



## CELEBRATING OUR DEPARTMENT'S ACHIEVEMENTS



**HASHEM B. EL-SERAG,  
M.D., M.P.H.**

Chair of the  
Department of Medicine

Dear Colleagues,

We assembled the topics and interviews for this newsletter early in 2020 or in the pre COVID19 era. We have decided to share it with you unaltered because we believe that it is just as relevant today as it was before. This newsletter also serves as a reminder that our quest to achieve and maintain excellence in our missions will (and indeed have) continue, sometimes using different tactics.

This issue of our newsletter has a common theme: quality improvement. Change. Growth. Advances in medical care, research, and education. Addressing these issues is a personal passion of mine. I'm proud to say that, after 3 years as Chair of the Department of Medicine, we have a team of professionals who share this common vision and embody a drive to remake the face of medicine.

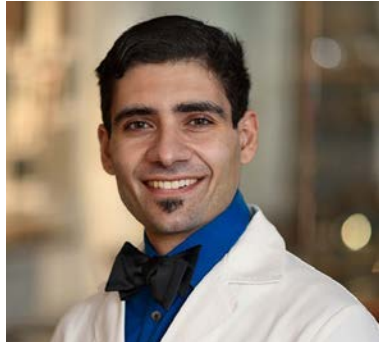
In the past year, we hired two new Section Chiefs and brought in 54 new faculty. Our seven Vice Chair Groups covering Clinical Affairs, Education, Faculty and Staff Development, Harris Health System/Ben Taub Hospital, Quality Improvement and Innovations, Research, and Veterans Affairs reflect our vision for the department. These groups improve and streamline our processes and procedures, making our Department of Medicine the most highly requested site by trainees.

In this newsletter, we highlight many of our achievements on the path to meeting our vision of improved quality of care, research, and education.

# QUALITY



## NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE VICE CHAIR GROUP FOR QII



DR. MAYAR AL MOHAJER

The Vice Chair Group for Quality Improvement and Innovation (VCG QII) has a new leader. Term-limited **Dr. Aanand Naik** passed the baton to **Dr. Mayar Al Mohajer, associate professor, Infectious Diseases**. Dr Al Mohajer completed an MBA in healthcare management and a Certificate in Patient Safety, Quality, Informatics and Leadership. In his capacity as medical director for infection prevention and antimicrobial stewardship at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center (BSLMC), Dr. Al Mohajer leads a team of eight infection preventionists and oversees quality improvement and research.

Since its inception in mid-2017, the VCG QII has held annual Quality Academy training, given out two rounds

of the Q Innovation Award and has helped the College with American Society of Graduate Medical Education site visit preparedness. Dr. Al Mohajer's main goals include developing an outpatient position for Chief Resident in Quality and Safety at the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center (MEDVAMC) and cementing a collaboration with the Baylor Center for Collaborative and Interactive Technologies to develop a Certificate for patient quality and safety. He also wants to strengthen the collaboration between BSLMC and Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI).

“Our group has a lot of great ideas and big plans. It’s going to be a phenomenal two years.”

### DR. AL MOHAJER

- Is from Syria
- Is passionate about quality improvement and education
- Says there is always room for improvement
- Likes learning new languages

Dr. Al Mohajer is the Chair of the Texas Division Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee, which manages quality improvement projects and prepares hospitals for regulatory visits. Through partnership with the other CHI hospitals, he hopes to create a renowned stewardship program with QI as a key component.

The VCG QII has liaisons from each Section within the Department of Medicine, but Dr. Al Mohajer plans to expand that collaboration. “I’m very excited to be selected for this role,” Dr. Al Mohajer says. “Our group has a lot of great ideas and big plans. It’s going to be a phenomenal two years.”



Vice Chair Group for Quality Improvement and Innovations

# COLLABORATION

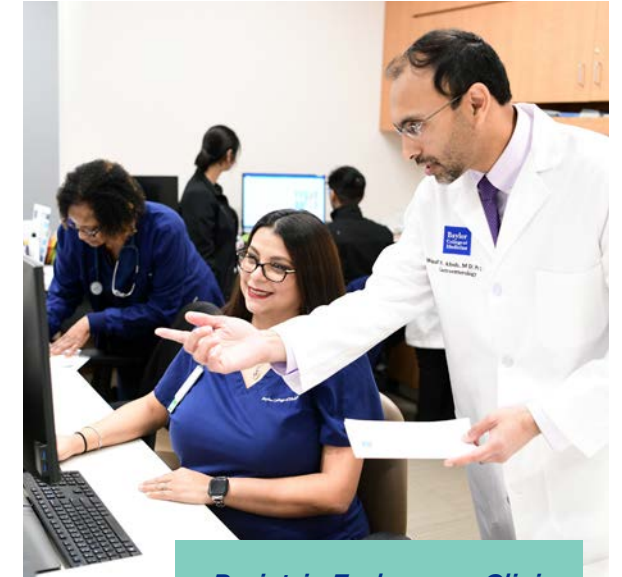


## NEW OPTIONS FOR OBESITY

With nearly two-thirds of American adults being obese or overweight and worsening trends in obesity, treatment of obesity has become a critically important part of patient care. “While diet and exercise remain the main treatment, most people struggle to maintain their weight loss,” says **Dr. Wasif Abidi, Assistant Professor in the Section of Gastroenterology and Hepatology**. “Surgery works wonders, but it’s restricted by low patient acceptance. Patients often come to me afraid of the possible complications that can occur with surgery.”

Dr. Abidi's practice offers novel minimally invasive endoscopic therapies to help patients lose weight, including sleeve gastropasty, which uses an endoscopic suturing device to mimic the sleeve gastrectomy anatomy, and an intragastric saline-filled silicone balloon placed in the stomach for 6 months. Efforts by Dr. Abidi and **Dr. Mandeep Bajaj and the Section of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism** led to Baylor College of Medicine being chosen as a site for a pivotal trial of the EndoBarrier®, an endoscopically placed plastic sleeve that causes the body to react differently to food and manage blood sugar more effectively.

