

NEWSLETTER

April - June 2021

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Awards, honors, and achievements highlight this quarter's newsletter. Please join me in sending sincere congratulations to our department's Faculty Award winners. They truly make us proud with their commitment to excellence and their dedication to the mission of clinical care, education, and research.



Baylor remains among the top 25 medical schools in the nation at 22nd, according to a new *U.S. News & World Report* ranking. In the primary care category, we ranked number 17, and our Family Medicine Residency Program received a 19th place rating. BCM ranked 56th in the new category of most diverse medical schools.

Our annual "Alumni Happy Hour" was held via Zoom in April. Many alumni logged in to stay informed about the latest happenings in the department. The presentation included information about the family medicine clerkship, electives and preceptorships, the residency program's recruits, Primary Care Update, the Family and Community Medicine Education Endowment, and more.

Be sure to read Dr. Faustinella's essay, "Where are you from?" While the essay is longer than others we have published, Dr. Faustinella's work is thought-provoking and provides another way of looking at the world.



On behalf of the department, I offer my deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Brian Wisnoski, M.D., who [died](#) on June 9. Please keep Brian's family in your thoughts and prayers.

The BCM Employee Assistance Program has resources to help support anyone in need:

- Confidential individual counseling sessions are available immediately (call 713-500-3008 to schedule a session)
- Numerous resources to address grief are free to access at www.mylifevalues.com. (Log in with BCM for both the user name and password, and enter the word *grief* in the search term box).

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roger Zoorob".

Roger Zoorob, M.D., MPH, FAAFP
Richard M. Kleberg, Sr. Professor & Chair

Where are you from?

~ Fabrizia Faustinella, M.D., Ph.D.
Professor



The other day in clinic, one of my residents asked me, with hesitation in his voice, where I was from. He even apologized for asking the question and said that he hoped I wouldn't be offended by that. I gladly answered and asked him about his heritage as well. While he was born and raised in the United States, his parents came from Vietnam, and they maintained close ties with both the local Vietnamese community and the family back home.

I thought it was sad that he would feel awkward and apologetic for asking a question that has always come natural to me, a question I've been asked so many times and was always glad to answer. Standing there, sharing family histories with the resident, memories of me as a child, barely six years old, asking people "Where are you from?" came back to mind.

I grew up in Perugia, a medieval town right in the center of Italy, between Florence and Rome, originally founded by the ancient Etruscans on a high hilltop. The city has always had its fair share of visitors from many foreign countries. Perugia is also the home of one of the oldest medical schools in Europe and the "Universita' per Starnieri," where foreigners from all over the world come to learn Italian. The steps of the Duomo di San Lorenzo and of the Palazzo dei Priori in the city's main square, Piazza 4 Novembre, were always filled with both visitors and locals, congregating to talk and socialize.

I've always been a curious and outgoing child. I wasn't shy about approaching strangers and asking questions. My parents had no concerns about me greeting people of different colors, different races and ethnicities. In fact, they even encouraged it.

When I started medical school, I made friends with students from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and many other countries. While studying and working in Milan and Florence, I was still afforded the opportunity to interact with people from all over the world. The exposure to colleagues and patients alike with different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds continued as I moved to Houston, a city with an international community, where the Harris Health System offers interpretation services in 150 different languages.

It should be easy to understand by now why asking "Where are you from?" or "Where is your family originally from?" have always been spontaneous and natural questions for me, born out of the genuine desire to get to know people better and to connect with them. Why then can questions like these be perceived as rude and as acts of micro-aggression?



Piazza Quattro Novembre in Perugia

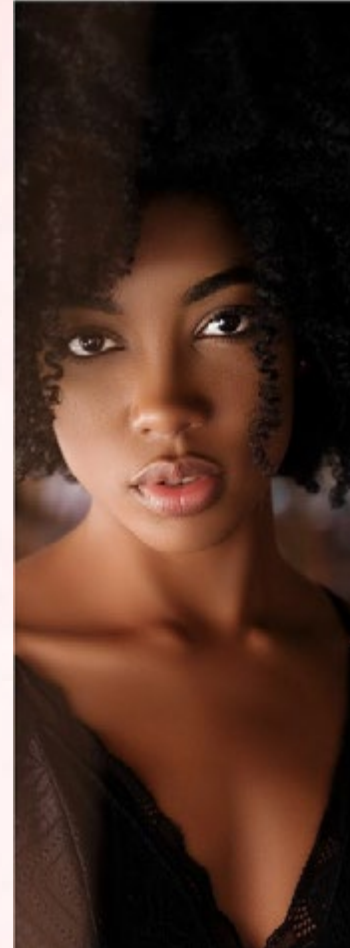
Some time ago, during a residency interview, I asked the candidate where she was originally from. I asked her about her heritage, as she had an accent and very much reminded me of a good friend of mine who was from Iran. She became visibly upset by my question and answered: "I am an American." At that time, I did not understand why my question was met with such resentment. Now I do.



