

ANNUAL REPORT

THE WRIGHT CENTER

2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR



THE WRIGHT
CENTER
for
COMMUNITY
HEALTH

THE WRIGHT
CENTER
for
GRADUATE MEDICAL
EDUCATION

THE WRIGHT
CENTER
for
PATIENT & COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

OUR MISSION:

To improve the health and welfare of our communities through inclusive and responsive health services and the sustainable renewal of an inspired, competent workforce that is privileged to serve.

OUR VISION:

For our Graduate Medical Education Safety-Net Consortium framework that integrates patient care delivery, workforce development and innovation to be the leading model of primary health care in America.

OUR VALUES:

Do the
Wright Thing

Be Privileged
To Serve

Be an
Exceptional
Team Player

Strive for
Excellence

Spread
Positivity

In medieval times, people were named for their occupation. A chandler worked in wax. A franklin owned a small farm. The bakers and the millers need no explanation. Then there were the wrights – people who built and repaired, created and restored. In this sense, The Wright Center is aptly named for the vision of its founder and the work that it does.

As a mission-driven institution, The Wright Center improves the health and welfare of our communities through inclusive and responsive health services and the sustainable renewal of an inspired, competent workforce that is privileged to serve. That means we are about building community, restoring health, creating opportunity, and repairing a health system struggling with access and equity issues. There is, however, another sense of “wright.” And that, of course, is “right” in the sense of “correct, just and honorable.” When a builder approaches the work at hand through this lens, great things happen for a community.

In these pages, we’ll explore what it means to build and restore things that are just and designed to serve. From TWC’s engagement with Alzheimer’s patients and Scranton’s unhoused to the awards won by our learners and the testimonials of grateful patients, we’ll examine everything our team has created and restored for the “wright” reasons – a safer, healthier community with expanded access to the wright care delivered in the wright place.



Funding for many of The Wright Center’s services and graduate education programs is provided by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In 2021-22, active HRSA awards for The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education totaled \$24,941,842 with varying percentages financed with non-governmental sources available per program. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov). The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in his health programs and activities.

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Online

The Annual Report is a comprehensive look at The Wright Center's accomplishments during the preceding year. It is also available at TheWrightCenter.org/annualreports.



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Internal medicine resident shares his time, treasure and talent to aid Ukrainian refugees in Poland.



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Acting Pennsylvania Secretary of Health and Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson addresses need to make syringe services programs available throughout the Commonwealth.



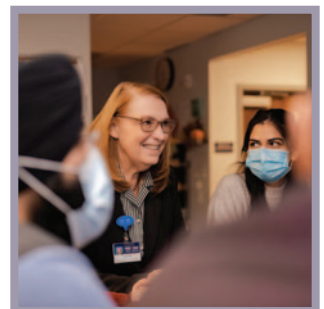
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The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education are an employer of choice, with more than 650 employees - and counting.



Follow The Wright Center on:



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



At The Wright Center, we are fortunate to have a noble, mighty mission and a clear, compelling vision. As a community-owned and governed nonprofit Graduate Medical Education Safety-Net Consortium, our Annual Report affords us a welcomed opportunity to reflect on and celebrate our collective accomplishments to improve the health and welfare of the communities we serve.

We foresee a future in which all Americans have access to affordable, high-quality, wholeperson health services regardless of their ZIP code or income bracket. We believe in the capacity of communities to unify stakeholders in the shared stewardship of health care resources that include the recruitment, education, inspiration, and retention of their interprofessional health care workforce.

We envision a national health care workforce made up of compassionate, inspired, and competent professionals, whose cultural diversity, practice patterns, and performance are optimized and sufficient for equitable, effective, and affordable whole-person health services for all Americans. And we are champions for the overdue – but thankfully emerging – value-driven investment in public health, primary care, and prevention services, including intentional traumainformed support of human resilience and coping skills and the promotion of lifestyle medicine.

We are steadfast and stalworth primary

care and public health enthusiasts who are confident these visions are not distant, pie-in-the-sky goals. In fact, we are optimistic there will soon be a day when major advances in public health outcomes, health care delivery services, and health care career equity for all Americans are achieved. We place our trust in the United States Department of Health and Human Services' leadership, the Health Resources and Services Administration's Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education innovations, and also the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education's visionary call towards the preferred future Sponsoring Institution 2025 Task Force that seamlessly integrates health care delivery and educational systems to ensure the standardization of a superb primary care physician training model across all residency and fellowship programs.

How can we be so hopeful?

Because, as illuminated in our Annual Report, The Wright Center is deeply and passionately immersed with like-minded, awesome partners in substantive activities that are building this preferred future for our national health care delivery and medical education systems.

Today – in collaboration with our local, regional, and national partners – we are achieving impressive outcomes in both the delivery of whole-person primary health services to patients and the delivery of effective, cost-efficient, community-based graduate medi-

Sharing our collective, hopeful cure for what ails American health care and medical education

cal education training to residents and fellows. And we are encouraging our nation's policymakers to take a look and learn more about our "achievable by all" Graduate Medical Education Safety-Net Consortium's story.

The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education share a noble, mighty mission and a clear, compelling vision with a deadline. Most importantly, our amazing patients, families, employees, learners, partners, and communities are counting on us to do our part to evolve our American health care delivery and medical education systems to work better – for everyone.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world."

–Margaret Mead

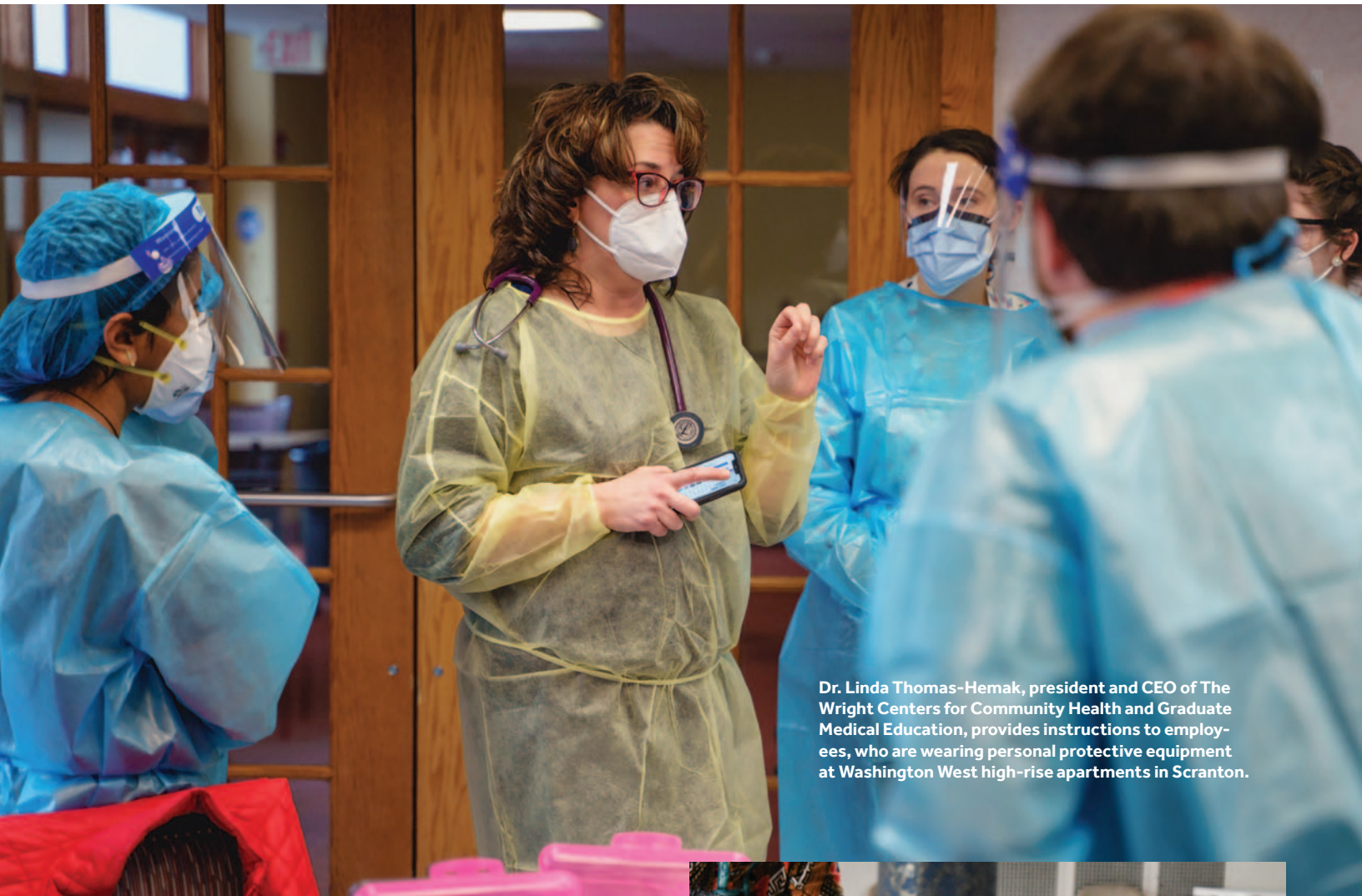
Linda Thomas-Hemak, MD

**Linda Thomas-Hemak, M.D., FACP, FAAP
President and CEO
The Wright Centers for Community Health
and Graduate Medical Education**



DOING **WRIGHT** BY OUR COMMUNITY

Enterprise reinvests grants and other funding into graduate medical education, primary care delivery



Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO of The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education, provides instructions to employees, who are wearing personal protective equipment at Washington West high-rise apartments in Scranton.

From humble beginnings in Northeast Pennsylvania, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education and The Wright Center for Community Health have grown into dynamic, nationally significant players in the education of primary care providers and the delivery of care to medically underserved areas and vulnerable populations.

The transformation has been gradual, but the broad impact of today's Wright Center is unmistakable. Active in Lackawanna County for nearly half a century, The Wright Center is a sizable employer, economic engine and community-enhancing entity



Amanda Turoni, a certified registered nurse practitioner, administers a COVID-19 vaccine at the Bhutanese Community Center in Scranton.



that also is an increasingly influential catalyst for positive change in how America's primary care workforce receives training and how safety-net primary and preventive care is delivered to patients – especially those in greatest need.

To appreciate The Wright Center's far-reaching and multi-dimensional community impact on the people and places it currently serves, consider these figures:

32,800 UNIQUE PATIENTS
130,000 PATIENT VISITS

\$16.7 MILLION IN FEDERAL TAXES
\$158 MILLION IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT

COMMUNITY IMPACT

220 RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS **1,100 JOBS**
\$6.7 MILLION IN STATE AND LOCAL TAXES

TWO DENTAL RESIDENTS

- There's been a more than **350% increase in the number of patients seen annually** at The Wright Center for Community Health's primary care practices over the past five years, a testament not only to the region's pressing need for care, but also to the organization's commitment to respond with appropriate clinical sites, services and support. The growth was made possible in large part by the organization's designation in 2019 as a Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike, which led to a more favorable reimbursement rate and allowed for greater ongoing access to the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) expertise and programs.
- **Annual revenue grew by about 800%** over the past decade for the two nonprofit organizations, collectively The Wright Center enterprise. Acting primarily

as a pass-through for grants and other funding, the enterprise reinvests those dollars to do good by supporting the patients, programs, learners and communities it serves.

- The Wright Center enterprise generates more than **\$158.8 million in economic output** annually, supporting **more than 1,100 jobs**, according to an analysis conducted by The Institute of our 2021 performance (inclusive of direct, indirect and induced impacts).
- In 2021, The Wright Center enterprise generated more than **\$6.7 million in state and local taxes** (up 15.5% over the prior year) and in excess of **\$16.7 million in federal taxes** (a yearly increase of 23%), according to The Institute's analysis.
- As a responsible steward of grants, The Wright Center managed **\$29.4 million from federal, state and foundation funders** during the 2021-22 fiscal year, strategically injecting public resources into graduate medical education programs as well as projects to improve the health and welfare of patients and community members.
- The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education educated and trained more than **220 residents and fellows** in multiple disciplines during the 2021-22 academic year, including 50-plus residents enrolled in its unique National Family Medicine Residency conducted with partner training sites in Arizona, Ohio, Washington state and Washington, D.C.



Driving Better Health, a mobile medical unit, delivers care where people live and work throughout Northeast Pennsylvania.



Residents of Washington West high-rise apartments in Scranton receive COVID-19 vaccinations.

"Graduates of our programs not only are well-prepared to provide competent, holistic care to patients, but also to be vocal advocates of America's preferred health care future – one in which everyone has access to care regardless of their ZIP code, insurance status or income," says Harold Baillie, Ph.D., chairperson of The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education Board of Directors.

"These physicians truly represent the change our nation needs."