The clinic coordinates closely with **Dr. Bajaj of the Surgical Weight Loss Clinic and Dr. Peter Jian of the Department of Family Medicine**. The group coordinates care of patients. “It’s quite satisfying to be able to make such a significant change in a patient’s anatomy and eating habits without making a single incision on their skin.” Patients undergo a rigorous pre- and post-procedural program consisting of dietician and psychologist visits to optimize outcomes.



Bariatric Endoscopy Clinic



Dr. Abidi with an EndoBarrier® plastic sleeve

Says Dr. Abidi, “We have been working to bring Houston novel choices to help patients lead healthier lives and I couldn’t be more proud of the success of this initiative.”



Installing the EndoBarrier® plastic sleeve

### DR. ABIDI

- Is married with two children, aged 6 and 10
- Grew up in the northeast
- Is an avid car fanatic
- Participates in Autocross events





## SOLID ORGAN TRANSPLANT PROGRAM'S SUCCESS

**Dr. Venkat Ramanathan is Chief of the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center (MEDVAMC) Solid Organ Transplant Program.** The success of the Center's liver transplant program led the VA to invest in a kidney program at MEDVAMC in 2014. "We've done very well," he says. "Within a short time, the MEDVAMC program has become the fastest-growing kidney transplant program in the VA system based on the number of transplant referrals and number of veterans added to the UNOS (United Network for Organ Sharing) transplant waiting list." Dr. Ramanathan credits the program's success to all members of the MEDVAMC transplant team, led by Transplant Manager **Mrs. Priscilla Sloan**, and the MEDVAMC leadership team. For transplant nephrology, Dr. Ramanathan is supported by **Dr. Jenny Pan, Nidhi Aggarwal, and Chandan Vangala.**



**DR. VENKAT RAMANATHAN**

### DR. RAMANATHAN

- Has been at both Baylor and MEDVAMC since 2003
- Is learning to play golf

### The Process

The program gets transplant referrals from all over the country. After the initial screen, potential candidates and one caregiver are flown to Houston for a 1-day evaluation, transplant education, and a multidisciplinary evaluation.

Once a veteran is listed in the national waiting list, the transplant team remotely follows each veteran to ensure they are healthy enough to proceed with surgery when an organ becomes available. The team works closely with referring VA hospitals to ensure veterans can arrive in Houston quickly when an organ becomes available.

### Beating the Odds

Dr. Ramanathan's team has traveled to multiple VA hospitals to promote organ transplantation, learn about their issues, and work with them to make the process work better. The team has organized remote town hall sessions. MEDVAMC is the only VA transplant center to organize specialized transplant workshops at referring VA hospitals to promote organ transplantation. The MEDVAMC kidney transplant system, with 370 veterans on the UNOS wait list, is now the second-largest VA kidney transplant



*Dr. Venkat Ramanathan with Transplant Manager Priscilla Sloan*



program. MEDVAMC leads the country in quality metrics, including the shortest referral-to-UNOS listing time.

### Living/Paired Donations

Given the long wait time for a deceased-donor organ, the program is expanding the Living Donor program. Recently, MEDVAMC performed the first paired kidney

donation (kidney swap) in the VA system. Two Navy veterans received compatible live donor kidneys from the other veteran's family member. Dr. Ramanathan and Mrs. Sloan will soon be working with other VA transplant centers. The team is also exploring the creation of a VA-private partnership between MEDVAMC and Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center to promote paired kidney donations across Texas Medical Center institutions.



*MEDVAMC Solid Organ Transplant Program team members*



# HEALTHCARE



## DR. CIVITELLO—ADVANCED HEART FAILURE PROGRAM

The Advanced Heart Failure (AHF) Program, under the leadership of **Dr. Andrew Civitello, Assistant Professor, Cardiology**, offers care when a patient is failing guideline-directed medical and device treatments, such as pacemakers and medical therapy.

### Diagnosis

When a patient first presents, the AHF team investigates the source of the heart failure. Patients undergo a wide range of tests. The team assesses whether patients merit heart transplantation or a ventricular assist device (VAD). “We are branching out to some more unusual types of heart failure, like cardiac sarcoidosis, to provide services not available elsewhere,” says Dr. Civitello.

### Treatment

Patients with AHF have a 10% survival rate at 1 year with no treatment and the average wait for heart transplantation is 2 years, so the VAD is often used as a bridge to the transplant. With the VAD installed, the patient’s viability is closer to 90% at 1 year. “You save people’s lives. There’s nothing more gratifying,” says Dr. Civitello. Once the VAD or transplant surgery is complete, Dr. Civitello’s group continues to manage these permanently immunosuppressed patients. “The risk of rejection decreases dramatically after the first year, but it never goes away.”

### The Team

The AHF Center has four specialists: Drs. Civitello, **Ajith Nair, Selby Oberton, and Leo Simpson**, each with his own area of specialization. **Dr. Nair** oversees pulmonary hypertension and cardiac amyloid treatment. **Dr. Oberton** works with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and is medical director for the Living Donor Program of the kidney transplant service. **Dr. Simpson** is an interventional cardiologist, i.e., treats patients who arrive experiencing AHF, typically using percutaneous devices to stabilize the patient and see if the other organs recover.

What Dr. Civitello would really like to see is for people to get diagnosed early so they can be treated by managing risk factors, like hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol or smoking. “Our best treatment is for you to stay out of our office.”



Dr. Andrew Civitello



Dr. Civitello assisting a patient with his VAD

“You save people’s lives. There’s nothing more gratifying.”

# RESEARCH



## STUDYING THE GENETIC VARIANTS THAT PREDISPOSE A PATIENT TO CANCER



DR. YONG LI

### DR. LI

- Is from the Henan Province in China
- Is a basketball fan
- Is married with two daughters, ages 11 and 13

**Dr. Yong Li, Professor, Epidemiology and Population Sciences**, leads a research team investigating genetic and environmental etiological factors in cancer. Dr. Li brings more than 20 years of research into cancer etiology. Dr. Li’s work is supported by several CPRIT grants, including the \$6 million Established Investigator Award, National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants and private funding. He aims to elucidate the roles of genetic and environmental etiological factors in cancer and determine the molecular and cellular events and genetic polymorphisms intersecting with environmental risk factors for cancer.

