., Ph.D. (Consulting Editor, *JCI Insight*) each took on senior editorships.

EDUCATION

- **Faculty Teaching Honors:** Michael Zile, M.D., received the 2026 ACC Distinguished Mentor Award; Amy Bradshaw, Ph.D., was named MUSC Graduate Student Association Teacher of the Year; and Ryan Tedford, M.D., received the 2026 MUSC Teaching Excellence Award for Educator Mentorship.
- **Trainee Recognition:** Madelyn Blake, B.S., received the ASCI Post-Baccalaureate Fellowship Award, and Amber Hazzard, Ph.D.(c), received a Distinguished Abstract Award at the APS Summit and a 2025 AAAS Mass Media Fellowship.
- **Fellowship Program Growth:** The division's five ACGME-accredited fellowship programs continue to attract highly competitive applicants. The general cardiology fellowship expanded to 21 fellows, and the electrophysiology fellowship now supports five fellows annually.

ENDOCRINOLOGY, DIABETES, AND METABOLIC DISEASES

Led by **Marc-Andre Cornier, M.D.**, the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolic Diseases is renowned for its patient-centered care, groundbreaking research, and commitment to education. Our multidisciplinary clinics provide comprehensive diagnostic and treatment services for a wide range of endocrine disorders, including diabetes, obesity, and thyroid, pituitary, adrenal and lipid disorders, reaching patients across South Carolina.

Focused on strategic growth, the division has welcomed new faculty and advanced practice providers, expanded clinics across the state and enhanced services in cardiometabolic health. For over five decades, our internationally recognized faculty have driven transformative research, setting new standards in endocrine, diabetes and metabolic care and continuing to lead advancements on a global scale.

BY THE NUMBERS

29,103
Outpatient Visits

4,066
New Patient Visits

5
ACGME Fellows

1
Diabetes Fellow

Professor and Division Director
Marc-Andre Cornier, M.D.

Professors
Jyotika Fernandes, M.D.
Timothy Lyons, M.D.

Associate Professors
Harsha Karanchi, M.D.
Aundrea Loftley, M.D.

Assistant Professors
Rashmi Dhakal, M.D.
Kelly Engle, M.D.

Assistant Professors (cont'd)
Colleen Gavigan, M.D.
Joshua Neal, M.D.
Emily Rosenberg, M.D.
Rani Shayto, M.D.
Zi Tan, M.D.

FY27 Recruits
Brandon Stone, M.D.
Chelsey Baldwin Teschner, M.D.
Sara Hrivnak, D.O.

ENDOCRINOLOGY, DIABETES, AND METABOLIC DISEASES HIGHLIGHTS

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

Over the past year, the division's clinical programs have continued to evolve to provide the best possible patient-centered approach.

Highlights include:

- Endocrinology clinical services expanded to Columbia, South Carolina, where **Aundrea Loftley, M.D.**, and **Meghan Blanchette, NP**, now see patients.
- Opened a new **Weight Management Clinic** and expanded weight management clinical services.
- MUSC obesity medicine physician **Joshua Neal, M.D.**, partnered with Trident Technical College to launch a four-week **culinary medicine pilot program** combining clinical guidance, personalized nutrition education and hands-on cooking instruction. Participants gained practical techniques and confidence to make healthier choices at home, demonstrating how food and cooking skills can support long-term health.



L-R: Joshua Neal, MD, Alexandra Krouch, Suzanne Jones, Leada Feaster, Winnice Walker, Jay Winnerman, Jacqueline Singleton Brown, Chef Randall Williams

RESEARCH

FY26 saw the continued expansion of the division's clinical and translational research portfolio with several new multicenter trials.



MUSC Management of Maternal Diabetes (MOMs) Program: This multidisciplinary research and care program brings together endocrinology, maternal-fetal medicine, diabetes education, nutrition, and community health to improve outcomes for people with diabetes before, during, and after pregnancy. In FY26, the program expanded access to maternal diabetes care through in-person and virtual services as part of the SC MOMs initiative, addressing both medical needs and social determinants of health to reduce adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes.

EDUCATION

The division grew its **Endocrinology Fellowship Program** to five ACGME fellows annually and, with an American College of Diabetology grant, launched a one-year **Diabetes Fellowship Program** that welcomed its first fellow in FY26.

FACULTY AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



Aundrea Loftley, M.D., received the 2026 MUSC Golden Apple Preclerkship Teaching Excellence Award and the 2026 MUSC Lift As You Climb Mentorship Award.

NEW LEADERSHIP



Josh Neal, M.D.
Chief, Health, Wellness and Human Performance ICCE



Emily Rosenberg, M.D.
Medical Director, Diabetes Management Service

GASTROENTEROLOGY AND HEPATOLOGY

Under the leadership of **Garth Swanson, M.D., MS**, the MUSC Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology has achieved significant growth in clinical care, research, and education over the past three years. The division has expanded its faculty and staff to meet the needs of a rapidly growing community, driving increases in clinical volume and colorectal cancer screenings. The Liver Transplant Program has strengthened its national standing with a notable rise in transplant volume, while the motility program broadened diagnostic services for patients with complex gastrointestinal disorders.

In FY26, the division welcomed seven new faculty members across general gastroenterology, motility, transplant hepatology, and interventional endoscopy, with three additional recruits set to join in FY27. Research remains a central pillar of the division's mission, anchored by the COBRE in Digestive and Liver Disease and the NIDDK P30-funded Digestive Disease Research Core Center. The division also expanded fellowship training, including its advanced inflammatory bowel disease fellowship, to prepare the next generation of specialists.

Professor and Division Director
Garth Swanson, M.D., MS

Distinguished University Professors
Don Rockey, M.D.

Professors
Andrew Brock, M.D.
Puja Elias, M.D.
Thomas Faust, M.D.
Brenda Hoffman, M.D.
David Katzka, M.D.
David Koch, M.D.
K. Mark Payne, M.D.
Amol Sharma, M.D., MS
Thomas Werth, M.D.
Ira Willner, M.D.

Associate Professors
Amit Agrawal, M.D.
Ryan Beyer, M.D.

Associate Professors (cont'd)
Erin Forster, M.D., MPH
Alexander Podboy, M.D.
Michael Rajala, M.D., Ph.D.
Zengdun Shi, M.D.
Heather Simpson, M.D.

Assistant Professors
Christian Clark, M.D.
Gregory Habig, M.D.
Vishnu Naravadi, M.D.
Songling Liu, M.D.
Chuma Obineme, M.D.
Cameron Wilhoit, M.D.
Kathy Williams, M.D.