- During the same academic year, The Wright Center for Community Health's clinics in Northeast Pennsylvania served as educational and training sites for **two dental residents**, through a new affiliation with NYU Langone Dental Medicine. Plus, **nearly 20 aspiring physicians** were based in Scranton as part of an innovative partnership with A.T. Still University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona that places its medical school students in community health centers like The Wright Center during the second through fourth years of their schooling.
- The Wright Center for Community Health recorded more than **130,000 patient visits** during the 2021 calendar year – the second full year during which practitioners were working under the strain of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Wright Center for Community Health didn't waiver from its mission during the prolonged public health emergency. To meet the unprecedented needs of communities, the clinical care teams embraced the health center's status as an Essential Community Provider and helped to lead the region's response to the highly contagious virus by quickly expanding access to testing, vaccines and therapeutics, such as monoclonal antibody infusion therapy.

The primary care practices in Lackawanna, Luzerne and Wayne counties maintained their normal operating hours and services despite enormous challenges

brought about by the virus, including periodic staffing shortages due to illness. Dedicated employees adapted to new protocols for the rapid rollout of newly developed vaccines, evolving federal guidelines and the pandemic's fast-changing circumstances. Since the outbreak began, the care teams have administered about 46,000 coronavirus vaccine and booster doses, and more than 1,750 infusions.

At the same time, The Wright Center for Community Health has continued to connect patients to its medical home model, offering them access to non-discriminatory, affordable, high-quality integrated care that includes medical, dental, behavioral, addiction and recovery, and other supportive services. Certain patients already are benefitting from our newly introduced Lifestyle Medicine and Obesity Medicine initiatives. For example, data for 54 patients seen by one of our obesity medicine-certified physicians show that they have lost an average of 16 pounds and experienced an average decrease in hemoglobin A1c of 15% – a key marker of blood sugar control and measuring risk for diabetes complications.

"From controlling diabetes to confronting the opioid crisis and COVID-19, our community needs-responsive health center rises to the biggest challenges of the day and opens its doors to all individuals, regardless of their ability to pay," says Mary D'Elia Marrara, secretary of The Wright Center for Community Health Board of Directors. "Services are available to the entire community, with a special commitment to uninsured, low-income patients."

Many of the health center's services are not confined to a clinic, as our compassionate care teams increasingly reach patients in their own neighborhoods and workplaces.

Thanks to a mobile medical unit, called Driving Better Health, and collaborative relationships with dozens of the region's health care and social service agencies, The Wright Center for Community Health has been able to significantly increase its impact on populations of special concern, including people who do not speak English as their primary language, individuals who are homeless, children and socially isolated seniors.

Driving Better Health has been repeatedly dispatched to Hazleton, in lower Luzerne County, stopping at places, such as the Hazleton One Community Center and the Dominican House of Hazleton to offer routine vaccinations and COVID-19-related services to members of predominantly Spanish-speaking households. Likewise, the mobile team has visited a Bhutanese cultural center, Scranton's senior high-rises and the Community Intervention Center, the latter of which is a daytime drop-in shelter in Scranton for people cop-

“From controlling diabetes to confronting the opioid crisis and COVID-19, our community needs-responsive health center rises to the biggest challenges of the day and opens its doors to all individuals, regardless of their ability to pay.”

—Mary D’Elia Marrara, Secretary,
The Wright Center for Community Health Board of Directors

ing with behavioral health issues and/or homelessness.

During the 2021-22 fiscal year, providers aboard Driving Better Health administered nearly 1,900 vaccines, including shots to prevent COVID-19, influenza, hepatitis, polio, meningitis and other communicable diseases. Of particular note, the mobile medical unit goes to public school districts throughout multiple counties during the back-to-school season, delivering routine childhood vaccines that are required for classroom attendance.

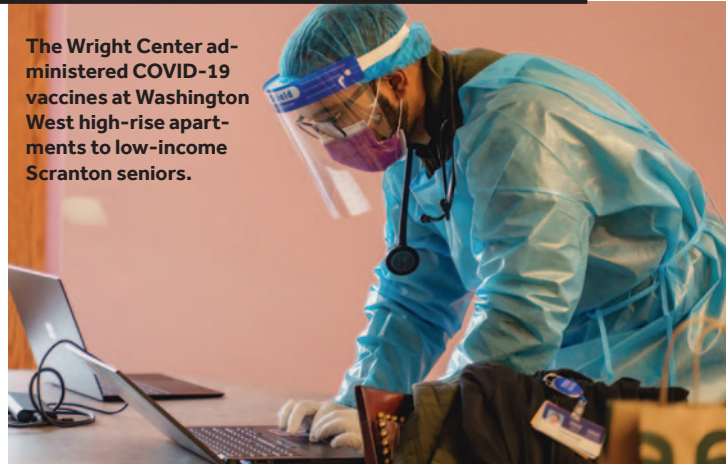
The Wright Center for Community Health further supports children’s education through a United Way of Wyoming Valley-led program called “See to Succeed,” which supplies eyeglasses to students who are found to be eligible based on vision screenings and financial need. The startup project, which involves multiple partners and serves three Luzerne County school districts, has gifted eyewear to hundreds of students.

On the opposite end of the age spectrum, senior citizens in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties are being aided through The Wright Center’s multiyear engagement with Telespond Senior Services, a provider of adult day care and other critical programming. This grant-funded initiative to support aging in place has succeeded in reinvigorating Telespond, which had been confronting financial hardship and largely suspended its activities during the pandemic’s early phases. As of June 2022, Telespond was serving a

daily average of about 40 clients in its day care program, and 61 volunteers were actively involved in providing in-home socialization to clients through a Senior Companion Program.

The Wright Center for Community Health also plays a leading role in the Healthy Maternal Opiate Med-

The Wright Center administered COVID-19 vaccines at Washington West high-rise apartments to low-income Scranton seniors.



ical Support program, simply known as Healthy MOMS, which it co-founded with dozens of committed partner organizations. The program empowers women who are faced with the dual challenge of raising a baby and coping with a substance use disorder. More than 180 infants have been born to mothers enrolled in the program that was launched in late 2018. At the conclusion of the most recent fiscal year, 141 mothers were active participants in the Healthy MOMS program.

To the public, some of The Wright Center for Community Health’s most visible – and most popular – activities are those conducted by its subsidiary, The Wright Center for Patient & Community Engagement (PCE).

PCE conducts food distributions, blood drives and social events, such as movie nights and school backpack giveaways, with more than 550 backpacks distributed during the prior back-to-school season. Its annual distribution of winter coats and accessories benefitted more than 200 individuals last winter. And our PCE-led volunteers took to area streets and parking lots in January and February, braving subfreezing temperatures to conduct drive-through distributions of COVID-19 test kits. In total, at specially promoted public events and through direct outreach to municipalities and first responders, the PCE team gave away more than 13,000 test kits and nearly 3,000 N95 masks.

Whether measured in lives improved, health outcomes achieved, physicians trained, dollars wisely spent or good deeds accomplished, The Wright Center makes a powerfully positive impact that ripples throughout our communities – and across the country.



Sebastian Rimerez gives a thumbs up after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine aboard Driving Better Health in Hazleton.

LIVING THE **WRIGHT** LIFE

Service and Engagement

Dr. Rojulpote delivers hands-on care and dose of hope to Ukrainian border



Dr. Chaitanya Rojulpote, an internal medicine resident at The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, provided treatment to Nina, an 86-year-old grandmother, who was on the verge of collapse when she arrived at the refugee camp in Medyka, Poland.

Haunted by daily reports of more bombing and bloodshed in Ukraine, 29-year-old resident physician **Dr. Chaitanya Rojulpote** of Scranton did more than simply feel sorrow for the people caught in the war's path. He did what his heart demanded.

He bought a plane ticket and made a solo trip to Europe, devoting one week of his vacation time to helping refugees displaced by the brutal Russian invasion. But before he did, he brushed up on techniques he hadn't used since his days in medical school in India, including how to close wounds. He visited the emergency department of Commonwealth Health Regional Hospital of Scranton, where two physicians graciously gave him refreshers on properly placing an intravenous line and

on suturing. He also watched YouTube videos about applying simple field dressings.

The physician is quick to point out his journey was supported by many others, including members of his Wright Center family. Three fellow resident physicians –



Drs. Kashyap Kela, Princy Shaw and Richard Bronnenkant – adjusted their plans to provide clinical coverage in his absence. “They couldn’t come with me,” he says, “but they helped me to make the trip.”

Rojulpote, a second-year internal medicine resident at The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education in Northeast Pennsylvania, teamed with a non-governmental medical relief organization dedicated to helping people in distress. He decided to publicly share his experiences in Medyka, Poland – where he volunteered inside a woodstove-heated tent that serves around the clock as both a sort of urgent care clinic and a healer of souls – as a way of motivating others to lend aid when hearing about the Ukrainians’ plight or any other calamity.

He worked in its first aid field unit, tending to individuals as they fled danger and finally crossed the border from chaotic Ukraine into the relative safety of Poland. From his post, Rojulpote, who was often dressed in five layers of clothing to stay warm, treated arriving



Dr. Chaitanya Rojulpote teamed with the non-governmental medical relief organization, Rescuers Without Borders, to help people in distress.



LIVING THE WRIGHT LIFE

refugees for hypothermia, dehydration, chronic conditions and a range of non-specific symptoms, such as headaches, fever and fatigue.

“What you’re giving these people more than anything else – more than medical help, more than food, more than water – is hope,” says Rojulpote. “You’re giving them hope that, after finally reaching this destination, it’s going to get better.”

“What you’re giving these people more than anything else – more than medical help, more than food, more than water – is hope.”

–Dr. Chaitanya Rojulpote

Rojulpote admits that, prior to embarking, he sometimes questioned his decision.

“Should I even be doing this,” he wondered. What gave him courage was a memorial plaque in the halls of Regional Hospital of Scranton.

Dr. Chaitanya Rojulpote poses with Sasha, a Ukrainian refugee who greets people at the border gate between Medyka, Poland and Ukraine.

Service and Engagement

Bringing rapid COVID infusion therapy to people who need it most



Kimberly McGoff of Spring Brook recovered from COVID-19 with assistance from monoclonal antibody infusion therapy.

Weakened and barely able to walk, **Kimberly McGoff** arrived at The Wright Center for Community Health's Mid Valley Practice with a distressing diagnosis of COVID-19 and another big reason to worry.

McGoff copes with lupus and related conditions that severely limit her immune system's ability to fight disease, putting her at increased risk of developing complications from the virus that has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians.

It was a scorching day in August, yet McGoff felt a penetrating chill as she crossed the parking lot and burrowed deeper into her winter coat, hoping

to stop her body from shaking. Her husband and a few concerned Wright Center employees helped her shuffle into the Jermyn clinic, where she had an appointment to receive a treatment that, for McGoff and other high-risk patients, can seem like a miracle.

Called COVID-19 infusion therapy, it has been shown to lessen the severity of symptoms for certain patients, potentially quickening their recoveries, preventing hospitalizations and saving lives. The Wright Center began offering the therapy in mid-January 2021 and had administered the potentially life-saving treatment to more than 1,300 patients through early May 2022 – many of whom reported experiencing sudden, dramatic improvement.

"I immediately felt better," recalls McGoff, a resident of Spring Brook and a Wright Center employee. "I couldn't walk into the room by myself, but I was able to get up, take my Wright Center blanket and walk out. Infusion therapy is an amazing thing.

I don't know what's in it, but it's amazing."

Called COVID-19 infusion therapy, it has been shown to lessen the severity of symptoms for certain patients, potentially quickening their recoveries, preventing hospitalizations and saving lives.

Now, since The Wright Center has streamlined its referral process, more people can receive the lifesaving treatment. If a patient tests positive for COVID-19 at any TWC primary care practice location in Northeast Pennsylvania, the individual



can be immediately scheduled for infusion therapy.

In one instance, a Wright Center team provided COVID-19 infusion therapy at an off-site location – treating nine residents of a Scranton-area senior living community in a single day. “All of those

“It was a historic event for The Wright Center and our collaboration in the community. Our care team’s actions and use of infusion therapy prevented the patients from needing hospital care.”

–Sheila Ford, R.N.
AVP, Clinical Quality and Patient Safety

residents have dementia, and some experience agitation, which posed extra challenges to the care team,” recalls **Sheila Ford, R.N.**, associate vice president of clinical quality and patient safety.

“It was a historic event for The Wright Center and our collaboration in the community. Our care team’s actions and use of infusion therapy prevented the patients from needing hospital care.”

Dr. Jignesh Sheth, chief medical officer for The Wright Center, orchestrated the rapid rollout of the therapy when it first became available to the health center. Only weeks later, Dr. Sheth dispatched a team to the senior living community to tamp down its cluster of COVID cases. Based on his observations, he now refers to monoclonal antibodies as “the unsung heroes when it comes to the fight against COVID-19.”

Our Stories:

To read more stories about our patients, residents, and services, go to

TheWrightCenter.org/our-stories.

Service and Engagement



Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO of The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education, provides an examination to patient Charles Battenberg at the Mid Valley Practice.

