

UC San Diego

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology & Palliative Care Newsletter



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Happy Thanksgiving from the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology & Palliative Care!



We are grateful for our community of clinicians, researchers, learners, partners, and supporters who make our work possible. Thank you for all you do to advance compassionate care, healthy aging, and dignity at every stage of life. Wishing you and your loved ones a restful, meaningful holiday.

Spotlight: Belicia Ding, MD



What is your current profession/role?

I am a geriatrician for the UCSD at Home program, conducting clinical visits at patients' homes.

What initially inspired and motivated you to pursue a career in your field?

Throughout my medical training, I was inspired by fantastic mentors in the field of Geriatrics. I was initially inspired by my mentor in medical school, Dr. Anita Major, who provided home-based primary care. I was deeply impressed by the relationship and trust that she and her interdisciplinary team built with their patients. The experience of working with the team sparked my journey into Geriatrics and especially home-based care.

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

What I love most about my work is that I'm able to visit my patients in the comforts of their own homes! I get a chance to know my patients on a more personal level, and being in their home environments, I'm able to readily identify care barriers that I may never learn from typical clinic visits.

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

I'm a big reader, whether in paper form or as audiobooks during my drive to and from patients' homes. I especially love memoirs and fictions on immigrant stories, though recently I've been on a fantasy binge, so let me know if you need any book recommendations!

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

I think I would love to be some type of animal conservationist or work with animal rescue teams! I've fostered cats for a while until my allergies, unfortunately, got really bad.



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I'm a
Caregiver

and I'm Caring for My _____.

November is National Family Caregivers Month, a time to honor the millions of family members, friends, and care partners who provide essential support to older adults and individuals living with serious illness. Caregivers play a vital role in maintaining health, dignity, and quality of life—often while balancing work, family, and their own well-being. This month, we recognize their resilience, compassion, and the invisible labor they contribute every day. We encourage our community to take a moment to thank the caregivers in their lives and to help connect them with resources, support, and moments of rest.

Caregiving in the US 2025: A National Portrait of Family Caregivers

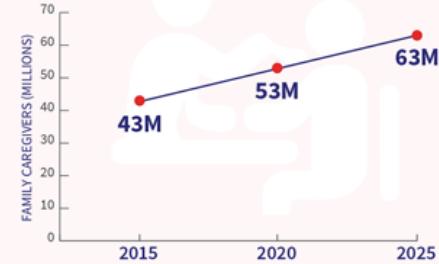
A Dramatic Increase

20 million

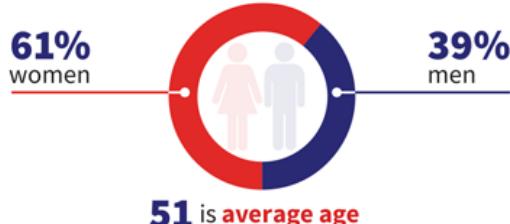
MORE family caregivers since 2015 – a nearly 50% increase

63 million

Americans are family caregivers – that's 1 in 4 adults



Who Are America's Family Caregivers?



NEARLY HALF are under 50 – younger than many expect.

29%
are **sandwich generation caregivers** – caring
for both children
and adults

18%
have a **disability**
themselves

27%
are caring for
someone with
dementia or
cognitive impairment

Work and Financial Challenges

7 in 10 working-age family caregivers
also work – **balancing dual responsibilities**

47% report at least one **negative financial impact**

1 in 5 can't afford basic needs like food and housing

1 in 4 family
caregivers
feel alone

Almost
4 in 10 report
emotional stress

23%
find it **difficult**
to take care of
their **own health**

Finding Hope & Solutions

51% of family
caregivers **find purpose**
in caregiving

Use of technology
to support caregiving
has **doubled** in 5 years

Caregivers' access to **paid family leave**
has expanded over 10 years



<https://doi.org/10.26419/ppi.00373.002>



More about National Family Caregivers Month

Faces of Caregiving



Faces of RAISE #RAISEcaregiving

The U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) created this powerful video to highlight the many “faces of caregiving” – sharing real stories from family caregivers whose dedication, compassion, and resilience often go unseen. Their experiences reflect the millions of parents, partners, spouses, children, friends, and neighbors who provide essential, unpaid care to older adults every day. We invite you to watch and share this video to honor caregivers in our community and help raise awareness of the vital role they play.

[Visit ACL website](#)

What's Happening



In honoring October as Health Literacy Month, Dr. Khai Nguyen shared key insights in his talk “Communication About Medications” — helping patients and providers connect for better, safer care.



[More about Health Literacy](#)



Dr. Toluwalasé (LaSé) A. Ajayi, AMA Board Chair-Elect, joined the California Medical Association House of Delegates to discuss key federal issues and the power of advocacy in shaping the future of medicine.

[More about the CMAHOD](#)

We are proud of Dr. Tessa Antalan, who helped organize and presented at the American College of Physicians Southern California Region III Annual Scientific Meeting. She is a wonderful example of our faculty leadership in action.

[More about American College of Physicians Annual Meeting](#)



*Congratulations
are in order...*

Congrats to Dr. Eddie Lam & Lissette Nahab!

Eddie Lam, MD and Lissette Nahab have both been accepted to the UC San Diego Health Leadership Academy, a custom course where participants engage with renowned experts in leadership, strategy, finance, healthcare trends, communication, and management. Our division has a growing number of members who have completed this course: Dr. Khai Nguyen in 2017, Vanessa Serrano Ramos in 2022, Dr. Anjoulie Pujji in 2023, and Dr. Tessa Antalan in 2024.