Dr. Li is studying genetic variants, such as those of p53, that predispose a patient to cancer. Individuals with certain p53 variants in the coding region have a high risk of cancer in their lifetime—up to 100%—but these mutants are rare (about 1 in 10,000 people). Noncoding DNA sequences do not code for amino acid residues, which are building blocks for proteins. Dr. Li is working with the specific p53 noncoding mutant that gives only a moderate cancer risk for breast cancer; however, approximately 100 million people worldwide carry this p53 mutant. For the past 10 years, Dr. Li has been using a molecular cell approach to understand why this p53 mutant confers such moderate risk and what kind of cancers you are susceptible to if you carry this mutant.

Dr. Li also studies environmental risks for cancer. For example, barbecued meats contain carcinogens, like benzo[a]pyrene, which increase the risk of colorectal cancers. Another newly identified carcinogen is the herbicide glyphosate, which is associated with non-Hodgkin lymphoma and multiple myeloma. Dr. Li is studying

the tissue specificity of these environmental factors in cancer risk. “It’s important to discover,” he says, “why this results in only two types of cancer.”

**Dr. Chris Amos, Interim Section Chief of Epidemiology and Population Sciences**, says “We’re very excited that he’s joined our group.”

“It’s important to discover why this results in only two types of cancer.”



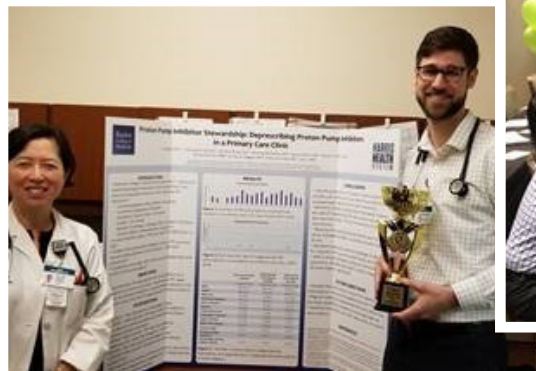
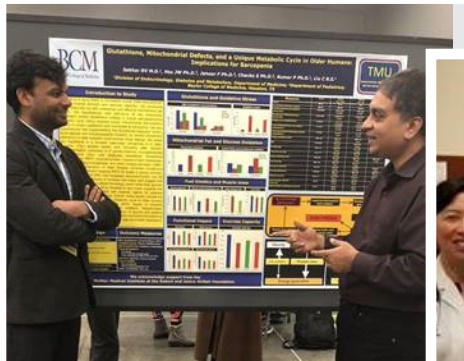
# DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE ACTIVITIES



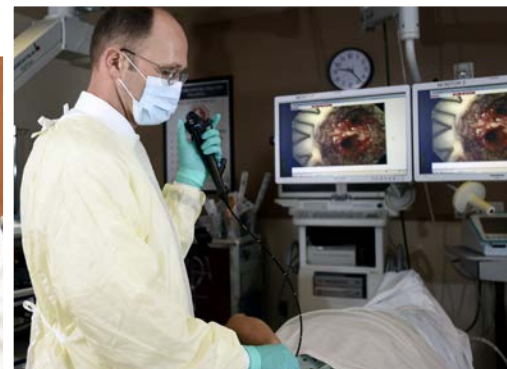
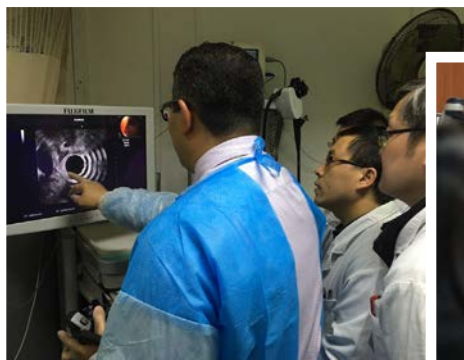
## CELEBRATES SUCCESSES



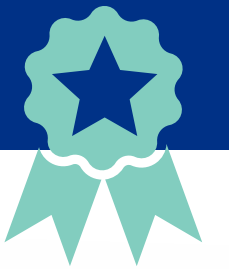
## TEACHES



## SERVES PATIENTS



# A LOOK BACK AT 2019



## SELECT FACULTY AWARDS

### Appointments/Promotions/Awards

- Dr. Horatio Adroque** Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Neeraj Agrawal** Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center Inpatient Teaching Award 2019
- Dr. Alok Bhattarai** Hospitalist of the Year Award
- Dr. Andrew Caruso** Norton Rose Fulbright Award for Educational Leadership
- Dr. Nicolas Cortes-Penfield** BCM Center of Excellence in Health Equity, Training, and Research Clinical Fellow Scholar
- Dr. Goutham Dronavalli** STAR Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Matthew Ellis** Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in Clinical Research
- Dr. Savitri Fedson** Norton Rose Fulbright Award for Teaching and Evaluation and Development of Enduring Educational Materials
  
- Dr. Joslyn Fisher** Joseph R. Guitreau Consummate Physician Award
- Dr. Ellen Fremion** Norton Rose Fulbright Award for Teaching and Evaluation
- Dr. Ellen Fremion** STAR Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Lindsey Gay** Norton Rose Fulbright Award for Teaching and Evaluation
- Dr. Kalpalatha Guntupalli** Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Drew Helmer** Deputy Director for IQuEST
- Dr. Loan Ho** Power of Professionalism Award from the Center for Professionalism
- Dr. Sylvia Hysong** Chair, BCM Norton Rose Fulbright Academy Grants Committee
- Dr. Nasser Lakkis** Excellence in Interventional Cardiology Teaching Award
- Dr. Glenn Levine** Barbara and Corbin J. Robertson, Jr., Presidential Award for Excellence in Education
- Dr. Na Li** Norton Rose Fulbright Award for Teaching and Evaluation
- Dr. Dhruv Mahtta** Research and Publications Committee for the American College of Cardiology's NCDR Chest Pain—MI Registry
  