Seniors preserve their independence thanks to grant from AllOne

The AllOne Foundation awarded a three-year grant to The Wright Center for Community Health in support of programming provided by Telespond Senior Services that enables residents of Lackawanna, Luzerne and nearby counties to successfully age in place. The joint initiative between the community partners began in 2020. AllOne Foundation CEO **John W. Cosgrove** presented the final installment of the grant that supported the sustainability of Telespond Senior Services.





Participating in the ceremonial check presentation, from left, are Maria Montoro Edwards, Anne Brennan, Joseph J. Grilli, president and CEO, Senior Day Services; John W. Cosgrove, CEO, AllOne Foundation; Nancy Menapace, Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO, The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education; and Michelle Carr, Telespond board member.

Veteran-owned business donates funds and PPE



The Stronghold Group continued its support of regional health care workers who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic by donating 5,000 pieces of personal protection equipment and \$5,000 to The Wright Centers for Community Health and Patient & Community Engagement. Stronghold's financial support was used to purchase fresh produce and canned goods for the most marginalized in the regional community. Participating in the ceremonial check presentation, from left, are **Sean Niquette**, co-founder and chief financial officer, Stronghold Group; **Dave Henderson**, co-founder and CEO, Stronghold Group; **William Waters**, co-chairperson, The Wright Center for Patient & Community Engagement; **Laurie LaMaster**; and **Kara Seitzinger**, director of public affairs/advisor liaison to the president and CEO, The Wright Center.

Our Stories

Mother-to-be finds help, hope in overcoming addiction



Jennifer Parker credits the Healthy MOMS program with helping her to achieve and maintain sobriety, allowing her to raise daughter Naudia. The Healthy MOMS program is a collaborative effort co-founded by The Wright Center for Community Health. It assists pregnant women and new moms in Northeast Pennsylvania who are coping with substance use disorders.

carried in a shopping bag, answered “yes.”

It was a one-word affirmation of life, and it awakened something in this mom-to-be that she badly needed: hope.

Parker’s situation began to change for the better almost immediately, thanks to her determination and the assistance of the Healthy MOMS program – a collaborative effort involving The Wright Center for Community Health, which is a co-founder of the program, and dozens of partners. The nonprofit Maternal and Family Health Services Inc. and multiple area hospitals are among the many health care, social service and government agencies that power the program’s ongoing success.

Homeless and pregnant, **Jennifer Parker** didn’t know in the summer of 2019 if she could take care of herself, much less a baby. Then 35 years old and struggling with addiction, she had been using illegal substances including cocaine and heroin for about half of her life. The former Lake Ariel resident had a criminal record and little else to her name.

She was encouraged to schedule an appointment with a case manager at a relatively new program in Northeast Pennsylvania – the Healthy Maternal Opiate Medical Support program, known simply as Healthy MOMS. After a brief conversation, the case manager directly asked: “Do you want to keep this baby?” Parker, who at the time had no place to stay, no shoes on her feet and a single spare shirt that she

The Healthy MOMS team quickly found a safe place for Parker to sleep, so she wasn’t on the street or

Homeless and pregnant, Jennifer Parker didn’t know in the summer of 2019 if she could take care of herself, much less a baby.

staying overnight with strangers. She received clothes and shoes. She was linked to multiple community-based programs and services, especially taxi and ride-sharing services to get to all her important appointments, so she and her unborn baby received proper health care.

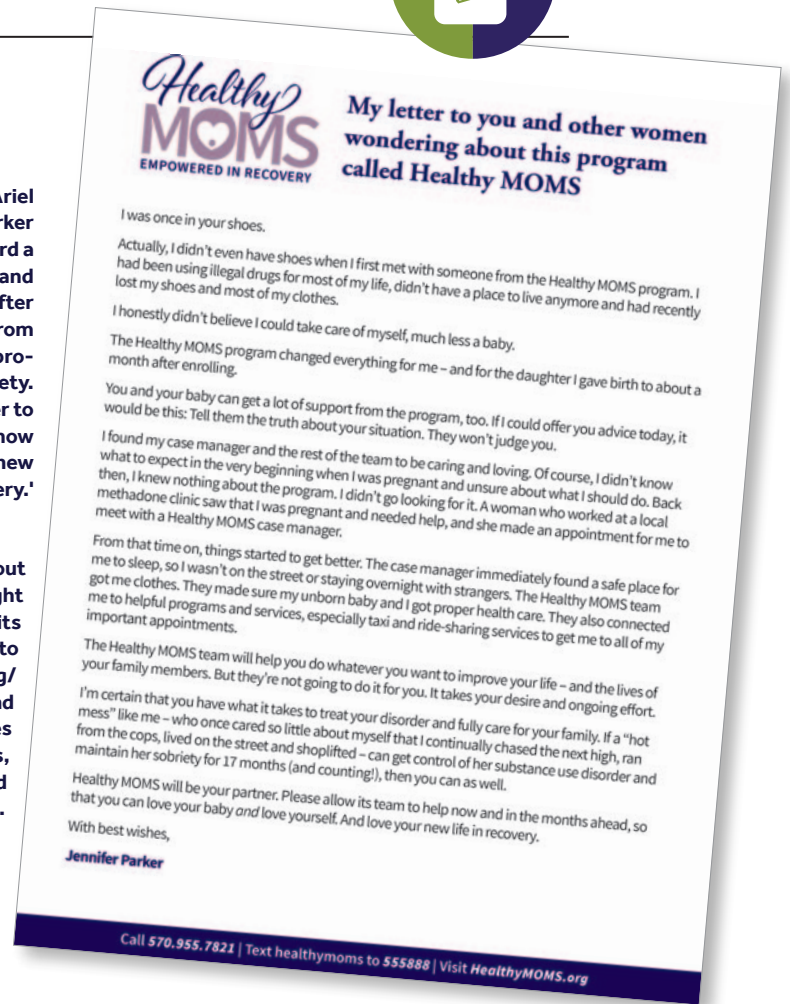


Now 17 months sober and seeking to enroll her 2-year-old daughter in day care, Parker wants to enroll in a cosmetology program and ultimately open her own salon. "After I met with a case manager, it was life-changing," says Parker. "It sounds corny, but it was. I never expected to be where I'm at today. Everything is different."

The Healthy MOMS program was launched locally in late 2018, aiming to help pregnant women and new mothers overcome addiction and embrace a life in recovery. Participants are offered blanket services that include medication-assisted treatment and addiction services, counseling, primary health care, OB-GYN care, parenting tips, legal advice and a range of other supports. The program promotes the well-being of both mom and newborn, ideally engaging them in wrap-around services until the child turns 2 years old.

Former Lake Ariel resident Jennifer Parker is taking steps toward a better life for herself and daughter Naudia, 2, after receiving support from the Healthy MOMS program to achieve sobriety. She penned this letter to let others know how they can love their 'new life in recovery.'

To read more about how The Wright Center fulfills its mission, go to Thewrightcenter.org/our-stories to find additional stories about our patients, residents, and services.



The Wright Center's Healthy MOMS program also provides supportive services for mothers and children in the novel initiative.

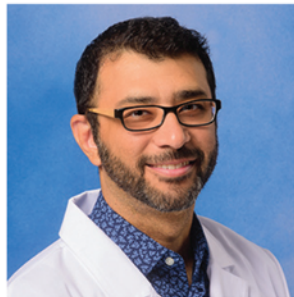


Celebrating Our National Family Medicine Partners

The Wright Center's unique National Family Medicine Residency Program was established in 2013 and spans four states and two coasts, addressing physician workforce shortages and health care disparities across the country. The innovative national curriculum immerses residents in high-performing, certified Patient-Centered Medical Homes, Community Health Centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers and Look-Alikes, as well as community-based hospitals, providing care to the nation's most vulnerable populations.



Dr. Lawrence LeBeau
Program Director



Dr. Neville Antia
Associate Program Director



Dr. Michael Dietz
Associate Program Director



Dr. Will Dixon
Associate Program Director



Dr. Gregory Hollick
Osteopathic Recognition Site Director



Dr. Felipe Perez
Associate Program Director

Health Humanities

with Allison LaRussa



About the Program

The new initiative promotes emotional wellness for residents, fellows, physician faculty, staff and members of the public through various artistic activities that are developed to foster connections, address trauma, addiction, social isolation and more.

For a complete schedule, go to TheWrightCenter.org/events.

Service and Engagement

North Pocono Practice cuts the ribbon in rural Covington Township



An open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony in April marked the debut of The Wright Center for Community Health's new North Pocono Practice in Lackawanna County's Covington Township, representing another milestone in the organization's development and introducing area residents to the clinic's many primary and preventive care services.

Now serving patients in rural areas, including Moscow and Clifton boroughs, as well as Covington, Elmhurst, Jefferson, Madison, Roaring Brook, Spring Brook and Thornhurst townships, the practice is located at 260 Daleville Highway.

To celebrate the clinic's launch, The Wright Center invited the public to tour the facility and learn more about the expanding nonprofit health care organization that serves patients regardless of their income or insurance status.

Before the ribbon-cutting, **Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak**, president and CEO said, "The Wright Center for Community Health's commitment to reaching traditionally underserved populations and to being responsive to community needs is what brought us here today."

A ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sunday, April 24 marked the opening of the new North Pocono Practice in Lackawanna County's Covington Township. Participating in the program, from left, are Frank J. Ruggiero, Lackawanna County solicitor; Ronald Donati; Scott Koerwer, executive vice president and chief administrative officer, Wright Center; Jerry Notarianni, commissioner, Lackawanna County; Robert Bastek, police chief, Covington Township; Ron Daniels, chief financial officer, Wright Center; Amanda Turoni, board-certified nurse practitioner; Wright Center; LeeAnn Eschbach, board member, Wright Center for Community Health; Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO; Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education; Richard Krebs, board member, Wright Center for Community Health; Gerard Geoffroy, board chairperson, Wright Center for Community Health; William Waters, board vice chairperson, Wright Center for Community Health; Thomas Glaser, associate vice president, grant operations, Wright Center; Dr. Jumea Barooah, DIO, Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education; Joseph Sileo, senior vice president; Wright Center; Sheila Ford, associate vice president, clinical quality and patient safety, Wright Center; Kellie Knesis, vice president, human resources, Wright Center; and Tiffany Jaskulski, chief operating officer, Wright Center.



Children from the community participated in arts and crafts during the open house program.



Participating in the open house program, from left, are Gerard Geoffroy, chair, Community Health board member; LeeAnn Eschbach, Ph.D., Community Health board member; Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO; Richard Krebs, Community Health board member; Amanda Turoni, CRNP, North Pocono Practice; and William Waters, Ph.D., vice chair, Community Health board.

Hawley Practice begins offering dental clinics



The Wright Center for Community Health began offering regularly scheduled dental clinics in April at its primary care practice in Hawley, offering residents of Wayne and Pike counties convenient access to affordable oral care, including exams, X-rays and cleanings.



Initially, the location is offering basic exams, cleanings and fluoride treatments; however, it is expected that future clinics conducted at the site will also offer expanded services, such as fillings, sealants and advanced procedures that currently are available at The Wright Center's practices in Scranton and Jermyn.

DOING THE **WRIGHT** THING

Alzheimers and Dementia Care program customizes help for patients and caregivers

The full extent of his wife's memory lapses became clear to **John P. Warnero** on a snowy morning in 2015 when he stepped outdoors to shovel. He discovered the couple's car shrouded in a blanket of new-fallen snow, parked in the driveway of their Throop home where it had been all night, with its engine still running.


"She forgot to shut it off," he says. "It ran for 12 hours straight."

A former cabinet maker, John Warnero, 67, now serves as **MaryEllen Warnero's** main caregiver, assisting and sometimes agonizing as she grapples with the relentless progression of early-onset

dementia, presumably caused by Alzheimer's disease. More than 280,000 Pennsylvanians are living with the disease, according to the Alzheimer's Association, which calls the situation in the commonwealth a "growing public health crisis" due to "escalating" cases.

He discovered the couple's car shrouded in a blanket of new-fallen snow, where it had been all night, with its engine still running.

To support Northeast Pennsylvania families like the Warneros, The Wright Center for Community Health introduced an Alzheimer's and Dementia Care program in 2020. It offers a range of health and supportive services to improve the quality of life of individuals with dementia and their caregivers.



Throop residents **MaryEllen and John Warnero** participated in the region's 2021 Walk to End Alzheimer's fundraising event, where John carried a yellow flower to signify his role as caregiver for someone with dementia. The couple receives support through The Wright Center for Community Health's Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Program.





To participate in the Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Program, it is not necessary for an individual to switch to a Wright Center doctor. A patient can stay with an outside doctor or specialist and still benefit from the program's co-management

model that emphasizes comprehensive and coordinated care. The Wright Center is one of only eight health systems in the nation to adopt the award-winning program model that was created at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

For now, John Warnero's support network is allowing him to care for MaryEllen in their home and to maintain his perspective and patience, even amid the most difficult and heart-wrenching of circumstances. "The Wright Center's team is constantly offering tips on communicating better with my wife, promoting healthy snacking to counteract her sweet tooth and other issues that caregivers like me encounter," he says.

