

**UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY**

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2022-2023**





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# Message From the Chair

Every academic year brings new accomplishments and challenges, and 2022-2023 was no exception. We started the year on the heels of the Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade and the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic. We watched as visitor restrictions were relaxed, staffing shortages became less acute but not eliminated and major changes in URMC leadership were announced. Cindy Becker stepped down as Chief Operating Officer at Highland in December 2022 and Dr. Marc Taubman announced he would be stepping down as Dean and CEO of URMC in December 2023. The coming year will bring new leadership and the opportunity for new perspectives and changes.

Our department also started the process of putting together a strategic plan for the next 5 years. Drawing on the expertise of many faculty, we focused on improving the obstetric and gynecologic health and wellness of all in Western New York and beyond, with increasing equity as a central theme.

Over the next five years, the department will sustain its broad clinical footprint across Western New York while focusing on delivering high quality, equitable care centered on patient needs and experience. Our education and research offerings will both grow to increase the academic connections essential to ultimately providing a high level of care at the bedside. Attention to department culture focusing on equity, wellness and professional mentoring is essential to successfully implementing this plan and sustaining the department's overall success.

The following pages highlight some of the accomplishments of our department over the past year. Each year I am thrilled to share the achievements that emphasize the amazing knowledge, skill and compassion of our faculty. And every year we strive to be "ever better" – Meliora!



**EVA PRESSMAN, MD**

Henry A. Thiede Professor  
Chair of the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology

# Community



On November 21st, the OBGYN & Midwifery Department, Office for Equity & Inclusion, and the School of Nursing presented a special screening of the award-winning documentary **Aftershock!**

The Little Theatre was full of professionals spanning the greater Rochester community, all deeply invested in the work of addressing and remediating disparities in maternal health. Following the viewing of the film, Midwifery Division Director, **Dr. Tracy Webber** facilitated a Q&A discussion panel featuring:

**Senator Samra Brouk** - NY Senator (55th Senate District) & Chair of Committee on Mental Health

**Dr. Twylla Dillion** - Executive Director Health Connect One

**Phyllis Sharp** - DONA Certified Birth & Postpartum Doula, Certified Lactation Counselor, Childbirth Educator

**Dr. Benjamin Christensen** - Jordan Health OB/GYN Clinical Chief

**Dr. Celia McIntosh** - Nurse Practitioner, Vice President of Rochester Black Nurses Association, Black Maternal Health Committee Chair





## ROCHESTER REGIONAL Breastfeeding Coalition

In December, various organizations and individuals across the greater Rochester community joined together to provide hot meals, gift totes, poinsettia plants, and large gift baskets filled with age-appropriate clothes, toys, and breastfeeding materials/supplies for over 30 families.

### The following individuals and organizations joined the ROC City Baby Café staff in this beautiful community collaboration:

NYSDOH	Dr. Aranov, DDS
Wegman's	Jenna Adriaansen, NP.
RRH Women's Center	Dr. Bostock
Highland Hospital Family Maternity Center	Keelee Green, RDH
UR Gender Wellness OB/GYN	Dr. A Harrington
Rochester General Pediatrics	Dr. C. Olson-Chen
RGH Family Birth Center	Michaela Rahimi, CNM
RGH PACU	Dr. H. Smith
RRH Midwifery Group	Dr. N. Sodi
UR OBGYN	Kerri Starks, RN, IBCLC
UR Midwifery Group	Dr. K. Vattana
	Dr. S. Webb

The ROC City Baby Café provides FREE, regular and ongoing education pertaining to breastfeeding basics and tips for achieving infant feeding goals, including:

- Benefits of Skin-to-Skin
- Normal Newborn Behavior
- Feeding Facts
- Positioning & Latch Techniques
- Making & Maintaining Milk Supply
- Addressing Common Concerns
- How To Obtain A Breast Pump

Breastfeeding/chestfeeding/lactation support, education, and guidance is available from lactation professionals. Any pregnant or breastfeeding parent in the community, at any stage in their breastfeeding journey is welcome.

For more information, please visit the [Rochester Regional Breastfeeding Coalition!](#)





# Education Specialists

As education specialists our goal is to enhance the experiences of medical students, residents, fellows, and faculty. While our contributions are just a small part of the department's progress, we're proud to support its focus on education, personal and professional growth, equity, and wellness.

**Medical Clerkship:** During the OBGYN rotation, we act as an additional layer of support as needed. This might consist of offering additional resources, supportive mentorship, as well as guidance regarding study habits, test-taking strategies, and best practices for a successful clerkship.

**Residency:** We take pride in contributing to a residency program that emphasizes innovative education and unwavering support, shaping compassionate and skilled OBGYN professionals.

**Fellowship:** As education specialists, we coordinate the design and facilitation of curricula that enhance the academic, personal and professional development of our OBGYN fellows. We aim to provide any necessary supports that empower them to excel in their specialized areas of OBGYN.

**Faculty:** Through ongoing collaborations among our respective teams, we consistently look for ways to enhance the research, teaching, and educational modalities among our faculty.

Our role within the OBGYN Department is one that offers a unique perspective, as we often have a wide-angled view of all of the many moving parts. Together, we aspire to continue nurturing an environment where education, personal growth, equity, and wellness thrive, shaping a brighter future for OBGYN healthcare.



**KYAN LYNCH, MD, MA**

**AVP for Education and Digital Innovation**  
Office for Equity and Inclusion

**Education Specialist**  
OBGYN Department



**DANIELLE GARY, Med**

**Education Specialist**  
OBGYN Department

# Education Specialists

## The Education Spotlight



### **Bridging Insights Across the Department**

Throughout the academic year, the "Education Spotlight" has served as a vital tool, facilitating an understanding of the diverse educational initiatives flourishing across our department. Curated by Education Specialist, Danielle Gary, it is designed specifically for anyone involved in teaching and learning.

This monthly chronicle is a strategic lens through which faculty can gain insights into the multifaceted educational endeavors, such as:

**Residency Didactics:** Delving into the core of our educational framework, the "Education Spotlight" presents a detailed account of our residency didactics. It quite literally shines a light on the diverse ways that education can be tailored to equip our residents with essential knowledge and skills in obstetrics and gynecology.

**Resident Connections:** Emphasizing the well-being of our physicians, this section of the Spotlight amplifies the *Resident Connections* Curriculum. It offers a window into evidence-based, practical strategies which can be used to combat burnout and foster positive relationships, connection and culture within our department.

**Fellowship Fridays:** The Fellowship Friday sessions are highlighted to allow faculty members who aren't in attendance to gain a deeper understanding of these sessions, witnessing the diverse ways that knowledge can be shared during these specialized sessions that address academic, personal, and professional development for our OBGYN fellows.

**Monthly Focus on Equity and Wellness:** This portion serves as a guide, shedding light on our ongoing initiatives and unwavering commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and the holistic well-being of our community.