- Dr. Anita Major** Ambulatory Care Service Think Innovation Transformation Award
- Dr. Anita Major** Norton Rose Fulbright Award for Teaching and Evaluation
- Dr. Arunima Misra** BCM Excellence in Teaching Award in Cardiovascular Disease
- Dr. Sara Nowakowski** Recipient of the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine's Arthur J. Spielman Early Career Distinguished Achievement Award
  
- Dr. Ricardo Nuila** 2019 Young Alumnus Award—School of Medicine
- Dr. Amit Parulekar** STAR Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. James Pool** Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Waqar Qureshi** Norton Fulbright Full Professor Award
- Dr. Rajeev Raghavan** STAR Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Venkat Ramanathan** Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Barbara Trautner** Barbara and Corbin J. Robertson, Jr., Presidential award
- Dr. Madhuri Vasudevan** STAR Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Cheryl Walker** Distinguished Toxicology Scholar Award
- Dr. Laila Woc-Coburn** Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
- Dr. Jingyin Yan** Norton Rose Fulbright Award for Teaching and Evaluation

## A LOOK BACK AT 2019



### SELECT FACULTY AWARDS

#### National Leadership Awards, Recognitions & Appointments

<b>Dr. Mahboob Alam</b>	Member, National Cardiovascular Disease Registry Chest Pain Myocardial Infarction Research & Publications Subcommittee
<b>Dr. Samaya Anumudu</b>	Intern, ASN Public Policy Committee
<b>Dr. Jairo Barrantes Perez</b>	Appointed to the Public Safety Committee of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine
<b>Dr. Sanket Borgaonkar</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Biykem Bozkurt</b>	President, Heart Failure Society of America
<b>Dr. Andrea Bradford</b>	Member-at-Large for the Society for Health Psychology
<b>Dr. Miguel Cruz</b>	Member, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Hemostasis and Thrombosis Study Section, Center for Scientific Review
<b>Dr. Miguel Cruz</b>	Member, Editorial Board of Blood Advances, <i>Journal of the American Society of Hematology</i>
<b>Dr. Natasha Dave</b>	Member, ASN Media and Communications Committee
<b>Dr. Jessica Davila</b>	HSR&D Researcher & Evaluator in Residence for the VA Office of Academic Affiliations
<b>Dr. Hashem El-Serag</b>	114th president of the American Gastroenterological Association
<b>Dr. Kevin Erickson</b>	Member, editorial board of the <i>Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology</i>
<b>Dr. Kevin Erickson</b>	Member, ASN Quality and Patient Safety Committee
<b>Dr. Alejandro Gener</b>	Reviewer, <i>AIDS</i> , the highest-impact HIV journal
<b>Dr. Traber Giardina</b>	Member, Special Emphasis Review Panel for the Agency for Healthcare Research
<b>Dr. Ruben Hernaez</b>	Elected top reviewer for 2018 for <i>Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology</i> and <i>Annals of Internal Medicine</i>
<b>Dr. Ruben Hernaez</b>	Member, National Surgery Office's Transplant Surgery Surgical Advisory Board
<b>Dr. Molly Horstman</b>	Panel Member, Infectious Diseases Society of America Clinical Practice Guideline
<b>Dr. Jason Hou</b>	Member, Veterans Affairs National Gastroenterology Field Advisory Committee
<b>Dr. Sylvia Hysong</b>	Continuing Education Chair for the Society of Industrial/Organizational Psychology
<b>Dr. Nadia Ismail</b>	Member, National Clerkship Directors in Internal Medicine Council
<b>Dr. Fasiha Kanwal</b>	Member, The American Society for Clinical Investigation
<b>Dr. Derian Lai</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Nasser Lakkis</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Glenn Levine</b>	Gifted Educator Award from the American College of Cardiology
<b>Dr. Lee Lu</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Anthony McClafferty</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Ayse Leyla Mindikoglu</b>	Awarded the Fellow of American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
<b>Dr. Yamini Natarajan</b>	Participant, American Board of Internal Medicine 2019 Gastroenterology Standard Setting Committee
<b>Dr. Sankar Navaneethan</b>	Member, American Heart Association EPI Statistics Committee of the Council on Epidemiology and Prevention
<b>Dr. Sankar Navaneethan</b>	Member, editorial board of the <i>Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology</i>
<b>Dr. Sayna Norouzi</b>	Intern, ASN Workforce and Education Committee

## A LOOK BACK AT 2019



### SELECT FACULTY AWARDS

#### National Leadership Awards, Recognitions & Appointments Cont.

<b>Dr. Waqar Qureshi</b>	Best Doctors in America 2019-2020
<b>Dr. Rajeev Raghavan</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Mehdi Razavi</b>	Fellow, National Academy of Inventors
<b>Dr. Susan Samson</b>	Second 3-year term to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
<b>Dr. Susan Samson</b>	Member-at-Large of the Board of Trustees of the American College of Endocrinology
<b>Dr. Susan Samson</b>	Member, Education Oversight Committee of AACE as co-Chair of Endocrine University
<b>Dr. Susan Samson</b>	Secretary/Treasurer, American Program Directors of Endocrinology and Metabolism
<b>Dr. David Sheikh-Hamad</b>	Member, ASN Grant Review Committee
<b>Dr. Hardeep Singh</b>	Fellow, The American Medical Informatics Association
<b>Dr. Hardeep Singh</b>	Member, National Quality Forum Committee
<b>Dr. Aaron Thrift</b>	Member, American Gastroenterological Association Institute Clinical Guidelines Committee
<b>Dr. Jefferson Triozzi</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Christie Turin More</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Anne Utech</b>	Senior Executive Service Equivalent position of National Director, Nutrition, and Food Services, Veterans Health Administration
<b>Dr. Wolfgang Winkelmayr</b>	Member, Editorial Board of the <i>Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology</i>
<b>Dr. David Wong</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. LeChauncy Woodard</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Diana Vila</b>	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
<b>Dr. Salim Virani</b>	Member, National Cardiovascular Disease Registry Scientific Quality and Oversight Subcommittee

#### Hospital Recognitions

The **Section of Cardiology** was given several awards from the American Heart Association, including the highest recognition—the Mission: Lifeline—NSTEMI—GOLD Award and the Mission: Lifeline—NSTEMI Receiving Center—GOLD PLUS Award for treatment of acute coronary syndrome and acute myocardial infarction at Harris Health System/Ben Taub Hospital, as well as the Get With The Guidelines—Heart Failure SILVER Award. This is the sixth year in a row the group has received these honors.

