

in our family



The alumni newsletter of the University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine and Community Health | Summer 2020

The COVID-19 Pandemic

A Q&A with the DFMCH Incident Response Team

On February 5, 2020, UW Health reported its first case of COVID-19. By March 23, Governor Tony Evers issued a Safer at Home order as cases in Wisconsin topped 400. As positive tests mounted, DFMCH assembled an incident response team to tackle the changing protocols and guidelines to keep our patients and staff safe. In this issue, they share their experiences.

WILLIAM SCHWAB, MD



Interim Chair

What were your greatest challenges?

Seeking to assure common ground among the many segments and people within our department in a context of the sudden inability to gather in person and the need to learn to communicate more effectively through virtual means. This was challenging as we had to adapt to substantial disruptions in our workplace structures,

huge changes in our clinical realm, and major transformations in how we provide education, sustain community health efforts, do research, and maintain the administrative infrastructure of our department.

Where did you find strength and inspiration?

The tremendous support of people in the department. We have nurtured each other through extraordinary times of fear, loss, and change. Our staff, faculty, and learners have shown extraordinary kindness and insight in addition to remarkable professionalism. I am deeply grateful for that.

What have you learned?

Greater comfort in sharing uncertainty. I'm impressed by how willing people are to accept that there may not always be clear answers, but that as long as there is openness and a commitment to integrity we can make good judgements together and move forward.

SANDRA KAMNETZ, MD



Vice Chair for Clinical Care

What were your greatest challenges?

Working at home at warp speed and not being able to see people. It was very hard to make decisions that I was not use to making, like going to war. Not what I planned for when attending medical school.

Where did you find strength and inspiration?

My strength is meditation daily, biking and gardening to get away from the computer.

What have you learned?

That this large organization can change on a dime—it never did before. I was glad I had been working with our new service chiefs. Without them, it would have been impossible.

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and Community Health
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the summer issue of *In Our Family*. I'm honored to serve as interim chair for the DFMCH during this unprecedented time. In

this issue, you'll read about how we came together to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and how we coped with the sudden loss of our own Dr. Beth Potter and her husband, Robin Carre. The losses of freedoms and family often made it hard to see the bright spots, but there are many. 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of DFMCH serving the people of Wisconsin. It will not be marked with keynote speakers, picnics and hugs from old friends—at least not at this time— but it will be remembered as a year that highlighted our strengths. During a year of immense challenges, our physicians, clinic and administrative staff worked alongside our education, research and community health teams to fulfill our vision to inspire health and wellness in patients, communities, and ourselves.

William Schwab, MD

Interim Chair, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

News Briefs

Dr. Sarina Schragger Inducted into AOA

Sarina Schragger, MD, MS, was inducted into Alpha Omega Alpha, the national medical honor society. A lifelong honor, membership in the society confers recognition for a physician's dedication to the profession and art of healing.



Dr. Melissa Stiles receives STFM Physician Advocate Award

Melissa Stiles, MD, received the 2020 Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM) Physician Advocate Award. The award honors STFM member(s) for outstanding work in political advocacy at the local, state, or national level.



Three DFMCH Physicians Selected for the 2020 UW Health Physician Leadership Development Program

Drs. Nicole Bonk, Ronni Hayon and Jeff Huebner were selected for the 2020 UW Health Physician Leadership Program. They were chosen from a robust applicant pool comprised of 60 well-qualified candidates and joined 22 other colleagues for the 2020 program. This prestigious educational opportunity provides the skills to lead teams within an academic medical center, implement institutional strategies and meet future challenges in academic medicine.



More news at: fammed.wisc.edu/news

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Remembering Beth Potter

Mourning the loss of our friend and colleague

On March 31, 2020, the DFMCH lost our colleague and friend, Dr. Beth Potter. Our sadness and shock at this loss is profound. We honor the passion and commitment she brought to the health of her patients and her fellow health care professionals. We also grieve the loss of her husband, Robin Carre, whose life was claimed by the same tragedy.

A physician at the Access Community Health Centers Wingra Family Medical Center, Potter also served as the Medical Director of Employee Health Services for UW Health. She dedicated her career to the health of families, women, and underserved communities, as well as the education of medical students and residents. In addition, she championed initiatives aimed at fostering the wellness of her health care colleagues.

Beth's husband, Robin Carre, PhD, had decades of experience as an educator and coach. He was an adjunct professor of History at Viterbo University and was the coaching director at Regent Soccer Club in Madison. He was an independent educational consultant who guided numerous high school students and their families through the college application process.