Members of The Wright Center community, upper left and below, participated in the annual event.



Service and Engagement



“We made the commitment to develop The Wright Centers into Sanctuaries in the hopes that doing so will create opportunities for not just survivable, but thriving environments, including improved employee retention, satisfaction, and communication.”

—Meaghan Ruddy, Ph.D.
Senior VP, Academic Affairs,
Enterprise Assessment and
Advancement, and Chief Research
and Development Officer

An antidote to the pressure on health care workers

The Wright Center embraces the Sanctuary Model

Positive changes are on the horizon at The Wright Center as the organization in August introduced the **Sanctuary Model** across the consortium. The Sanctuary Model is a training program that alleviates the pressure and anxiety of working in health care through a proven

strategy and practice techniques that expand a person’s capacity to handle stressful situations and consistently treat one another with compassion. Every employee will be a part of this long-term journey and will implement it in the workplace and broader community.

Using the Sanctuary Model will:

- Create a truly collaborative treatment environment
- Improve treatment outcomes
- Help clinical staff work more effectively and therapeutically with traumatized clients
- Improve staff morale
- Increase employee retention
- Reclaim the commitment upon which the organization was built

The New York-based Sanctuary Institute trainers will teach organizational leadership that puts the focus back on healing, support and stakeholder welfare by teaching participants to spot the warning signs and reverse destructive patterns.



Meaghan Ruddy, Ph.D.





CEOs Against Stigma promotes mental wellness in the workplace

To promote the well-being of its employees, The Wright Center is participating in an initiative that shatters workplace stigma surrounding mental health issues and encourages the timely treatment of conditions, such as depression and anxiety.

Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak has joined the **CEOs Against Stigma** campaign – a project of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)'s state organization to prioritize mental health in the workplace. The Wright Center's executive team will follow the campaign's guidance, using a six-step toolkit to closely examine and address factors commonly associated with employee depression, anxiety and burnout.

This new collaboration with NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania – the official state organization of the NAMI – is part of The Wright Center's ongoing effort to become an optimal employer, as well as to respond to the increased mental health challenges resulting from the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic.

“This partnership will help us more effectively understand and address the whole-person health needs of our employees and also the patients, families and communities we are privileged to serve.”

–Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak,
President and CEO

Training program promotes mental health first aid

Training in mental health first aid – a method for recognizing and helping a person with a mental health issue before it results in injury or death – will be offered to the public and employees of The Wright Center for Community Health as part of a national grant-funded initiative.

The Wright Center was selected to receive one of eight training scholarships to participate in the project, which is supported by AmeriCares and the National Association of Community Health Centers.

The scholarship allows one staff member from each of the eight chosen organizations to become a certified trainer through the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

Owen Dougherty, The Wright Center's recovery supports manager and behavioral health community liaison, completed his certification with the council in mid-March. He will conduct multiple public training sessions for members of the community, helping them to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders, and empowering them to intervene when someone needs support. Mental health first aid takes the fear and hesitation out of starting conversations about mental health and substance use problems by improving understanding and providing an action plan.



Owen Dougherty
Recovery Supports Manager
and Behavioral Health
Community Liaison

Doing the Wright Thing

State officials discuss syringe service programs during tour of Scranton Practice



Denise Johnson, M.D., FACOG, FACHE, Pennsylvania Department of Health's Acting Secretary and physician general, visited The Wright Center for Community Health, an Opioid Use Disorder Center of Excellence, in May to discuss syringe service programs and the important role they play in the drug treatment process.

The visit included a private roundtable discussion, tour of the primary care and Ryan White HIV/AIDS clinical space and a press briefing with regional print and broadcast media at the Scranton Practice.

Pennsylvania Department of Health Acting Secretary and physician general Denise Johnson, M.D., FACOG, FACHE, delivers remarks at a press briefing held at the Scranton Practice.

"We want to reduce the number of drug overdose deaths."

—Denise Johnson, M.D.
Pennsylvania Department of Health's
Acting Secretary and Physician General

"Thanks to syringe service programs already in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, many Pennsylv-



nians have found their bridge to treatment and social services," Dr. Johnson said. "We want to reduce the number of drug overdose deaths. We need to use every tool at our disposal and the success of existing programs is evidence that residents across the state could experience better health outcomes if more syringe service programs are available."

Multiple studies show that access to clean syringes reduces HIV, hepatitis B and C transmission and other blood-borne



Scranton Mayor Paige Cagnetti addresses members of the media.

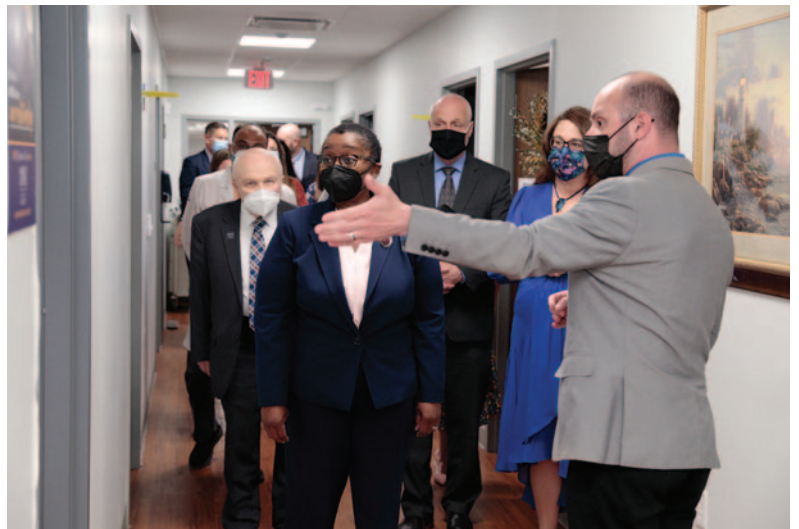
"For over 25 years, I've had the opportunity to be a part of individuals' recovery journeys through the delivery of comprehensive behavioral health support. This perspective has opened my eyes to the real barriers, determinants and stigma that people in recovery are faced with every day."

—Scott Constantini
AVP, Primary Care and Recovery

pathogens in people who inject drugs. Syringe service programs also increase public safety and protect law enforcement and first responders by properly disposing of used syringes.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf's administration has worked with members of the General Assembly to develop Senate Bill 926 and House Bill 2264, which would allow additional organizations outside of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia to engage in this work.

Dr. Johnson was joined by Steven Ross, state Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), Scranton Mayor Paige Cagnetti, delegates from the offices of state Representatives Kyle Mullins and Thom Welby, Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO of The Wright Centers, and other executive leadership at the roundtable and tour.



Shane Cobert-Fuller, director of HIV and preventive services at The Wright Center for Community Health, provides a tour of the Scranton Practice to state and local officials.



Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO of The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education, addresses Dr. Denise Johnson and other state and local officials during the roundtable discussion.

DOING THE WRIGHT THING

RECRUITING THE **WRIGHT** FUTURE

Education and Excellence

75 new residents welcomed

The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education (TWCGME) welcomed 75 new resident physicians into its regional and national residencies on national Match Day for newly minted doctors.

TWCGME matched residents in the following regional programs:

- **Internal Medicine Residency (34)**
- **Regional Family Medicine Residency (12)**
- **Psychiatry Residency (7)**
- **Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (5)** – the newest training program.

The National Family Medicine Residency has filled its resident physician positions at the following training sites:

- **Tucson, Arizona (4);**
- **Auburn, Washington (4);**
- **Washington, D.C. (6); and**
- **Hillsboro, Ohio (3).**

The incoming first-year residents for the five residencies hail from eight countries, including

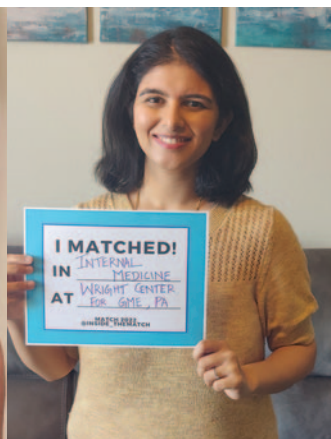
-  **Canada (11)**
-  **Egypt (1)**
-  **India (12)**
-  **Nepal (4)**
-  **Pakistan (6)**
-  **Philippines (1)**
-  **Saudi Arabia (1)**
-  **United States (39)**

Overall, The Wright Center received 5,744 applications and interviewed 877 candidates for the available slots in the five residencies.

Dr. Jume Barooah, the designated institution official at The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, said, "Your residency is a once-in-a-lifetime educational experience that only you and your peers can understand. You have plenty to be proud of as your persistence, passion and dedication to the field have earned you this opportunity."



Dr. Ankit Gautam



Dr. Archana Sridhar



Dr. Jenny Gao



Dr. Mohamed Khorshid



Dr. Samurna Sabir

RE



The National Resident Matching Program's Match Day is one of the most important events and competitive processes in the medical school experience. On the third Friday of March each year, fourth-year medical students, as well as their graduate medical education programs, learn where they will complete the next stage of their medical training.

Fellows Match Day

TWCGME also welcomed nine fellows into the fellowship programs – Cardiovascular Disease, Gastroenterology and Geriatrics – for the 2022-23 academic year.

"The new fellows strengthen The Wright Center's educational and provider communities," Dr. Barooah said.

Two of the new fellows – **Drs. Pranav Karambelkar and Purveshkumar Patel** – transitioned from the TWC's Internal Medicine Residency into the Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship.



Dr. Sanya Badar

Dr. Vaishnavi Gadicharla

New residents and fellows proudly shared pictures with The Wright Center on their important days.

Fellows



Dr. William Buniak



Dr Alaa Habash



Dr. Sajid Hussain



Dr. Pranav Karambelkar



Dr. Vabhav Pal



Dr. Purveshkumar Patel



Dr. Usman Rana



Dr. Nischay Shah



Dr. Sapinder Pal Singh

RECRUITING THE WRIGHT FUTURE

Education and Excellence

Hometown Scholars will learn in and serve their own communities, with help from The Wright Center endorsements

Two Wright Center-endorsed students have been accepted into the collaborative Hometown Scholars program and will attend medical school at A.T. Still University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona (ATSU-SOMA), located in Mesa.

The Wright Center's Hometown Scholars program, in partnership with ATSU-SOMA and the National Association of Community Health Centers, recruits future physicians, physician assistants and dentists from Northeast Pennsylvania who want to serve and make an impact in a community-health setting. Wright Center executives endorse the applications of qualified students who exemplify compassion, civic-mindedness and a commitment to serving individuals with limited access to high-quality health care.



Ceilia Severini of Scranton, a Scranton Preparatory School graduate, holds a Bachelor of Science in neuroscience from Bucknell University and a Master of Biomedical Sciences from Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine.

"When I talked to Dr. Thomas-Hemak, I was intrigued by ATSU-SOMA's unique approach to medical education," she said.

"I learn best from hands-on experience and I feel that, though my years of education have helped me greatly in reaching this point, my experiences as a medical scribe, clinical coordinator and a standardized patient have contributed even more value.

"I also want to improve access and care to those

who are most marginalized in our communities. This is the ideal path for me to become a doctor as it aligns perfectly with my values and goals," she added.



Morgan Schermerhorn of Scranton received her master's in public health in epidemiology of chronic disease from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health after earning her undergraduate degree in biology from New York University. The Wright Center for Community Health's mission to alleviate barriers to quality health care and to

those most in need attracted the Scranton Preparatory School graduate to the novel program.

"My interest in medicine began at The Wright Center when I shadowed Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak. I was inspired by her personal dedication and professionalism. By personally observing this approach, I was drawn to the mission of the community health center – providing compassionate care to all members of the community, especially those who are most marginalized," she said.

The training and education hometown scholars receive at ATSU-SOMA is distinctive compared to other medical schools, as it intentionally brings students back to Northeast Pennsylvania to care for the medically underserved urban and rural communities.

Medical students in the program are assigned to one of 16 select community health





“I also want to improve access and care to those who are most marginalized in our communities. This is the ideal path for me to become a doctor as it aligns perfectly with my values and goals.”

—Ceilia Severini
Hometown Scholar

center partner sites across the country and introduced to the clinical setting earlier than traditional medical schools. The Wright Center hometown scholars return to the region during their second year of graduate medical school and begin rotating at clinical sites with preceptors while continuing their academic education through in-class-room and distance-education experiences.

Other Wright Center-endorsed Hometown Scholars included **Grace McGrath** of Dunmore and **Moriah Bartolai** of Pittston.

The Wright way to wellness begins with you

The Wright Center’s Health Humanities program collaborated with the **Northeast Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center** in February 2022 to provide mental health first aid training at the Fallbrook Healthy Aging Campus. As part of the program, participants created “self-love cards” that focused on and identified something they loved about themselves.