The **Section of Geriatrics House Calls team** was recognized as a National Committee for Quality Assurance-certified Patient-Centered Medical Home.

The **Catholic Health Initiatives—Texas Division** has received the Texas Hospital Association's Bill Aston Award for Quality in the academic institution or large teaching hospital/health system category.

**Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center** has been recognized as a Best Hospital for 2018–2019 according to U.S. News & World Report.



# A LOOK BACK AT 2019



## SELECT FACULTY AWARDS

### Department and College Leadership Awards and Appointments

<b>Dr. Amy Ampoker</b>	Associate Director for Education at IQuEST
<b>Dr. Sharmila Anandasabapathy</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Monisha Arya</b>	Mentor of the Year Award
<b>Dr. Robert Atmar</b>	Chair, Department of Medicine's Faculty Appointment and Promotions Committee
<b>Dr. Uma Ayyala</b>	Associate Chief of Staff—Education at MEDVAMC
<b>Dr. Christie Ballantyne</b>	2019 Michael E. DeBakey, M.D., Excellence in Research Award
<b>Dr. Jairo Barrantes Perez</b>	Faculty Senate Inductee
<b>Dr. Jennifer Chen</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Jennifer Chen</b>	Faculty Senate Inductee
<b>Dr. Priti Dangayach</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Kevin Erickson</b>	2019 BCM Distinguished Educator Award
<b>Dr. Cara Foldes</b>	Director, Foundational Sciences Curriculum
<b>Dr. Nicola Hanania</b>	Faculty Senate Inductee
<b>Dr. Susan Haudek</b>	Faculty Senate inductee
<b>Dr. Nadia Ismail</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Lubna Khawaja</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Lee Lu</b>	Faculty Senate Inductee
<b>Dr. Lee Lu</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Meroë Morse</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Jung Hyun Park</b>	Associate Chief of Staff—Quality, Safety, and Value at MEDVAMC
<b>Dr. Rajeev Raghavan</b>	Faculty Senate Inductee
<b>Dr. Nalini Ram</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Venkat Ramanathan</b>	Faculty Senate Inductee
<b>Dr. Stacey Rose</b>	Assistant Dean, Clinical Curriculum
<b>Dr. Rosa Schmidt</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Richa Shukla</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Brandon Smaglio</b>	Faculty Senate Inductee
<b>Dr. Norm Sussman</b>	Faculty Senate Inductee
<b>Dr. Sandhya Thomas</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Isabel Valdez</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
<b>Dr. Carl Walther</b>	2019 BCM Distinguished Educator Award
<b>Dr. Jingyin Yan</b>	2019 BCM Distinguished Leadership Award
<b>Dr. Liping Zhang</b>	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence

### Department of Medicine Promotions

<b>Dr. Mayar Al Mohajer</b>	Associate Professor (tenured)	<b>Dr. Manreet Kaur</b>	Associate Professor (non-tenured)
<b>Dr. Mahboob Alam</b>	Associate Professor (tenured)	<b>Dr. Jan Lindsay</b>	Associate Professor (non-tenured)
<b>Dr. Elizabeth Chao</b>	Professor (tenured)	<b>Dr. Tina Shah</b>	Associate Professor (tenured)
<b>Dr. Ali Denktas</b>	Professor (non-tenured)	<b>Dr. Mothaffar Rimawi</b>	Professor (tenured)
<b>Dr. Thomas Giordano</b>	Professor (tenured)	<b>Dr. Barbara Trautner</b>	Professor (tenured)
<b>Dr. Jason Hou</b>	Associate Professor (tenured)	<b>Dr. Salim Virani</b>	Professor (tenured)
<b>Dr. Christina Kao</b>	Associate Professor (tenured)		

# EDUCATION



## A DAY IN THE LIFE...DR. GALANT CHAN— DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL EDUCATION AT BSLMC

### What's your background?

I grew up in Houston, left for Harvard, and came back to Baylor College of Medicine for medical school. I did residency at Columbia and an infectious disease fellowship at the University of Washington in Seattle.

I wanted a place where education was a priority, where faculty were encouraged to focus on and given incentives for promotion based on contributions to education. Baylor actually gives faculty a clear path for “this is how you engage in medical education, excel in it, and get promoted.” And that focus on education was important to me.

### What's a day in your life like?

It's varied! From the mundane things like personal protective gear training to assigning call rooms, to organizing grand rounds talks, providing case discussion lectures, or being a faculty presence at morning report, to recruiting new residents, and talking to applicants about why they should consider Baylor.

### How much of each day is in this role of director?

I have assigned periods for clinical practice, but education is a 24/7 job. You never know when issues with residents will come up, and you have to be available. I like working in that interpersonal way so that advisees know they can come to me.

### What are you responsible for teaching?

I'm responsible for eight second- and third-year medical students at a time as well as about 40 residents. They rotate to different pavilions like the VA hospital and MD Anderson Cancer Center, but when they're at BSLMC, we try to provide as much educational value as possible. For example, we now provide the “night float,” to give trainees more one-on-one learning during night shift. We're also involving more faculty in their day-to-day teaching—including a new session in the simulation lab beginning in 2020.

