



# UC San Diego

## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology & Palliative Care Newsletter



# #11 GERIATRICS

UC San Diego Health

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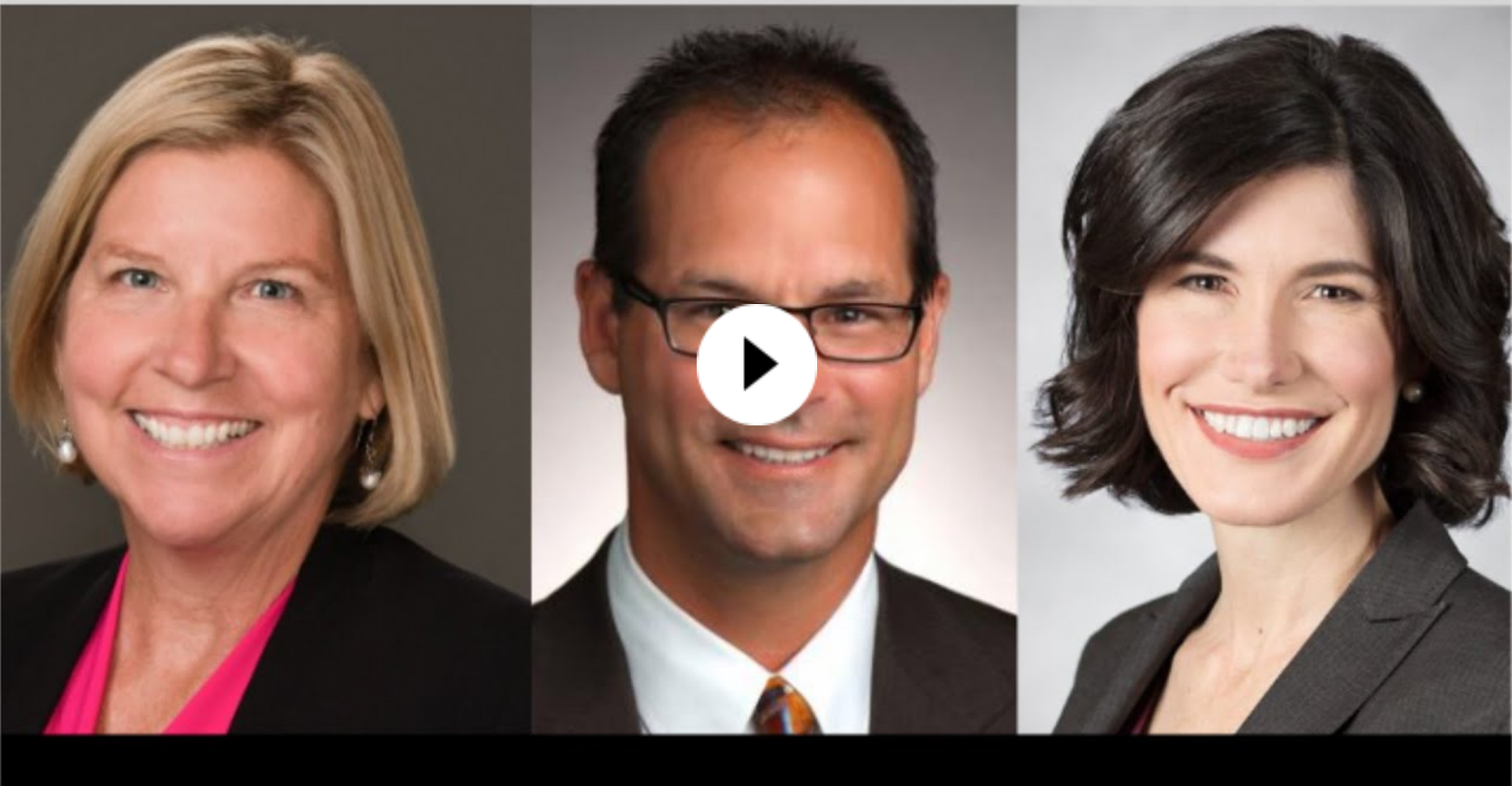
UNIVERSITY  
OF  
CALIFORNIA

**HAPPY PRIDE**

**Former Faculty, Dr. Lindsey Yourman on GeriPal Podcast**

Dr. Lindsey Yourman, the first Chief Geriatric Officer for the County of San Diego was

recently featured as a guest on the GeriPal Podcast titled “How State and Local Agencies on Aging Help Older Adults”, alongside Susan DeMarois of [California Department of Aging](#) and Greg Olsen of the [New York State Office for the Aging](#).