Beth Potter, MD, and Robin Carre, PhD

DEVOTED TO PATIENTS

Potter approached the practice of family medicine with tremendous compassion, earning the respect of patients and colleagues alike. Her multilingualism in French and Spanish brought clarity and comfort to the diverse patient population she served.

She took an innovative approach to clinical care, devising new ways to establish trust between providers and patients and to promote health. For example, she helped pilot a program in 2017 that utilized group visits for patients with chronic pain, a practice that addressed both physical health needs and that also connected those living with chronic pain to one another so that they could discuss their experiences and share pain management strategies.

A DEDICATED TEACHER

As the medical director of Employee Health Services for UW Health since 2016, Potter led a team focused on occupational health to address the work-related health needs of UW Health employees. She also was a highly respected medical educator who taught and mentored hundreds of medical students and family medicine residents, many of whom went on to join the departmental faculty. Her work focused on teaching evidence-based medicine, wellness, women's health, and investigating ways in which emerging technologies can be used to advance medical education. Potter is



Beth Potter, MD

remembered by students and residents as a kind mentor who worked to instill the missions of education, research, patient care, and service to society. She led by example, showing with brilliance how to put these ideals into action.

HONORING AND REMEMBERING

The Beth Potter and Robin Carre Memorial Fund was created to honor the lives of Beth and Robin through conservation and scholarship.

The DFMCH hopes to raise \$100,000 for a memorial in the UW Arboretum—a place they both cherished—and residency scholarships. The Beth Potter Scholarship will allow DFMCH residents to attend leadership training that focuses on wellness and resiliency. The Arboretum Memorial will include updates and maintenance to the boardwalk, a bench on one of the Gardner Marsh overlooks, a commemorative tree, and a commemorative stainless steel leaf that will hang from a trellis connecting the Native Plant Garden to Longenecker Gardens.

Please consider donating to the Potter/Carre Memorial Fund. Your generosity will help us honor the vibrant spirit and dedication Beth and Robin brought to all aspects of their lives.

Donate: <https://go.wisc.edu/b66r9h>

STATEWIDE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Baraboo Rural Training Track (RTT)

Internal medicine physician **Danny Sessler, MD**, transitioned the majority of his practice to addiction medicine and will be instrumental in teaching and coaching residents in this area. AODA Counselor **Cheri Wotnoske, CSAC**, will help support further resident training with intake and other addiction medicine focused didactics.



Dr. Danny Sessler



Cheri Wotnoske

Eau Claire Residency Program*

Amy Ludwikowski, MD, received her board certification in addiction medicine. Dr. Ludwikowski is a community staffer in the continuity clinic and provides comprehensive care including obstetrical, well women, newborn, well child, pediatrics, adult, and geriatric care. Program Director **Joan Hamblin** received the 2019 Medical College of Wisconsin Outstanding Medical Student Teacher Award.



Dr. Amy Ludwikowski



Dr. Joan Hamblin

La Crosse Residency Program



Dr. Wesley Fox

Wesley Fox, MD, joined the faculty at Gunderson Health System after completing his residency in the La Crosse Program in June 2019. Dr. Fox practices comprehensive family medicine. The La Crosse program also welcomed its fourth class of residents in July 2019.

* On June 15, 2020, the DFMCH ended its institutional sponsorship of the Eau Claire Residency Program. DFMCH continues as an academic partner of the program which is now part of the Wisconsin Northern and Central GME Collaborative (WiNC) that is supported by UW SMPH and MCW. The final DFMCH resident class graduated from the program on June 26, 2020.



The new class of La Crosse residents started in July 2019. From left: Laura Krueger, MD, Garrett Donaldson, MD, McKenzie Bruce, MD, Martin Erlandson, DO, Mary George, MD, Zacharia Razavi, MD

Lakeland Rural Training Track (RTT)

A successful 2019 match filled the Lakeland program as they prepare to graduate their first class of residents next year. The program has steadily grown to include a more robust Suboxone program and, with the addition of **Lauren Walsh, MD**, a broader OB program.



The Lakeland RTT Class of 2022. From left Phil Zuska, MD, Cherline Lee Walsh, MD, Jazmine Smith, MD, and Jeff Favour, MD

Madison Residency Program

Karyn Cecele, MD, and Kelsey Schmidt, MD, the program's first Rural Health Track residents, are graduating. Both will enter rural practice in Wisconsin. Dr. Schmidt will practice at the Monroe Clinic in Brodhead, WI, and Dr. Cecele will join the Mayo Clinic in Tomah, WI.