[Umbrella Factory Magazine](#). 2021 Apr;48:43

Unfortunately, I came to realize that these questions are not always asked in the spirit of getting to know people better. To the contrary, they may be used to imply, based on the person's looks alone or accent, that "you don't belong here," putting emphasis on how "being different" is not a good thing and may become grounds for exclusion. When asked these questions, people may sense rejection, marginalization, a challenge to their loyalty as citizens, a challenge to the intrinsic value of their citizenship, which is seemingly lessened and undermined by "looking and sounding different." They may sense an entitlement that suggests implicitly or explicitly that only certain people belong here.

As you may know, I have an accent myself and I've been asked for years the "Where are you from?" or "What's your country of origin?" questions. I've been asked these questions by patients, colleagues, residents, students and total strangers. I've been asked these questions at dinner tables, at job interviews, at workshops and conferences, pretty much everywhere I go and every time I open my mouth even just to say "Good morning", because I can't even make these two short words sound like a native speaker would. There have been a few times when I knew in my heart that those questions were not asked out of sincere curiosity, but out of discriminatory intents. Yes, I have heard people saying, "How can she be a good doctor with such a heavy accent?" as if brains have accents. Nevertheless, it is my belief that we shouldn't stop asking those questions altogether because doing so would diminish the depth of our human interactions, thwarting it and making it less meaningful. We have to acknowledge and understand our differences if we want to fully embrace diversity and multiculturalism. But how can we do that, acknowledge our differences and embrace diversity, if we stop asking those very basic questions? So much of our identity, beliefs and behaviors are tight into our cultural background and our family history that to ignore where we are from becomes yet another form of shallow colorblindness, which we could refer to as cultural-blindness. This creates a society that denies our experiences, rejects our cultural heritage and historic context, and invalidates our unique perspectives.



[Umbrella Factory Magazine](#).
2021 Apr;48:38



[Umbrella Factory Magazine](#). 2021 Apr;48:43

The key is not to ignore skin color, race and ethnicity and where people are from. The key is to be able to see it, respect it and celebrate it. Cultural competency, in fact, doesn't necessarily require belonging to the same culture. Cultural competency requires the awareness that there are people from all over the world, that there are societies and cultures different from ours; it requires awareness of our own bias and prejudice, it requires respect for others, and the acknowledgment of our shared humanity.

Isn't "Where are you from?" or "Where is your family from?" a good question to ask then? How can a citizenship replace all of that, replace our identity and our heritage? How can we say that diversity should be celebrated and then resent those very questions which allow our interlocutors to get to know us better?

I still believe that, while being considerate of people's sensitivities and aware of the complexity of the issue, these questions are a good step towards successful interaction with people who are culturally different and towards a deeper understanding of diversity and the true celebration of it.

If you are interested in writing an essay for this column, please submit your thoughts to [Dr. Zoorob](#). He is interested in sharing what's on your mind.



Maribel Mosqueda started her healthcare career over ten years ago and joined FCM in July 2017. She and her husband, a combat veteran and first responder, have a son, Daniel, with a congenital heart defect. As you may imagine, accepting that there is no cure was extremely difficult. It was then that Maribel became passionate about prevention. She focuses her attention on diseases that can be prevented - in honor of those who do not have that option.

In that vein, Maribel's first assignment was Project Manager of the Women's Access Project Houston (WAPH), a collaborative effort between FCM and the Santa Maria Hostel and the Houston Area Community Services, Inc. She enjoys projects like this that support historically underrepresented populations so she can witness the impact on individuals in need.

Maribel is an artist at heart, and she expresses her creativity by painting "kindness rocks" with Daniel. The two of them leave the painted stones on the trails near her home. Those out for a walk are often surprised and brightened when they come upon the Mosquedas' handiwork.



Rounding out the family unit are three matipoos, Bravo, Ranger, and Delta. Yes, her husband was responsible for naming their dogs!



