

in our family



The alumni newsletter of the University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine and Community Health | **Spring/Summer 2025**

A Unique Journey

Katharine Greenfield's path to family medicine.

For **Katharine Greenfield, MD**, her journey to becoming a family medicine physician was anything but conventional. Growing up in an Alaskan fishing town with parents deeply connected to the outdoors – her father was a fisherman, and her mother worked for the forest service – Greenfield's earliest memories are of the sea and the forest. At 2 years of age, she was having adventures as a deckhand, setting the stage for a life intertwined with nature. After high school, Greenfield initially pursued a biology degree but found herself more engaged in college rowing than academics. "I spent more hours on the water than at the library, and as a result, I didn't have the grades to continue," she remembers.

Although still intrigued by biology and the possibility of a career helping others, Greenfield wasn't ready to commit to a lengthy academic path. She enrolled in a technical college in Bellingham, Washington, where

she explored small-appliance repair and electrician courses, eventually attending a heavy-equipment school in Portland, Oregon. Despite the challenges of these male-dominated fields, Greenfield thrived and eventually moved to Reno, Nevada, to work and live near her aunt. For a decade, she honed her problem-solving skills and developed meticulous attention to detail while running heavy equipment, grading construction sites, and eventually working for a land-survey company. However, the land-survey profession was changing and would require a four-year degree to advance within the field.

"When I realized I would need a degree to progress beyond where I was in the field, I realized that I still wanted to pursue the science education I had abandoned all those years ago," shares Greenfield. "I wanted to combine my love for science with my passion for helping others and make a more direct impact on people's lives."



Dr. Katharine Greenfield

This led her to return to undergraduate studies in biochemistry and molecular biology, this time at the University of Nevada; the transition culminated in realizing that her ultimate desire was to pursue medical school. Though she was then a single parent, Greenfield thrived in the uni-

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest

issue of *In Our Family*.

Our cover story features Dr. Katharine Greenfield, a

dedicated physician who shares her unconventional path to family medicine.

In this issue, you'll also find highlights from several of our statewide programs, including updates from DFMCH-sponsored initiatives and our academic partner programs.

Finally, learn more about Baraboo RTT Program alumnus Dr. Hans Elzinga and the mentors he credits with shaping his long career, as well as DFMCH faculty member Dr. Mark Beamsley, recipient of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's Dean's Teaching Award.

As always, we invite you to stay in touch—we'd love to hear from you!

David Rakel, MD

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

News Briefs

Dr. Alexander Milsap Named Medical Director of Inpatient Medicine

Congratulations to Alexander Milsap, MD, clinical assistant professor, on his appointment as medical director of inpatient medicine at UW Health East Madison Hospital. Milsap will continue to strengthen collaborative relationships with nursing leadership, health system leadership, the emergency department, and outpatient providers.



Dr. Jonathan L. Temte Featured in NEJM Clinical Decisions

Congratulations to Jonathan L. Temte, MD, PhD, on being featured in the January 30, 2025, *New England Journal of Medicine* "Clinical Decisions" interactive feature. In this segment, two experts are presented with a case vignette and assigned opposing viewpoints. For the case titled "Deciding Whether to Accept an Unvaccinated Child into a Pediatric Practice," Temte argues for declining the patient unless she receives the MMR vaccine.



Dr. Ravi S. Hirekatur is Family Medicine's April Cover Artist

Congratulations to Ravi S. Hirekatur, MD, MS, on having his photograph featured on the cover of the April 2025 issue of *Family Medicine*. The image—a dewdrop-covered spider web—symbolizes a family physician at the center of a web of specialists, patients, and communities. *Family Medicine* is the official journal of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine and publishes original scholarship on education in family medicine and primary care.



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versity setting that had once daunted her. Medical school was soon within reach, but she did not feel she had the flexibility afforded to students at a different stage in life.

“As a single parent with young children, I faced the additional challenge of trying to get into medical school without disrupting my family’s life in Reno,” adds Greenfield, a fact that limited her application pool.

After being waitlisted twice at the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, Greenfield broadened her scope and took a leap with her family. That leap led her to the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), where she found her “true home.”

Upon earning her medical degree from the SMPH, she chose the Medical College of Wisconsin’s Fox Valley Family Medicine Residency Program in Appleton, Wisconsin. This was a natural fit, as she felt an immediate connection during her residency interview and appreciated the varied experiences the program offered. “In Wisconsin, I felt an unparalleled sense of community and support for my family,” Greenfield notes.