FY27 Recruits
Fayrouz Hachicho, M.D.
Hampton Sasser, M.D.
Jake Wilson, M.D.

BY THE NUMBERS

40,826
Outpatient Visits

5,753
New Patient Visits

3,761
Telehealth Visits

180
Liver Transplants CY25

GASTROENTEROLOGY AND HEPATOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE



Ray Hardy, M.D., and Amol Sharma, M.D.

- **Expanding Liver Disease Detection:** The division launched a new Cardiometabolic MASLD Clinic, a collaboration between the MUSC Hepatology and Cardiology Integrated Innovation Institutes (I^3) to treat patients with metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) and liver fibrosis, paired with translational research alongside Allied Health dietitians and behavioral medicine providers. Complementing this effort, Fibroscan is now available as an Epic-ordered service to assess liver fibrosis, building on the Fib4 workflow Andrew Schreiner, M.D., developed in Primary Care to identify at-risk MASLD patients.
- **Integrated Liver ICU Care:** Pre- and post-liver transplant critical care has been consolidated into the SMICU, providing seamless intensive care for patients with liver failure or recent liver transplant, in collaboration with Rita Bakhru, M.D. (Pulmonary Critical Care) and Tara Barry, M.D. (Transplant Surgery).
- **Expansion of GI Motility Services:** The division expanded its motility program to include esophageal manometry, anorectal manometry, and ATMO Gas Wireless Motility capsules, increasing access to comprehensive diagnostic testing for complex gastrointestinal disorders.
- **Improving Diagnostic Access:** In collaboration with Nuclear Medicine, the division developed a solid-phase dynamic esophageal emptying scan for evaluating patients with dysphagia, and implemented online scheduling for GI colonoscopies to streamline access.

RESEARCH

Digestive Disease Research Center
AT THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

- **P30 Digestive Disease Research Core Center:** The division celebrated the renewal of the NIDDK P30-funded MUSC Silvio O. Conte Digestive Disease Research Core Center.
- **New Research Infrastructure:** The division expanded the shared resources available to digestive disease investigators by establishing the MUSC Digestive Disease Biorepository and MUSC Digestive Disease Microbiome Core, and is developing a Digestive Disease Organoid Core to support lab models that can accelerate discovery.
- **NIH-Funded Research Portfolio:** Division faculty hold multiple NIH awards supporting high-impact research. Don Rockey, M.D., advances portal hypertension research and digestive disease training programs; Amol Sharma, M.D., studies the gut-microbiota-brain axis in Parkinson's disease and neuromodulation for diabetic gastroparesis; and Garth Swanson, M.D., investigates circadian misalignment and chronotherapy in inflammatory bowel disease.
- **Collaborative Clinics:** New research-focused collaborative clinics span Parkinson's disease and GI motility disorders, cardiology and metabolic liver disease, and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome and neurogastroenterology.

EDUCATION



Fellowship Growth: The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation-recognized IBD Fellowship welcomed its second fellow, Ryan O'Leary, M.D., complementing ACGME-accredited programs in transplant hepatology and general gastroenterology.

FACULTY AWARDS



Don Rockey, M.D., received the 2026 MUSC Peggy Schachte Research Mentor Award

GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE, GERIATRICS AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Under the leadership of **Kimberly Davis, M.D., FACP**, the Division of General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, and Palliative Care continues to advance clinical excellence, education, and research across the Department of Medicine. With more than 40 clinical and research faculty, the division provides broad inpatient and outpatient training for residents and fellows while mentoring trainees in clinical care, quality, value-based care, and research.

Strategic recruitment continues to expand the division's reach, with eight physicians joining in FY26 and two additional recruits scheduled for FY27. Through innovation in primary care, geriatrics, palliative medicine, and sickle cell care, the division remains committed to improving outcomes across South Carolina and beyond.

Professor and Division Director
Kimberly Davis, M.D., FACP

Professors
Neal Axon, M.D.
Elisha Brownfield, M.D.
Walter Brzezinski, M.D.
Ben Clyburn, M.D.
Leonard Lichtenstein, M.D.
Cara Litvin, M.D.
Leigh Vaughan, M.D.

Associate Professors
Brad Keith, M.D.
Jennifer Goldstein, M.D.
Harriet Mather, M.D.
Edward O'Bryan, M.D.
Amanda Overstreet, D.O.
Eric Palecek, M.D.
Andrew Schreiner, M.D.
Samuel Schumann, M.D.
John Tucker, M.D.
Deanna Vroman, M.D.

Assistant Professors
Kathryn Anderson, M.D.
Sofia Arango Mendoza, M.D.

Assistant Professors (cont'd)
Sarah Ball, Pharm.D.
Thompson Barr, M.D.
Anup Bhushan, M.D.
Patrick Coyne, MS
Susan Evenhouse, M.D.
Kelly Graves, M.D.
Robert Ishak, M.D.
Shantae Jenkins, M.D.
Ellen Maher, M.D.
Nathalie Malcolm, M.D.
Joshua Mixson, M.D.
Ahmed Mohamed, Ph.D.
Emily Nelson, M.D.
Sanjay Saha, M.D., MHS
Ryan Schexnaildre, M.D.
Zemin Su, MS
Brigid Sullivan, M.D.
Sophia Urban, M.D.
Jacob Vaught, D.O.
Ramya Yeleti, D.O.

FY27 Faculty Recruits
Britton McGlawn-McGrane, M.D.
Paige Chase, M.D.

BY THE NUMBERS

60,719
Outpatient Visits

4,801
New Patient Visits

7,790
Telehealth Visits

2
ACGME Fellowships

GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE, GERIATRICS & PALLIATIVE CARE HIGHLIGHTS

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE


Dr. Thompson Barr with nurses Caroline Wallinger and Patricia Thompson

General Internal Medicine:

- This year, the division opened the first Hypertension Institute pilot clinic at University Internal Medicine and launched automated outreach to improve follow-up for adult patients with uncontrolled hypertension.
- The division and the MUSC Center for Telehealth launched a remote patient monitoring (RPM) program that lets care teams spot and treat uncontrolled blood pressure sooner, with the goal of improving patient outcomes. Led by Thompson Barr, M.D., the program is now expanding RPM services to federally qualified health centers and free clinics statewide, supported by a grant from The Duke Endowment.