The "Education Spotlight" represents our collective commitment to educational excellence while offering a comprehensive glimpse into the educational happenings across the University of Rochester's OBGYN Department. It stands as a bridge, connecting faculty members to new methodologies, tips, and tools, that shape our educational landscape. As with any impactful tool, it's only helpful when you use it!

An archive of all past issues of the Education Spotlight is available at <https://bit.ly/urobgynEducationSpotlight>



# Professional Development

## Leadership in Action

During the spring, **Dr. Erin Duecy** designed and facilitated a novel approach to professional development focusing on empowering administrative professionals to enhance their leadership skills, through the collaborative partnership with the attending physicians that they support.

The multi-faceted framework highlighted the distinct differences between management and leadership, as well as the influence of both in our environments.

Throughout the seminar, participants engaged in a deep dive of:

- How our personal values influence our unique leadership styles, and that of our colleagues.
- Analyzing our individual results from the Gallup CliftonStrengths Assessment, and how we can best utilize our strengths to become our best possible selves.
- The pitfalls of poor management strategies, and how to avoid them.
- How our unique leadership styles contribute to the success of our teams.



**As part of our final day of learning, each departmental dyad that participated created a "coat of arms" to signify their shared vision for leadership.**



*"Participating in Dr. Duecy's leadership seminar taught me more about what kind of leader I am and how others may react to my style. This has helped me immensely as I have grown into a new role with many staff of whom have different personalities with various goals. Learning this information has enabled me to assist my staff in achieving their goals."* - **Adrienne Pope**



*"I learned more about the kind of person I am, and embracing myself has helped me to develop an authentic, empathic leadership style. I also learned how to project myself so that people perceive my true intentions. The way we were paired in teams helped us to prepare for and complete major projects facing our unit in the next 12 to 18 months. This was a great investment in time and I would not hesitate to do it again. Thank you Dr. Duecy!"* - **Dr. Katy Drennan**



*"I was incredibly honored to assist Dr. Duecy with the development and facilitation of this curriculum. Not only was I an invested participant, I learned so much more about my current leadership styles and how to focus my efforts in becoming the best leader that I can be. This was such a positive experience, in a non-judgemental environment, with supportive colleagues who were invested in celebrating each other's growth and development."* - **Danielle Gary**

# Professional Development

## *Fostering an Inclusive Environment*

The Education and Learning Team from the URM Office for Equity and Inclusion led a transformative series of educational sessions throughout the year, during the OBGYN Department's Grand Rounds schedule. This approach guaranteed that every staff member, from faculty to learners, had the opportunity to engage with, and internalize, these crucial concepts in fostering an inclusive environment within our department.

Topics covered included:

### **Unconscious Bias**

This session introduced faculty, staff, and learners to fundamental terminology and key concepts to create a common language and establish a foundation for DEI work in our department. Our collective learning covered topics such as microaggressions, bias, and the fear of saying the wrong thing.

### **Recognizing and Addressing Bias and Microaggressions in OBGYN with Patients**

Jackie Beckerman, Chief Patient Experience Officer, joined this session to clarify institutional expectations for patient behavior. The workshop used realistic scenarios as opportunities for participants to recognize, respond to, and begin to disrupt incidents of bias or microaggressions between patient and trainee/learner.

### **Recognizing and Addressing Bias and Microaggressions in OBGYN Education**

In this workshop, faculty reflected on their own role in creating an inclusive learning environment, including honest explorations of their experiences with being a bystander, committing a microaggression, receiving unflattering feedback, and/or misgendering someone. Participants were given tools to process their missteps with curiosity and humility, rather than shame.

### **Power and Privilege in OBGYN**

Participants identified ways in which they can mentor learners from diverse backgrounds and make OBGYN a more inclusive department that attracts and retains diverse faculty, residents and fellows.

### **Caring for Our Transgender Patients in OBGYN**

This session enhanced skills in communication, conscious listening, and building relationships with transgender and gender non-conforming patients. Participants discussed the use of affirmed pronouns and nongendered language, accessing and updating names and pronouns in the electronic record, and how to recover after accidental misgendering.

### **Allyship**

The final part of the series built on the knowledge gained from the previous sessions to demonstrate how to partner with others to create and sustain change. Allyship is an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluation, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group. We left this series with a clear understanding of the steps we can take to begin, continue or strengthen our lifelong allyship process.

# Medical Student Clerkship



**JULIA MACCALLUM, MD MPH**  
OBGYN Clerkship Director

The theme of the year for the OBGYN Clerkship was *continuous improvement!* Through constant collaboration and ongoing conversations regarding how to best meet the needs of our learners amidst an ever-changing landscape, we identified areas of strength as well as areas where we had room to grow!

Through an intentional approach to improving the experience for all learners within our program, the OBGYN department engaged in various personal and professional development opportunities ranging from giving and receiving effective feedback to an in-depth educational series provided by the Office for Equity & Inclusion.

The residents were very approachable and willing to help and answer questions. Many even went out of their way to teach me things in areas I was most interested.

July 2022

The residents and faculty understood our level as medical students and adjusted their teaching.

July 2022

The people are ultimately the most important ingredient in a clerkship, and the culture was overall positive and welcoming.

August 2022

The residents always made themselves available for teaching and for questions.