Initially envisioning a practice in a town smaller than Madison or Appleton, Greenfield found the perfect environment for her personal and professional life at the UW Health Sun Prairie Clinic. According to Greenfield, her diverse background gives her a unique perspective in her medical practice, helping her relate to older patients and blue-collar workers, and understanding the implications of missing work and living paycheck to paycheck. Her empathy allows her to connect with a wide variety of patients and helps her be a compassionate, effective physician.

Greenfield is passionate about women’s health, focusing on issues



Greenfield (left) and her daughter, Nicole Kunkler, at the World Jigsaw Puzzle Competition in Valladolid, Spain.

like birth control and menopause. She also is interested in health informatics, having received Epic Systems builder training and serving as an alpha user for several artificial intelligence (AI) pilot programs at UW Health. These technologies, she believes, can significantly improve the ease of practice and reduce cognitive burden for physicians.

“Integrating AI technology into health care can transform the ways we deliver care while improving patient outcomes,” she explains. Greenfield’s advice to new students pursuing family medicine is to find something they are passionate about within and outside the field. She emphasizes the importance of work-life balance and encourages students to cultivate and enjoy their interests. “Balancing your professional and personal life is crucial for long-term success and happiness,” she advises.

Outside of medicine, Greenfield enjoys spending time outdoors, traveling, and doing puzzles – a hobby she

shares with her daughter. They have participated in multiple speed-puzzling events, including the World Jigsaw Puzzle Championship in Spain. Greenfield still enjoys rowing and has helped teach learn-to-row courses in the summer at Mendota Rowing Club. She draws on her rowing experiences from her undergraduate years to instill teamwork and mental toughness in the medical students she mentors.

Greenfield’s journey from the rugged outdoors to the medical field exemplifies her resilience and adaptability. Her diverse experiences not only enrich her medical practice but also serve as an inspiration to her patients and colleagues. By blending her love for nature, science, and helping others, she has carved out a unique and impactful path in family medicine, showing that unconventional routes can lead to extraordinary destinations.

STATEWIDE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Baraboo Rural Training Track (RTT)



The Baraboo Rural Training Track is producing a recruitment video featuring Program Director **Stuart Hannah, MD**. The video will highlight the training program's unique features and also the community of Baraboo.

Madison Residency Program



From left: Drs. Molly Vernon and Kailin Randolph, both PGY-3s at the Verona Clinic, have participated in the gynecology half days at clinic and presented a session on contraceptive management at the Family Medicine Midwest Conference earlier this year.

Over the past year, the UW–Madison Family Medicine Residency Program has advanced clinic-based education across its four sites: Belleville, Northport, Verona, and Wingra. Each clinic is launching a Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), supported by the residency and the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health's Office of Community Health, to enhance the patient experience through direct feedback and collaboration.

PFACs also contribute to quality improvement initiatives as part of the American Board of Family Medicine's Residency Performance Improvement Program, in which residents collaborate with faculty and staff on projects addressing issues such as hypertension and preventive screenings.

Additionally, the program introduced procedure half-days, during which residents learn office-based skills alongside faculty. In 2024–25, gynecology-focused sessions included training in long-acting reversible contraception, endometrial biopsies, and colposcopies. Dermatology procedure days will launch next year, further enhancing hands-on learning and reinforcing specialty rotations through a primary care lens.

SSM Health Monroe Residency Program

The Monroe Residency Program celebrated the graduation of its Class of 2025, with all graduates choosing to remain in Wisconsin to serve local communities. This year also marked a milestone: the program increased its complement, welcoming four additional residents and expanding its capacity to train compassionate, community-focused physicians. Educational innovations included integrating virtual reality simulation into didactic sessions, enhancing clinical training through immersive experiences. Residents also demonstrated strong community engagement by volunteering at the Latinx Health Fair, supporting local sporting events, and participating in Green County's National Night Out—fostering connections and promoting wellness throughout the region.

Statwide Osteopathic Collaborative



Briana Krewson, DO (right), demonstrates a technique during the quarterly conference.

This past year was both exciting and productive for the Statewide Osteopathic Collaborative. Each quarterly conference advanced resident education and fostered faculty development, creating a dynamic environment where knowledge was shared, techniques refined, and connections strengthened. A highlight was the annual two-day Fascial Distortion Model course, which drew osteopathic and allopathic professionals from across the state and beyond. The program continued

monthly osteopathic meetings, bringing together alumni, community physicians, faculty, and residents. To join, contact program coordinator Denise.Hix@fammed.wisc.edu.

