



UC San Diego

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology & Palliative Care Newsletter

Welcome to the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care's Inaugural Newsletter! We want to provide you with a more in-depth look into our work and to our division members and trainees, starting with this first issue and subsequent editions to come. We will also weave into these newsletters some insight into select healthcare topics, along with tips to advocate for one's own age-friendly care. We welcome your feedback!

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In this edition:

- Interview with Dr. Alison Moore
- Age-Friendly Healthcare System
- Geriatrics Fellowship
- The San Diego AD-RCMAR Program
- What's Happening/Events

Interview with our Division Chief, Dr. Alison Moore



What motivated you to become a geriatrician?

I was always very happy to spend time with my older relatives like my grandmothers and had an affinity for older persons. I decided to study aging as an undergraduate biology major and was fascinated by the different theories of aging. As a second-year resident in general internal medicine, my clinic preceptor was a gifted teacher. His name is David Reuben, MD, and he had just come back from a sabbatical year at UCLA learning about geriatrics. I also spent time with geriatricians as part of elective time during my residency. This exposure during residency plus my inherent interest in aging and affinity for older adults put me on the path of being a geriatrician.

What motivated you to pursue your area(s) of research?

I began my aging research career focused on the area of health services research. I was interested in developing and then testing a means for primary care physicians without geriatrics training to feasibly perform a version of comprehensive geriatric assessment in their practices. This included a relatively short screening assessment and

intervention. This work at the time was difficult to fund but one of my mentors at the time invited me to join her to develop and test a screening assessment and intervention in primary care addressing unhealthy alcohol use in older adults. My work has focused primarily on alcohol and other substance use in older adults ever since.

What do you like most about your career?

Many things! I love being in academic medicine and being a clinician-scientist in geriatrics. I love mentoring others and being mentored, taking care of older adults, and program development. I love the diversity of what I do.

What is your vision and/or main goals for the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology and Palliative Care in the years ahead?

We have been making great progress since I arrived here (2016) due to outstanding faculty, staff and trainees as well as a substantial investment in the Division by the Department of Medicine and the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences to enable us to build our group and expand our clinical, educational and research programs. Last year, we joined forces with Palliative Care, which has been a tremendous benefit to us. Moving forward, I want to continue to build a shared community with our division members; learn from each other as we build and refine our clinical programs (e.g., increase Age-Friendly Health System work at UCSD and expand palliative care clinical services to more ambulatory settings); increase cross-training among our fellows in geriatrics and hospice and palliative care; and grow our research portfolio overall, including in the areas of gerontechnology and geroscience and public health, as well as enhancing collaborations among the research-focused faculty.

I look forward to increasing engagement with our community - including with the start of this newsletter - to share new discoveries and good news as well as to educate and celebrate older adults and those people who care for them!

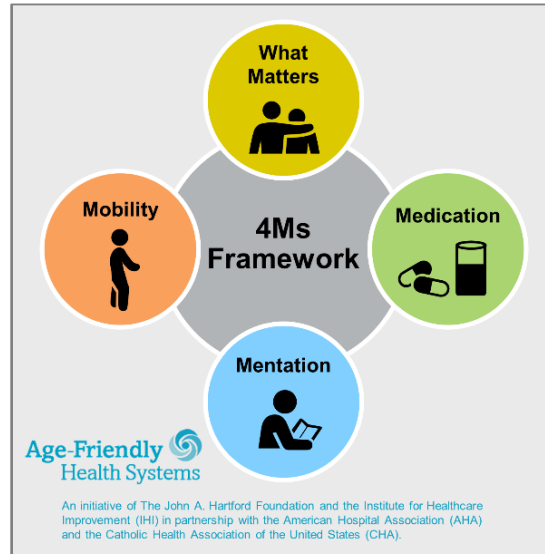
Age-Friendly Healthcare System



UC San Diego Health is leading the way in making sure that every day, every older adult receives age-friendly health care that is based on what matters most to each of us as individuals and is delivered reliably in every setting. As part of a national Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative, we have been recognized as Committed to Care Excellence by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). This designation acknowledges UC San Diego Health's ongoing work to implement a set of evidence-based interventions designed to improve care for older adults.

The four essential elements of an Age-Friendly Health System are known as the “4Ms”

[More about the 4Ms](#)



The UC San Diego Geriatrics Fellowship

Our long-standing, ACGME-accredited Geriatrics Fellowship program strives to train geriatric medicine fellows to become top-notch geriatricians, who have the skills needed to practice in their setting of choice, whether it be an academic environment or the community, provide quality patient care, and become local and national leaders in the field of aging. Our program appreciates the opportunity to train three fellows each year, with our current cohort scheduled to graduate June 2022.