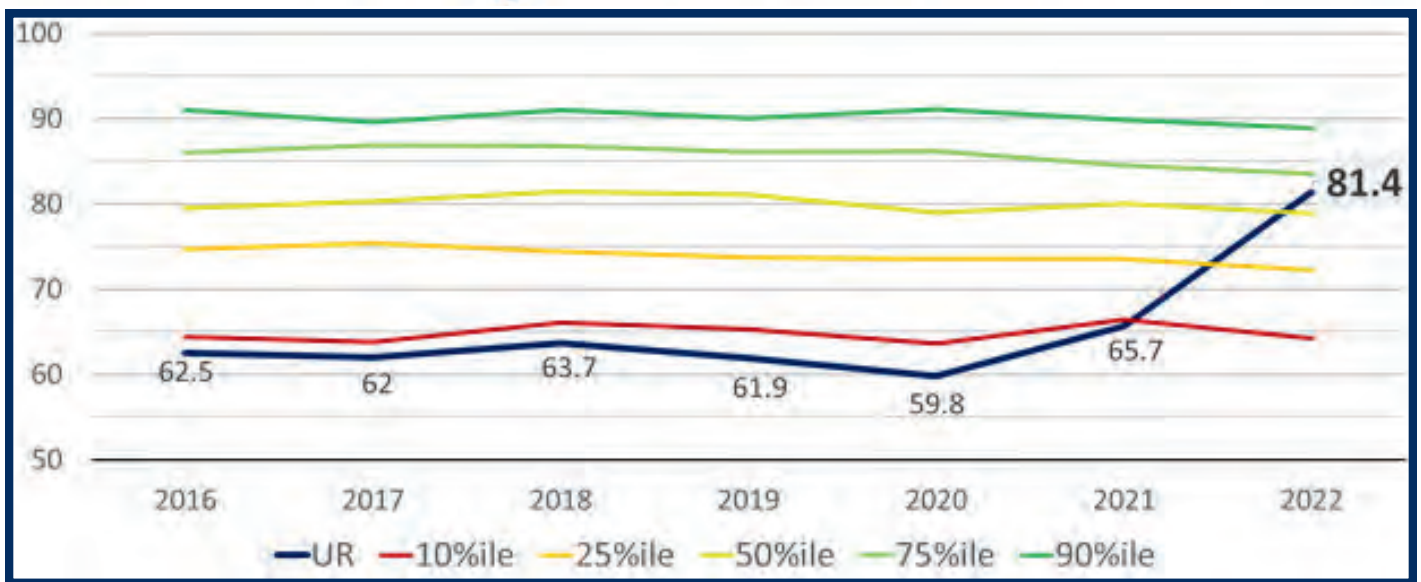
September 2022

The dedication to teaching of the faculty and residents I had an opportunity to work with was outstanding. I always felt supported and included in patient care, at a trainee-appropriate level. Everyone consistently created a safe learning environment.

November 2022

I had very positive interactions with residents while on OB who were thoughtful and very willing to educate.

December 2022



Student satisfaction ratings of the OBGYN Clerkship

## Director's Report



**COURTNEY OLSON-CHEN, MD**  
OBGYN Residency Program Director

### LEADERSHIP

**Kristen Burhans, MD**

Residency Associate Program Director  
for Education

**Wendy Vitek, MD**

Residency Associate Program Director for  
Research and Scholarly Activity

**Elizabeth Willman, MD**

Residency Program Director for Highland Hospital

**Amy Keller**

Residency Program Manager

**Kyan Lynch, MD and Danielle Gary, MEd**

Department Education Specialists



#### Personnel Changes

In 2022, we welcomed two new Associate Program Directors - **Dr. Hollenbach** and **Dr. Willman**. Dr. Hollenbach will be coordinating resident research and scholarly activity program. Dr. Willman will be the primary contact and resident leader at Highland Hospital.



#### Department Spotlight

Our Education Specialist, **Danielle Gary**, implemented a very successful new effort called the *Connections Curriculum* which is steeped in emotional intelligence, social and emotional competencies, and practical self-care strategies with a goal of improving resident wellness.



#### Department Pride

We continue to recruit and train the most amazing, thoughtful, passionate and dedicated physicians.



## Our Unsung Hero!

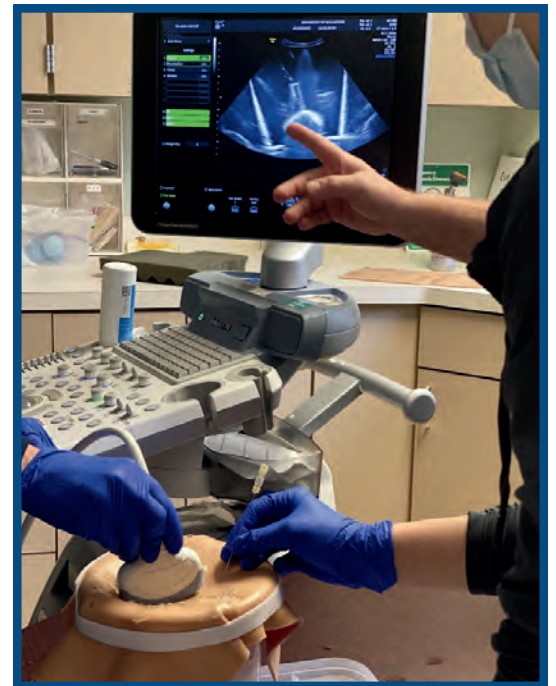
In addition to becoming the APD for Education, **Dr. Kristen Burhans** continued to work tirelessly to lead and ensure the simulation program remains a major asset with creative models, innovative teaching tools and experiential learning. She began coaching faculty and fellows in this effort and does an incredible amount of behind the scenes work to support education through simulation.



## Research Raves:

### The winners of the Curtis Lund Research Award

- ✓ **Dr. Michelle Vu** - The Lived Experiences of Infertility in Asian Americans: A Qualitative Study
- ✓ **Dr. Yanling Dong** - Increasing Prevalence of Hypertensive Morbidity in Pregnancy During the Coronavirus Pandemic Demonstrates Geospatial Socioeconomic Associations
- ✓ **Dr. Victoria Ly** - One Abnormal Value on 3-hour Glucose Tolerance Test and Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy



## Educators of Excellence:



**Joseph Robert Panza, MD**



**Diego Hernandez-Aranda, MD**

**Drs. Panza and Hernandez-Aranda** have served as outstanding leaders and coaches in introducing our residents to total vaginal hysterectomy simulation using the Miya model. They work one-on-one with our senior residents on a regular basis. This education effort is so important to help prepare our residents for these cases as TVH is the less common approach to hysterectomy in our institution.

## Awards & Honors:



**APGO Excellence in Teaching Award:  
Danielle Krueger**



**CREOG Faculty Teaching Award:  
Courtney Olson-Chen**



# Female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive Surgery

## Director's Report



**ERIN DUECY, MD**

Division Director  
Fellowship Program Director

### LEADERSHIP

**Joseph Panza, MD**

Associate Fellowship Program Director

**Amy Benjamin, MD**

Medical Director for MIGS/Pelvic Pain

**Megan K. Burns, MD, MA**

Departmental Grand Rounds Coordination

**Paula Doyle**

Director of Research

### Personnel Changes



**Diego Hernandez-Aranda** joined Urogynecology as an Assistant Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology in 2022. He graduated from Ponce Health Sciences University and completed his residency at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut. He completed his fellowship in Urogynecology at the URM Urogynecology Fellowship and we were delighted when he joined as faculty!

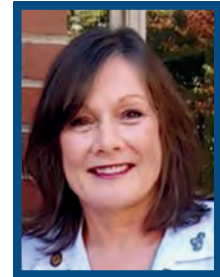
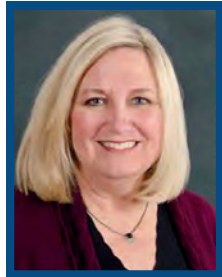
### Department Spotlight



Continued growth of collaborative care for pelvic floor disorders with Urology & Colorectal Surgery. Routine screening for co-existing pelvic floor disorders and referral for consultation between Urogynecology & Colorectal Surgery with 29 scheduled collaborative surgical reconstruction cases including fistulas, obstetric trauma, and uterovaginal/rectal prolapse. Continued collaborative cases for complex urinary tract cases with Urology including genitourinary fistulas, management of mesh complications, and surgical reconstructions with 11 scheduled complex reconstructive cases.