### What else do you do in terms of education?

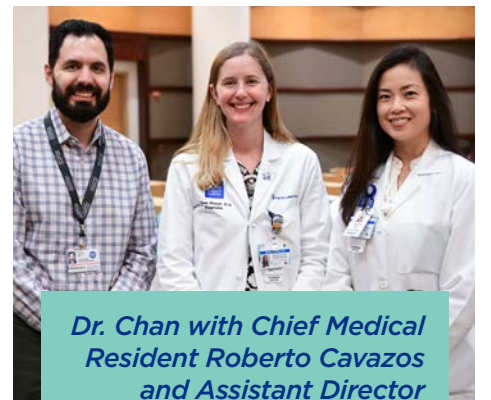
I work closely with Allison Heinen, who is assistant director of medical education, and together we oversee the moonlighting program for residents and fellows to take on extra shifts to do overnight/weekend clinical care. I'm also Vice Chair for the Graduate Medical Education committee at BSLMC. We are also helping to implement improved transitions in care. We work on evaluations for residents and interns—to ensure they have positive experiences and are engaged in education. People have very positive experiences at Baylor, and we want to keep it that way.

### Is this the right path for you?

Clinical service is very direct, whereas medical education lets me indirectly affect the care of even more patients. I don't think I could give up taking care of patients entirely to focus on education, I think you need that to maintain the correct focus, but I really love the balance that I have right now.



DR. GALANT CHAN



Dr. Chan with Chief Medical Resident Roberto Cavazos and Assistant Director Allison Heinen

“People have very positive experiences at Baylor, and we want to keep it that way.”

# CARING IN ACTION



## GOING THE EXTRA MILE—LITERALLY



DR. AHMED AWAN

It's a good day when the transplant team gets a donated organ; it's a great day when two patients have the opportunity to receive a transplant. This fall, one patient's transplant was rejected for medical reasons, so when a call for a second organ came through, making the transplant happen became a priority for the team. **Dr. Ahmed Awan, Assistant Professor, Nephrology,** was on call when the word came in. The transplant coordinators had been calling for 3 hours but were unable to reach the recipient. The coordinator said if the patient didn't respond in the next 30 minutes, the

donation would have to go to the next person on the waiting list. Dr. Awan knew he had to go the extra mile.

He called 911 and asked them to check at the patient's address, but they told him it would be 2 hours before they could make the visit. Dr. Awan saw that the patient only lived 15 miles away, and he thought maybe I can get there.

Upon arriving, he discovered that he was at the home of the man's sister. The patient had been living between his two sisters' homes. The patient's sister gave Dr. Awan the proper phone number. Dr. Awan told the patient, who had just been abruptly awoken, "Call this number right now. You only have 5 minutes to check in."

The patient was able to arrive at the hospital that night and got a kidney transplant early next morning. Dr. Awan saw the man recently for his post-surgery checkup. His new kidney is working perfectly. He is freed from dialysis and doing well.

**Dr. Rajeev Ragahavan, Associate Professor, Nephrology, and Director of the Scott Street Renal Center,** recommended Dr. Awan for the Power of Professionalism Award, an honor rightly deserved.

“Call this number right now. You only have 5 minutes to check in.”

# CARING IN ACTION



## A CHANCE ENCOUNTER LEADS TO A FLOURISHING DIABETES CLINIC

**Dr. Madhuri Vasudevan, Assistant Professor in the Section of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism,** is the Director of the Diabetes Clinic at MEDVAMC. She had planned a career in interventional cardiology but, during residency, she met a young patient who had developed end-stage heart failure. "I remember thinking, what was it that got her to this point? Do I deal with the end-stage disease or could I envision a life helping her not get to that point?" So she switched to endocrinology.

### Several individuals inspired that choice:

- Her parents, Drs. Nalini and Arun Mukhodpadhyay, who instilled in her a love of caring for another person
- Her brother-in-law, **Dr. Ashok Balasubramanyam** who, she says, was contagious with his love of endocrinology
- A family friend whose death from diabetes had a major impact on her life

As a fellow, Dr. Vasudevan began to appreciate the complexity of bridging the gap between outpatient and inpatient care. "We have to remember to slow down and educate these patients the way we would our own family. And when I see a person with diabetes, I first look at what's going on in their life." For example, one patient with out-of-control diabetes had just lost her husband. "That tells me that the only thing this person needs from me right now is support. She knows what she needs to do, and she'll get back there. The goal is how to get her better, not to create a conflict between the two of us."

### Improvements at the VA

Dr. Vasudevan's first job at the VA was to create an e-consult program for diabetes. She devised a two-part response note in both medical and non-medical terminology and recommended printing a copy for the patient, for the refrigerator, and the caregiver. After 6 months, Dr. Vasudevan's program was the third-most-productive VA e-consult program in the country.

As director of the Diabetes Clinic, Dr. Vasudevan also:

- Created a referral program with the ophthalmology program
- Formed the insulin pump clinic, growing its users from 20 to 350 patients
- Started a daily educational program and a telehealth program
- Joined the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, which educates physicians about nutrition and inflammatory/non-inflammatory effects of certain foods
- Became a champion for the MOVE! program

Part of Dr. Vasudevan's long-term vision is to develop a comprehensive program to help people with chronic inflammatory conditions and offer services in anti-inflammatory nutrition.



DR. MADHURI VASUDEVAN

### DR. VASUDEVAN

- Was a competitive Highlands dancer
- Also performed traditional Indian dancing
- Attended Rice University, University of Texas at Houston and Baylor College of Medicine
- Went into labor while rounding with Dr. Marco Marcelli



MEDVAMC Diabetes Clinic staff

“We have to remember to slow down and educate these patients the way we would our own family.”



# NEW LEADERS



DR. IVAN ROSAS

## DR. ROSAS

- Was born in Bogotá, Colombia
- Conducted research at the National Institutes of Health
- Is passionate about fibrosis

We welcome two new Section Chiefs: **Dr. Ivan Rosas** for Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine and **Dr. Aanand Naik** for Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine.