Geriatrics: The division expanded its Comprehensive Geriatrics Assessment Program to include bone marrow transplant patients, piloted tablet-based digital cognitive assessment tools, and expanded participation in the GUIDE dementia care program with neurology.

Sickle Cell: The Rena Grant Sickle Cell Center, led by Shantae Jenkins, M.D., became a member of the National Alliance of Sickle Cell Centers and expanded its multidisciplinary team with the addition of pain specialists and physical therapists, enhancing comprehensive disease management, chronic pain care, and coordinated inpatient-outpatient care.

Palliative Care:

- The Palliative Section completed a quality improvement initiative embedding a palliative care provider in the NSICU, expanded inpatient hospice resources with improved workflow integration, and collaborated with the MUSC Cancer Integrated Center of Clinical Excellence to grow ambulatory palliative care.
- Harriet Mather, M.D., Palliative Care section head, received the Ben Clyburn Clinician Educator Award for her project, "Developing Serious Illness Communication Training at MUSC." The award supported her VitalTalk faculty development training, which lays the groundwork for serious illness communication training for residents and clinicians.



Dr. Harriet Mather presenting at the inaugural DOM Innovation Day

RESEARCH

- Faculty partnered across specialties to improve care, education and research, including studies with Hospital Medicine examining interhospital transfers, inpatient tobacco treatment, delirium and mobility.
- Andrew Schreiner, M.D., received a NIH R01 grant to develop early detection methods for liver disease (MASLD) in primary care. His project integrates predictive modeling with EHR alerts to identify patients at risk for advanced liver fibrosis
- Sarah Ball, Pharm.D., and her team received a three-year extension from the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to continue their statewide academic detailing program through 2027, educating clinicians on opioid and alcohol use disorders, ADHD, and MASLD.

EDUCATION

- Through the ACGME's Advancing Innovation in Residency Education pathway, the division launched a new competency-based Geriatric Medicine fellowship and matched its first fellow. The division's ACGME-accredited fellowships in Geriatric Medicine and in Hospice and Palliative Medicine each train two fellows per year.
- GIM faculty play a central role in training Internal Medicine, Med-Peds, and Med-Psych residents, both on inpatient services and in their Internal Medicine continuity clinics.

HEMATOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY

Under the leadership of **Craig Lockhart, M.D., MHS**, the Division of Hematology and Oncology continued to earn national and international recognition in FY26 for its contributions to clinical care, research, and education. As an integral part of Hollings Cancer Center, South Carolina's only National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center, the division grew its faculty and expanded the scope of its clinical and research initiatives. **Russell Jenkins, M.D., Ph.D.; Mohammad Alhousani, M.D.;** and **Priyal Agarwal, M.D.,** joined the division in FY26, following eight faculty recruits in FY25. Four additional faculty members are scheduled to join in FY27. The division also leads the state's only combined hematology and oncology fellowship and advances new treatments through clinical trials and laboratory discoveries.

Professor and Division Director
Craig Lockhart, M.D., MHS

Professors
Frank Brescia, M.D.
Benjamin Djulbegovic, M.D., Ph.D.
Charles Greenberg, M.D.
Thai Ho, M.D., Ph.D.
Sanjay Jain, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professors
Mariam Alexander, M.D.
Katherine Antel, M.D., Ph.D.
Praneeth Baratam, M.D.
Kevin Becker, M.D.
Theodore Gourdin, M.D.
Brian Hess, M.D.
Russell Jenkins, M.D., Ph.D.
John Kaczmar, M.D.
Oleksandra Lupak, M.D.
Abirami Sivapiragasam, M.D.
John Wrangle, M.D.

Assistant Professors
Priyal Agarwal, M.D.
Steven Akman, M.D.
Jonathan Alexander, M.D.
Mohammad Alhousani, M.D.
Rebecca Bechhold, M.D.
Joseph Caveney, M.D.
Alexander Coltoff, M.D.
Toros Dincman, M.D.
Anthony Dominick, D.O.
Dali Edwards, D.O.
Ashwath Gurumurthi, M.D.
Paul O'Brien, M.D.
Christopher Rangel, M.D.
Kimberley Youkhana, M.D.

FY27 Recruits
Varsha Gupta, M.D.
Mehmet Uyanik, M.D.
Yiseiry Perez-Melendez, M.D.
Laura De Castro, M.D.

BY THE NUMBERS

48,292
Outpatient Visits

3,633
New Patient Visits

6,887
Telehealth Visits

206
Bone and Marrow Transplants in CY25

HEMATOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE



Nurse navigator Melanie Wilson, Dr. Russell Jenkins and nurse McKenzie Williams

- **New Cutaneous T-cell Lymphoma (CTCL) Clinic:** MUSC opened a new multidisciplinary CTCL clinic bringing dermatologists and oncologists together to treat CTCL with specialized therapies not available elsewhere in the state.
- **Bringing Advanced Melanoma Therapy to South Carolina:** MUSC Health became the state's only hospital system to offer tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte (TIL) therapy, a personalized treatment that uses a patient's own immune cells to fight advanced melanoma. Led by Russell Jenkins, M.D., Ph.D., the multidisciplinary team completed its first tumor collection in spring 2026.
- **Expanding Capacity:** The MUSC Health Hematology & Oncology North Charleston clinic doubled its capacity in FY26, adding eight exam rooms and 10 infusion chairs and enabling new and urgent patients to be seen within two business days. MUSC Health and Hollings also broke ground on the Nexton Medical Center's 30,000-square-foot ambulatory cancer facility and began planning a new comprehensive cancer hospital.

RESEARCH



Praneeth Baratam, M.D., with patient.

- Led by John Kaczmar, M.D., Hollings Cancer Center enrolled the first patient globally in a phase 2/3 trial combining the bifunctional antibody ficerafusp alfa with pembrolizumab for recurrent or metastatic HPV-negative head and neck cancer.
- A clinical trial led by Abirami Sivapiragasam, M.D., is testing a response-adaptive chemotherapy approach for women with stage 2–3 triple-negative breast cancer who cannot receive standard therapy because of heart disease, tailoring treatment based on early MRI results to improve outcomes while reducing toxicity.
- With National Cancer Institute support, Mariam Alexander, M.D., Ph.D., is building the clinical and research infrastructure to bring emerging cellular therapies to patients with solid tumors, expanding access to advanced treatment and clinical trials closer to home.
- Additional faculty-led trials spanned myelofibrosis and MDS/MPN (Alex Coltoff, M.D.), post-CAR-T consolidation therapy for lymphoma (Brian Hess, M.D.), and pancreatic adenocarcinoma (Craig Lockhart, M.D.). John Kaczmar, M.D., led the division in FY26 trial enrollment with 35 patients, followed by Praneeth Baratam, M.D. (17) and Christopher Rangel, M.D. (16).
- Faculty also earned national recognition: Russell Jenkins, M.D., Ph.D., was named the Cecilia and Vincent Peng Endowed Chair in Melanoma and Cutaneous Oncology, and Abirami Sivapiragasam, M.D., was named to the 2026–2027 ASCO Leadership Development Program Education Scholars program and an ASCO Advocacy Champion at the 2026 ASCO Advocacy Summit.