STAFF spotlight

Maribel Mosqueda, MPA/HCA



Clark Faculty Service Award

Honors Exemplary Service
with Professionalism

Yasmeen Quadrei, M.D.



Master Clinician Award

Honors Outstanding Contributions
to the Clinical Mission at the Highest Level

Fareed Khan, MBBS, FAAFP



Star Faculty Award

Honors Excellence in Patient Care

Kenneth Barning, M.D.; Hammad Mahmood, M.D.; Thomas Porter, M.D.; Joanne Atkinson, M.D.



Early Career Faculty Award

Honors Excellence in Patient Care

Peter Jian, M.D., FAAFP



HHS Crystal Award

Congratulations to **Carmella Caldwell, M.D.**, on receiving the prestigious and coveted Crystal Award, which honors providers with the highest patient satisfaction performance during the quarter. Dr. Caldwell received the award from Harris Health System (HHS) CEO, Dr. Esmail Porsa, and she was recognized before the Harris Health Board of Trustees. Her 100% score is even more impressive because this is a system-wide award across all specialties.

Our providers listed below scored greater than the 95th percentile.



Diana Atwal, M.D.



Samuel Willis, M.D.



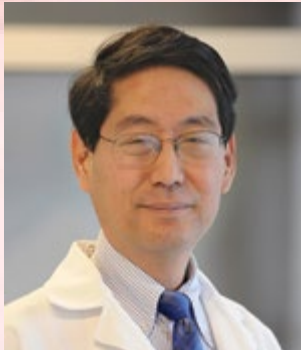
Minal Patel, M.D.



Malvika Juneja, M.D.



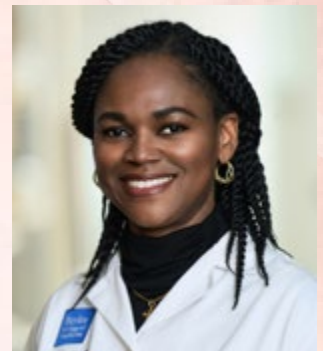
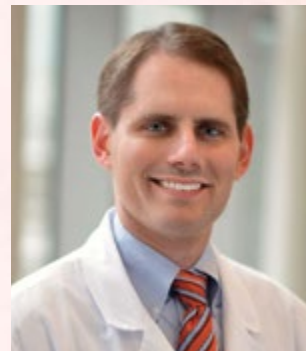
Jason Buchanan, M.D.



Norton Rose Fulbright Faculty Excellence Award

Honors Excellence in Educational Research

William Huang, M.D.



Norton Rose Fulbright Faculty Excellence Award

Honors Excellence in Teaching and Evaluation

Rashmi Rode, M.D.; Brian Wisnoski, M.D.; Jennifer Okoh, MBBS, MPH



Residency Graduation

The Family Medicine Residency graduation took place at the Houston Aquarium in June. Hamming it up for the camera are the 2021 graduates. We wish you continued success in the next phase of your career,

Congratulations! We will miss you.

2021-23 Master Teacher Fellowship Program

Rashmi Rode, M.D., was selected to join the upcoming Master Teacher Fellowship cohort. Congratulations on this honor!

The primary aim of the MTFP is to enhance the educational mission of the College by improving the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of chosen faculty.



America's Essential Hospital's Gage Awards

At America's Essential Hospitals' Vital 2021 Conference in June, Thomas Porter, M.D., received the prestigious Gage Award Honorable Mention in the Population Health category for Strawberry Health Center's Food Rx Program. The awards recognize members for implementing successful improvement projects; spread best practices and innovative programs to other organizations; and support our research, policy, and advocacy work by sharing stories of members' success with external audiences.

Only two entries are selected for each category from submissions from around the country. Congratulations, Dr. Porter and all participants at Strawberry!

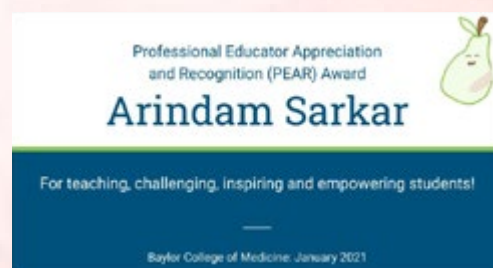


Professional Educator Appreciation and Recognition (PEAR) Award

Arindam Sarkar, M.D., was named a PEAR Award winner in April.



"Dr. Sarkar was a great teacher, and went above and beyond my expectations to teach advanced strategies in Family Medicine, such as motivational interviewing, adjusting my interviews based on patient's expectations, and talking about ideas he has to improve patient medication compliance. He was very supportive, and was very eager to teach me."