**Dr. Ivan Rosas** trained at the University of Miami, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Johns Hopkins Hospital before returning to the NIH to conduct a 3-year research fellowship. After encountering a young patient who died from lung fibrosis, Dr. Rosas began studying the disease, and he has been working in that field since 2000.

Dr. Rosas' early studies led him to associating biomarkers with clinical presentations. He was part of the group who first identified a blood marker associated with the development of pulmonary fibrosis; that biomarker is still the strongest known molecular signal of fibrosis development in the blood.

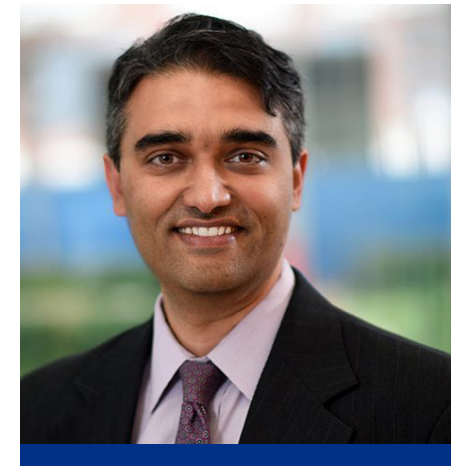
Dr. Rosas employs advanced technologies such as next-generation sequencing of individual cells to identify new biomarkers and pathways that could contribute to the disease. One such pathway signals the body to protect against fibrosis and inhibit scar production. This naturally occurring phenomenon is being used as a potential drug that mimics the effect of the signaling to protect the body. Dr. Rosas branched into clinical trials to identify new pulmonary fibrosis treatments. These trials identified two new drugs that are now FDA-approved.

Dr. Rosas credits his success, in part, to strong mentorship, and he welcomes the opportunity as the new Section Chief to carry on that tradition. His vision for the Section is to continue to provide excellent care, provide a strong education resource to learners in the Department of Medicine, and further develop and increase the amount of sponsored research.

"There are challenges and opportunities associated with the mission we've set forth in this changing medical environment." We would like to move forward, he says, to provide optimal care to patients while expanding and excelling in scholarly activity and research.

"There are challenges and opportunities associated with the mission we've set forth in this changing medical environment."

# NEW LEADERS



DR. AANAND NAIK

## DR. NAIK

- Was born in Chicago and grew up in Houston
- Bonded with his wife at Parkland Memorial Hospital over their love of Doctor Who
- Has three teenage sons

**Dr. Aanand Naik** has been with Baylor since 2004. He attended medical school and completed an internal medicine residency and geriatrics fellowship at University of Texas Southwestern. Then he participated in the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program at Yale University before being recruited to Baylor College of Medicine.

He has straddled his practice between working to improve the quality of care through the Department of Medicine's Health Services Research (HSR) Section and caring for the elderly at MEDVAMC.

He has held leadership roles at the HSR Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness & Safety (IQuEst) since 2010. In 2014, he became the director of the Coordinating Center for the national VA Quality Scholars Program, which annually trains 60 fellows and 20 to 30 faculty in quality improvement scholarship across ten VA centers and the partner program in Toronto. Under his guidance, the group developed the curriculum, taught lessons, performed program evaluations, and held annual national conferences. Dr. Naik also was selected as the Department of Medicine's inaugural Vice Chair for Quality Improvement and Innovations in 2017, a role he continued until his successor, **Dr. Mayar Al Mohajer**, took over in January 2020.

Dr. Naik also leads an active research program focused on developing, testing, and implementing models of care for older adults with multiple chronic conditions. He received career development awards from the National Institute of Aging and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Most recently, he served as the program director of the Southeast Texas Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program, a U01 grant program focused on education, training, and program development of age-friendly healthcare systems.

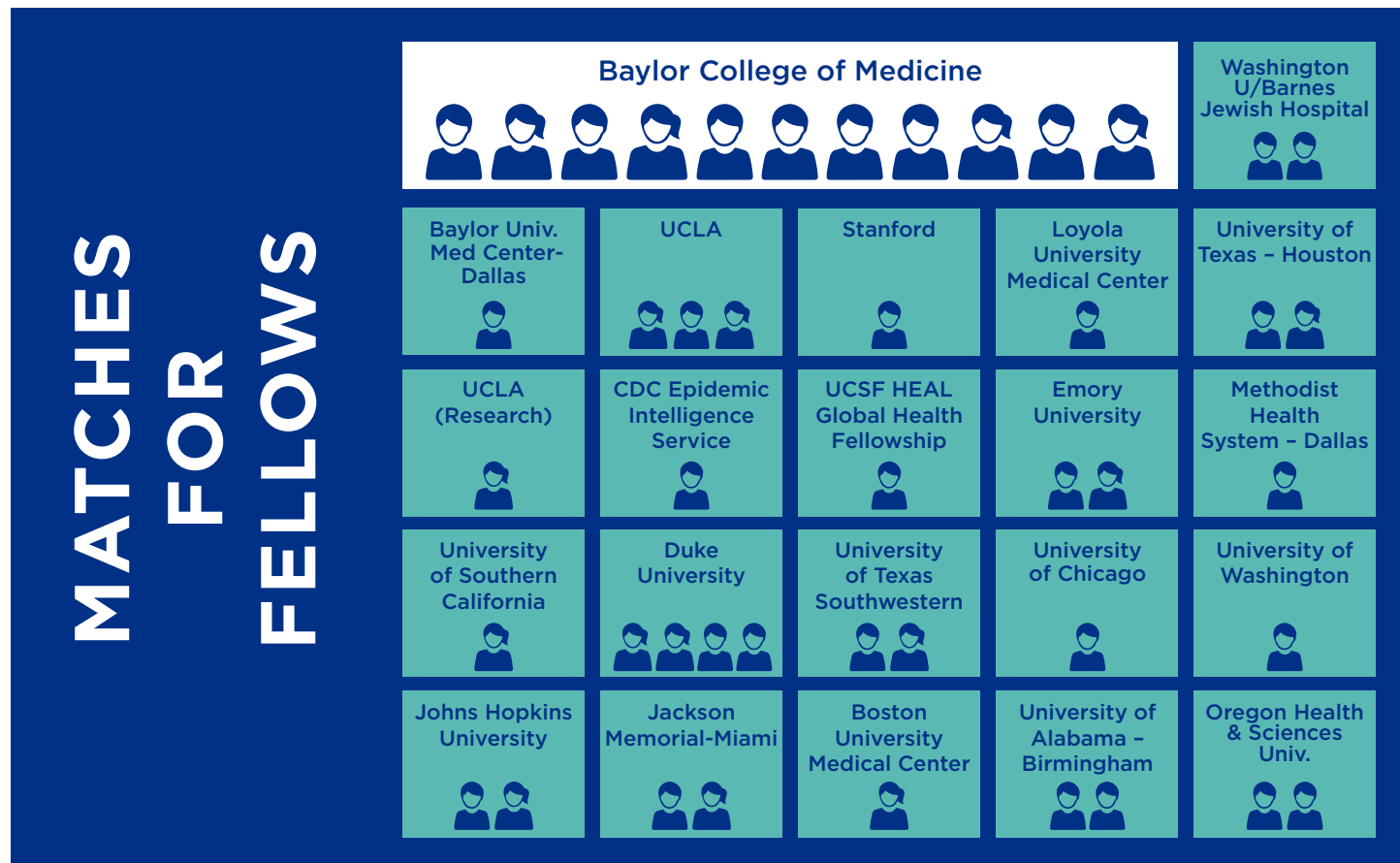
"Geriatrics is a calling," he says, "and I'm honored to be able to lead the Section. It's an important time to be mindful of where the field of geriatrics is going, and Baylor is one of the leading programs in the country." His focus will be on all core areas—clinical, research, and education—as well as program and quality improvement.