[Learn More](#)

Highlight on Geriatric Medicine Fellow, Dr. Rachael Petry



Rachael Petry, MD is a Tennessee native, who became interested in geriatrics during medical school. She enjoyed talking with, educating and empowering older adults to become more active participants in their care plans. She was also blessed to be surrounded by older adults throughout her childhood--with both sets of her grandparents playing huge roles in her upbringing. Her major interests are in education and teaching communication skills to residents and students with the aim of practicing more informed, patient-centered care. Rachael is also particularly interested in goals of care conversations, medication management and safe transitions of care between hospital and outpatient settings.

During fellowship, Rachael most enjoyed her time at the San Diego VA Hospital's Community Living Center, where she gained a more thorough understanding of skilled nursing, hospital rehabilitation and custodial care eligibility. The UCSD Geriatrics Fellowship motivated her to be a more proactive clinician when discharge planning for her hospitalized patients. Rachael also took advantage of the multiple teaching opportunities available to her during fellowship -- from helping to design an Interprofessional Simulation Education case for the UCSD School of Medicine on aging to providing a lecture for UCSD undergraduate students on frailty to co-leading a guest lecture with Dr. Alison Moore for the UCSD School of Public Health course on Aging Epidemiology. She has loved being able to teach others about aging and geriatrics across the UCSD system.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her fiancé, Graham, and her dog, Barley. She also enjoys jogging, wine tasting, and water skiing with her family. After fellowship, Rachael will be returning to Nashville to join the Department of Geriatric Medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center as an Assistant Professor. She will primarily provide geriatrics consultations and care for hospitalized patients in their Acute Care for the Elderly Unit. Additionally, she will spend time at the Nashville VA Hospital supervising internal medicine residents and assessing older adults in an outpatient falls clinic. Rachael will be greatly missed when she graduates. She has been an outstanding addition to our fellowship program!

The San Diego AD-RCMAR Program

Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center for Minority Aging Research



Our division is home to the San Diego Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (AD-RCMAR), one of eight centers funded across U.S funded by the National Institute on Aging. This Center is a partnership between the UC San Diego Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology and Palliative Care, and Department of Neurosciences, and San Diego State University's Department of Psychology and Graduate School of Public Health.



The goal of the San Diego AD-RCMAR is to enhance the diversity of the aging research workforce by mentoring scientists from underrepresented groups for careers in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) relevant research.

Each year, our center selects 3-4 early-career investigators by providing them with funding to complete a small or pilot research project focused on ADRD; and providing them with mentorship and career development support.

Congratulations to our selected scientists for 2022-2023



Lauren Brown

PhD, MPH

Assistant Professor, Health Management & Policy, School of Public Health, San Diego State University

PILOT PROJECT: Examining Cohort Variation in Chronic Stress, Anthropometric, Biological, and Cognitive Function of Black and White Older Adults Across Age Cohorts

Sabrina Smiley

PhD

Assistant Professor, School of Public Health, San Diego State University

PILOT PROJECT: A Qualitative Study Designed to Explore the Experience of Social Isolation, Loneliness, and Cognitive Function among Older Black Individuals with Cocaine-Use Disorder (CUD)





Krystal Kittle

PhD

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Public Health, Social & Behavioral Health, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

PILOT PROJECT: Racial/Ethnically Diverse Sexual and Gender Minority Caregivers of Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

Lize Tibiriçá

PsyD

T32 Postdoctoral Fellow, Stein Institute for Research on Aging, UC San Diego Department of Psychiatry

PILOT PROJECT: The Effects of Perceived Discrimination and Nativity Status on Cognitive Decline among Hispanic/Latin American Older Adults

[More about our AD-RCMAR](#)

What's Happening/Events

Our Vice Chief of Research, Dr. Anthony Molina, on The Gerontological Society of America's Momentum Discussion Podcast

Researchers have identified several molecular pathways at a cellular level, including within the mitochondria, which appear to influence both aging and age-related chronic disease.

This episode, which features Dr. Anthony Molina, Vice Chief of Research for our division, focuses specifically on what researchers are learning about the importance of mitochondrial function.