EDUCATION

- **Fellowship Program Growth:** The division graduated its first two APP fellows from MUSC's one-year Hematology/Oncology APP Fellowship track, with two more set to join in FY27. Led by Abirami Sivapiragasam, M.D., the Hematology and Oncology Fellowship also added a slot, now supporting five fellows annually.

HOSPITAL MEDICINE

Under the leadership of **Marc Heincelman, M.D., MPH, SFHM**, the Division of Hospital Medicine's 56 physicians and 11 APPs provide care to patients on 14 inpatient services, one orthopedic co-management service, one consult service, and a robust preoperative medicine clinic, while providing tele-hospitalist support to four small rural hospitals in South Carolina. The division leads innovation in patient care, education, and research to meet the needs of patients across South Carolina and beyond. In FY26, the division welcomed eight new faculty members, with three more recruits set to join in FY27.

Associate Professor and Division Director
Marc Heincelman, M.D., MPH

Professors
Danielle Scheurer, M.D., MSCR
Pamela Pride, M.D.

Associate Professors
Kevin Baker, M.D.
Benjamin Barnette, M.D.
Patrick Cawley, M.D.
Theresa Cuoco, M.D.
Ashley Duckett, M.D.
Keri Holmes-Maybank, M.D., MSCR
Benjamin Kalivas, M.D.
Ernest Murray, M.D.
Yotam Papo, M.D.
Erik Summers, M.D.
Maggie Thomas, M.D., MPH
Phillip Warr, M.D.
Kristin Wise, M.D.

Assistant Professors
Rahoul Ahuja, M.D.
Steliyana Bakalova-Georgieva, M.D.
Sarah Beasley, M.D.
Graham Beattie, M.D.
Liam Bendig, M.D.
Shailesh Bhattarai, M.B.B.S.
Jamel Brown, M.D.
Taylor Christian, M.D.
Jessica Cook, M.D.
Dustin Dalton, M.D.

Assistant Professors (cont'd)
Andrew Dorsey, M.D.
Ellen Esposito, M.D.
Bianca Farley, M.D.
Awais Farooq, M.D.
Caitlyn Gallagher, M.D.
Shane Fiust-Klink, M.D.
Nancy Hagood, M.D., MPH
Alyson Honko, M.D.
Nicholas Honko, M.D.
Laura Juul, M.D.
Christopher Lashley, D.O.
Andy McNulty, M.D.
Cameron Mitro, M.D.
Tahirali Motiwala, M.D.
Andres Ospina, M.D.
Fletcher Penney, M.D.
Roger Pons, M.D.
Emily Reams, M.D.
Charles Santos, M.D.
Nicholas Smith, M.D.
Don Turner, M.D.
Mason Turner, M.D.
Satya Villuri, M.B.B.S.
Taelor Weaver, M.D.
Mason Walgrave, M.D.
Leonidas Walthall, M.D.
Austin White, M.D.
Abbie Zeffery, D.O.

FY27 Recruits
Moses Asempah, M.D.
Andrew Kern, M.D.
Andrew Biscardi, M.D.

BY THE NUMBERS

160,621
wRVU Generation

10,757
Perioperative Patients

12%
Increase in Perioperative Patients from FY25

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE



Hospital Medicine Division Faculty, Staff and Fellows

- **Complex Intervention Unit (CIU):** Under the leadership of Benjamin Kalivas, M.D., the division opened one of 14 Complex Intervention Units in the U.S. in Sept. 2025. In the CIU, hospitalists with combined training in internal medicine and psychiatry care for patients admitted with complex medical needs alongside significant psychiatric comorbidities.
- **Expansion of Tele-Hospitalist Care:** Under the leadership of Yotam Papo, M.D., MPH, MUSC's tele-hospitalist program expanded to four rural hospitals in South Carolina. The program enables tertiary-care hospitalists to provide remote clinical oversight and support, helping ensure high-quality inpatient care within local rural communities.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION INNOVATION

The division continues to advance innovation through initiatives that improve clinical care and expand educational opportunities.

- Nancy Hagood, M.D., MPH, developed a structured, longitudinal Global Health Education Curriculum for Department of Medicine trainees. Ellen Esposito, M.D., is evaluating a non-interruptive electronic health record alert designed to increase prescribing of nicotine replacement therapy during hospitalization and at discharge. *Read more on page 23.*
- Yotam Papo, M.D., MSCR, with funding from the National Telehealth Center of Excellence, is evaluating the financial and clinical impact of MUSC's tele-hospitalist program on rural hospital care in South Carolina.
- Leon Walthall, M.D., is studying an inpatient mobility program at MUSC Charleston designed to increase ambulation, reduce hospital-acquired conditions, and increase discharges to home.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

In FY26, several faculty members were recognized for their leadership and excellence in medical education:

- Jamel Brown, M.D. — Director of Professionalism, Education and Mentoring, MUSC COM
- Ashley Duckett, M.D. — 2026 MUSC Faculty Teaching Excellence Award (Educator Lecturer)
- Caitlyn Gallagher, M.D. — 2026 MUSC Department of Medicine Michael E. Assey Award
- Nancy Hagood, M.D., MPH — COM Academy of Medical Educators Inductee; MUSC COM Director of Global Health Education; 2026 MUSC Department of Medicine Outstanding Junior Faculty Clinician Educator of the Year
- Marc Heincelman, M.D., MPH — MUSC COM Associate Dean for Career Advising
- Keri Holmes-Maybank, M.D., MSCR — MUSC COM Gold Humanism Society Inductee; SGIM/SHM Academic Hospitalist Academy Director
- Maggie Thomas, M.D., MPH, MS — 2026 Golden Apple Clinical Preceptor Excellence in Teaching Award (Faculty); MUSC COM Academy of Medical Educators Inductee
- Mason Walgrave, M.D. — MUSC COM Gold Humanism Society Inductee; MUSC COM Master Clinical Skills Teacher; MUSC COM Clinical Competency Director
- Leon Walthall, M.D. — MUSC COM Gold Humanism Society Inductee; MUSC COM Academy of Medical Educators Inductee
- Phillip Warr, M.D. — Society of Hospital Medicine Academic Hospitalist Academy Facilitator
- Abbie Zeffery, D.O. — 2026 MUSC Department of Medicine Hidden Gem Award