Congrats to Dr. Lindsey Yourman!

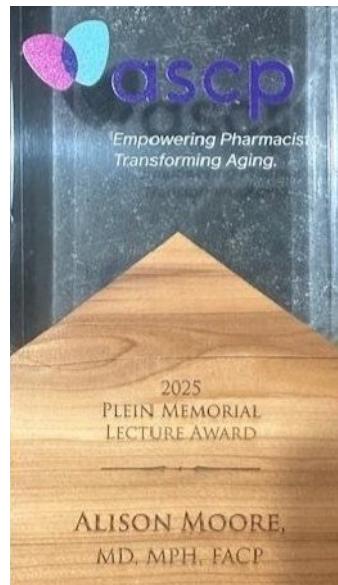


Lindsey Yourman, MD will be our new clinical quality improvement leader for Geriatrics. She brings much experience in this area including, but not limited to, her work for the health system as the geriatrics quality improvement leader, San Diego County improving care for older adults, the nation serving as an advisor for the American College of Physicians Geriatrics Surgical Verification Program, and for the EPIC Geriatrics Specialty Steering Board, and most recently, for the state as a member of the California Commission on Aging.

Congrats to Dr. Alison Moore!



Alison Moore, MD was honored with the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists Plein Memorial Lecture Award for her outstanding contributions to geriatrics, mentorship, and advancing the science of healthy aging.



Welcome New Hires

Welcome Alina Pang, PhD

UC San Diego

Division of Geriatrics,
Gerontology & Palliative Care



**We are excited to welcome
Dr. Alina Pang, who joins us as an
Assistant Project Scientist in
Michael Corley's lab in the
Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology
and Palliative Care**

Alina Pang was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i, where she obtained her PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the John A. Burns School of Medicine. She completed her postdoctoral training in Infectious Disease at Weill Cornell Medicine, where her research focused on HIV and epigenetics. Her current work explores accelerated epigenetic aging and age-related comorbidities affecting people living with HIV. She is excited to continue investigating the intersection of the immune system and aging within the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care. Outside of research, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, traveling, and cooking.

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING ALINA!

Welcome Julia Wilkins, MD



UC San Diego

Division of Geriatrics,
Gerontology & Palliative Care

**We are excited to welcome
Dr. Julia Wilkins, who joins us as a
Health Sciences Clinical Assistant
Professor for UC San Diego Division
of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and
Palliative Care**

Dr. Wilkins grew up in Columbus, Ohio though has called Southern California home for the last 5 years. She completed medical school at New York Medical College, followed by residency in Family Medicine at UC San Diego. Finding a love for palliative care during residency, she stayed at UC San Diego to complete a fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Dr. Wilkins is excited to continue working at UC San Diego in the department of palliative care. Outside of work, she is a new mom, enjoys surfing with her husband and watching THE Ohio State Buckeyes.

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING JULIA!

Welcome Jaeyoun Choi, MD

UC San Diego

Division of Geriatrics,
Gerontology & Palliative Care



**We are excited to welcome
Dr. Jaeyoun Choi, who joins us
as a Geriatrician for UC San
Diego at Home, Population
Health Services**

Jaeyoun Choi is originally from South Korea and completed his medical education at Yonsei University in Seoul. He served his mandatory military service as a primary care physician in underserved communities, where he developed a strong interest in caring for older adults. After completing his service, he worked as a pain physician with a focus on chronic pain management in the elderly population. He later moved to the United States, completed his internal medicine residency at Saint Francis Hospital in Evanston, Illinois, and went on to finish his geriatric medicine fellowship at UC San Diego. He is now excited to join the UCSD at Home program. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife and their three-year-old daughter.

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING JAEYOUN!

Welcome Kristie Hsu, MD

UC San Diego

Division of Geriatrics,
Gerontology & Palliative Care



**We are excited to welcome
Dr. Kristie Hsu, who joins us as a
Health Sciences Clinical
Assistant Professor in the
Division of Geriatrics,
Gerontology, and Palliative Care**

Kristie grew up in Indiana and attended Indiana University for her undergraduate degree (go Hoosiers!). She completed her medical degree at the Stanford University School of Medicine, followed by Internal Medicine residency at the University of California San Francisco where she also completed chief residency and geriatrics fellowship. Kristie is passionate about health systems improvement for older adults and advancing geriatrics medical education. Clinically, Kristie is joining the VA San Diego Healthcare System's Community Living Center as a full-time geriatrician. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her energetic 1-year-old son, racquet sports, and trying new recipes.

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING KRISTIE!

In the News...

With flu season underway, Dr. Toluwalasé (Lašé) Ajayi shares expert tips on how to stay healthy and protect your loved ones. Watch her interview on Fox 5 News [here](#).

When Cal Fresh benefits are delayed, seniors suffer. Dr. Ian Neel spoke with KPBS about the urgent need to protect older adults from food insecurity. Read it [here](#).

A new study from Dr. Ben Han shows VA records missed 4 out of 5 overdose deaths among Veterans—especially accidental ones. Most had accessed VA care, highlighting key prevention opportunities. Read it [here](#).

A new review from Dr. Biren Kamdar and colleagues explores the evolution of enteral nutrition—from ancient enemas to modern tube feeding—and compares commercial vs. food-based formulas in critical illness, highlighting key research gaps. Read 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. Join us to help older adults live their best lives longer and improve 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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