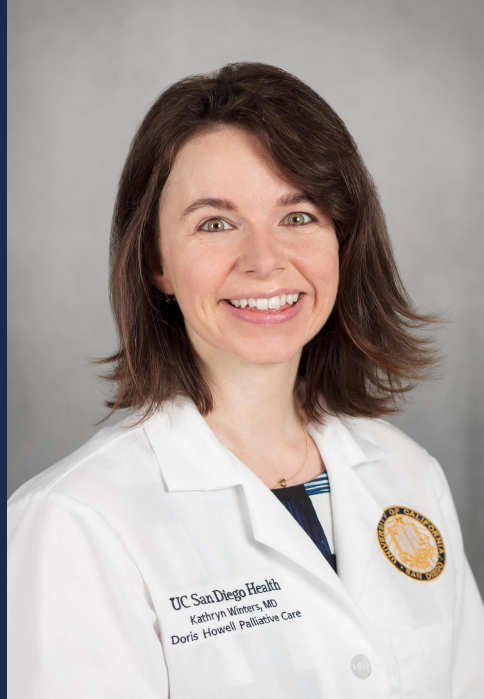
[Listen here](#)

[or view transcript here](#)



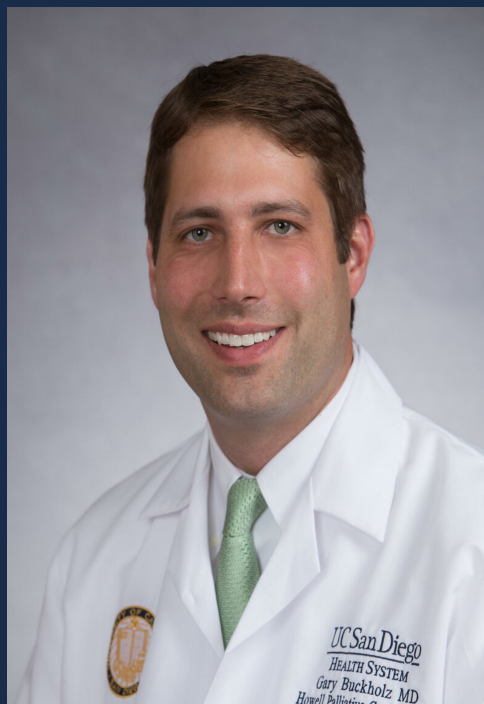
Dr. Kathryn Winters & Dr. Gary Buckholz to participate in Sanford Communication Faculty Fellowship

At some point in life, all of us have experienced communication that lacks heart. What we know in medicine, is that less-than-stellar communication between doctors and patients, and doctors and other healthcare providers, erodes trust and makes it harder for patients to get the care they deserve. Two palliative care physicians in our group are taking steps to make a lasting difference in how they, and others at UCSD, connect and care with patients. Drs. Gary Buckholz and Kathryn Winters have been selected to participate in the inaugural [Sanford Communication Faculty Fellowship](#). The fellowship is a yearlong training course for physicians, built to help them hone skill in communication with both patients and colleagues, as well as skill in teaching others how to better connect. The fellowship is taught by expert faculty ranging from physicians to theater artists, who teach physicians how to incorporate the arts and humanities into their daily work as communicators. For Drs. Buckholz and Winters it has been a truly transformative experience! We look forward to seeing the positive changes they bring from the Fellowship to their work with patients, and to colleagues and trainees across UCSD Health.



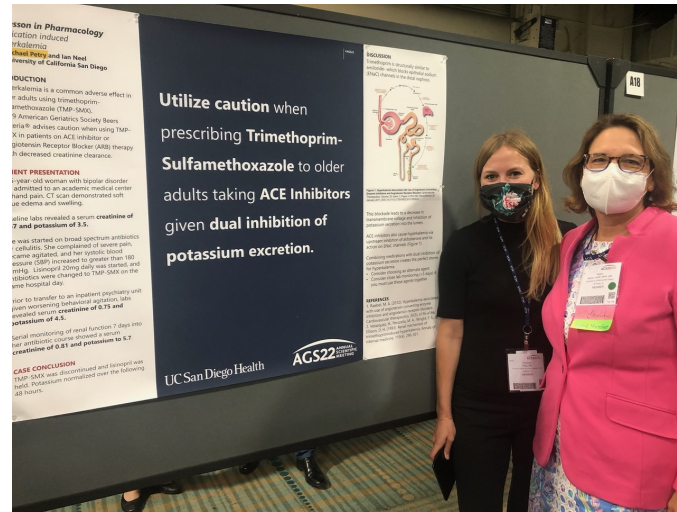
Dr. Kathryn Winters
&
Dr. Gary Buckholz

Learn More
about the Fellowship here



UC San Diego attends the American Geriatrics Society 2022 Annual
Scientific Meeting

Several members of our Division, including faculty, fellows, and medical students, attended the annual [American Geriatrics Society](#) meeting held in Orlando, Florida earlier this month. This event provided attendees the opportunity to share new research, innovative programs, interesting case studies, and best clinical practices for improving the health, independence and quality of life of older people. It also provided trainees an opportunity to network with others interested in geriatrics. Congratulations to those on our team, who had the opportunity to present their own work at this event and to share our university's accomplishments!





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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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