



UC San Diego

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology & Palliative Care Newsletter



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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.

SUPPORT US

Palliative Care Collaborates with Colleagues at University of Alabama Birmingham

Authors: Kyle Edmonds, Jennifer Kim, Lissette Moreno Nahab, Kira Skavinski, Karolina Soriano



Left-to-right: Cheryl Cephus-Vickers, Chair of their Center's Community Advisory Board; Lissette Moreno Nahab, Kira Skavinski, Karolina Soriano, Kyle Edmonds, Jennifer Kim, and Dr. Rodney Tucker, Professor & Director of UAB Center for Palliative & Supportive Care

As part of their strategic goals, the UCSD Palliative program has partnered with the University of Alabama at Birmingham as part of the Center to Advance Palliative Care's [Palliative Care Leadership Centers](#). We chose to work with UAB as they are a large, academic center that is also geographically distinct from us. In fact, the entirety of the Southeastern US has been recognized as a palliative care “[desert](#),” which UAB is actively working to remedy. They also have many similarities to UCSD including being housed within the Division of

Geriatrics and having clinical services at the main UAB hospital, the local children's hospital, and the VA. At the same time, their academic structure and clinic are both advanced compared to what we have.

Our delegation included inpatient Nurse Practitioner (and winner of the Division's 2022 Palliative Care Values in Action Award), Jennifer Kim; palliative unit clinical social worker, Karolina Soriano; clinic/inpatient physician and Associate Director, Kira Skavinski; inpatient physician and Director, Kyle Edmonds; and Associate Director of Palliative Operations, Lissette Moreno Nahab. It was wonderful to meet with, learn from, and engage with the members of the Center for Palliative and Supportive Care as well as to receive a tour of their standalone Supportive Care Clinic and their Inpatient Palliative and Comfort Care Unit, which reminded many of us of the previous San Diego Hospice Inpatient Care Center. Throughout an intensive two days, we worked with their leaders to share more about our mission and vision, clinic operations, educational offerings, and inpatient teams. That is, when we weren't partaking of some Alabama BBQ!

We brought some excellent growth goals for our team back from Alabama including creating a closer clinical partnership with our geriatrics colleagues, creating a more centralized structure for UCSDH staff education, and seeking better integration with the cancer center. We look forward to working with the UAB team over the coming nine months to make these goals reality and can see more clearly a future where we too have a Center and more integration with our VAMC and Rady Children's palliative colleagues.

October is Health Literacy Month

It's Health Literacy Month!



How are you taking action to build awareness about health literacy?

Share with the community today!



#healthliteracymonth

healthliteracymonth.org

October is Health Literacy Month - a time when health organizations, literacy programs, libraries, social service agencies, businesses, professional associations, government agencies, and other groups work together to integrate and expand the mission of health literacy. Together, we can build a world with greater health equity where all people can attain positive health outcomes. Visit the website linked below to learn how you can turn awareness into action!

[go to HealthLiteracyMonth.org](http://HealthLiteracyMonth.org)

Ageism Awareness Day



Ageism Awareness Day was held on October 7 as an opportunity to draw attention to the impact of ageism in our society and how we can reframe aging in our communities. Even though the day has past, it is still a very important cause and there are still ways you can grow awareness. Check out the Ageism Awareness Day toolkit for more resources, including an ageism fact sheet, a call to action with ideas on how to get involved and sample materials that you can use to advocate for ageism awareness with local media and government officials.

[More about ASA's Ageism Awareness Day](#)

Welcome New Division Members!



Welcome Stephanie Schmitt, M.D.

We are excited to welcome Dr. Stephanie Schmitt (she/her), as she joins our Outpatient Palliative Medicine at UCSD and Inpatient Pediatric Palliative Care at Rady Children's Hospital. Dr. Schmitt was born in Chicago, Illinois. After medical school, she moved to San Diego where she completed her residency and chief residency in Pediatrics at UCSD/Rady Children's Hospital. She did her Palliative Medicine fellowship at UCSD and Scripps Health and is excited to continue working alongside this amazing team! Outside of work, she loves finding new hiking trails and eating every taco she can get her hands on.

Welcome Isabel Mancilla

We are excited to welcome Isabel Mancilla as she joins as Program Assistant for the San Diego Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (AD-RCMAR) and working with Stein Institute as part of their research program. UC San Diego alumna, Isabel Mancilla, received her bachelor's degree in biology with special interests in public health and longevity. As an undergraduate, she supported successful aging projects through the Stein Institute for Research on Aging through the Molina Lab. Outside of work, she loves to play tennis, play video games, and go to the gym. She is excited to join the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care at UCSD.