Health Humanities, under the leadership of **Allision LaRussa, B.A., CPS, RYT**, also examined professional identify formation through the ancient art of mask making during orientation programs with resident physicians and SOMA students.



Education and Excellence

NACHC bestows Gold Advocacy Designation on TWC

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) has recognized The Wright Center as a Gold Advocacy Center of Excellence (ACE) – **the first community health center in Pennsylvania to achieve the gold standard.**

The ACE designation from the national body recognizes The Wright Center's dedication to advocating for and supporting community health centers and providing comprehensive primary and preventive health services to medically underserved populations in rural and urban areas. NACHC awards three levels of ACEs: bronze, silver and gold. Each designation is valid for two years.

"It is an incredible honor to be recognized by NACHC with the Gold ACE designation," said Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO of The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education. "Our advocacy efforts extend throughout our organization, as our 625 dedicated employees live and deliver our shared mission to improve the health and welfare of the communities we are privileged to serve. I am very proud of their collective service efforts to ensure high-quality primary and preventive care are available for all our patients."

An ACE is a community health center that:

- Creates a culture of advocacy to ensure that policy makers commit to investing in affordable, equitable and innovative care that health centers provide;
- Consistently demonstrates engagement success and ongoing commitment to making advocacy an organization priority;
- Actively engages with NACHC and forums that address federal policy issues, as well as their state primary care association and platforms to address key state and local level policy issues that impact community health centers and their patients.



The Wright Center receives national honors from HRSA

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, awarded five 2021 Community Health Quality Recognition (CHQR) awards to The Wright Center for Community Health based on quality improvements, health information technology and the health center's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

HRSA provides the CHQR badges to recognize Health Center Program awardees and Look-Alikes that have made notable quality improvement achievements in the areas of access, quality, health equity and health information technology. HRSA awarded three new badges in 2021 to recognize health centers' response to the COVID-19 pandemic – The Wright Center received all three.

The Wright Center received the following HRSA COVID-19 Awards:





Wright Center partners with NIMAA

Program for medical assistants addresses critical shortage of health care professionals



Nicole Munley, CMA, left, a medical assistant manager at the Mid Valley Practice, discusses the appointment schedule with her colleague, Jenna Dunn, CMA, a certified medical assistant at the clinical site in Jermyn.



Melissa Lemus will join The Wright Center as a medical assistant after being the first Wright Center-sponsored graduate of the NIMAA program.

A Wright Center for Community Health and National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement initiative is addressing a critical national shortage of health care professionals.

The collaboration educates and trains students over 29 weeks to become certified medical assistants. The program combines flexible online learning with a paid internship at one of The Wright Center for Community Health's primary care practices.

Students who are accepted into the program receive personalized training with experienced medical professionals at the Wright Center during the clinical portion of their education. After completing the educational component, students will be eligible to take the National Healthcareer Association Medical Assistant examination to receive their certified clinical medical assistant credential.

A medical assistant is responsible for assisting doctors and nurses in providing care to patients in hospitals, doctor's offices and other health care facilities. For more information or to register for the next cohort, go to nimaa.edu/admissions.

Archbald couple appreciates Wright Center services



Listen to **Agnes and Andy Touch** talk about The Wright Center for Community Health, and you might mistake the longtime married couple for paid spokespeople.

Agnes Touch praises the staff for its compassionate care. Andy Touch calls The Wright Center a "great community asset."

But this duo, each in their 80s, doesn't get a penny for promoting The Wright Center's primary care services. In fact, Andy isn't even a regular patient.

The Northeast Pennsylvania natives simply value the help they have received from The Wright

Center – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when they and one of their daughters received treatment for the virus – and they want others across the region to know all that the organization offers to help individuals and families be healthy.

Due to their health histories and ages, the Touches were eager in January 2021 to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Agnes made an appointment to receive her first dose of the Moderna vaccine at the Mid Valley Practice in Jermyrn. Andy accompanied her and asked if he, too, could get the in-demand, but not yet widely available vaccine. Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak recommended he first get an exam that included a check of his vital signs. Andy consented – which turned out to be a potentially



To read more about how The Wright Center fulfills its mission, go to TheWrightCenter.org/our-stories to find additional stories about our patients, residents, and services.

“She said my blood pressure was close to stroke range,” Andy Touch recalls.

disaster-averting decision. “She said my blood pressure was close to stroke range,” he recalls. Dr. Thomas-Hemak, acting in coordination with Andy’s regular physician, recommended changing to a different hypertension drug and quickly facilitated the switch.

“More people should be aware that The Wright Center is not just a place where you go to see a doctor for a checkup,” says Andy, a retired insurance agent. “They have psychiatrists for mental health. They have dentists. They’ll do bloodwork for you. They’re trying to make it a one-stop health and wellness center,” he says.



After feeling ‘sick as a puppy’ and testing positive for coronavirus earlier this year, Andy Touch received the COVID-19 antibody infusion therapy at The Wright Center for Community Health Mid Valley Practice in Jermyn. He and his wife, Agnes, who also was administered the treatment, avoided becoming seriously ill and are able to enjoy their usual activities.

State funding expands Driving Better Health’s reach



The Wright Center for Community Health was awarded \$75,000 in state funding to encourage hesitant residents in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming counties to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The new grant funding is part of the state’s \$2.5 million COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Program. With the grant funding, The Wright Center expanded Driving Better Health’s reach in the Hazleton area.

The Wright Center’s 34-foot mobile medical unit, better known as Driving Better Health, delivers primary health care where people live and work in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Our Stories

Blooming Again: Inspirational images from people living in recovery serve to promote healing

Looking at the ho-hum hallways in The Wright Center for Community Health's Clarks Summit Practice, **Dr. William Dempsey** and his colleagues saw an opportunity to give a platform to patients – and just maybe help them to heal.



They asked patients and employees to share personal photographs with deep meaning, the sort of cellphone images that capture an inspiring scene, a significant life moment, a milestone. They particularly wanted to receive and spotlight photos from people who cope with substance use disorders, such as addiction to opioids.

The result: a fast-growing photo collection that reflects pieces of our shared humanity, from its emotional messiness to everyday majesty.

"These photos capture the spiritual part of the journey that our patients are on," says Dr. Dempsey, deputy chief medical officer of The Wright Center and medical director of its Clarks Summit Practice. "We ask each person who submits a photo to tell their story. What's the message your photo conveys? When you took the photo, what was the subject saying to you? That's what we're trying to get."

One stark photograph zooms in on a snow-covered patch of ground and a few items that could be mistaken for litter: a Campbell's Chunky soup can and an empty water bottle. The patient calls this image "My Last Meal as an Addict."

About 40 photographs have been framed and mounted so far, hinting at what promises to become a vast collection of eye-catching and discussion-spurring art. "We're going to fill the walls," says **Carlie Kropp**, a case manager for The



Patients of The Wright Center for Community Health's Clarks Summit Practice are being asked to contribute personal photos of meaningful and inspirational images, such as this pink flower.

Wright Center's Opioid Use Disorder Center of Excellence. She and Dr. Dempsey say the photo project offers multiple benefits, from sparking conversations about important topics with patients who are living in recovery, to reducing stigma surrounding addiction, to making the clinic's interior a bit more attractive.

Each photo will be displayed with a label and brief message, giving its creator a voice to explain the shot and its significance. A flower with vibrant pinks and yellows, for example, fills one frame, representing one patient's self-described experience of "Blooming Again," Kropp says.

Nature is a common theme of several photos: a rainbow emerging after a storm, trees reflected in placid water, a sunrise. Collectively, the participants shared shots evoking happiness, heartache and perhaps the most important "H" of all: hope.

To read more about how The Wright Center fulfills its mission, go to Thewrightcenter.org/our-stories to find additional stories about our patients, residents, and services.



A collection of photos taken by patients and employees at The Wright Center for Community Health's Clarks Summit Practice includes powerful and poignant images, including this lantern release in memory of a lost loved one.

After a destructive spring storm, Dr. William Dempsey encountered this forested scene and took a cellphone photo, which he calls 'Recovery Begins.' Today, the image is part of the art collection.



'My Last Meal as an Addict,' is one of many patient-submitted photographs that make up a growing and inspirational art collection at The Wright Center for Community Health's Clarks Summit Practice.



ENGAGING THE **WRIGHT** PEOPLE

New in the clinic

Vikas Khurana, M.D., was named the director of the Gastroenterology Fellowship. A graduate of the University of Delhi's Maulana Azad Medical College in India, he completed his residency in internal medicine at State University of New York Health Science Center in Brooklyn, New York, and a fellowship in gastroenterology at the University of Miami School of Medicine in Miami, Florida. Khurana also holds an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and served as an associate professor of medicine at Temple University.

Simin Nasr, M.D., a board-certified family medicine physician, trains and educates the next generation of primary care providers and collaboratively treats patients of all ages as a preceptor alongside a high-quality empaneled care team of resident physicians at the Scranton Practice.

In addition to her clinical duties, she serves as a family medicine physician faculty member for The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education. She plans to sit for her boards in October 2022 to become certified in geriatric medicine. A graduate of the Belarusian State Medical University in Minsk, Belarus, she completed an obstetrics and gynecology residency at Gilan University of Medical Sciences in Iran and provided OB-GYN services in both community-based and hospital settings.

Tanureet Kochar, M.D., is a dual board-certified internal medicine and geriatric medicine physician, who provides services at the Mid Valley Practice in Jermyn. In addition to her clinical duties, she serves as an internal medicine and geriatric physician faculty member.

She earned her medical degree from Dayanand Medical College and Hospital, Punjab, India. Kochar completed her internal medicine residency at Charleston Area Medical Center, Charleston, West Virginia, and fellowships in geriatrics and sleep training at Detroit Medical Center/Wayne State University, Michigan.

Nirali Patel, M.D., is a board-certified internal medicine and board-eligible geriatric physician. She sees adult patients at the Scranton Practice. Patel is also the associate program director of the Geriatrics Fellowship program and core faculty of the Internal Medicine Residency for The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education.

She earned her medical degree from Medical University of Lublin, Poland, and completed her internal medicine residency and geriatrics fellowship training at The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education.



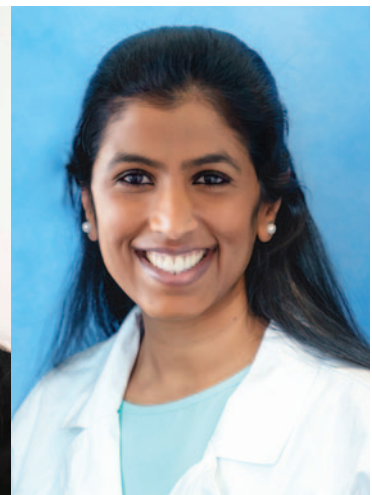
Dr. Vikas Khurana



Dr. Simin Nasr



Dr. Tanureet Kochar



Dr. Nirali Patel



The 'integrator' New executive vice president and chief administrative officer relishes role as agent of change

Scott Koerwer, Ph.D., Ed.D., has been a professor and a vice dean in medical education. He's been a college president, a business school dean, an entrepreneur, a consultant, and a higher education and business thought leader. Now he is the executive vice president and chief administrative officer for The Wright Center, a role he says blends all of his passions into one job and allows him to do what he likes best – build, operationalize, and grow teams while striving for excellence in support of the education, health, and well-being of learners and communities.

"Before coming to The Wright Center, I had a series of conversations with Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak," he said. "She said, 'I have a feeling we might be able to do something together,' and lo and behold we found we had very similar interests, especially in increasing the number of health care learners in the region as a component of economic growth and community health."

Koerwer said his title may sound traditional, but the role he agreed to fill is unusual and is better described as an "integrator," as he will begin to orchestrate and oversee the major day-to-day functions of the nonprofit enterprise and holds the people, processes, systems, priorities, and strategies together.

As the "integrator," he provides executive leadership oversight of all administrative departments and services while contributing to the enterprise's clinical delivery and educational missions. Koerwer also guides the integration of graduate and undergraduate interprofessional medical, behavioral, and dental education activities.

"Dr. Thomas and I agree that we don't have to replicate existing systems to have a significant impact in the communities we serve and in the industries of health care and health education," said Koerwer, who in his new role will work to strategically position The Wright Center in a way that allows the enterprise to accomplish major goals in coordination and partnership with community partners. "Instead, our concept is of open, collaborative, collective action with committed institutions and partners in order to yield community benefit.

"It is a privilege to join The Wright Center team during very exciting times," Koerwer added.

Overall, Koerwer has more than 30 years of experience working at world-class institutions of higher education and business. At Geisinger, he served as vice president of strategy and planning, and vice dean for graduate education in the Commonwealth School of Medicine where he maintains a faculty appointment.