# Female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive Surgery

Our Unsung Heroes!



Our APPs, **Pam Wigent**, **Mandy Nitsche**, **Jen Mariani**, and **Michelle Dugan** provide consistent high quality care for our patients with pelvic floor disorders and chronic pelvic pain- special population! They manage chronic pain and pelvic floor issues, improve patient's quality of life, and teach the next generation of providers such as OBGYN residents, Family Medicine residents, APP students, & medical students!

## Research Raves:

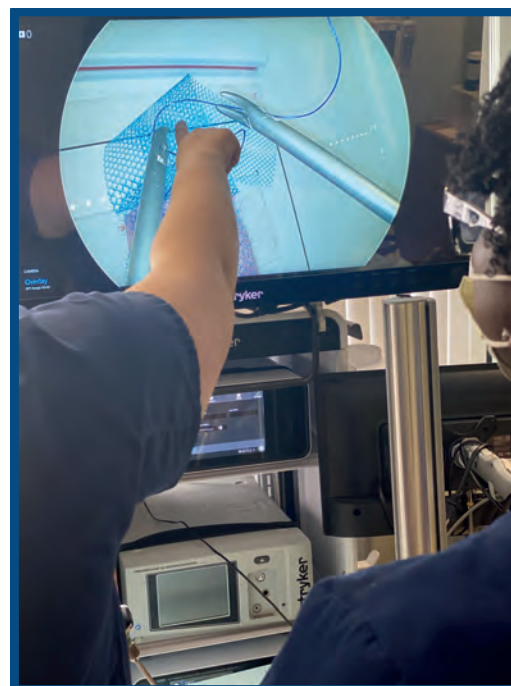
- ✓ **Dr. Diego Hernandez-Aranda's** fellowship thesis was published *Analgesia Using Transcutaneous Electric Nerve Stimulation in Office Bladder Chemodeneration, a Randomized Controlled Trial*. Evaluated a possible alternative pain management during ambulatory procedures to increase patient comfort while reducing the need for pain medication and anesthetics. Study found that transcutaneous electric nerve stimulation is a safe and noninvasive adjuvant analgesia option for patients with lower pain levels and high satisfaction rates.
- ✓ **Dr. Joseph Panza** was an author on an international standardization publication setting standards for enhanced recovery after surgery for patients undergoing surgery for pelvic floor disorders: *AUGS-IUGA Joint clinical consensus statement on enhanced recovery after urogynecologic surgery*. This work consisted of a year long process to evaluate the data and create practice standards.
- ✓ **Dr. Erin Duecy** was a coauthor of the 2022 version of the FPMRS Milestones, *Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery Milestones for the The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education*. This is used to track training milestones for all FPMRS fellows nationally and consisted of a year long process to develop the milestones covering Patient Care, Medical Knowledge, Systems-Based Practice, Practice Based Learning & Improvement, Professionalism, and Interpersonal & Communication skills.
- ✓ **Dr. Paula Doyle** was a co-author of *Surgical Removal of Midurethral Sling in Women Undergoing Surgery for Presumed Mesh-Related Complications: A Systematic Review*. This systematic review for the Society of Gynecologic Surgeons and American Urogynecologic Society evaluated the data and found that postoperative SUI may be lower with partial mesh removal compared with total mesh removal, and the amount of mesh removed did not impact pain, bladder outlet obstruction, mesh erosion or exposure, and lower urinary tract symptoms.

## Educators of Excellence:



**Margaret Wilkes, MD**

**Dr. Margaret Wilkes** is our 3rd year fellow in Urogynecology. She has chosen an academic track in Teaching and Education Administration and is pursuing a Masters degree in Education from Warner. She has developed and implemented a new on-line curriculum in Office Urogynecology for OBGYN residents and is a prime example of teaching leadership in fellowship and residency didactics.



**Joseph Panza** and **Diego Hernandez-Aranda's** collaborative simulation lab covering TVH, which included vaginal surgery skills development, procedure simulation, and simulation of surgical complications received great feedback from residents. They also conduct precept sessions twice a month for senior residents on the Ambulatory rotation.



# Generalists

## Director's Report



### **MITCH LINDER, MD**

Generalist Division Director  
Ambulatory Medical Director  
Director of Informatics  
UPP Director Inpatient OBGYN Service Line  
Director of Clinical Affairs OBGYN Department

### **LEADERSHIP**

#### **Kristen Burhans, MD**

Assistant Residency Program Director  
OBGYN service line Simulation Director

#### **Sarah Betstadt, MD**

2nd Year Medical Student Course Director  
Family Planning Clinic Director

#### **Johann Piquion**

Gynecology Quality Assurance Director

#### **Natalie Whaley**

Medical Student Course Director  
Wellness Director

#### **Ellen Tourtelot, MD**

GOG Clinic Director  
GOG Ambulatory UPP Team Leader

#### **Merielle Stephens, MD**

GOG Associate Clinic Director  
Ambulatory Quality Assurance Director Associate  
Director of Informatics for the OB/GYN Service Line

#### **Julia MacCallum**

3rd year Medical Student Clerkship Director

#### **Stacy Sun**

4th year Medical Student AI Director

#### **Katrina Nicandri**

Pediatrics and Adolescent Clinic Director

#### **James Woods, MD**

Perifacts Director



### **Personnel Changes**

We welcomed **Drs. Ally Morell, Merielle Stephens, Johann Piquion** and **Cara Lucas** to our division!



### **Department Spotlight**

We were awarded a Family Planning fellowship, with the first fellow to start in July 2024! **Dr. Sarah Betstadt** will fill the role of Fellowship Director and **Dr. Stacy Sun** as the Assistant Program Director.



### **Department Pride**

Multiple members passed their Family Planning Boards - **Drs. Harrington, Whaley, and Betstadt.**



# Generalists

## *Educators of Excellence:*



**Dr. Merielle Stephens** was selected as a Quality Institute Scholar!



**Dr. Sarah Betstadt** was awarded a prestigious Dean's Teaching Fellowship to continue to work with the Neurology Department in offering contraception to at-risk patients.



**Dr. Kristen Burhans** continues to do excellent work expanding our Simulation program!

# Gynecological Oncology

## Director's Report



**RICHARD G. MOORE, MD**  
Gynecologic Oncology Division Director

### LEADERSHIP

**Ashlee Smith, DO**  
Fellowship Program Director

**Lauren Mahon, NP**  
Lead Advanced Practice Provider

**Linda Bell, RN**  
Nurse Manager

**Kim Altobelli, RN**  
Assistant Nurse Manager

**Virginia Bellaire**  
Administrator I/Practice Manager

**Karin Bow**  
Administrative Assistant

**Amy Jo Hurley**  
Lead Outpatient Access Staff

## Our Unsung Hero!

**Karin Bow** kept the office afloat throughout the year. For several months, in addition to her own job, she also took on the surgical scheduling, all while training new staff. She's always willing to jump in and help out!