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Under the leadership of **Cassandra Salgado, M.D., MS,** the Division of Infectious Diseases excels in patient care, research, and education. Faculty provide consultative and ambulatory care across South Carolina and lead key MUSC programs in global health, infection prevention, antimicrobial stewardship, outpatient antimicrobial therapy (OPAT), telehealth, and transplant infectious diseases. In FY26, the division welcomed **Nikko Tabliago, M.D.**, with **Robert Tyler, M.D.**, and **Zach Gruss, Pharm.D.**, joining in FY27.

For more than 30 years, the division has delivered comprehensive HIV care through the HRSA and SC DHEC Ryan White Program, with research spanning HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM), antimicrobial resistance, hepatitis, OPAT, and transplant infectious diseases. Faculty also lead educational programs locally and nationally while serving in major institutional leadership roles that strengthen MUSC's clinical, research, and public health impact.

Professor and Division Director
Cassandra Salgado, M.D., MS

Professors
Susan Dorman, M.D.
John Gnann, M.D.
Camelia Marculescu, M.D.
John McKinnon, M.D.

Associate Professors
Ruth Adekunle, M.D.
Scott Curry, M.D.
Evgenia Kagan, M.D.
Stephanie Kirk, Pharm.D.
Eric Meissner, M.D., Ph.D.

Assistant Professors
Yosra Alkabab, M.D.
Hayley Berry, Pharm.D.
Helen Burton, M.D.
Drew Charles, D.O.
Courtney Harris, M.D.
Jordan Jones, Pharm.D.
Alexandra Mills, M.D.
Nikko Tabliago, M.D.
Charles Teixeira, D.O.

FY27 Recruits
Robert Tyler, M.D.
Zach Gruss, Pharm.D.

BY THE NUMBERS

8,907
Outpatient Visits

767
New Patient Visits

1,567
TeleID Consultations Statewide

INFECTIOUS DISEASES HIGHLIGHTS







CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

- **Meeting Rising Demand:** The division launched a new inpatient general infectious diseases teaching service to strengthen trainee education, and a separate attending-only inpatient service to accommodate a more than 30% increase in consult volume over FY25.
- **Expanding Statewide Reach:** The tele-infectious diseases service now covers more than 1,800 inpatient beds across South Carolina. The division also expanded its Ventricular Assist Device (VAD) infectious diseases clinic and its ambulatory clinics for injectable ART and PrEP, and continues to provide comprehensive HIV care to more than 1,400 patients statewide through the HRSA Ryan White Part B program.

RESEARCH

- **Tuberculosis and NTM:** Susan Dorman, M.D., directs a broad tuberculosis and NTM research portfolio spanning drug development and global clinical trials. She leads an NIH-funded R34 planning grant to develop novel treatments for pulmonary disease caused by Mycobacterium abscessus, and works with the NIH-funded Advancing Clinical Therapeutics Globally (ACTG) network on a stratified medicine trial for adults and adolescents with TB. Her work also spans a 10-year CDC contract leading international TB treatment trials through the Tuberculosis Trials Consortium and an NIH R01 award for FEND for TB, an international study evaluating novel tuberculosis diagnostics in endemic regions.
- **HIV and Hepatitis:** The division's nationally recognized HIV and hepatitis research program, led by Eric Meissner, M.D., Ph.D., continued to expand in FY26. Dr. Meissner led a Phase III HIV clinical trial (ARTISTRY-2) evaluating a novel antiretroviral treatment strategy, published in *The Lancet HIV*. He and colleagues also uncovered how two naturally occurring forms of an antiviral receptor, IFNLR1, differ in the strength of immune signaling they trigger against pathogens at mucosal surfaces like the liver and gut — one producing a broader, stronger antiviral response than the other. The findings, published in the *Journal of Innate Immunity*, offer new insight for treating chronic viral infections such as hepatitis B.

EDUCATION

- **Fellowship Program Growth:** The division graduated two ID fellows in FY26, with both entering academic ID positions. The program currently trains five fellows — four in general ID and one in transplant ID. Led by Courtney Harris, M.D., the Transplant ID Fellowship celebrated the graduation of South Carolina's second Transplant ID fellow this year.

FACULTY RECOGNITION:



Courtney Harris, M.D. received the 2026 MUSC Teaching Excellence Award (Developing Teacher) and was accepted into the Harvard Macy Institute's Program for Educators in Health Professions.



Cassandra Salgado, M.D. received the 2026 AAIM ASP Eric G. Neilson Award for Leadership in Subspecialty Internal Medicine

NEPHROLOGY

The Division of Nephrology advances the understanding and treatment of kidney disease through excellence in clinical care, research, and education. Under the leadership of Division Director **Josh Lipschutz, M.D.**, and Clinical Director **Ruth Campbell, M.D.**, the past year has been marked by significant accomplishments across all three missions. Strategic recruitment continues to expand the division's reach, with two physicians joining in FY26 and four additional recruits — three in nephrology transplant and one in general nephrology — scheduled for FY27. With 29 faculty members recognized for their national prominence, the division continues to excel in providing top-tier patient care, groundbreaking research, and comprehensive training for future nephrologists.

Professor and Division Director
Joshua Lipschutz, M.D.

Distinguished University Professor
David Ploth, M.D.

Professors
Prince Anand, M.D.
Milos Budisavljevic, M.D.
Ruth Campbell, M.D.
Tibor Fulop, M.D.
Zipporah Krishnasami, M.D.
Oleg Palygin, Ph.D.
Roberto Pisoni, M.D.
Maria Aurora Posadas Salas, M.D.
Rachel Sturdivant, M.D.
Michael Ullian, M.D.
Harold Szerlip, M.D.

Associate Professors
Anand Achanti, M.D.
Wayne Fitzgibbon, Ph.D.
Natalie Freidin, M.D.
Blaithin McMahon, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professors (cont'd)
Mihaly Tapolyai, M.D.
Justin Van Beusecum, Ph.D.