At Newberry College in South Carolina, he served as the 21st president and as a business professor. In addition, he has served as deputy dean and clinical professor of management at the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business; associate dean of graduate and executive programs and services at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business; and director of the executive education division of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

He has also been a part of or led several startup organizations, including serving as a co-founder of an early, online higher education enrollment management company that raised nearly \$25 million in venture capital before it was acquired by Hobsons. Koerwer also has provided his executive education and consulting expertise to dozens of national and international organizations and institutions of higher education, including Lockheed Martin, British Airways, British Petroleum, Lane Construction, Merrill Lynch, Samsung, Siam Cement, and Commercial Bank, Toyota, Duke Corporate Education, Auburn University, University of Kansas School of Medicine, University of Nevada School of Medicine, George Washington University, the University of International Business and Economics (in China), and more.

A lifelong learner, Koerwer has a bachelor's degree from Muhlenberg College. He earned a master's degree in government from Lehigh University, a Doctor of Education degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Thomas Jefferson University.



Scott Koerwer, Ph.D., Ed.D.

Engaging the Wright People

A career supporting high-quality patient care

New VP for quality and assurance touches lives of patients by improving processes



Connie Sixta started working as a staff nurse in 1972, then felt called to do even more to promote good health and quality patient care.

So, she began to teach other nurses.

"I believed if I could teach nurses how to do a good job and understand all the things that are important in the role, I could help a larger number of people and better support patient care," said Sixta, who graduated from nursing school in the 1970s in Omaha, Nebraska.

In the five decades since then, Constance "Connie" S. Sixta, Ph.D., MSN, RN, MBA, has made a habit of tak-

ing on new and expanded job roles that allow her to not only touch the lives of more patients, but also to improve the quality of practitioners, processes, and environments.

The Nebraska native – who hails from former late-night television host Johnny Carson's hometown of Norfolk – has hopscotched across the country, working for hospitals, health systems, and the renowned Institute for Healthcare Improvement. As a quality improvement consultant, she has collaborated with influential change agents such as Dr. Edward Wagner, the father of the chronic care model, and the professionals at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Now, she is sharing her extensive expertise with The Wright Center for Community Health as a full-time employee.

Sixta joined the organization in March as vice president for quality and assurance. She has since transitioned to the role of interim vice president and chief operating officer of clinical administration.

"I'm lucky to be working here," said Sixta, who maintains a Texas residence, but routinely travels to Northeast Pennsylvania for in-person sessions with colleagues. "I love improvement work, and the job that I have, most of it is about improvement and growing people."

As an independent consultant, Sixta previously guided projects at numerous primary care practices, including Federally Qualified Health Centers. She worked with large health systems, including Continuum Health Partners in New York City, a stakeholder of eight hospitals. She also directed quality improvement collaboratives sponsored by organizations, such as the Association of American Medical Colleges, the American Medical Association, and state governments.

She became familiar with The Wright Center about 11 years ago while serving as a leading director of the Pennsylvania Chronic Care Initiative, in which she supported the Patient-Centered Medical Home transformation of our clinical practices. As she recalls, The Wright Center was "a star" among a strong Northeast region during that statewide rollout.

She had continued to routinely assist The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education, serving as a valued consultant for various population health, care management, and referral management projects, as well as care compacts within our enriched community networks.

Now part of our executive management team, Sixta can focus her energy on reinforcing the basics of patient-centered care and ensuring the standardization of clinical processes.

"We had it going really well at our primary care practices, but I think the COVID-19 pandemic knocked certain things out of place," she said. "We've got to get back to the basic foundation of care."

"And we will," she added. "We have a great team."



New roles in the office

Wright Center names VP of primary care and recovery services integration

The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education have named **Scott J. Constantini** as the associate vice president of Primary Care and Recovery Services Integration.

In his new role, Constantini will advocate for a preferred future in primary health care and medical education for trauma-informed and community-based primary care, and behavioral health and recovery services integration initiatives, while engaging in legislative advocacy and relationship building with regional, state and national stakeholders.

Constantini will also serve as The Wright Center's internal champion for trauma-informed training for all employees and advise the organization in its journey toward trauma competency. In addition, he will promote a culture of integration within The Wright Center and represent community programs that flip the model of primary health care to the prevention of high-risk behaviors.

He also will collaboratively support leadership of the Behavioral Health Service Line and interface with payors and internal stakeholders, while working directly with grants and project management as the primary subject matter expert related to behavioral health and addiction for relevant grants and projects.

Constantini is a graduate of Penn State University. He has more than 25 years of experience in mental health, trauma, substance misuse and leadership management. He is a member of the Lackawanna County Recovery Coalition, Lackawanna County Overdose Review Team and Recovery Bank Steering Committee.



Scott J. Constantini

Wright Center prioritizes DEI; appoints Dr. Samonte as vice president

The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education has named **Dr. Alexis Samonte** as its vice president of Sponsoring Institution Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Faculty and Curriculum Development, and Graduate Medical Education Funding Stewardship.



Dr. Alexis Samonte

In this newly created role, Samonte will work with executives and others throughout the organization to ensure ongoing and innovative faculty development, substantial accreditation compliance, community benefit tracking, and continuous resident wellness and resiliency, among other objectives. One major focus will be to create a robust strategy for diversity, equity and inclusion. Samonte's diversity and inclusion efforts will span all three nonprofit entities: The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, The Wright Center for Community Health and The Wright Center for Patient & Community Engagement.

"I am excited about this new role," said Samonte, who previously served as medical director of The Wright Center for Community Health's pediatric services. "Leading this journey is a privilege, since diversity, equity and inclusion are embedded within our mission."

The longtime pediatrician, who is a native of the Philippines, will work to educate faculty, staff and members of the broader community about diversity and inclusion matters such as those promoted by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education's (ACGME) "ACGME Equity Matters" initiative. The ACGME initiative aims to drive change within graduate medical education institutions by increasing physician workforce diversity, and building safe and inclusive learning environments, while promoting health equity by addressing racial disparities in health care and overall population health.

Additionally, Samonte will develop volunteer opportunities for residents and fellows that focus on diversity, equity and inclusion activities. She also will monitor and track the progress of The Wright Center's diversity-related metrics.

A Jenkins Township resident, Samonte earned her doctorate degree in medicine and surgery as well as a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines. She also earned a master's degree in business administration from the University of Scranton.

Engaging the Wright People

Awards and accolades

Dr. Sheth recognized for mentorship

The American College of Physicians (ACP) recognized **Dr. Jignesh Y. Sheth**, chief medical officer for The Wright Center for Community Health and senior vice president of enterprise IT, clinical operations and education integration, during National Mentoring Month for making a positive impact on the internal medicine community through mentorship.

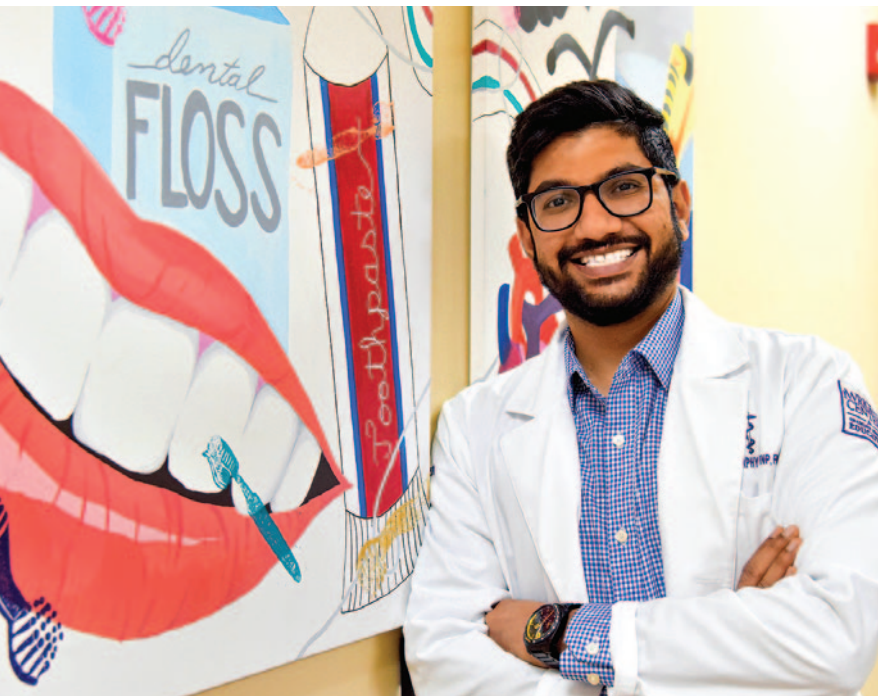
Dually board certified in internal medicine and addiction medicine, Sheth received a certificate of appreciation from ACP in recognition of his commitment to mentoring and the positive impact of his mentorship in the internal medicine community. National Mentoring Month is observed every January.

Sheth received the national honor after **Dr. Sandeep Mandal**, a postgraduate year-one resident physician in The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education Internal Medicine Residency, shared with ACP how his mentor has had a positive impact on his life and medical residency.



Dr. Jignesh Y. Sheth

Dr. Upadhyayula gets NYU Langone Dental Medicine appointment



Dr. Satya Upadhyayula, a board-certified general practice dentist at The Wright Center for Community Health, received a faculty appointment to NYU Langone Dental Medicine, enabling him to share his oral surgery and dental treatment know-how with dental residents who are training locally.

The Wright Center became a dental training site and welcomed its first two residents in 2021 through an affiliation with NYU Langone Dental Medicine. The Brooklyn-based organization operates the world's largest post-doctoral dental residency program of its kind, training about 400 residents annually at partner sites, including community health centers, hospitals and other affiliates in nearly 30 states.

The Wright Center is currently the only partner site in Pennsylvania.



Board Certifications



Dr. Jumea Barooah

Karen E. Arscott, D.O.

Dr. Karen Arscott, a primary care physician and addiction medicine specialist, was board certified by the American Board of Preventive Medicine in addiction medicine. Since 2016, The Wright Center has been one of 50 Opioid Use Disorder Centers of Excellence in Pennsylvania.



Dr. Karen E. Arscott

Jumea Barooah, M.D.

Dr. Jumea Barooah, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education's designated institutional official and a primary care physician, has received board certification in lifestyle medicine – an approach that uses small lifestyle changes to treat and potentially reverse chronic disease and prevent illness.

Charles N. Burns Jr., M.D.

Dr. Charles N. Burns Jr., an addiction medicine specialist, was board certified by the American Board of Preventive Medicine in addiction medicine. TWC's Opioid Use Disorder Center of Excellence is designed to help individuals in recovery reshape their lifestyles and is also linked to the Healthy MOMS program.



Dr. Charles N. Burns Jr.



Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak

Linda Thomas-Hemak, M.D., FACP, FAAP

Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO of The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education, has earned her fourth board certification, this one from the American Board of Obesity Medicine in obesity medicine. The certification gives physicians the insights and tools to help patients who are struggling with the complex issue of obesity.



Engaging The Wright People

Farewells

Joseph Ercolani, D.D.S., retires

For more than 40 years, **Joseph Ercolani, D.D.S.**, provided dental care to patients of all ages in Northeast Pennsylvania, including at The Wright Center for Community Health's Mid Valley Practice in Jermyn. He retired from practicing dentistry in 2021.

The Wright Center for Community Health and employees acknowledged their appreciation for his dedication to patients, the dental profession and the organization's overall mission, vision and core values by holding a retirement party at the Mid Valley Practice, complete with balloons, cake, party favors and well wishes.



Colleagues and friends wished Dr. Ercolani well during his retirement party.





PA-ACP elects Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak governor

Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO of The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education, has been elected governor-elect for the eastern region of the American College of Physicians' Pennsylvania Chapter (PA-ACP).

In April, she began serving one year as governor-elect concurrently with **Dr. Lawrence H. Jones**, governor of the eastern region whose term expires in 2023. Her four-year term as governor begins April 2023.

Founded in 1915, the **American College of Physicians** is a national organization of internists, who specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and care of adults. It is the nation's largest medical-specialty organization, with more than 161,000 members, of which more than 7,800 are members of the PA-ACP chapter. The PA-ACP chapter has three regional governors that represent the eastern, western and southeastern regions of the commonwealth.

"I am humbled and proud to represent and advocate on behalf of my physician colleagues we represent, the profession of medicine we embody and the patients, families and communities we serve through the American College of Physicians' Pennsylvania Chapter," said Dr. Thomas-Hemak, who previously received the prestigious Dr. Ann Preston Women in Medicine and Laureate awards from PA-ACP in 2020 and 2014 respectively. "I am grateful for and inspired by the incredible honor and leadership opportunity."

It is the nation's largest medical-specialty organization, with more than 161,000 members, of which more than 7,800 are members of the PA-ACP chapter.



Education and Excellence

Graduation ceremony celebrates residents, fellows as they embark on next phase of medical careers

'The sense of camaraderie was like no other and it's a feeling I'll never forget.'