### Personnel Changes

We graduated our first Fellow, **Dr. Kathryn Kennedy**, who joined us in her 3rd year of fellowship, transferring in from another program. She has since taken a job in Arkansas and is doing very well.



### Department Spotlight

Our fellowship program launched successfully, led by **Dr. Ashlee Smith**, with the addition of our two initial fellows, **Drs. Kathryn Kennedy** and **Naixin Zhang**.



### Department Pride

Patient care is our greatest source of pride. We offer all new patient referrals to be seen within 48-72 hours. Ours is a patient driven office, not a provider driven one. Every single person that works in this office treats our patients as if they are family. Any one of these women could be our mother's, sisters or daughters and we take that to heart. We want to make sure our patients and their families have the best possible outcome and experience that we can give them.



# Highland Women's Health

## Director's Report



**EVA PRESSMAN, MD**  
Acting Director Nov 2022-June 2023

### LEADERSHIP

**Amy Smith**  
Labor and Delivery Director

**Ayesha Turner**  
Ambulatory Director

**Danielle Krueger**  
Gyn OR Director



## Our Unsung Hero!

**Cindy Becker** retired as Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of Highland Hospital in December 2022 after 23 years. Under her leadership, OB/Gyn at Highland expanded from 1500 to 3000 deliveries per year and Gyn Oncology grew exponentially. She will be missed.

### Department Spotlight



A Robotic Simulator and FLS Trainer were installed at Highland Hospital in July 2022 to allow onsite resident education and faculty use for recredentialing.

### Personnel Changes



**Dr. Mary Ma** relocated to California in the fall of 2022 and **Dr. Eva Pressman** took over as Acting Chief of OBGYN at Highland Hospital and Director of Highland Women's Health. **Dr. Margaret Schoeniger** joined the faculty in October 2022.

# Maternal-Fetal Medicine

## Director's Report



**LORALEI L. THORNBURG, MD**

Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Division & Fellowship Director

### LEADERSHIP

**Kathryn Drennan, MD**  
Ultrasound Director  
Assistant Fellowship Director

**Neil Seligman, MD, MS**  
Director of QA/QI (OBGYN)

**Monique Ho, MD**  
Director of Regional Ultrasound  
Reproductive Genetics Director

**Stefanie Hollenbach, MD, PhD**  
Regional Perinatal Center Director  
MFM Research Co-Director

**Ponnilla Marinescu, MD**  
Director of Strong Perinatal Associates  
(Outpatient Services)

**Courtney Olson-Chen, MD, MPH**  
Residency Program Director  
MFM Research Co-Director

**Sarah Crimmins, DO**  
Obstetrical Service Line Director



#### Personnel Changes

**Dr. Charlotte Orzolek** joined the faculty at the completion of her fellowship. **Chasity Palermo** came on board as the new fellowship coordinator. Our department celebrated the addition of a diabetes specific NP and mental health support in both HR offices.



#### Department Spotlight

The addition of the new diabetes in pregnancy and pregnancy loss consult programs have added tremendous value to our department.

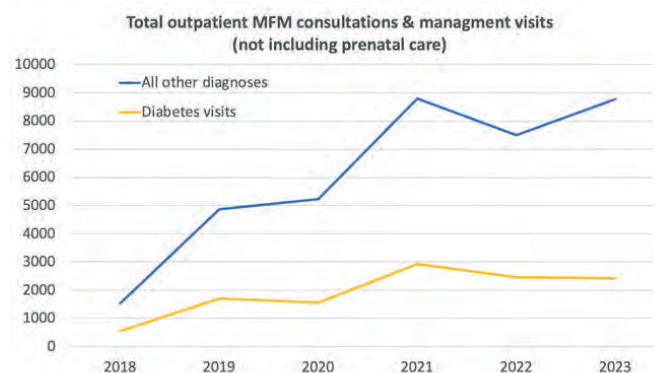
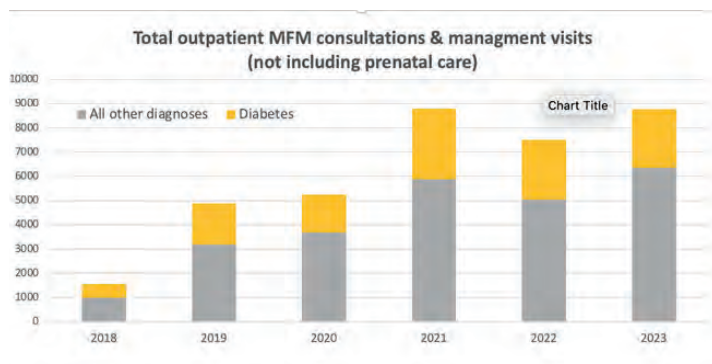
# Maternal-Fetal Medicine

## Department Pride

The MFM team has been increasing our use of telemedicine since 2018, bringing regional expansion of services. Starting in 2020, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a rapid expansion of telemedicine coverage for patients throughout the Finger Lakes. While during the academic year ending in June 2018 the MFM division did approximately 1500 management visits, by 2019 this number had risen to approximately 5000. By 2021 (the year including July 2020 through June 2021), this number peaked at almost 9000 visits, and we have continued to see approximately 8,000-9,000 outpatient management and consultation visits annually, mostly through telemedicine or as Level II ultrasound consultation, in addition to supporting a large high-risk MFM pregnancy practice.

As age and complex medical comorbidities have increased in the pregnant population, support for pregnant people with diabetes has been an increasing need in our community. In the same period as described above, the number of visits for diabetes in pregnancy increased from approximately 500 in 2018, to almost 3000 in 2021. With the arrival of **Dr. Sarah Crimmins**, a known national expert on diabetes care in pregnancy, there was opportunity to expand diabetes care in pregnancy both locally and across the region. Dr. Crimmins, together with **Dr. Marinescu**—medical director of Strong Perinatal Associates, **Dr. Olson-Chen**—medical director of the Special Care Clinic at Gender Wellness OBGYN, MFM advance practice providers, nutrition support, and other team members, carved out a perinatal support infrastructure specific to pregnant people with diabetes. With the hire of **Carly Vittozzi, CNM**, an advanced practice provider whose role focuses on diabetes care in pregnancy, the team started the “Diabetes in Pregnancy Program” (DiPP).

Commencing in Spring 2022, the program has rapidly expanded, with almost 700 visits completed for diabetes care in pregnancy in the first year of the program, to almost 1200 visits completed in the second year! Between providing much needed glycemic review and medication management, in addition to patient education and support, the team has managed to help expand diabetes access across upstate New York. DiPP has also partnered with URM (Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital) Endocrinology to improve pre- and post-conception care and life-style management, as well as research innovation to help advance outcomes. DiPP’s strategic goals for the 2023-2024 academic year are to focus on postpartum transition of care, including improved hand of care to primary care and endocrinology offices.