Visit GeriPal's site to read the transcript

## Welcome Tolúwalàṣe "Làṣe" Àjàyí, MD FAAP



It is our great pleasure to announce that Dr. Toluwalàṣe “Laṣe” Ajayi, MD FAAP has joined the UCSD faculty in the Department of Medicine, Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology and Palliative Care as well as the Department of Pediatrics. She is Program Director of the joint UCSD-Scripps Health-Elizabeth Hospice Palliative Medicine Fellowship, succeeding Dr. Gary Buckholz who served as the Director for well over a decade firmly establishing our program among the best in the country.

The joint fellowship in Palliative Medicine is one of the oldest and largest in the country, training 7 fellows each year in adult and pediatric palliative medicine and hospice. Dr. Ajayi will also have roles as a digital health leader in the Jacobs Center for Health Innovation, and pediatric palliative care consultant at Rady Children's Hospital

Dr. Ajayi is board-certified in adult & pediatric palliative medicine as well as pediatrics. She was co-director of adult palliative care at Scripps Mercy Hospital as well Senior Staff Scientist and Director of Clinical Research and Diversity Initiatives at Scripps Research Translational Institute. Her research has focused on opportunities at the intersection of novel digital medicine technologies and unmet needs in maternal fetal health as well as pain and palliative medicine. Dr. Ajayi is also highly involved in public service as the immediate past President of the San Diego County Medical Association and an elected member of the American Medical Association Board of Trustees.

Dr. Ajayi is married to our own Kyle Edmonds and they have two daughters, Tiwa (5yo) and Káí (2yo) and a son, Palmer (13yo), as well as a Bernedoodle named Dunní and a cranky Calico named Egypt. In her free time, she enjoys running and traveling with her family.

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# Welcome 2023-24 Fellows

## Geriatric Medicine Fellows



Join us in giving a warm welcome to our new geriatric medicine fellows of 2023-24: Mayra Bugarin, Kathryn Dere, and Jennifer Kim! We are thrilled to have you and excited for the year to come!



**Geriatrics Fellowship Bootcamp in full swing!**

[More about our Geriatrics Fellowship](#)

**Hospice & Palliative Medicine Fellows**

Join us in giving a warm welcome to our Palliative Care Fellows of 2023-24: Eric Leslie, Guiya “Lutetia” Li, Matt Mason, Sean Posada, Theodore “Theo” Roper, Iris Vuong, and Patricia “Annie” Weisner! We are thrilled to have you and excited for the year to come!



[More about our Hospice & Palliative Medicine Fellowship](#)

## Ruth Covell Award in Geriatrics Recipient

This award is given to one or more graduating medical students who has expressed an interest in and demonstrated a commitment to geriatrics through scholarly activities, leadership, and/or participation in geriatrics programs at UC San Diego. This award was established in 2017 thanks to the generous support of the late Dr. Ruth Covell, who was a UC San Diego School of Medicine Professor Emerita.

Students were recognized during a Senior Awards Luncheon held on Saturday, June 3.

**Congratulations Kemeberly Charles!**



*Dr. Alison Moore with Senior Award Recipient, Kemeberly Charles*

Kemeberly Charles was selected to receive the 2023 Ruth Covell Award in Geriatrics for her dedication to older adults, participation in geriatrics programs, and contributions to aging-related research. This award was well deserved! Kemeberly has been dedicated to older adults since prior to medical school. After completing her undergraduate education, she worked as a research associate with a geriatric oncologist at City of Hope for two years as part of a project to enhance geriatric assessment for older adults undergoing cancer care. At UC San Diego, Kemeberly sought clinical experience in geriatrics throughout medical school, including having worked with Dr. Moore, our division chief, in the senior medicine clinic for two years, and completing an elective in geriatrics during her 4th year.