Assistant Professors
Ahmed Abdelkader, M.D., Ph.D.
Zeeshan Azeem, M.D.
Ahmed Daoud, M.D., Ph.D.
Waleed Elsheikh-Mohammed, M.D.
Megan Goff, D.O.
Eily Hayes, D.O.
Sakshi Vaishnav, M.D.
Justin Van Beusecum, Ph.D.
Xiaofeng Zuo, Ph.D.

Research Instructor
Marharyta Semenikhina, Ph.D.

FY27 Recruits
Erik Mai, M.D.
Farah Abuazzam, M.D.
Remy Fadel, M.D.
Munsef Barakat, M.D.

BY THE NUMBERS

27,213
Outpatient Visits

2,521
New Patient Visits

382
Kidney Transplants in CY25

PKD FOUNDATION CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

NEPHROLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE


L-R: Lada Palygina, Justin Van Beusecum, Ph.D., Marice McCrorey, and Helen Butler, Ph.D

- **Expanding Access:** The division reduced new patient wait times through e-consults, urgent clinic appointments, and faculty growth. It also strengthened its clinical workforce with new faculty and APP recruitment.
- **Program Growth:** The division expanded its Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy (CRRT) program, and its Plasmapheresis Unit earned reaccreditation from the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy. Through the Carolina Kidney Partners Alliance and CKD A3 initiatives, the division advanced kidney disease and hypertension care, integrating renal genetics and statewide outpatient dialysis record sharing to strengthen precision medicine and coordination. Collaborative trials and translational research further grew the division's research enterprise.

RESEARCH

- **Research led by Joshua Lipschutz, M.D.**, found that formoterol, a common asthma medication, reversed kidney and fatty liver damage in diabetic mouse models by increasing mitochondrial biogenesis, with retrospective patient studies also showing protective associations. The team is now enrolling patients with diabetic kidney disease in a randomized clinical trial that will also evaluate effects on metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH), potentially advancing a safe, affordable treatment for two serious and common complications of diabetes.
- **Justin Van Beusecum, Ph.D.**, received a two-year Lupus Innovation Award from the Lupus Research Alliance to investigate the Piezo1 channel protein's role in lupus-related cardiovascular and neuropsychiatric complications, seeking targeted therapies to reduce cardiovascular events among young women with lupus.
- **Marharyta (Rita) Semenikhina, Ph.D.**, received the inaugural MUSC College of Medicine Rising Scholar Award, a three-year grant supporting her transition to an independent investigator with a tenure-track faculty appointment.
- The **MUSC Kidney Translational Research Center**, led by Oleg Palygin, Ph.D., and Justin Van Beusecum, Ph.D., was designated an MUSC Core Facility, expanding kidney biobanking and national translational research collaborations.

EDUCATION

- **Comprehensive fellowship training.** The division's general and transplant nephrology fellowships trained 11 general nephrology fellows and two transplant nephrology fellows.
- **New interventional nephrology elective**. Launched in 2025 with the MUSC Health Orangeburg Dialysis Access Institute, the elective helps fellows pursue certification through the American Society of Diagnostic and Interventional Nephrology. Kiyoshi Houston, M.D., became its first participant.

FACULTY RECOGNITIONS:



Oleg Palygin, Ph.D. ranked among the Department of Medicine's 10 most-published faculty members in 2026.



Justin Van Beusecum, Ph.D. received the 2025 MUSC Faculty Developing Scholar Award.

PULMONARY, CRITICAL CARE, ALLERGY AND SLEEP MEDICINE

Under the leadership of **Dee Ford, M.D., MSCR**, the Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Allergy and Sleep Medicine expanded access to specialized care, strengthened its research portfolio and increased fellowship training in FY26. Clinical teams introduced a new treatment for chronic blood clots in the lungs, improved access to sleep care and broadened lung cancer screening across South Carolina. Faculty also led national and international research in critical care, thoracic oncology, sarcoidosis and bronchiectasis. Strategic recruitment continues to expand the division's reach, with four physicians joining in FY26 and five additional recruits scheduled for FY27. Growth in pulmonary and critical care, sleep medicine and interventional pulmonology fellowships further reinforced the division's commitment to preparing the next generation of specialists while improving care for patients with complex respiratory conditions.

Professor and Division Director
Dee Ford, M.D., MSCR

Distinguished University Professors
Patrick Flume, M.D.
Gerard Silvestri, M.D.

Professors
Alice Boylan, M.D.
Jason Caldwell, D.O.
Andrew Goodwin, M.D.
Terrill Huggins, M.D.
Luca Paoletti, M.D.
Richard Rissmiller, M.D.
Jigme Sethi, M.D.
Robert Smith, M.D.
Charlie Strange, M.D.
Nichole Tanner, M.D.
Timothy Whelan, M.D.

Associate Professors
Rahul Argula, M.D.
Rita Bakhru, M.D.

Associate Professors (cont'd)
Tatsiana Beiko, M.D.
Anna Brady, M.D.
Christopher Gilbert, D.O.
Ennis James, M.D.
Edward Kilb, M.D.
Rachana Krishna, M.D.
Young Im Lee, M.D.
Howard Li, M.D.
William McManigle, M.D.
Michelle Spiegel, M.D.

Assistant Professors
Megan Brunckhorst, M.D.
George Carter, M.D.
Hina Chaudhry, M.D.
Luke Domaleski, M.D.
Abigail Dy, M.D.
Travis Ferguson, M.D.
Derlis Fleitas Sosa, M.D.
Adam Fox, M.D.
Marri Horvat, M.D.
Jessica Lozier, M.D.
Neal Maru, M.D.

Assistant Professors (cont'd)
Aravind Menon, M.D.
Christina Mingora, M.D.
Tejaswi Nadig, M.D.
Denise Sese, M.D.
Stephen Sexauer, M.D.
James Sincebaugh, M.D.
Harrison Smith, M.D.
Lauren Sullivan, M.D.
Charles Terry, M.D.
Lumi Tudor, M.D.

FY27 Recruits
Karen Patterson, M.D.
Kelli Williams, M.D.
Emily Campbell, M.D.
Carolyn Word, M.D.
Lauren Worth, D.O.

BY THE NUMBERS

63,127
Outpatient Visits

9,675
New Patient Visits

21
Lung Transplants in CY25

192
Active Clinical Trials

PULMONARY, CRITICAL CARE, ALLERGY AND SLEEP MEDICINE HIGHLIGHTS

First-in-State Pulmonary Hypertension Treatment

MUSC became the **first in South Carolina** to offer **balloon angioplasty** for patients with **chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension (CTEPH)**.