# Maternal-Fetal Medicine

## Our Unsung Hero!

**Courtney Olson-Chen** has an unbelievable commitment to education. One of the most impactful ways that she has strengthened our entire educational team was through the development of the Education Department Retreat. This annual event provides an opportunity to reflect upon the year, celebrate successes, identify areas for improvement, and collaborate upon new ideas and strategies. Courtney exhibits outstanding leadership in everything she does.



## Research Raves:

**Dr. Olson-Chen** has been working on a variety of research regarding vaccine use, hesitancy, and increasing uptake in pregnant people. She has also been working on RSV research, which was just newly approved for pregnant people. Her interest in infectious disease started in fellowship with her basic science work on viral transfection in placental explants.

"As a doctor and as a mom, I strongly recommend receiving the COVID-19 vaccination during your pregnancy. It provides the best protection to you and your baby."  
**DR. TIEG BEAZER**, University of Rochester Medical Center

Learn more about  
**COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy.**

SCAN HERE TO VISIT  
[health.ny.gov/pregnancy](https://health.ny.gov/pregnancy)

UR MEDICINE  
Tieg L. Beazer, MD, MSc  
Maternal-Fetal Medicine

NEW YORK STATE  
Department of Health

In addition to working on vaccine updates for research, she has also been working with public health and outreach regarding infectious diseases in pregnancy, including doing work with the DOH on vaccine outreach. She was part of the team that helped in these efforts, and **Dr. Tieg Beazer** was recruited to be the "face" of COVID vaccination in pregnancy for the DOH in New York-- including both print, video and radio outreach to increase acceptance.

Both Drs. Olson-Chen and Beazer have worked to address the increasing syphilis rates within pregnant people, increased testing/treatment, as well post-natal neonatal assessments. They worked diligently with hospital leadership to ensure access to penicillin for pregnant individuals (despite a national shortage).



# Maternal-Fetal Medicine

## Educators of Excellence:



**Ponnila Marinescu, MD**

Under **Dr. Ponnila Marinescu's** guidance, the MFM team added a pregnancy loss service, providing counseling and pregnancy support to those experiencing pregnancy loss, either in this pregnancy or a previous one, and helping patients to gain understanding into what happened, as well as develop strategies for care in future pregnancies.



During resident didactics, Dr. Marinescu incorporated active, hands-on learning using Play-Doh for a full realization of the stages of blastocyst development.

## Awards & Honors:



MFM Faculty Teaching Award went to Dr. Glantz for the "At a Glantz" embryology and ultrasound course that he provided for the Fellowship!

## Director's Report



**TRACY R. WEBBER, D.N.P., M.P.A.**

Director - Midwifery Division



### Personnel Changes

Hannah Sherry, CNM started with our Division in July of 2022.  
Naomi Schwartz, CNM started with our Division in October of 2022.



### Department Pride

In 2022 the Midwifery Division celebrated 30 years at URM. There was a catered celebration at a local restaurant, which included a silent auction to fundraise for the Elizabeth Cooper Lectureship fund and a Proclamation from Mayor Malik Evans.

## Awards & Honors



In 2022, Tracy Webber became a Fellow at the American College of Nurse Midwives



## Department Spotlight

The Midwifery Division began to explore the possibility of starting a Midwifery Education Program. An exploratory group was formed and we worked with a midwifery-led consultant group. Two possibilities were explored; to create a midwifery education program via the academic medical center (which would allow the Division to accrue CMS funding) or to partner with the School of Nursing. Due to the complexities of the first option, it was decided that the Midwifery Division would partner with the School of Nursing. Meetings with the School of Nursing leadership have been ongoing. We hope to admit our first class of students for the 2025-26 academic year.

## Our Unsung Heroes!

All of the midwives are heroines. They have stepped up when things have become exhausting, mostly because of last minute schedule changes, and rose to the occasion every time.



# Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility

## Director's Report



### KATHLEEN HOEGER, MD

Chief of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology

### LEADERSHIP

#### Wendy Vitek MD

Director of Fertility Preservation  
Director of the REI Fellowship Program

#### Erin Masaba MD

Medical Director of IVF

#### Erin Scott MD PhD

Andrology and Endocrinology Lab Director  
Embryology Lab Manager

#### Snigdha Alur-Gupta MD

Director of 3rd Party Reproduction

### Personnel Changes



**Jamie Feingold, NP** joined us from Boston as an NP REI specialist who provides REI intakes, ultrasound and office based procedures in REI. She has an interest in nutrition and exercise as it impacts reproductive medicine and has become an integral part of our PCOS clinic.

### Department Spotlight



We started an REI fellowship and successfully completed our first year of fellowship education with one of our own residents, **Dr. Adam Evans**, providing an excellent role model for all future fellows. We successfully recruited our Second fellow, **Dr. AJ Knutson**, from Penn State via the match. The fellowship is starting at a great time for REI as we have increased interest from residents and the demand for REI trained physicians is at an all time high.

### Department Pride



We have and have maintained a strong academic REI division and recently added a fellowship to train the future work force. The prevailing headwinds in reproductive medicine are challenging and our division has recruited and retained an amazing faculty and laboratory team who are dedicated to both excellent patient care and the acquisition of new knowledge. We routinely present our findings at national and international meetings and our faculty are well known in the field. We have a dedicated clinical team who provide the highest standards of care.

# Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility

*Innovation in Action*

**Strong Fertility began its PCOS Clinic over 2 decades ago, putting the care of this important population at the forefront. But this past year we expanded our offerings and team!**

The clinic aims to treat those with PCOS in a collaborative, multidisciplinary setting. In each clinic, patients are first seen by one of our clinic providers: **Dr. Hoeger, Dr. Alur-Gupta, or Jamie Feingold, NP.**

Then they meet with our PCOS Nutrition Counselor/Registered Dietician, **Laura McNamara**, followed by our licensed Psychologist, **Beth Cerrito**, before concluding the visit with one of our nursing team members: **Lynda Kochman, Alicia Collins, or Heather Drake.**

At the start and conclusion of each clinic, our team meets to create an individualized and comprehensive care plan for each patient. An additional unique aspect of our clinic is that new patients are eligible to receive a PCOS Cookbook with a multitude of healthy recipes and/or the PCOS Workbook, full of useful guidelines and strategies for living with PCOS.