Annette Li, M.D., was selected to participate in TAFP's yearlong leadership development program to equip family doctors with the skills they need to lead their physician groups, health care systems, academic institutions, community organizations, and professional societies.

Dr. Li is currently participating in the interactive sessions, didactic lectures, case presentations, multimedia presentations, and small group breakouts.



Congratulations to **Kenneth Barning, M.D.**, who was elected to an at-large position on the Student Services Committee (formerly the Student Affairs Committee).

Giovanna Carroll, MA, MPA, LPC, recently completed the arduous task and received full licensure by the Texas State Board of Professional Counselors. Requirements are:

- Bachelor and Masters degrees in Psychology
- Pass LPC and Jurisprudence exams
- 1,500 hours direct contact with clients with DSM diagnosis
- 1,500 hours indirect administrative counseling setting
- 1 hour a week of supervision under licensed LPC for min. of 18 months

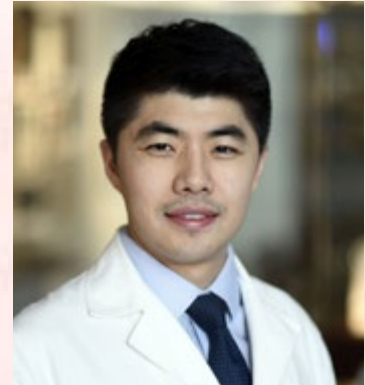


Anjali Aggarwal, M.D., served as judge of posters, presentations, and abstract reviews at TEACH-S (Texas Educators Academics Collaborative for Health Professions-Southeast) Educational Symposium and at the 62nd Annual National Student Research Forum (NSRF) at UTMB in Galveston (May 2021).



In April, **Peter Jian, M.D.**, contributed to the Momentum Blog's ["What is the importance of BMI?"](#)

"BMI is not always an accurate measure for weight and health, because it does not account for muscle mass, gender, ethnicity or menopausal status," said Dr. Jian. While BMI has limitations, "it can be used to measure health trends over time."



Monica Prado, M.D., participated in the *Telemundo Houston News* virtual forum on COVID-19 vaccinations on May 27. Dr. Prado was joined by Harris Health colleagues Dr. Max Quintana and Ana Aguillon.

The panelists did an incredible job representing both Harris Health and Baylor College of Medicine by contributing to the ongoing education of our community on the importance of COVID-19 vaccinations.

In ["Vaping and mental health: What's the connection?"](#) **Namrata Walia, M.D.**, reports that 19.6% of high schoolers and 4.7% of middle school students currently use e-cigarettes. Nicotine dependence has been associated with impulsivity, mood disorders, anxiety, suicidality, and depression.

The essay was published on BCM's Momentum Blog in May.



Irvin Sulapas, M.D. has advice for those attending [sporting events](#) during the age of COVID-19.

"When attending sporting events with a group, try to sit or stand next to family or friends in your own bubble," Sulapas said. "We still have to be smart about attending sports events by social distancing and encouraging everyone to get vaccinated."

Dr. Sulapas was also interviewed for the allrecipes.com article, [11 Sneaky Signs You Might be Dehydrated](#). "If you're feeling thirsty, you are already behind on your hydration."



Larissa Grigoryan, M.D., Ph.D., MSc, and Michael Hansen, M.D., MPH, MS, were interviewed by *Helio Primary Care* for [Meaningless urine culture results prompt clinicians to look for solutions](#). Concerning the high number of contaminated cultures, Dr. Grigoryan suggested the cause could be due to “the high number of obese patients, for whom it’s physically difficult to carry out the midstream clean-catch urine collection technique.” Another explanation might include the low health literacy levels or comprehension of the English language.

Contagion also interviewed Dr. Grigoryan about the problem of urine culture contamination. To watch her interview and hear her take on the issue, please click [here](#).



Fabrizia Faustinella, M.D., Ph.D., was invited to present at the American College of Physicians Texas Chapter Leadership and Advocacy Day in Austin on May 26. Her presentation, ACP-Supported Health Care Bills, covered:

- Expand Health Coverage and Affordability” (HR340);
- Train and Support Frontline Physicians During and After COVID-19 (HR2256);
- Support the Value of Primary and Comprehensive Care (HR 1025);
- Improve Access to Prescription Drugs and Reduce Costs (HR 2163); and
- Expand Access to Telehealth Services and Promote Patient Safety/Privacy (HR 2903).



