

# UC San Diego

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## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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The Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology &  
Palliative Care Newsletter



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## Spotlight: Ellen Mackall



### **What is your current profession/role?**

I am the Program Administrator for the Hospice & Palliative Medicine Fellowship and an administrator for the Palliative Care team, focusing on team schedules.

### **What initially inspired and motivated you to pursue a career in Palliative Care?**

I was actually completely unfamiliar with Palliative Care when I was offered this position through UCSD's Temporary Employment Services! I am so grateful to have found this team and have enjoyed learning about Palliative Care over the past six years. My background is quite varied (I studied sustainable development in grad school and worked for different types of nonprofits beforehand), so I'm glad to have found a meaningful career doing this work.

### **What parts of your work have been particularly inspiring or rewarding for you?**

Working with the fellows, getting to know them, and supporting them has been incredibly rewarding! I especially enjoy fellowship recruitment, interviewing, and learning about all of the amazing things they have already accomplished. And of course, graduation is always a highlight—it's great to look back on the growth that happens over the course of the year. The one-year cycle goes by quickly, so I try to enjoy each part of it!

### **What is your go-to stress relief activity during a busy workweek?**

I love to read (fiction, young adult, and mystery novels) and regularly attend a book club! I also enjoy spending time with my toddler and husband, and finding new places for my daughter to run around outside—bonus points if there's a vegetarian restaurant nearby to try.

### **If you had to choose a different profession, what would it be?**

Before having a toddler of my own, I probably would have said preschool teacher! I would love to be a travel blogger if that's still a profession these days. I did a lot of traveling when I studied abroad and always enjoyed sharing travel stories and photos!

## Letter from our Division Chief, Dr. Alison Moore

**UC San Diego**  
Division of Geriatrics,  
Gerontology & Palliative Care

**Dear Supporters,**

**I hope this message finds you well. As Chief of the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology and Palliative Care, I want to share an urgent concern regarding the federal funding freeze and potential cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). These actions could significantly impact the future of our research, limiting our ability to drive scientific discoveries, improve quality of life for older adults and those who are seriously ill, and train the next generation of scientists.**

**Despite these uncertainties, we remain committed to 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. As we navigate these challenges, your continued support is more important than ever.**

**Thank you for standing with us. We deeply appreciate your support and will keep you updated as the situation unfolds.**



**With gratitude,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison A. Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

**Alison A. Moore, MD, MPH**

## What's Happening

### Dr. Karen Bullock Visits UCSD & Shares Insights



Drs. Alison Moore & Karen Bullock

We were honored to spend two incredible days with Dr. Karen Bullock from Boston College, who shared her deep wisdom on cultural humility in caring for those with serious illness. Her thoughtful approach provided us with valuable tools for improving care and building stronger, more empathetic relationships with patients and their families. We are grateful for the insights and meaningful discussions that will continue to inspire our work moving forward!



Dr. Karen Bullock with Dr. Kadee Winters



Dr. Bullock & Geriatrics Fellows Drs. Daney Lozano and Angelica Suarez-Ramirez with Fellowship Director Dr. Roopali Gupta

## A Night at the Theater

Members of our division had a fantastic time attending *Hello, Dolly!* at [San Diego Musical Theater](#) to support our Director of Communications, Sasha Weiss, who shined on stage. It was a joy to see her talent in action and celebrate the arts together!!



## In the News...

Dr. Alison Moore shares insights on maintaining mental agility in retirement in a recent *The New York Times* article, "What Happens to Your Brain When You Retire?" Read it [here](#).

Dr. Toluwalase "Lase" Ajayi was featured in *SD Physician Magazine's* article "The Healthcare Landscape in 2025," sharing insights on the future of healthcare. Dr. Ajayi continues to lead and innovate in our community. Read it [here \(16-17\)](#).

Our new faculty member, Dr. Michael J. Corley explores the hidden role of ancient viruses in our DNA, the gut microbiome's impact on longevity, and how stress, diet & exercise shape aging. "Decoding the Dark Side of the Human Genome: How Ancient Viruses Shape Aging" on UCTV. Watch it [here](#).

Dr. Ian Neel was interviewed in The New York Times on the risks of benzodiazepine use and its impact on health - an important read on a growing issue. Read it [here](#).

In a new study in JAMA Network, Dr. Aladdin Shadyab and team found current osteoporosis screening tools miss younger postmenopausal women, highlighting the need for better detection methods. Read it [here](#).

Our division has joined BlueSky (an alternative to Twitter/X)! Please follow us [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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