The PCOS Clinic strives to provide our patients with holistic well-rounded care and continuity. To learn more about PCOS, International Guidelines recommendations and patient info, you can visit: <https://ae-society.org/patients>

*Our Unsung Hero!*

**Anne Tedrow** is our division's administrative assistant and has been foundational to our faculty and staff support and we could not be more grateful. She successfully helped us in our zoom fellowship interviews and it went flawlessly. She is tireless in her assistance and so dedicated to our success. A true bright light in our division.





# Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility

## Research Raves:

Residents **Michelle Vu** and **Kathryn Voss** both received oral presentations at ASRM based on their research on attitudes on childbearing delays in medical trainees (Vu) and impact of interpregnancy weight gain on success in fertility interventions (Voss).

They both prepared and presented highly regarded talks at the annual meeting. Both of these residents have made the decision to pursue reproductive medicine careers with fellowships in REI.

**Dr. Michelle Vu**, along with her mentor **Dr. Snidgha Alur-Gupta** presented a qualitative study of the lived experience of Infertility in Asian Americans at the ASRM.



**Dr. Michelle Vu presenting her work at ASRM**



**Dr. Kathryn Voss presenting her work at ASRM**

# Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility

## Departmental Celebrations:



**AEPCOS honoring Dr. Lou DiPaolo on his retirement for NICHD support of PCOS research**

**Dr. Hoeger** completed her tenure as President of the Androgen Excess/PCOS Society and hosted the 20th anniversary annual meeting of the international society in Anaheim California. Attendees from more than 20 countries met along with patient advocates over 2 days to discuss the latest research and clinical pearls in PCOS. Our division had great representation with **Drs. Vitek, Alur-Gupta** and our fellow, **Dr. Adam Evans** in attendance. One of our collaborators from Cornell University, Dr. Heidi Vanden Brink, won the early career research award based on her work on ovarian morphology in PCOS with the division. We also honored Dr. Lou DiPaolo for his retirement after 30 years at the head of NICHD for his unwavering support for PCOS research (including funding our investigators).

## Educators of Excellence:

**Wendy Vitek** is our fellowship director and she has developed an excellent curriculum for the fellowship that is really a national example. The curriculum is progressive throughout the fellowship and gradually builds the opportunities for the fellow to teach as well. She is nationally recognized for her curriculum development and we are fortunate to have her in our division!



# Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility

## Educators of Excellence:

**Drs. John Queenan** and **Snigdha Alur-Gupta** added the third year OBGYN clerkship selective to REI and successfully mentored interested medical students. This is a unique opportunity to dive into an area of reproductive medicine and explore the IVF process and fertility journey that patients experience, that would not typically be available to early stage medical students at many medical schools.



**John T. Queenan, M.D.**



**Snigdha Alur-Gupta M.D., M.S.C.E.**

## Awards & Honors:

- ★ **SART Platinum Recognition for our IVF lab (fewer than 15% of IVF clinics receive this)**
- ★ **Wendy Vitek was awarded a training award for Valor Performance Leadership Coaching**
- ★ **Kathy Hoeger was named to the International PCOS Network to develop the International Guidelines for Diagnosis and Management of PCOS**
- ★ **Erin Masaba was elected Chair of the Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Special Interest Group of the ASRM**
- ★ **Snigdha Alur-Gupta was elected Chair of the Early Career Interest group of the AEPCOS**



## Director's Report



### TIMOTHY D. DYE, PH.D.

Associate Chair of Research  
Professor  
Obstetrics and Gynecology

### JOINT APPOINTMENTS AND ADJUNCT FACULTY:

Emily Barrett  
David Foster  
Wyatte Hall  
José Pérez Ramos  
Jay Reeder  
Christopher Stodgell  
Nancy Cardona Cordero  
Dongmei Li  
Thomas G. O'Connor  
Tiffany Panko  
Carmen Velez Vega  
Miriam Weber

### LEADERSHIP

**Richard Miller**  
Professor  
**Brooke Levandowski**  
Associate Professor  
**Shawn Murphy**  
Associate Professor  
**Christopher Stodgell**  
Associate Professor  
**Monica Barbosu**  
Research Assistant Professor  
**Kyu Kwang Kim**  
Research Associate Professor  
**Rakesh Singh**  
Research Associate Professor  
**Ronald Wood**  
Research Associate Professor  
**Megan Falsetta**  
Assistant Professor  
**Rogelio Perez D'Gregorio**  
Research Assistant Professor  
**Nazifa Shinwarie**  
Research Assistant Professor  
**MaryAnn Wilbur**  
Research Assistant Professor  
**Carrie Irvine**  
Associate Faculty  
**Professor Emeritus:**  
Morton Miller

Our Division is home to more than 30 trainees, from undergraduates to post-docs interested in reproductive health, women's health, basic science, immunology, epidemiology, public health, maternal and child health, and biomedical engineering.



#### Personnel Changes

**Dr. Nazifa Shinwarie** joined the Research Division as a Research Assistant Professor, focused on reproductive health, South Asia, and immigrant communities. **Dr. Brooke Levandowski** was promoted to Associate Professor.

## Educators of Excellence!

The OBGYN Research Division engaged in teaching in various ways this past year, including participating in the 2023 Resident Research Day, working with our OBGYN fellows through Fellowship Fridays, engaging in problem-based learning and research ethics training, and individually mentoring undergraduate, graduate, and medical student researchers.

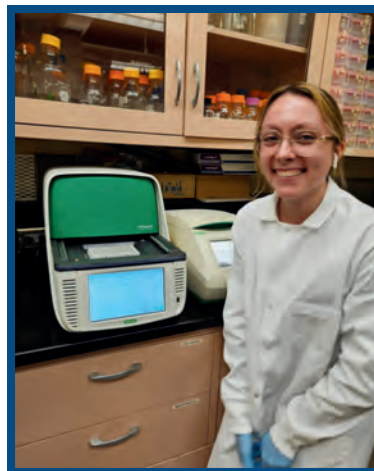
**Dr. Megan Falsetta** has been particularly active in the teaching mission this past year, having mentored 3 medical students, 1 SURF student, 7 undergraduates, and 2 graduate students in her laboratory, working with each on personalized research projects that contribute to the overall research mission of the Falsetta lab, which is to improve women's vulvar and sexual health. Dr. Falsetta hopes to raise sexual health awareness through high-impact, peer-reviewed research conducted by her talented trainees. Three of Falsetta's trainees will present their work at the 2024 International Society of Women's Sexual Health Annual Meeting, while a fourth plans to present at the upcoming Society for Investigative Dermatology Annual Meeting.



