

2025

STATE OF THE SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

2025



Anschutz

School of Medicine

ADVANCING SCIENCE, IMPROVING CARE

The mission of the University of Colorado Anschutz School of Medicine is to provide Colorado, the nation, and the world with programs of excellence in:



EDUCATION –

through the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs for medical students, allied health students, graduate students, residents and fellows, practicing health professionals, and the public-at-large;



RESEARCH –

through the development of new knowledge in the basic and clinical sciences, as well as in public and community health, health policy, and health sciences education;



CLINICAL CARE –

through state-of-the-art clinical programs, which reflect the unique educational and scholarly environment of the university, as well as the needs of the patients and communities it serves; and



COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS –

by forming partnerships with the broader community, learning from the experiences of community members, and sharing the school's expertise and knowledge, in order to promote healthier and more resilient communities, address the social, environmental, and economic determinants of health, and advocate for health equity.

A LETTER FROM THE DEAN

This past year has been one of meaningful momentum for the CU Anschutz School of Medicine—progress built through a clear vision; strengthened leadership; and the extraordinary dedication of our faculty, staff, learners, and partners. As we look ahead to 2026 and the next chapter in our Top 10 in 10 journey, it is important to reflect on how far we have come.

Across every mission, our campus community demonstrated what is possible when excellence is paired with purpose. In education, interest in our programs remains high, with more than 10,000 medical school applicants. Our newest graduates rated their experience as exceptional, a testament to the new Trek curriculum, our faculty's commitment to educating a top-tier health care workforce, and the culture of support we continue to strengthen.

Our research enterprise reached new heights, fueled by transformative gifts and competitive federal funding. A historic \$50 million gift from the Anschutz Foundation is accelerating mental health innovation across our campus; an anonymous \$40 million contribution to Ophthalmology is driving new therapies; and a \$64 million NIH award to Dr. Jean Kutner is positioning our faculty to lead the country in palliative care research. In addition, a \$15 million gift from Tom and Cydney Marsico will fuel a data science and AI initiative focused on pancreatic cancer. These investments and many others, coupled with groundbreaking discoveries—from pancreatic cancer programs to insights into dormant cancer cell activation—underscore the national impact of our research.

In clinical care, our partnerships and providers delivered exceptional outcomes for the people of Colorado and beyond. UCHealth University of Colorado Hospital remains the No. 1 hospital in the state, while Children's Hospital Colorado again earned a place on the national Honor Roll with Top 10 rankings across key specialties. Denver Health has earned top billing in Colorado for its social responsibility. Our close partnership with the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center ensures that veterans in our community receive the world-class, compassionate care they deserve. And, our partners at National Jewish Health continue to lead the world in respiratory care.

Our faculty led nationally recognized patient-care stories, from life-extending cancer treatment breakthroughs to innovations in telehealth. At the same time, new technologies like Abridge are improving workflow and restoring valuable time to our clinicians.

Strengthening leadership across the school was one of my priorities this year. We welcomed two new executive vice deans, three senior associate deans, and three department chairs who bring experience, energy, and a commitment to excellence. Their collective leadership is helping us align operational performance and mission success—ensuring that high-performing teams are supported, recognized, and empowered. We also advanced our community mission. Whether mentoring young scientists, expanding climate and health policy impact, or supporting local partnerships, our faculty and trainees demonstrated that academic medicine thrives when it serves the good of the public. Donor generosity further amplified this work, with major philanthropic gifts enabling discovery, training, and care that will impact patient outcomes well into the future.

None of this happened without facing challenges. Like academic medical centers across the country, we are navigating federal transitions, evolving NIH funding environments, and increased pressures on clinical systems and faculty well-being. Yet our progress this year shows that we are adapting and leading during this time of change.

As we move into 2026, our priorities remain clear: accelerate progress toward Top 10 in 10; strengthen operational excellence; unify and elevate the CU Anschutz brand; and continue building a community that attracts, supports, and retains the best in academic medicine.