Welcome Lin Wang

We are excited to welcome Lin Wang (she/her), as she joins the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology and Palliative Care as a Research Coordinator for Molina Lab. Lin is originally from Beijing, China and came to San Diego as a visiting scholar. Since then, she has completed her postdoctoral training at UC San Diego and The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) and joined the Mitochondrial and Metabolic Disease Center at UCSD as a research associate and lab manager. She is excited to become a part of the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care and continue her study on mitochondria in the context of healthy aging. When not working, she loves hiking, trail jogging, and backpacking.

**Please join us in welcoming Dr. Stephanie Schmitt,
Isabel Mancilla and Lin Wang!**

What's Happening/Events

Walks to End Alzheimer's

UC San Diego continues to be committed to making a difference in the lives of individuals living with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias and their care teams, through its many research, clinical, and training programs. Locally, we have nearly 100,000 individuals now living with some form of dementia. Here in October, two walks were held here in San Diego to raise awareness for this important cause: both the national Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's® held on October 7 at Liberty Park and the local Alzheimer's San Diego Walk4ALZ held on October 21 in Balboa Park.



Our Aireen Gutierrez with her husband and daughter at the AA's Walk to End Alzheimer's on October 7.

[More about AA's Walk to End Alzheimer's](#)

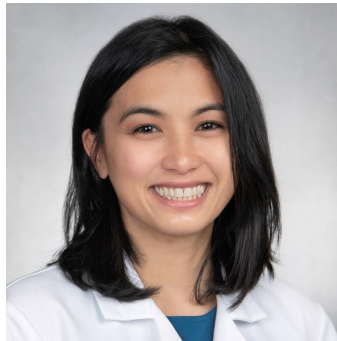
[More about Alzheimer's San Diego Walk4ALZ](#)

Congratulations are in order...

Tessa Antalan, MD, FACP, received the 2023 Outstanding Early Career Physician Award from the American College of Physicians (ACP) Region III

Congratulations Dr. Antalan!

[More about ACP](#)



Arnold Gass, MD, FACP, received the American College of Physicians (ACP) Region III, 2023 Distinguished Internal Medicine Physician Award

Congratulations Dr. Gass!

[More about ACP](#)



Parag Agnihotri, M.D. and Population Health Services received an award from AMGA (American Medical Group Association) Foundation. The award is in recognition of high performance on the AMGA's National Rise to Immunize Challenge campaign.

Congratulations Dr. Agnihotri and Population Health Services!

[More about AMGA](#)



National Value Based Healthcare Competition Winners

1st

Bringing Healthcare Home: Community Paramedicine for ESRD Patients

Penn State College of Medicine - Linda Qiu, Sahil Sardesai, Michael Huang, Courtney Landis



2nd

PalliCARE: A Value-Based Intervention for End-of-Life Care

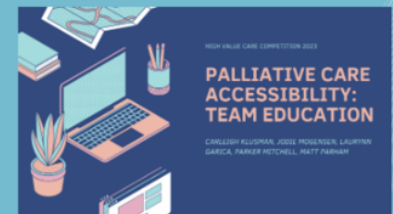
University of California San Diego School of Medicine - Jenna Stelmar, Kelsey Smith, Leo Meller, Nimit Desai, Vasanth Jagadeesh



3rd

Palliative Care Accessibility: Team Education

Baylor College of Medicine - Carleigh Klusman, Jodie Mogensen, Laurynn Garcia, Parker Mitchell, Matt Parham



Five UCSD medical students placed 2nd place in the **National (!)** Value-based Healthcare Competition with their proposal for “PalliCARE: A value-based intervention for end-of-life care” under the guidance of Drs. Kathryn Winters and Kyle Edmonds. Congratulations to Jenna Stelmar, Kelsey Smith, Leo Meller, Nimit Desai, and Vasanth Jagadeesh!

See the proposal

"PalliCARE: A value-based intervention for end-of-life care"

- Dr. Benjamin Han published "Age-friendly care for older adults with substance use disorder" in The Lancet, Healthy Longevity. Read it [here](#).
- Dr. Molina presented "Healthy Longevity: A Scientist's Perspective" at the [Center for Healthy Aging's](#) Healthy Longevity Symposium on October 6th. Available on UCTV. Watch it [here](#).

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