Her presentation was delivered multiple times during the day to different senators, house representatives, and/or their legislative assistants, including Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, and House Representatives Al Green, Chip Roy, Daniel Crenshaw, Lloyd Doggett, and Lizzie Fletcher.



An ardent writer, Dr. Faustinella reminisced about Martin Luther King, Jr., and his vision in the essay, [Reaching ‘The Promised Land’](#) which BCM Progress Notes Blog published in February.

Monica Alzate, Ph.D., MS, joined Dr. Faustinella at an 8-week Writers Workshop developed and implemented by Inprint, Houston’s premier literary arts institution. The program, “Race, Resistance, and Resilience,” was offered free to all employees of BCM, UT Health, and Harris Health. Students learned writing techniques and composed different pieces throughout the workshop. During week 9, they participated in a public, virtual reading of their selected work. Dr. Faustinella’s was titled “Human Remains” and Dr. Alzate’s, “Strangers.”

For those interested, please check the [Inprint website](#).

WELCOME

Jessica Garcia, D.O., received her medical degree from the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences in Kansas City, Missouri. She was trained at the Christus Spohn Family Medicine Residency Program at Texas A&M. Dr. Garcia practices at Cypress Health Center.



Esthefania Ponce Cobos is a Medical Assistant II with the Baylor Medicine Group Practice. Esthefania comes to us with three years of experience serving patients with a leadership position in her last role. Esthefania's work location is at Kirby Clinic.

Erica Fielder is a Medical Assistant II with the Baylor Medicine Group Practice. Before joining Baylor, Erica was a Medical Assistant with Village Medical and came to us with over eight years of experience in the field. Erica's work location is at Kirby clinic.

Brittany Coleman is a Registered Nurse II with the Baylor Medicine Group Practice. Brittany received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in 2018. Brittany came with 2+ years of experience as a nurse in medical surgery and family medicine. Brittany's work location is at Upper Kirby Clinic.

Kimberly Jaimes is a bilingual Medical Assistant I with the Baylor Medicine Group Practice. Kimberly received her Medical Assistant Certificate from Alterius Career College in 2019 and comes to us after working at the Clínica del Sol. Kimberly's work location is at Kirby Clinic.

Chiayuan Lin is a Sr. Research Administrative Associate. She comes to us from Shawcor, LTD in Houston.

Steve Castro is a Medical Assistant I at Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston. Before joining the department, Steve was an MA at Spring Branch Community Health Center.

Kylie Schaper, MPH, joins the department as a Research Operations Associate. Before joining the department, Kylie was a COVID-19 Lab Administrative Lead and Public Health Educator with the Houston Health Department.

Alejandra Arechiga is a bilingual certified medical assistant and came to us from Oncology Consultants as a Medical Assistant II.

Asya Jenkins received her medical assistant certification after attending the College of Health Professions (May 2020). Asya is a Medical Assistant II at the Kirby location.

Nouri Alkassab is a graduate of the Medical Institute of Kentucky (Lexington) and comes to us from the UK Transplant Clinic. Nouri is Medical Assistant I at the Kirby location.



Cofie LE, Hirth JM, Lee JGL. [Social support networks and foreign-birth status associated with obesity, hypertension and diabetes prevalence among 21-30 and 50-70 year old adults living in the San Francisco Bay area](#). *Am J Health Promot*. 2021. May 18:8901171211016320. doi: 10.1177/08901171211016320. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34000826.

Berenson AB, Hirth JM, Chang M. [Prevalence of genital human papillomavirus by age and race/ethnicity among males](#). *Clin Infect Dis*. 2021 May 13:ciab429. doi: 10.1093/cid/ciab429.

Berenson AB, Chang M, Hirth JM, Kanukurthy ML. [Intent to get vaccinated against COVID-19 among reproductive-aged women in Texas](#). *Hum Vaccin Immunother*. 2021; 30:1-9. Doi: 10.1080/21645515.2021.1918994.

Faustinella F. [Where are you from?](#) *Umbrella Factory Magazine*. 2021 Apr:28-43.

Faustinella F. [Forgotten](#). *Hawai'i Pacific Review*. 2021 02 25.

Whitney R, Centrone WA, Hoover SM, Falkenstein K, Levine RS, Harris J, Hazlitt M, Lim CA. [Impact of a collaborative childhood anemia intervention program in Peru](#). *Trop Med Int Health*. 2021 Feb 19. Online ahead of print.