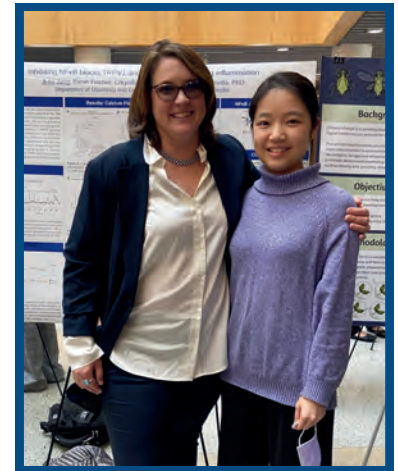
**Megan Falsetta, Ph.D.**



**Ashley Updike**  
Undergraduate Student



**Sarah Fischer**



**Ji-Mi Jang**  
Undergraduate Student

Dr. Falsetta's laboratory manager, **Sarah Fischer**, who completed her undergraduate research honors in the Falsetta lab and was recently accepted into medical school, was invited to speak at the Sexual Medicine Society of North America's 24th Annual Fall Scientific Meeting.

Dr. Falsetta has also been engaged in training first-year medical students as a problem-based tutor, working with OBGYN fellows on improving their writing skills, and leading thoughtful discussions with new University of Rochester researchers on research ethics. She is especially committed to training individuals from classically underrepresented groups in academia and is dedicated to working with each student one-on-one to help ensure they will achieve their goals and become future clinicians and researchers invested in championing women's health.

## Department Pride

We are most proud of our reach and public impact! Among many successful NIH- and other-funded research projects, we are especially proud of our leadership in providing education to communities and clinicians.

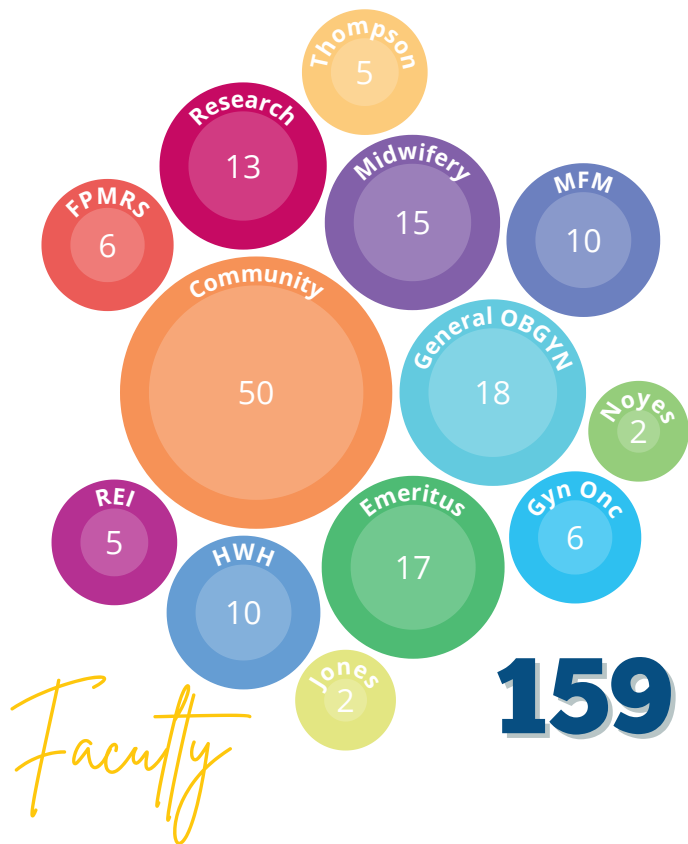
Our Division leads grants and services that provide state of the art information to health care providers in New York State and across the US and beyond concerning therapeutic, occupational and environmental exposure risks to pregnant individuals, planning a pregnancy, breastfeeding and children through the MotherToBaby program at UR, the National Lactation Study Line, and Finger Lakes Children's Environmental Health Center housed at the University of Rochester.

We also house the NYS AIDS Institute's Clinical Education Initiative's Resource Center of Excellence which provides continuing education around HIV, HCV, Sexual Health, and Drug User Health to more than 30,000 professionals. Further, the NYS AIDS Institute's LGBTQ+ Health Initiative is based in our Division and serves agencies and communities throughout New York State to reduce disparities experienced by gender and sexually diverse populations.

## Innovation in Action



Our innovative NIH-funded Proyecto DiSCo (Diálogo Social Científico) is funded by the National Human Genome Research Institute which supports a collaborative team from the University of Puerto Rico and the University of Rochester to conduct a large-scale mixed methods study of genetic research participation among Puerto Ricans, both to include the entire country of Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican diaspora residing in the United States. The Disco project aims to better understand the impact of diaspora status, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences on likelihood of participating in research and to develop participant-centered strategies for their inclusion in research. Such work could contribute to reducing the justice-gap that exists among Puerto Ricans in genetic research. During the past year, we've recruited 3,000 people from throughout Puerto Rico and the United States to participate, forming one of the largest and most thorough studies of its kind. The project is deeply collaborative and is guided by a stellar Community Advisory Board and team of consultants.



# By the Numbers

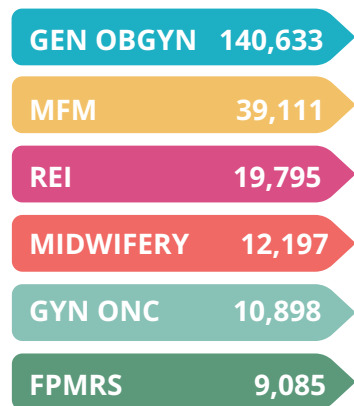
*Research*



**77** Peer-Reviewed Publications

**57** Journals

**\$18M** Grants & Funding

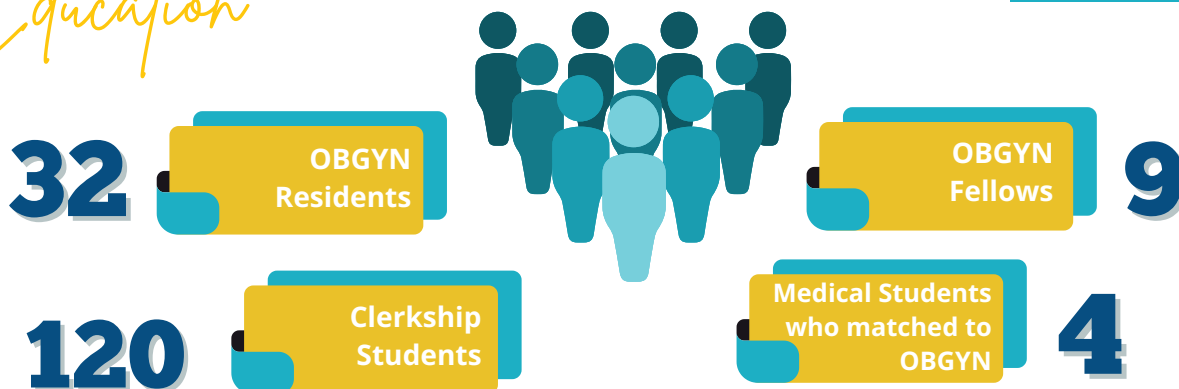


*Patient Care*

**481**  
Strong Stars



*Education*





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