Kelsey Schmidt, MD, (left) and Karyn Cecele, MD

Milwaukee Residency Program

Senior Chief **Thomas Harrington, DO**, partnered with the Graduate Medical Education office to arrange substance use disorder training for X-waiver prescribing for all family medicine, internal medicine and obstetrics/gynecology faculty and residents. **Dr. Itamar Gnatt** accepted the inaugural Hyperbaric and Wound Care Fellowship at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center. **Dr. Alice Shallcross** accepted the Global Health Fellowship with Florida State University College of Medicine.



Faculty and residents from the Aspirus Wausau Family Medicine Clinic look forward to working with residents from MCW



Dr. Thomas Harrington



Dr. Itamar Gnatt



Dr. Alice Shallcross

Waukesha Residency Program

Jennifer Zeman, MD (Waukesha '19), joined the Waukesha program as a new faculty member. Dr. Zeman is a full-spectrum family physician with an interest in women's health and obstetrics.



Dr. Jennifer Zeman

Wausau Residency Program

The National Resident Matching Program approved the application for the Medical College of Wisconsin-Central Wisconsin/Aspirus Wausau Family Medicine Innovative Curriculum (AWFM IC). AWFM IC is designed to immerse one second-year Medical College of Wisconsin-Central Wisconsin (MCW-CW) student per year into the community-based Wausau Family Medicine Residency Program.

Statewide Osteopathic Collaborative

Amanda Schoenfuss, DO, (Wausau '19) and **Elizabeth Abbas, DO**, joined the teaching faculty. Dr. Schoenfuss practices at Aspirus Family Health Specialists in Wausau. Dr. Abbas practices at Gunderson Health System in La Crosse where she is also a site director.



Dr. Elizabeth Abbas



Dr. Amanda Schoenfuss

Fellowships

Bruce Barrett, MD, PhD, (see page 6) accepted the role of Primary Care Research Fellowship director in December. He was joined by Associate Directors **Elizabeth Cox, MD, PhD**, Department of Pediatrics, and **David Feldstein, MD**, Department of Medicine, strengthening the fellowship's connection to other primary care departments at UW.



Dr. Elizabeth Cox



Dr. David Feldstein

Research at DFMCH

Moving forward with alumnus Bruce Barrett, MD, PhD

Most people have probably thought more about research in the past few months than ever before. As scientific research guides us through a global pandemic, we are learning the important role it plays in our daily lives. The University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine and



Community Health (UW DFMCH) established a research division in 1984 to generate new knowledge to improve the health of individuals, families and communities. Thirty-six years later, Bruce Barrett, MD, PhD, took the reins as the DFMCH vice chair for research to lead the team forward. Dr. Barrett's role includes oversight of research project planning, looking at funding opportunities, grant proposal and manuscript review, and budget and staffing needs.

THE KEY IS FUNDING

In FY19, the DFMCH Research Team received \$8.8 million dollars in grant awards to support research in fields including addiction and substance misuse prevention and treatment, infectious disease surveillance, and systems-engineering approaches for improving ambulatory care. These types of grants, awarded through federal, state and private agencies, are the backbone of a robust research program. As vice chair, Dr. Barrett supports researchers through grant review and submission as they seek funding. It's a role he is familiar with through his own research pursuits. "It is one thing to be passionate about research and another to get it funded," said Barrett. "I'm grateful to work

with such a dedicated team of researchers, grant managers and administrators who share a passion for primary care research and work together to get these projects off the ground."

A PASSION FOR RESEARCH

Dr. Barrett is committed to doing research that reflects his values as an engaged citizen with interests in environmental health, equity, and human rights. He's currently site lead and a co-investigator on two studies: Strategies to Assist with Management of Pain (STAMP) and Enhancing Antibiotic STewardship in Primary Care (EAST-PC).

The STAMP study compares ways to help patients with chronic low back pain who use opioids to reduce pain and improve quality of life. Study participants learn mindfulness meditation or cognitive behavioral therapy as alternative ways to manage pain.

The EAST-PC study—a collaboration with the University of Georgia and Georgetown University—studies antibiotic use in acute cough illness (bronchitis). These researchers have recently pivoted to a study aimed at predicting outcomes of patients diagnosed with COVID-19, aiming to help decide whether they can go home, need close follow-up, or hospitalization. Several researchers from across the US have joined the study, whose goal is to develop and validate novel prediction models for progression to ICU care and mortality.