She also served as Co-President for the Geriatrics Student Interest Group and helped launch a new pre-clinical elective clerkship for 1st and 2nd-year students, which now provides hands-on geriatrics experience to 1-2 students each quarter, and volunteered for “Serving Seniors”, a local organization providing health-promoting services to help seniors in poverty. In the midst of her clinical studies, Kemeberly also actively contributed to a research project in collaboration with a group of engineers here at UC San Diego titled “VOLI”, which is focused on developing a personalized and context-aware voice-based digital assistant to improve the quality of life and the healthcare of older adults, and consequently, to reduce caregiving burden and optimize the interactions with healthcare and service providers. This work has resulted in a number of engineering conference proceedings, a poster at the Annual Meeting of the American Geriatrics Society, and a manuscript submission for publication. What’s up next? She will be completing a combined medicine-geriatrics residency program at Mount Sinai. Congratulations Kemeberly!

[More about Ruth Covell](#)

# Melody K. Schiaffino, PhD, MPH, Named Inaugural Moores Cancer Center, Associate Director for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



Congratulations Melody!

Dr. Melody Schiaffino, affiliate faculty in our division and as part of our Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (AD-RCMAR), is a health services researcher and epidemiologist who specializes in health disparities as they relate to population health, health services delivery, and quality outcomes.

[More about Melody Schiaffino as Associate Director of EDI](#)

## What's Happening/Events

Alzheimer's Awareness Night at Petco Park on September 18th!





# ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS NIGHT AT PETCO PARK!

MONDAY, SEPT. 18, 2023 | ROCKIES vs PADRES | 6:40 PM

The Padres & San Diego's leading dementia-focused organizations have teamed up to raise awareness for Alzheimer's & other forms of dementia! Join us for an evening of baseball & camaraderie with others that support this important cause!

Theme Game package includes a limited-edition themed hat and a ticket to the Rockies vs. Padres game.



Tickets Available Now!  
[www.padres.com/ALZ](http://www.padres.com/ALZ)



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Medicine of USC

Alzheimer's Therapeutic  
Research Institute



Southern Caregiver Resource Center  
*Caring for those who care for others*

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School of Medicine

Shiley Marcos Alzheimer's Disease  
Research Center

Alzheimer's Awareness Night at Petco Park is September 18th. Join UC San Diego, the San Diego Padres, and our community partners to raise awareness for Alzheimer's disease at Petco Park. Get a game themed Alzheimer's Awareness Padres hat with your ticket purchase and sit with faculty, staff, colleagues, and

volunteers by using this special [UCSD-specific link for ticket purchases](#). Family, friends, and other colleagues are welcome!

Get Tickets Here

## Aloha Day, this past April

This past April, members of the division participated in a team building event called Aloha Day. This annual event is hosted by the paddling club Hanohano Outrigger Canoe Club based out of Mission Bay. Teams of beginner paddlers competed in a double elimination race in the bay. Everyone had a lot of fun. Hopefully this will become an annual team building activity for the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care.

More about Aloha Day



## San Diego Oasis Grand Opening at Rancho Bernardo

Drs. Alison Moore, Lindsey Yourman, and Jordan Marks (Chief Deputy Assessor/ Taxpayer Advocate for the San Diego County Assessor/Recorder/ County Clerk)



## Congratulations on the 50th Anniversary of the longstanding Rancho Bernardo Study on Healthy Aging



On Saturday, June 24th, Dr. Anthony Molina and leaders in the Nathan Shock Center hosted a recruitment event at the Rancho Bernardo Library. This event, "Healthy Longevity: 50th Anniversary of the Rancho Bernardo Study on Healthy Aging", provided an update on current research in healthy aging and also described aging research being conducted at the Nathan Shock Center to an audience that included Rancho Bernardo Study participants and the general population. The event included presentations from Anthony

Molina (our very own Chief of Research), Gerald Shadel (Director of the San Diego-Nathan Shock Center of Excellence in the Basic Biology of Aging), and Donna Kritz-Silverstein (Professor, Department of Family Medicine). This event was very successful and increased interest and potential participation in the Shock Clinical Cohort Study.