—Pranav Karambelkar, M.D., '22
Former IM chief resident/
President, house staff council

The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education celebrated the accomplishments of **67 residents and fellows** who completed their specialized education and training during the **44th annual graduation ceremony** on Saturday, June 25, at the Scranton Cultural Center at the Masonic Temple.

The Class of 2022, known for its resiliency and dedication in the face of a worldwide pandemic, features graduates from the internal medicine (28), regional family medicine (11), national family medicine (16) and psychiatry (4) residencies, and cardiovascular

disease (3), gastroenterology (2) and geriatrics (3) fellowships, many of whom will continue their education or practice of medicine in Northeast Pennsylvania.

The graduating class also includes the first two dental graduates who are members of The Wright Center's affiliation with the New York University Langone Dental Medicine Postdoctoral Residency Program.

Graduates who plan to stay in the region to practice medicine or continue their studies include:

- **Dr. Gurminder Singh** will begin an internal medicine residency at The Wright Center;
- **Dr. Roger Elliott** will join Adfinitas Health, Scranton, as a hospitalist;
- **Dr. Pranav Karambelkar** and **Dr. Purveshkumar Patel** will remain with The Wright Center for a cardiovascular disease fellowship;
- **Dr. Jacob Miller** will join the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre as a teaching hospitalist; and
- **Dr. Saba Safdar** will join Lehigh Valley Hospital in Dickson City as a hospitalist.



The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education held its 44th annual graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 25. Participating in the program, from left, are Harold Baillie, Ph.D., chairperson, Graduate Medical Education Board of Directors; Dr. Robert Wright; Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, president and CEO; and Gerard Geoffroy, chairperson, Community Health Board of Directors.



Dr. Linda Thomas-Hemak, left, poses for a photo with Dr. Brenda Chuksorji, who graduated from the Regional Family Medicine Residency in June.



ENGAGING THE WRIGHT PEOPLE

The 44th annual graduation ceremony was held at the Scranton Cultural Center at the Masonic Temple.

Education and Excellence

Acing the test: Psychiatry residents earn a top 10 score in national exam

The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education's Psychiatry Residency: Postgraduate Year 1 (PGY1) cohort placed in the top 10 nationally on the American College of Psychiatrists' Psychiatry Resident in Training Examination.

The two-part exam, administered three to four times during the four-year residency, tests performance in comparison with other resident physicians at a similar level of training in the United States, Canada and elsewhere. It consists of 300 questions and addresses content areas, such as neurosciences, clinical psychiatry, epidemiology, behavioral and social sciences, and more.

"I am incredibly proud of our resident physicians. They embody the ideals of The Wright Center. They have worked extremely hard under trying circumstances during the pandemic to master the field of psychiatry and provide patient-centered care to the patients who have entrusted their care to us."

—Dr. Sanjay Chandragiri
Founding Director of The Wright Center for Graduate
Medical Education's Psychiatry Residency

The cohort of Drs. Salman Alam, Nathan Hoff, Christine Lu, Rosa Peverini and Ashley Zhan scored in the 97th percentile among the 230 psychiatry residencies in the nation.



Dr. Ashley Zhan



Dr. Salman Alam



Dr. Nathan Hoff



Dr. Christine Lu



Dr. Rosa Peverini

New residency targets a healthy and functional life

The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, in collaboration with Allied Services Integrated Health System, received initial approval from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education for the creation of a four-year Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation residency.

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation diagnoses, manages and treats conditions of the bones, muscles, joints, and central and peripheral nervous systems that affect a person's ability to function. Patients treated by a physiatrist can recover and return to a healthy and mobile lifestyle.

The new residency will be under the direction of **Dr. Kenneth Gentilezza**, a board-certified physiatrist and medical director of Allied Services' Transitional Rehabilitation Unit. The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education now accepts postgraduate year-one residents for the residency. The first class was seated in July.

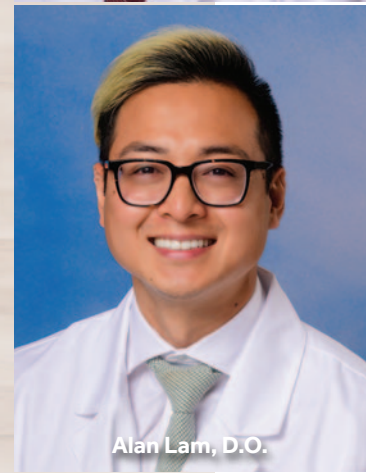
Dr. Jumea Barooah, the designated institutional official (DIO) at The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, said, "Under Dr. Gentilezza's leadership, we are excited that highly-skilled physiatrists will serve our community and transform the lives of all people with rehabilitative needs."



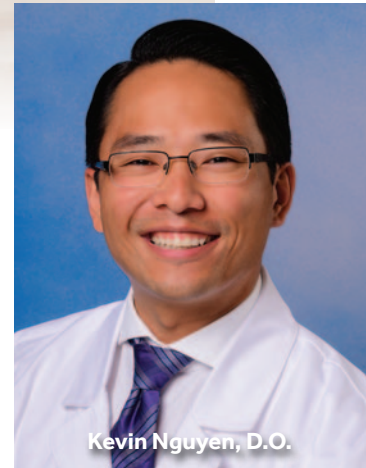
Aliy Ahmed, D.O.



Brad Bierman, D.O.



Alan Lam, D.O.



Kevin Nguyen, D.O.



William P. Conaboy, Esq.
President and CEO
Allied Services Integrated Health System



Robert Cole, Ph.D.
Senior VP & Chief Analytics Officer
Allied Services Integrated Health System



Dr. Kenneth Gentilezza
Program Director
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Engaging The Wright People

Meet Dr. Manju Mary Thomas 'Aim to be the best.'

As advice goes, it was five simple, straightforward words that still resonate with **Dr. Manju Mary Thomas**, a Wright Center for Community Health board-certified pediatrician: "Aim to be the best."

Dr. Thomas said she was inspired to join the "very beautiful and challenging field" of medicine by her uncle, the late Dr. K.C. Joseph, a noted surgeon in the suburbs of Pittsburgh. She admired how easily his patients trusted him and how comfortable they seemed in his presence.

"That impressed me, and I wanted to be like him," recalls Thomas, who is also the medical director of pediatrics and community and school-based medical home services.

"I came to The Wright Center because of the teaching opportunities and the opportunity to do community health."

—Dr. Manju Mary Thomas
Board-Certified Pediatrician

Dr. Thomas said she also found the TWC's mission inspiring. "I came to The Wright Center because of the teaching opportunities and the opportunity to do community health," said Dr. Thomas. "Children need a very strong family foundation with as much safety, care and education as possible. You also must balance what is good for the child while addressing parents' concerns."

In a career that has spanned more than 23 rewarding years, Thomas has experienced her fair share of uncommon cases that have left a lasting impression on her. Among them is a young patient saved by a routine physical exam. "During the exam, I discovered a lymph node in the subclavian area – a dangerous area," The Wright Center doctor said, recalling how some-

thing as commonplace as this procedure resulted in an early – and lifesaving – diagnosis for her 14-year-old female patient. "It turns out she had lymphoma."

Thankfully, the patient had early-stage lymphoma and was able to receive proper clinical care to clear her lymphatic system of cancer. That former patient is now a medical school graduate and an oncologist.

"I felt great," Dr. Thomas said, knowing the early diagnosis made the cure possible. "Medical school was a very impressive trajectory for her. It was her true calling."





Call to care for the whole person: Meet Dr. Steven Archambault

Dr. Steven Archambault had nearly completed college with a degree in psychology when he realized his true calling wasn't to only solve matters of the mind, but to go beyond the brain. "I wanted to work in an environment that enabled me to take care of the whole person," he said.

He began the years-long pursuit of becoming a family physician, ultimately serving his medical residency with a program perfectly suited to his interests in holistic health care. Archambault, 30, who completed his training in 2021, is notable for becoming the first graduate of The Wright Center's modern-day Regional Family Medicine Residency to join the organization as a practicing physician and faculty member. He sees patients at The Wright Center's Scranton Practice.

He builds on the tradition established by multiple alumni from The Wright Center's Internal Medicine Residency – a long-established program that traces its roots back to 1976 – who have chosen to remain with the health center after their training was completed and provide care for Northeast Pennsylvania residents. Those alumni include Drs. Jignesh Sheth, chief medical officer; Jumea Barooah, designated institutional official; and about a half-dozen others, all of whom have advanced to leadership positions.

A New England transplant now living in West Pittston, Archambault is the first member of his immediate family to attend college. He grew up in the former farming community of Hollis, New Hampshire. After finishing his undergraduate work at the University of New Hampshire, he fine-tuned his career trajectory and attended medical school at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Erie, Pennsylvania.

He then entered residency at The Wright Center, seizing on opportunities to make the most of his graduate medical education right here in Northeast Pennsylvania. "I decided to go for it," said Archambault. "As residents, we had a lot of opportunities to work with different specialists – orthopedic doctors,

sports medicine doctors – all of whom do very different things than we do as primary care physicians."

Archambault picked up insights in the operating room and other settings that allow him to be a more well-rounded, empathetic doctor. If he encounters a patient, for instance, who has "small scars" from a recent gallbladder surgery, he will know "what they went through and what happened inside them. You get a better understanding of how significant the 'small things' are."

He credits The Wright Center, and physician faculty members, such as Dr. William Dempsey,

deputy chief medical officer, for fostering his natural inclination to independently pursue additional knowledge and career-enhancing experiences. He chose the Scranton-based Wright Center for the next step in his career journey in part because it satisfied his desire to work in a learning environment, energized by the academic pursuits of its medical students, residents and fellows.



"I wanted to work in an environment that enabled me to take care of the whole person."

—Dr. Steven Archambault,
Practicing Physician

Education and Excellence

Psychiatry Residency expands in response to national shortage

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) has approved the Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education's application to add three resident physicians to the psychiatry residency.

To meet the growing national demand for psychiatric care, the current workforce of about 45,580 psychiatrists must increase by 2,800 behavioral specialists by 2025, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Today's estimated 6.4% shortage of psychiatrists is expected to nearly double to 12% by 2025.

"As demand grows, workforce shortages during the pandemic have exacerbated our nation's health crisis," said **Dr. Sanjay Chandragiri**, founding program director of the Psychiatry Residency. "The ability to expand our psychiatry team will help us provide patients with the care and treatment they deserve and expect from The Wright Center."

ACGME is the body responsible for accrediting all graduate medical training programs for physicians in the United States. The growth of The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education's Psychiatry Residency enables



Dr. Sanjay Chandragiri
Founding Director
Psychiatry Residency



Dr. Vinod Sharma
Associate Program Director
Psychiatry Residency

25 resident physicians to serve the region, while also replenishing the nation's health care workforce in the specialty field.

The additional residents joined The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education's four-year Psychiatry Residency in July 2022.

The Wright Center for Community Health presents at-home COVID-19 test kits to Friedman Jewish Community Center, community partners

The Wright Center for Community Health joined in the federally led coronavirus response by distributing at-home COVID-19 test kits to community partners in Northeast Pennsylvania, including the Friedman Jewish Community Center in Kingston, and the McGlynn Learning Center and Volunteers of American in Wilkes-Barre.

Overall, The Wright Center disbursed more than 23,000 free at-home test kits, which were supplied to the community health center as part of the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) COVID-19 Testing Supply Program. Of the total, more than half The Wright Center's allotment of kits were supplied to the general public. Health center patients and employees also received the self-test kits in an effort to contain community spread of the potentially fatal virus.

The Wright Center for Patient & Community Engagement, a subsidiary of The Wright Center for Community Health, mobilized volunteers, including board members, resident physicians and employees, to distribute the kits in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties.

The Wright Center also organized and staffed drive-through distributions of free kits in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties. Three of those kit giveaways were held at the organization's Mid Valley Practice in Jermyn. Two giveaways were completed in Luzerne County, one in conjunction with the Kingston Fire Department and one in partnership with Luzerne County Community College in Nanticoke.

As a community partner, the Jewish Community Alliance of Northeastern Pennsylvania received a supply of children's reusable masks and 45 test kits, and quickly distributed the masks and rapid antigen tests to members.

Gary Bernstein, the alliance's CEO, appreciated the in-demand health care supplies, which were given to senior adults participating in the Friedman Jewish Community Center's Men's Club and Parkinson's exercise class in Kingston. "I always tell people 'community' is our middle name," said Bernstein. "Collaboration with The Wright Center is very important to me and our organization. It's like-minded organizations working together to strengthen the community."



People experiencing homelessness get a second chance, thanks to collaboration

Partnership with Community Intervention Center offers safety net and 'fresh start'

Bounced out of foster care when she turned 18, **Angela Powers** spent a "rough" five years dealing with homelessness, often staying on the streets of New York City's Times Square.

She then moved to Scranton, where her fortunes seemed on the upswing. But the house in which she lived in 2007 was condemned, thrusting her back into an uncertain and unsafe situation. "I had no relatives in Scranton," Powers recalls. "I had no friends."