Additionally, **Jennifer Svarverud, DO**, was named director of curriculum and instruction, and **Rita Henien Bybee, DO**, and **Samantha Lease, DO**, took new roles as statewide osteopathic chief residents.

Fellowships



New fellows: Emily Claypool, PhD (left), and Elizabeth Ver Hoeve, PhD.

Two new fellows, **Emily Claypool, PhD**, and **Elizabeth Ver Hoeve, PhD**, joined the Primary Care Research Fellowship under the T32 research training grant funded by the

Health Resources and Services Administration. **Asma Ali, PhD**, and **David Mallinson, PhD**, graduated from the fellowship and accepted faculty positions in 2024—Ali at the University of Memphis and Mallinson at Rush University. **Miena Hall, MD, IBCLC**, and **Sydney Tan, MD**, graduated in 2025. Hall has accepted a research position with the Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes, while Tan is returning to complete her residency at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. **Laura Prieto, PhD**, completes her second year in fall 2025 and will continue into a third year.

Waukesha Residency Program

Rachael Rainey-Thomas MD, chief resident at the Waukesha Family Medicine residency and graduating PGY-3, delivered a presentation on time management to a standing room only crowd at the STFM National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, in May 2025. She was accompanied by two program faculty: **Aaron Grace, PsyD** and **Simon Griesbach, MD**. The team drew inspiration for the presentation from topics covered at the Wisconsin Chief Resident Retreat hosted by the MCW Department of Family Medicine and Community Health.



From left: Drs. Simon Griesbach, Aaron Grace, and Rachel Rainey-Thomas.

Milwaukee Residency Program



STFM Conference. From left: Drs. Keyonna Taylor-Coleman, Devin Walsh-Felz, Katharine Kelly, Kjersti Knox, Will Lehmann, and Lawrence Moore.

Over the past year, the Aurora Family Medicine Residency Program has made climate and health a central focus of its educational mission. Recognizing the impact of climate change on patient health and health equity, the program has taken active steps to prepare residents to address these challenges. Recently, core faculty and UW alumni attended and presented at the Annual Spring STFM Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Their session, Climate Change, Communication, and Patient Care, explored how to use MOC IV requirements to integrate climate counseling into clinical practice.

As of April 2025, **Anne Getzin, MD**, was appointed medical director of sustainability to lead ongoing climate and health efforts at Aurora Health Care.

Wausau Residency Program

In June 2025, the Wausau Family Medicine Residency established an addiction medicine e-consult service to improve access, provide more timely visits, and offer clinical guidance. Addiction medicine physicians from across the Aspirus system were recruited to respond to e-consults, including **Drs. Adam Clements** and **Thomas Licata** in Wausau, Wisconsin; **Dr. Umar Siddiqui** in Duluth, Minnesota; and **Dr. Kirk Klemme** in Houghton, Michigan. These physicians consult on addictions involving alcohol, opioids, amphetamines, kratom, nicotine, and tianeptine. The service is intended to support clinicians who lack access to addiction medicine resources in their communities.

Mark Beamsley, MD

Dean's Teaching Award Honors Excellence in Education

Dr. Mark Beamsley, director of medical student education in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, has been honored with the prestigious Dean's Teaching Award from the University of Wisconsin (UW) School of Medicine and Public Health. This award recognizes his outstanding contributions to medical education and his lasting impact on students, colleagues, and the broader academic community.

Beamsley's path to medicine began with a childhood fascination with nature and science. "I loved being a medical student," he recalls. "The classes and content were fascinating, and I always enjoyed thinking and talking about medicine." Although academic medicine was not part of his original plan, he found himself drawn to teaching during residency at UW. "I sometimes jokingly think of my work in education as being an accidental tourist," he says. "One opportunity led to another, and eventually to my current role."

MENTORSHIP THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE

Among the many influences on his journey, Beamsley credits **Dr. David Deci**, former director of medical student education, as a pivotal mentor. "David had a wonderful way of connecting with students and colleagues and finding what excites and motivates a person," he shares. "He encouraged me to take on new responsibilities I might have otherwise shied away from, and that had a big impact on my development."

Beamsley's teaching philosophy centers on understanding learners' goals and building from there. "Earlier on, I approached teaching from a 'know the basics' standpoint," he explains. "But I've learned that adult learners are quite good at knowing what they need to learn. There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach."

LEADING WITH INNOVATION AND IMPACT

One of Beamsley's most lasting contributions has been the development of a longitudinal community health engagement training experience for UW School of Medicine and Public Health students. Collaborating with statewide physicians and curriculum leaders, he helped create a model that blends didactics, reflection, and hands-on community health projects. "It's still part of every student's training," he notes. "It's helped maintain ongoing partnerships with community organizations and integrate field-based learning into the curriculum."