The program is led by **Denise Sese, M.D.**, with interventional cardiologist **Thomas Todoran, M.D.**, performing the specialized procedure.



L-R: Rahul Argula, M.D., Eric Lehman, Megan Kelly, RN, BSN, Thomas Todoran, M.D., Denise Sese, M.D., Kevin Mims, Molly Sillowski, M.D., Meghan Albenze, Delaney Gass, Michelle Darvis and Katie Kennedy.

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

- **Faster access to sleep care.** From December 2024 to March 2026, wait times for new appointments fell 67% for in-person care and 62% for virtual care. Completed visits increased 51%, from 713 to 1,074.
- **Statewide lung cancer screening.** The program expanded screening across 13 locations in the Charleston, Midlands, Pee Dee and Orangeburg regions, bringing earlier detection services closer to communities throughout South Carolina.

RESEARCH

- **Andy Goodwin, M.D.**, completed enrollment in the INSPIRE ABG Study, the largest prospective study of pulse oximeter accuracy across different skin tones in critically ill patients. The study collected 502 arterial blood gas measurements.
- MUSC became a founding member of the **BEACON Clinical Trials Network**, expanding opportunities for multicenter emergency and critical care research.
- Research led by **Adam Fox, M.D., MSCR**, and **Gerard Silvestri, M.D., MS**, published in *JAMA Oncology* found that nearly half of older adults with metastatic non-small cell lung cancer never received treatment.
- **Ennis James, M.D.**, led MUSC's selection as an inaugural site for a multicenter registry that will follow patients with sarcoidosis over time.
- **Patrick Flume, M.D.**, and **Christina Mingora, M.D.**, contributed to the development and FDA approval of brensocatib, the first medication approved specifically for bronchiectasis. Flume also led a European Respiratory Society clinical guideline and chaired a national care center position statement for bronchiectasis and nontuberculous mycobacterial disease.
- **Dee Ford, M.D., MSCR**, continues to serve as MUSC site principal investigator for two active National Institutes of Health R01 grants and to lead MUSC's federal Telehealth Center of Excellence.

EDUCATION

The division has expanded its **Pulmonary and Critical Care Fellowship** with **three additional funded slots** (supporting 18 fellows annually) and added one slot to its **Sleep Medicine Fellowship**, now supporting two fellows annually. The one-year ACGME **Interventional Pulmonology Fellowship**, led by **Christopher Gilbert, D.O.**, welcomed its second fellow in FY26. The division also trains three critical care fellows annually and offers research training through its NIH/NHLBI T32 grant.

FACULTY RECOGNITION

Patrick Flume, M.D. - 2026 MUSC Distinguished Faculty Service Award

Kelli Williams, M.D., MPH - Clinical Immunology Society Distinguished Service Award

Adam Fox, M.D. - 2026 MUSC Faculty Developing Scholar Award

RHEUMATOLOGY AND IMMUNOLOGY

Under the leadership of **Jim Oates, M.D.**, the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology expanded its clinical, research and education programs in FY26. Over the past two years, **Sean Carter, M.D.**; **Jessica English, M.D., MSCR**; **Anne Maitland, M.D.**; **Priyanka Ballal, M.D.**; and **Silera Holguin Balbuena, M.D.**, joined the division, adding expertise in clinical ultrasound, lupus, reproductive rheumatology, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome and mast cell disorders. Faculty continued to advance care and research in lupus, systemic sclerosis, vasculitis and other complex autoimmune diseases while collaborating with Pediatric Rheumatology. The National Scleroderma Foundation also designated MUSC as South Carolina's only Scleroderma Research and Treatment Center.

Professor and Division Director
Jim Oates, M.D.

Distinguished University Professors
Carol Feghali-Bostwick, Ph.D.
Gary Gilkeson, M.D.
Richard Silver, M.D.

Professors
Galina Bogatkevich, M.D., Ph.D.
Faye Hant, D.O.
Stanley Hoffman, Ph.D.
Diane Kamen, M.D.
Tamara Nowling, Ph.D.
Betty Tsao, Ph.D.

Associate Professors
DeAnna Baker Frost, M.D., Ph.D.
Melissa Cunningham, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professors (cont'd)
Anne Maitland, M.D., Ph.D.
Kathleen Maksimowicz-Mckinnon, D.O.
Katherine Silver, M.D.
Grace Suppa, D.O.
Celine Ward, M.D.

Assistant Professors
Priyanka Ballal, M.D.
Sean Carter, M.D.
Jessica English, M.D.
Samantha Minkin, M.D.
Ludivine Renaud, Ph.D.
Jennifer Schmidt, M.D.

FY27 Recruits
Silera Holguin Balbuena, M.D.

BY THE NUMBERS

18,606
Outpatient Visits

2,583
New Patient Visits

7
ACGME Fellows

RHEUMATOLOGY & IMMUNOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE



Carol Feghali-Bostwick, Ph.D. and DeAnna Baker Frost, M.D., Ph.D.

- **Electronic consultations.** Jim Oates, M.D., launched internal e-consults for patients with a positive antinuclear antibody test but no clear signs of autoimmune disease, helping guide appropriate referrals.
- **Improved Access:** The redesigned referral triage process, led by Katherine Silver, M.D., and Aiken McNair, PA, reduced urgent visit wait times and expanded to allow patients with active disease to be seen faster.
- **Remote Monitoring:** Grace Suppa, M.D., and Jennifer Schmidt, M.D., expanded Remote Therapeutic Monitoring for Medicare patients with inflammatory arthritis to all rheumatology providers. Electronic surveys track disease activity, medication tolerance, pain, and function between visits.
- **Expanded lung disease clinic**. Richard Silver, M.D., and DeAnna Baker Frost, M.D., Ph.D., expanded the collaborative interstitial lung disease clinic with Pulmonary Medicine to a weekly schedule.

RESEARCH

In FY26, faculty secured nearly $2 million in new research funding, published 57 original manuscripts, one book and one book chapter, and funded five pilot projects through the P30 Core Center for Clinical Research program.