Sarkar A, Aggarwal A, Grigoryan L, Nash S, Mehrotra N, Zoorob R, Huang W. Improving student confidence with electronic health record entry. *PRIMER*. In press



Presentations

Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences (CPPS) Program Mini-Retreat

Apr 2021

Mejia MC, Zoorob R, Mosqueda M, Sarkar P, Hinh K, Levine RS. Initial Outcomes of a Comprehensive Lung Cancer Screening and Tobacco Cessation Program in a Safety-net System. * People's Choice Award for Best Synchronous Poster

Mejia MC, Zoorob R, Levine RS, Mosqueda M, Hinh K, Huang X, Staggers K, Hennekens CH. A Cross Sectional Survey of Smoking Patterns during COVID-19 in a Tobacco Cessation and Lung Cancer Screening Program.

Off Script: Combined BCM Narrative Medicine Program & UTHHealth McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics

Apr 2021

Faustinella F. The Headstone.

Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) Spring 2021 Meeting

Apr 2021

Valentine-King MA, Trautner BW, Zoorob RJ, Germanos G, Salemi JL, Gupta K, Grigoryan L. Prescribing for Recurrent UTIs Often Does Not Align with IDSA Guidelines, Study Finds.

Hansen MA, Matas JL, Willis SE, Danek LC, Katta A, Muldrew K, Zare M, Hudson F, Atmar RL, Chou A, Trautner BW, Grigoryan L. Optimizing Urine Collection Represents an Important Stewardship Opportunity in Primary Care.

Valentine-King MA, Trautner BW, Zoorob R, Germanos G, Salemi JL, Gupta K, Grigoryan L. Analysis of Recurrent Urinary Tract Infection Management in Outpatient Settings Reveals Opportunities for Antibiotic Stewardship Interventions.

American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology (ASCCP) Scientific Meeting

Apr 2021

Hirth JM, Berenson AB, Chang M. Prevalence of Genital Human Papillomavirus by Age and Race/Ethnicity Among Males.



Presentations

UTHealth Research Day

Apr 2021

Walia N, Gonzalez S, Zoorob R. Yoga for Substance Use: A Qualitative Review.

Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM) 2021 Annual Spring Conference

May 2021

Jian P, Sidani M, Juneja M, Zoorob R. Results from an Integrated Multi-disciplinary Weight Management Team for Obesity Management in a Family Medicine Clinic.

Hansen M, Gonzalez S, Zoorob R, MacMaster S. Peer Recovery Support for Minorities with Substance Use Disorders.

Mejia MC, Gonzalez S, Zoorob R, Muppala V, Hennekens C, Levine E, Levine R. Suicide: The Leading Cause of Death in Young American Teenagers.

Levine RS, Levine E, Mejia MC, Muppala V, Gonzalez S, Zoorob R, Hennekens CH, Woods S. Increasing Rates of Suicide in American Youths.

Mejia MC, Levine R, Walia N, Gonzalez S. Trends in United States Opioid Mortality in Non-Hispanic Women of Child Bearing Age.

Mejia M, Levine R, Mosqueda M, Zoorob R, Sarkar P. Preliminary Outcomes of a Comprehensive Lung Cancer Screening and Tobacco Cessation Program in a Safety-net System.

Mejia M, Zoorob R, Gonzalez S, Hennekens CH, Levine R. Facts and Myths about Lung Cancer (LC) and Hepatocellular Cancer (HCC) on the United States (US)-Mexico Border.

Mejia M, Levine R, Walia N, Gonzalez S. Trends in United States Opioid Mortality in Non-Hispanic Women of Child-bearing Age.

American College of Physicians, Texas Chapter Leadership and Advocacy Day

May 2021

Faustinella F. Improving Health Care Access and Primary Care Services by Expanding Medicaid Eligibility.

Texas Public Health Association (TPHA) Annual Education Conference

May 2021

Levine RS, Mejia MC, Gonzalez S, Walia N, Hennekens CH, Zoorob RJ. Texas Schoolchildren are Experiencing Alarming Increases in Firearm-related Mortality.

Levine RS, Mejia MC, Gonzalez S, Walia N, Hennekens CH, Zoorob RJ. Lung Cancer (LC) and Hepatocellular Cancer (HCC) on the United States (US)-Mexico Border: Facts and Myths.



The Family and Community Medicine Quarterly Newsletter is a publication of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine.

To be added to the *Newsletter* email listserve, please email [Joan Newell](#).