He also played a key role in launching a new integrated clinical training course during a major curriculum overhaul. The course combined family medicine with other specialties and involved sites across Wisconsin. "We built the curriculum from the ground up," he says. "It taught me how to facilitate large-group decision-making and find mutual goals."



Mark Beamsley, MD

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE DURING COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to medical education. "Students were removed from clinical environments for months," he recalls. "We had to rapidly develop online simulated clinical training experiences." Working with a team of creative and tireless colleagues, he helped ensure continuity in student learning. "We all learned a new degree of flexibility and gained new perspectives and tools for training."

Receiving the Dean's Teaching Award is a meaningful milestone for Beamsley. "It's truly flattering and humbling," he says. "There are so many outstanding faculty in our department and at UW School of Medicine and Public Health. I've learned so much from them over the years and feel fortunate to have had so many opportunities to work with students and residents."

STAY IN TOUCH!

Got news or updates? Share them at: fammed.wisc.edu/alumni/alumni-form

Hans Elzinga, MD

A Reflection on the Mentors Who Shaped His Career

As one of the first graduates of the Baraboo Rural Training Track (RTT) in 1999, **Dr. Hans Elzinga** has built a career defined by service, innovation, and deep gratitude for the mentors who shaped his path. From pioneering procedural care for underserved communities to mentoring future physicians, Elzinga continues to carry forward the values instilled during his time in Baraboo.

A LEAP OF FAITH GUIDED BY MENTORSHIP

Following medical school, Elzinga sought a residency program that combined high-volume OB and ICU experience with hands-on procedural training. That rare combination led him to Baraboo, where a pivotal interview with **Dr. Mark Meier** changed everything. Newly out of residency, Meier committed to teaching Elzinga how to perform C-sections. That moment of trust and mentorship was the deciding factor. "I sensed I'd be given incredible learning opportunities in Baraboo," Elzinga recalls. "I couldn't have been more right."

Elzinga credits much of his success to mentors like Meier and **Dr. Randy Krszjaniek**, both of whom he nominated for—and who received—the prestigious Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Award, an honor for teachers who have inspired their former students to make a significant contribution to society. Meier's dedication to patient care and teaching left a lasting impression. One particularly memorable experience involved a

house call to a patient who feared her breast cancer had returned. As they drove to the patient's home in a small town outside Baraboo, they stopped at a gas station to ask for directions—only to discover that the patient's daughter was working there. With tears in her eyes, she guided them to her mother's home. "That moment encouraged me to create the Longmont Surgical Mission," Elzinga says, referring to the pro bono surgery program he later founded for uninsured patients.

Krszjaniek inspired Elzinga through his encyclopedic medical knowledge and tireless commitment to excellence. "He never stopped learning, and he never stopped doing everything possible to help his patients," Elzinga shares. His example helped shape Elzinga's vision of what a rural family physician could be: deeply knowledgeable, community-focused, and relentlessly dedicated. When COVID and corporate changes reduced access to colon cancer screening for uninsured patients, Krszjaniek's example motivated Elzinga to launch Butt Savers—a program funded by employee paycheck donations that now provides more than 400 low-cost endoscopic procedures annually.

A JOURNEY OF SERVICE

After residency, Elzinga fulfilled a National Health Service Corps (NHSC) scholarship obligation by serving in rural Texas. As the only full-time physician in the county, he delivered 80 to 100 babies annually, cared for more than 50 nursing home patients, and managed emergency



Hans Elzinga, MD

cases—including helicopter transfers from a clinic with no hospital.

When financial instability threatened his NHSC commitment, he transitioned to Salud Family Health in Longmont, Colorado—a federally qualified health center. There he was connected to **Dr. Tillman Farley**, son of Madison physicians and philanthropists Drs. Eugene and Linda Farley, which affirmed his decision. Elzinga completed his NHSC service and has remained at Salud for more than two decades.

Today, Elzinga performs cesarean sections, tubal ligations, cardiac stress tests, and nearly 1,000 GI endoscopies annually for underserved patients. He also trains residents and fellows—one of whom is now a practice partner.

What keeps Elzinga going after more than two decades? A deep passion for serving the medically underserved—and the enduring influence of his mentors. "The skills, knowledge, experience, and mentoring I received at the Baraboo RTT—especially from Dr. Meier and Dr. Krszjaniek—made my career path possible. I am extremely grateful."



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