She turned to the Community Intervention Center (CIC) – a now 50-year-old nonprofit in Scranton that provides shelters, apartment-style supportive housing, case management and related services for historically marginalized populations, such as adults who are experiencing homelessness. The Wright Center for Community Health is proud to partner with the CIC, supplying its clients, like Powers, with primary health care and other forms of compassionate assistance.

"They have helped me in every way possible," says Powers, 43, who now lives in an apartment and is pursuing her bachelor's degree in human services. "There's no limit to the help that they try to give you. They do things from the heart."

Highlights of the CIC/TWC Partnership include:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, TWC dispatched its mobile medical unit, Driving Better Health, multiple times to CIC's daytime drop-in center on Sixth Avenue, enabling clients there to receive coronavirus tests and vaccines.
- On the mobile unit's first trip to the CIC in April 2021, nearly 30 people received the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine. Flu vaccines also have been made available.
- The Wright Center's team has distributed hygiene products, blankets and other essentials to those who want them. And the team offers "to-go packages," each containing bottled water as well as easy-to-carry foods such as sandwiches and breakfast sandwich bars.
- At The Wright Center's Scranton Practice, patients have the convenience of going to a single site to access medical, dental and behavioral health services. No patient is turned away due to an inability to pay.
- The Wright Center's team provides CIC clients with an emotional boost by scheduling occasional social activities at the drop-in center near downtown Scranton, which on most days draws 60 to 80 people.
- The Wright Center's Patient & Community Engagement team goes to the CIC regularly, with trays of pizza in hand, engaging clients in fun activities such as bingo games and holiday crafts. Most recently, about 15 CIC clients completed the mural project titled, "Instilling Hope."



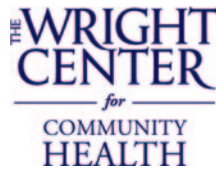
Jean Brannon, far left, gets vaccinated against COVID-19 at the Community Intervention Center, while Angela Powers, right, showcases the mural residents at the Scranton-based nonprofit designed and painted in coordination with The Wright Center.

WE HUMBLLY ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK:

Our board members who unselfishly dedicated their time and talent; Our residents and fellows who entrust us with their education; The patients and families who place their confidence in our care teams; Our employees and staff who deliver our mission and vision every day;

Our community, which shapes our experience and allows us to serve.

The Wright Center for Community Health is patient – and community-governed to ensure a patient-led majority, in alignment with Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike requirements. The Wright Center for Community Health Board gives voice to individuals, families and communities, and provides meaningful contributions and guidance to ensure that we deliver care to the nation's most vulnerable and underserved patients and families, in alignment with the mission of HRSA and the Bureau of Primary Health Care.



The list below includes everyone who served on a board at any time from July 1, 2021 thru May 1, 2022. For a current list of board members, visit thewrightcenter.org/board-members.

Linda Thomas-Hemak, M.D., CEO,
Ex-Officio, Non-Voting

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chairperson

William Waters, Ph.D.,
vice chairperson

Deborah Kolsovsky,
treasurer

Mary Marrara,
secretary

Mary Ann Chindemi, RN

Jody Cordaro

Patricia Desouza

LeeAnn Eschbach, Ph.D.

James Gavin

Kim Heritscko

Kristen Hill

Tracy Hunt

Jason Kavulich

Richard Krebs

Deborah Kolsovsky

Lewis Marcus

Jeff Metz

Melissa Simrell

Francis Stevens

Ellen Walko

Linda Thomas-Hemak, M.D.,
president

Harold Baillie, Ph.D.,
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James Gavin,
vice chairperson

John Kearney,
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Carol Rubel,
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Jumee Barooah, M.D., DIO,

Ex-Officio, Non-Voting

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Ronald Bukowski

Patrick Conaboy, M.D.

Judy Featherstone, M.D.

Lauren Hazzouri, Psy.D.

Vincent Keane

Gertrude McGowan, J.D.

Robert Naismith, Ph.D.

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Teri Ooms

Michael Paglia, M.D.

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Lia Richards-Palmiter, Ph.D.

Douglas Spegman, M.D.

Kevin Sullivan

Debra Youngfelt

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co-chairperson

Williams Waters, Ph.D.,
co-chairperson

Mary Marrara,
vice chairperson

LeeAnn Eschbach, Ph.D.,
secretary

Dr. Jacob Miller,
chief resident liaison

Dr. Viren Raheja,
leader resident liaison

Cathy Genco,
treasurer

Gail Cicerini

Gerard Geoffroy

Robert Grady

Charlie Hemak

Frank Koza

Lorraine Lupini

Kari Machelli

Mary Marrara

Girard Petula, Ph.D.

Sarah Quinlin-Sheridan

Carol Rubel

Tammy Saunders

Ellen Walko

GRANTS & AID

(July 2021–May 30, 2022)

The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education used a combination of private, local, state and federal grants to support its mission-driven work during the 2021-22 fiscal year. The \$29.4 million received in critical grant funding was deployed to improve the health and welfare of our communities through inclusive and responsive health services and the sustainable renewal of an inspired, competent workforce that is privileged to serve.

CLINIC SUPPORT

AllOne Foundation: Improving mental health outcomes for older adults in Northeast Pennsylvania through Telespond Senior Services.

United Way of Wyoming Valley: Ryan White Part B for HIV and Preventative Services in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Health Resources and Services

Administration: Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part C Early Intervention Services in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Maternal and Family Health Services:

Subaward for Title X funding from Health and family planning services.

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg

Foundation: Operating Grant to support the establishment of the Scranton Practice.

PA Department of Health: Community-Based Health Care Grant Program for the Hawley and North Pocono practices.

Health Resources and Services

Administration:

Post-Doctoral Training for Dentistry.

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

Health Resources and Services

Administration:

TeachingHealthCenterFunding

- Residency Programs
- Planning and Development

TECHNOLOGY/COVID-19 RELATED

Centene Corporation and the National Association of Community Health

Centers: Telehealth Access Expansion.

Federal Communications Commission Round 2: COVID-19-related technology.

COVID-19 FUNDING

AllOne Foundation: Support for vaccine clinics through the school-based health program and COVID-19 vaccines in the community using the mobile medical unit, Driving Better Health.

CDC Foundation: Hazleton COVID-19 Relief Project for underserved and vulnerable populations.

Health Resources and Services Administration: American Rescue Plan Act for Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alikes to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to enhance health care services and infrastructure.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ National Association of Community Health Centers/National Health Care for the Homeless Council: COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy for persons experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ Pennsylvania Department of Health:

Vaccine disparities for education and PPE distribution for vulnerable populations in Lackawanna County.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development:

Vaccine outreach for education and marketing of COVID-19 vaccines and testing directed to vulnerable populations in Northeast Pennsylvania, excluding Lackawanna County.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ Lackawanna County COVID-19 Response Program:

Provide bus passes and emergency food bags to vulnerable patients in Lackawanna County.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Providerrelieffunding, Phases 1-4.

Duke University/National Institutes of Health:

Increasing COVID-19 testing in the underserved population in Pennsylvania.

RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES

Appalachian Regional Commission Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems Initiative:

Implement workforce expansion via training-to-employment opportunities for people in recovery.

Health Resources and Services Administration: Rural Communities Opioid Response Program – Implementation.

Health Resources and Services Administration: Rural Communities Opioid Response Program – Neonatal Abstinence Program.

Pennsylvania Department of Health/ Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant (HRSA Title V

Funding): Children and youth with special health care needs.

Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs: Pregnancy support services.

Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs: Pennsylvania Coordinated Medication-Assisted Treatment Program for technical assistance and capacity development for treatment of substance use disorder in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Northeast Behavioral Health Care Consortium and Community Care:

Warm hand-off services with a certified recovery specialist workforce.

Pennsylvania Chapter, American

Academy of Pediatrics: First Food Program to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration rates.

Americares: Mental Health First Aid Instructor Leadership Initiative.

Women in Philanthropy Initiative Fund of the Scranton Area Community

Foundation: Initial child care assistance to help Healthy MOMS program participants return to work.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration: Medication-Assisted Treatment – prescription drug and opioid addiction for hard-to-reach populations.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS

United Way of Wyoming Valley: See to Succeed Program – eye exams and corrective lenses for economically disadvantaged students in Luzerne County.

Scranton Area Community Foundation:

Community Health Workers' Patient Assistance Program in Lackawanna County addressing food insecurity, transportation challenges and providing filled backpacks for children.

GRANT OPERATIONS TEAM

Meaghan P. Ruddy, Ph.D.

SVP, Academic Affairs, Enterprise Assessment/ Advancement, & Chief Research/Development Officer

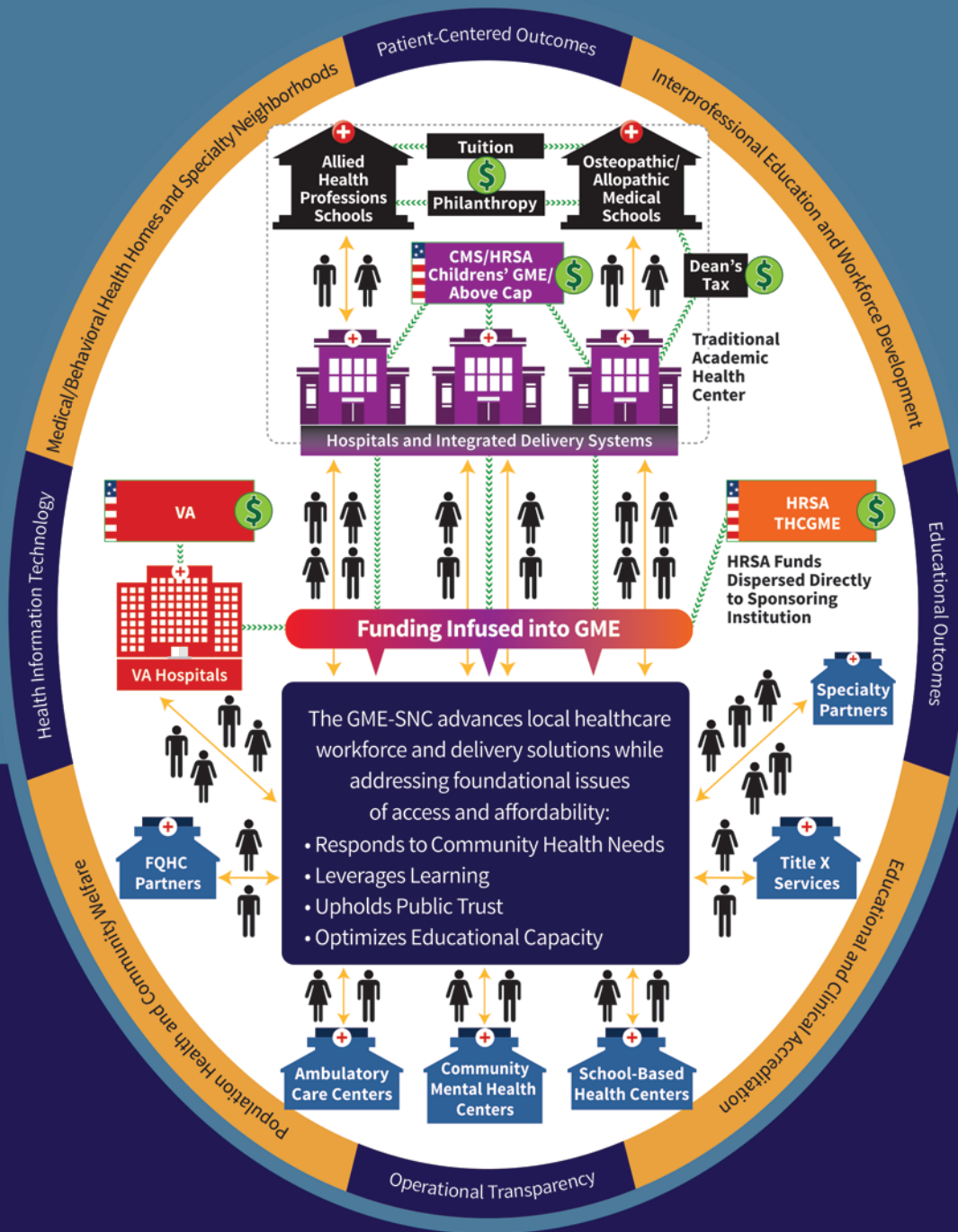
Lisa Baumann Vice President of Strategic Initiatives

Michael Higgins Post-Award Grants Manager

Tom Glaser Associate VP of Grant Operations

Jennifer Washney Grants Specialist

Graduate Medical Education Safety-Net Consortium Model



The GME-SNC Model is an effective, replicable, and scalable model, with a healthy, overdue, inclusive mentality of “achievable by all” that spreads an exciting “we can do more together” culture for essential community provider primary health services with integrated workforce development nationally.