"Geriatrics is a calling, and I'm honored to be able to lead the Section of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine."

# IM RESIDENCY PROGRAM

The Internal Medicine (IM) Residency Program continues to be among the best in the country. Its residents participated in more than 84 conferences outside Baylor in 2018-2019 (up from 60 last year) and matched in some of the best fellowship training programs. The program prioritizes giving its residents opportunities to present at national subspecialty meetings, winning state and national championships and awards and earning crucial authorships in high-ranking journals.

The interview season has grown as the number of applicants increases. The IM Residency Program's medicine track—including categorical, preliminary, research track, IM/The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and IM/genetics—received 3,794 applications and interviewed 560 of those applicants. Of these, the program matched 74 interns on March 20. Concurrently, the IM/pediatrics program received 324 applications and interviewed 66 applications, anticipating matching nine interns.



# IM RESIDENCY PROGRAM

## RESIDENCY MATCHES

- Omid Amidi
- Dorothy Pei
- Laura McDermott
- Ama Annor
- Jacob Morgan
- John Cochran
- Jeff Berman
- Michael Katsnelson
- Henry Zheng
- Christopher Chen
- Carl Zehner
- Luis Dlouhy
- Marwah Shahid
- Vince Siebert
- Alexander Farr
- Nico Herrera
- David McCormick
- Will Barwatt (ID/Critical Care)
- Sam Hatfield
- Ellie Chen
- Cynthia Tran
- Cassandra Gandle
- Chiemeziem Eke
- Shawn Gurwara
- Niharika Mallepally
- Parth Patel
- Anna Strasma
- Alexandra Grand
- Abir Khan
- Rafee Talukder
- Khaled Sanber
- Jeff Aldrich
- Sudha Yarlagadda (2018 graduate)
- Christiana Hayward
- Randy Planegger
- Nathan Nowalk
- Ayush Sutaria
- Dilreet Rai
- Ben Moss
- Meredith Ventura
- Cecilia Cai
- Scott Carlson
- Naveed Khanjee
- Eric Deal
- Michael Hughes
- University of California - Los Angeles
- University of Texas - Houston
- Jackson Memorial - Miami
- Boston University Medical Center
- University of Alabama - Birmingham
- Baylor University Med Center - Dallas
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Washington University/Barnes Jewish Hospital
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Oregon Health & Science University
- University of Texas - Houston
- Baylor College of Medicine
- University of California - Los Angeles
- Loyola University Medical Center
- Oregon Health & Science University
- University of Alabama - Birmingham
- CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service
- Duke University
- UCSF HEAL Global Health Fellowship
- UCLA (Research)
- Emory University
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Methodist Health System - Dallas
- Baylor College of Medicine
- University of Southern California
- Washington University/Barnes Jewish Hospital
- Duke University
- Duke University
- University of Texas Southwestern
- University of Washington
- Johns Hopkins University
- Emory University
- Baylor College of Medicine
- University of California - Los Angeles
- Baylor College of Medicine
- University of Chicago
- Jackson Memorial-Miami
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Johns Hopkins University
- Duke University
- University of Texas Southwestern
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Stanford University



# A DOSE OF MEDICINE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE



MICHELLE STEVENSON

**We hope you enjoy our new look and name! We thank Michelle Stevenson, who came up with the winning name, A Dose of Medicine. A little about Michelle:**

**How long have you been at BCM?** *19 years. I started in August 2001 in the Office of the Registrar and became a member of the Department of Medicine in 2015, working as the program coordinator for the Gastroenterology and Geriatric Medicine fellowship programs.*

**What's your favorite thing about working here?** *The people. I've had the pleasure of meeting and working with some incredible people.*

**What do you like to do in your spare time?** *My spare time is spent with my family binge-watching Netflix, reading on my Kindle or in the kitchen cooking up something tasty!*

**What's something unique about yourself that you'd like us to know?** *Nothing particularly unique about me. (We disagree!) I love what I do here at BCM, and if I am of help to someone and can make a small, positive impact in another person's day, that brings me joy.*

Baylor  
College of  
Medicine

THE MARGARET M. AND ALBERT B. ALKEK

DEPARTMENT OF  
MEDICINE

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