Faculty secured multiple competitive awards this year, including:

- Betty Tsao, Ph.D. – received an NIH/NIAMS R01 grant to identify rare pathogenic variants in systemic lupus erythematosus.
- Carol Feghali-Bostwick, Ph.D. – received funding for research on mitochondrial DNA and sex differences in scleroderma-associated interstitial lung disease.
- DeAnna Baker Frost, M.D., Ph.D. – awarded a Phase II clinical trial evaluating allogeneic NK cell therapy for B-cell–dependent rheumatologic diseases.
- Diane Kamen, M.D. – secured funding for the Social Factors, Epigenomics and Lupus Assessment (SELA) study.
- Gary Gilkeson, M.D. – awarded a Training Grant in Inflammatory and Fibrosing Diseases.
- Jim Oates, M.D. – received funding for IMPACT+, improving minority participation and awareness in clinical trials.
- Jessica English, M.D., MSCR – awarded funding to study pregnancy outcome disparities in women with SLE.
- Stanley Hoffman, Ph.D. – awarded funding to study novel therapeutics for heart failure.

EDUCATION

- Under the leadership of Faye Hant, M.D., and Jennifer Schmidt, M.D., the Rheumatology Fellowship Program provides comprehensive training in clinical care and research. The program includes five clinical fellows and two research fellows.

FACULTY RECOGNITION

Melissa Cunningham, M.D., Ph.D.
Lupus Foundation of America
PULSE Award

Jessica English, M.D., MSCR
2026 Tinsley Harrison Scholar, Southern Society for Clinical Investigation

Carol Feghali-Bostwick, Ph.D.
Chair of the Board of Directors, National Scleroderma Foundation



2026 DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE AWARDS CEREMONY





The Department of Medicine's annual awards program recognizes faculty, staff, and trainees for their exceptional contributions to their divisions, the department, the College of Medicine, and MUSC.

On June 4, the 2026 Department of Medicine Awards Ceremony celebrated this year's honorees and their achievements in education, patient care, and research. More than 100 attendees gathered in person, with over 50 others joining via Zoom, making the event a meaningful celebration of excellence across the department.

To see the full list of honorees, Scan the QR code below or visit https://bit.ly/AwardsDay26







Department of Medicine

2026 RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

On Friday, April 17, the Department of Medicine hosted its 19th Annual Research Symposium, showcasing 38 abstracts presented by junior faculty, trainees, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, research specialists and staff scientists.

Four participants received oral presentation awards, and seven were recognized with research poster awards. Keynote speaker Carol Feghali-Bostwick, Ph.D., delivered an inspiring address titled "All Roads Lead to Collagen."

Oral Abstract Presenters



Sean Jones, M.D., Ph.D.
Gastroenterology & Hepatology Fellow

Mentor: Garth Swanson, M.D., MS
Title: "Central Circadian Misalignment by Night Shift Work and Colonic Barrier Integrity in Ulcerative Colitis"



Lindsey Havenga, M3
Medical Student, MUSC

Mentors: Leonidas Walthall, M.D. and Meghan Thomas, M.D.
Title: "Digital Self Reporting Tool to Measure Inpatient Mobility Goal Achievement"



Helen Butler, Ph.D., MS
Postdoctoral Fellow, Nephrology

Mentor: Justin Van Beusecum, Ph.D.
Title: "Non-Canonical Endothelin System Activation by Autoantibodies as a Mechanistic Pathway to SLE-Associated Vascular Dysfunction"



Brennan Winkler
Graduate Student, MUSC College of Graduate Studies

Mentor: Josh Lipschutz, M.D.
Title: "Beta 2 adrenergic receptor agonists as a treatment for metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH)"

To see the Full List of this year's winners, Scan the QR code or visit https://bit.ly/ResearchWinners26









PHILANTHROPY **HIGHLIGHTS**

HEART & VASCULAR HEALTH INSTITUTE

Event Spotlight: *An Affair of the Heart*

An Affair of the Heart, hosted by the MUSC Heart & Vascular Health Institute (HVI) leadership and the HVI Advisory Board at The Charleston Place, was a resounding success, raising $1 million through the generosity of nearly 300 friends and supporters! The evening—in its third year—featured an exciting live auction and a moving patient story that illustrated the life-changing impact of HVI's work. It also showcased the expertise and achievements of HVI physician specialists whose research, treatments, and patient care are redefining cardiovascular health. Thanks to the heartfelt generosity of our supporters, these funds will drive advancements in education, research, and patient care—transforming lives and shaping the future of heart and vascular medicine.









Photos from An Affair of the Heart, hosted by the MUSC Health Heart & Vascular Center.



L-R: Bob and Sandy Merchant, Walter Ennis James IV, M.D., program director of the Susan Pearlstine Sarcoidosis Center of Excellence, and Katie Benfield, nurse navigator

Grateful Patients Become Champions of Sarcoidosis Research

Inspired by the care that made a difference in their own lives, Bob and Sandy Merchant have committed $1.5 million to establish the Merchant Family Sarcoidosis Endowed Chair in the Department of Medicine. An endowed chair provides permanent support for a faculty leader, helping the department recruit and retain exceptional experts and giving them the resources to advance research, education and patient care. The Merchant Family Endowed Chair will support the director of the Susan Pearlstine Sarcoidosis Center of Excellence, strengthening leadership in sarcoidosis research and care at MUSC. Through their gift, the Merchants are investing in greater understanding of this complex disease, new discoveries and better outcomes for people living with sarcoidosis.

A Gift That Connects Heart and Mind



Dr. Federica del Monte, right, in her lab with postdoctoral fellow Dr. Camilla Bacchin.

A generous anonymous gift is powering research into the shared biology of Alzheimer's disease and heart failure. Cardiologist Federica del Monte, M.D., Ph.D., discovered years ago that the hearts of patients with cardiomyopathy and heart failure contain the same plaques and tangles found in the brains of Alzheimer's patients, work that reframed heart failure as what she calls "the Alzheimer's disease of the heart." The gift allowed her lab to acquire specialized equipment to test whether echocardiography can detect amyloid in the heart as reliably as PET imaging, a step toward earlier, less invasive diagnosis.

Del Monte's study follows three groups—patients with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction, patients with Alzheimer's disease, and healthy controls—tracking each through biomarker testing, cognitive assessments, and cardiac imaging over eight years. Her long-term vision is a hybrid heart/brain clinic at MUSC, bringing neurologists, cardiologists, physical therapists, and psychologists together for patients whose heart and brain health may be more connected than once believed. This donor-funded work reflects how philanthropy accelerates discovery that might otherwise take years to fund through traditional channels, giving del Monte's team the tools to pursue a question with the potential to reshape how two of medicine's most challenging diseases are diagnosed.

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
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Charleston, SC
Permit No. 1057

MUSC
Medical University
of South Carolina

Changing What's Possible

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Charleston, SC 29425-5500

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