More about Nathan Shock Centers

*Congratulations  
are in order...*

...to our Graduating Geriatrics Fellows and Teaching in Excellence Awardee – Dr. Roopali Gupta!



Huge congrats to our three graduating geriatrics fellows, Mai-Ahn Dam, Belicia Ding, and Karun Singla! A graduation celebration was held to recognize their accomplishments on Saturday, July 15! Two of our graduating fellows will remain local (Belicia has accepted a position at St. Paul's PACE and Karun will be working at Aligned Geriatrics), while Mai-Anh has accepted a position at Loma Linda University. Also, congratulations to Dr. Roopali Gupta, who was nominated by this year's fellows to receive the 2022-2023 Teaching in Excellence Award!

(Pictured: Jennifer Reichstadt, Karun Singla, Roopali Gupta, Belicia Ding, Mai-Ahn Dam)

...to Clinic Nurse, Reva Nafsu for getting her RN degree!



## Helpful Resources

### San Diego Oasis: Lifelong Adventure



San Diego Oasis is a unique educational program for adults 50+ who want to continue to learn and be productive throughout life. Membership is free. The mission of San Diego Oasis is to promote healthy aging through lifelong learning, active lifestyles, and volunteer engagement. They offer opportunities to participate in classes, lectures, discussion groups, performances, trips, off-site adventures, and mentoring children in the community through our intergenerational tutoring program. San Diego Oasis has two locations (including La Mesa and a new one in Rancho Bernardo) and also offers online options.

[Visit the website](#)

# The Reframing Aging Initiative



The National Center to Reframe Aging (NCRA) is led by the Gerontological Society of America and is a central hub with the goal to counter ageism by changing how we talk about aging. By changing the way we communicate about aging, we can help to eliminate negative stereotypes of older people. The Reframing Aging Initiative is designed to improve the public's understanding of what aging means and the many ways that older people contribute to our society. The NCRA also aims to guide our nation's approach to ensuring supportive policies and programs.

Visit the website

- Dr. Melody Schiaffino was featured on the [PBS News Hour](#) discussing "Why having in-person medical interpreters is vital to the health of Asian Americans with limited English proficiency." See it [here](#).
- Dr. Benjamin Han's recent paper "Co-occurring Medical Multimorbidity, Mental Illness, and Substance Use Disorders Among Older Criminal Legal System-Involved Veterans" was published in the *Medical Care Journal*. Read it [here](#).
- Dr. Kathryn Winters was cited in the *Washington Post* talking about "Rude comments and bottom slaps: The things female doctors put up with." Read it [here](#).
- A new paper was published with Belicia Ding, MD (UCSD geriatrics fellow), and Nick Wu, BS (UCSD med student): Han BH, Jewell JS, Ding BK, Wu NC, Cottler LB, Palamar JJ. *Trends in Characteristics of Prescription Opioid-related Poisonings among Older Adults in the United States, 2015-2021*. *J Addict Med*. 2023 Jun 22. Read it [here](#).
- Dr. Benjamin Han was interviewed by the *New York Times* for article: *Substance Abuse Is Climbing Among Seniors*. Read it [here](#).
- Dr. Ian Neel was featured on KUSI discussing screening of older adults for mental health concerns. See it [here](#).

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Please consider donating to our mission! While we continue to make great strides, we are limited on what we can accomplish with existing funds. We encourage you to become involved with the UC San Diego Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care and join us in helping older adults live their best lives longer and improving care for individuals with serious illness. By supporting our efforts, you can ensure that our research, education programs, and clinical care keep pace with the needs of our community and remain strong.

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