Finally, Dr. Barrett is perhaps most proud of his work with the Mindful Climate Action (MCA) project. MCA is an educational and behavior change program designed to help people decrease their carbon footprints

while enhancing their personal health and happiness. "Climate changes pose more risks to health than anything ever has," said Barrett. "People can live healthier lives while being more sustainable. Riding your bike instead of driving can improve your cardiovascular health and reduce your carbon footprint. Eating more plant-based foods and less meat and dairy is good for you and good for the planet. Reducing your purchasing and energy consumption will help both your pocketbook and our collective aspirations for sustainability."

MINDFUL CLIMATE ACTION



Mindful Climate Action trainings consist of eight weekly, 2 to 2.5 hour group sessions, complemented by daily mindfulness practice focused on concepts, experiences, and behavioral choices relevant to carbon

footprint and climate change. The Mindful Climate Action program will help people drive less, walk and bicycle more, reduce household energy use and overconsumption, and eat less meat and more plant-based foods. The goal is to improve health and happiness while reducing carbon footprint.

This behavioral training wellness program combines mindfulness-based meditation practice with college-level education on climate change, energy use, and carbon footprint. Mindfulness research has substantially grown over the last decade, indicating that mindfulness interventions have great potential to effect behavior change, but the connection between mindfulness and carbon footprint has yet to be tested.

More information:

<https://www.fammed.wisc.edu/mca/>

KIRSTEN RINDFLEISCH, MD



Associate Vice Chair for
Clinical Care

What were your greatest challenges?

The pace of change, the volume of information and the degree of uncertainty were certainly the greatest challenges for clinical care in the early weeks of the pandemic. As we've transitioned into a more chronic phase, finding updated approaches to effective communication has become an important area for focused improvement.

Where did you find strength and inspiration?

First, the memory of Beth and imagining how she would maintain focus on helping patients, communities, providers and staff through this crisis. Then, the incredible dedication, integrity and compassion that I saw every hour of every day from the staff and providers in our clinics.

What have you learned?

Our organization and others across the US can be incredibly nimble and innovate rapidly in the face of great need. I hope we can continue to leverage this terrible opportunity to transform our healthcare system to make it work better for everyone, especially communities where health is so dramatically affected by racism, poverty and other systemic factors.

ILDI MARTONFFY, MD



Residency Program
Director

What were your greatest challenges?

Making sure we were
doing what was best

for everyone – colleagues, patients – in the face of rapidly changing information and local and national public health guidelines. Many times, we did not have the option to wait for more or “better” information and just had to decide and act on things.

Where did you find strength and inspiration?

A triathlon coach I know responds with “and we can do hard things” when someone says something is hard. Our healthcare colleagues in places like New York have been working more grueling hours making much tougher decisions than we have had to make. As for inspiration, witnessing the kindness COVID has brought out in so many people in our community has been amazing.

What have you learned?

So, so much. Probably the most important thing is the power of communication even when we don't have all the answers. People need to and want to know what is going on, even when it is changing hour by hour.

STACEY LANSING



Administrative
Program Specialist

What were your greatest challenges?

Getting myself up to
speed with clinical

care. My colleagues on the response team are all practicing physicians, and my background is in communications and event planning. They had a common language and shared practical experience to draw from to which I had to orient myself. The upside is that being immersed in their world meant that I learned very quickly. I've always had an interest in medicine, so it was fascinating to get not only a deep dive into the epidemiology of the virus, but a truly comprehensive look at how the pandemic touched every aspect

of our organization from direct patient care to incoming medical students.

Where did you find strength and inspiration?

Knowledge is power. Things are a lot less scary and stressful when you understand what's going on, and knowing that our department and the organization at large were being really proactive and transparent with ever-evolving information instilled a lot of confidence. I was also really impressed by all the people throughout DFMCH that stepped up to make the transition to our new normal as smooth as possible, from the clinic providers that were willing to go where they were needed most to the staff who are reaching out remotely to make sure people feel connected through things like shared lunches over video and virtual gratitude cards.

What have you learned?

So much! Serving on our response team was a crash course in crisis planning, health care administration, and all the complex workings of our department. I feel like I got five years' worth of experience in five weeks. I also learned that I could offer a unique viewpoint from a patient and community perspective – it's important to have different voices at the table when dealing with complex issues.

Community Resources

The DFMCH Office of Community Health created a COVID-19 resource page recognizing that in times of crisis, our most vulnerable patients are likely to become even more vulnerable. The page includes:

- Resources to support our patients and community members
- Educational resources: impact of COVID-19 on our most vulnerable populations
- Law, policy, and public health recommendations and resources
- Stop the stigma
- Sharing our stories

Visit: <https://www.fammed.wisc.edu/community/covid19/> to learn more.



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