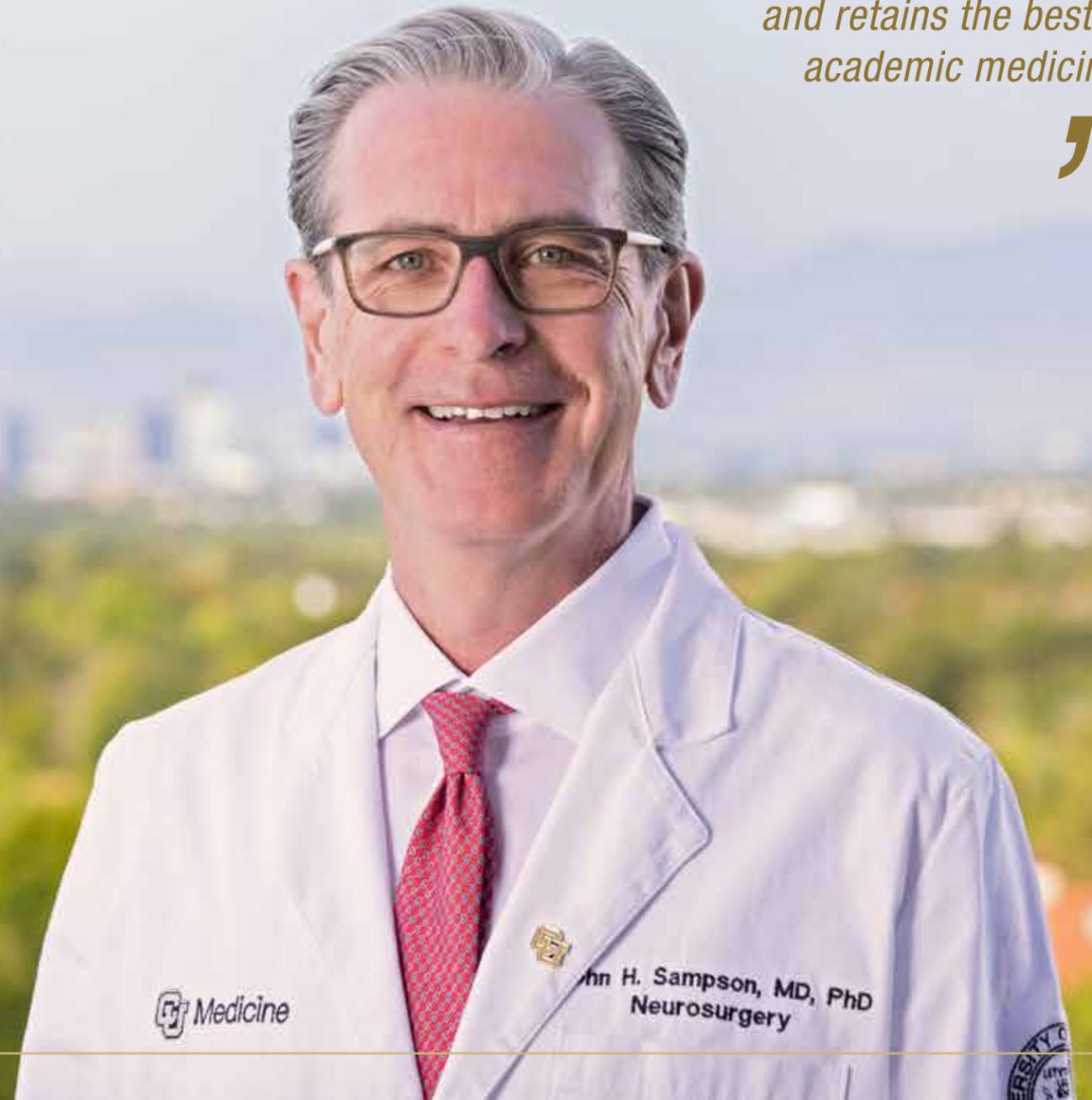
Thank you for the work you do every day on behalf of this institution and the patients and communities we serve. Together, we are shaping a future worthy of a top 10 institution.

John H. Sampson, MD, PhD, MBA
Richard D. Krugman Endowed Chair
Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs
Dean, CU Anschutz School of Medicine

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NEW LEADERSHIP IN THE DEAN'S OFFICE



**Vineet Chopra, MBBS, MD, MSc,
Executive Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs, Quality, and Research**

Appointed by Dean Sampson as Executive Vice Dean, Dr. Chopra leads the School of Medicine's efforts to advance excellence in clinical care, quality, and research. He also serves as the Chair of Medicine.

**Shanta Zimmer, MD,
Executive Vice Dean for Education**

Promoted to this new role, Dr. Zimmer leads the School of Medicine's educational mission, guiding programs that prepare the next generation of physicians and scientists. A respected educator and mentor, Dr. Zimmer has been instrumental in shaping the Trek curriculum.



**Naresh Mandava, MD,
Senior Associate Dean for Strategic Advancement**

Dr. Mandava promotes the strategic growth initiatives of the School of Medicine and attracts benefactor support through community relationships he's built on over the past two decades. He also serves as the Chair of Ophthalmology.

**Leslie Berg, PhD, Senior
Associate Dean for Biomedical Research**

Dr. Berg enhances the School of Medicine's overall ability to conduct outstanding basic and translational research. She also serves as Chair of the Department of Immunology and Microbiology.



**Adit Ginde, MD,
Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Research**

Dr. Ginde works to improve the clinical trials processes with the overall goal to elevate the campus to a world-class, preferred destination for patients, scientists, government, and industry.

NEW CLINICAL DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

**Vik Bebarta, MD, Chair,
Department of Emergency Medicine**

The Department of Emergency Medicine is a leading national force in patient-centered clinical excellence, practice-changing science, and innovative education. By investing in the systems, partnerships, and culture that help teams thrive, we will deliver meaningful impact for patients, our communities, and the future of health care.



**Peter Fecci, MD, Chair,
Department of Neurosurgery**

The Department of Neurosurgery is building destination centers for brain tumor and precision neuromodulation, while expanding patient access to cutting-edge clinical care, novel technologies, and therapeutics. The department is delivering on its mission to elevate the future of neuroscience through compassionate care, bold scientific discovery, and the training of future leaders.



**Saketh Guntupalli, MD, Chair,
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology**

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology is at the forefront of research and innovation in women's health. Focusing on the newest technologies such as AI, precision medicine, and the molecular basis of disease, we will find cures for the diseases that afflict our patients and improve the lives of women in our community and beyond.



MAJOR MILESTONES FROM 2025

Jan. 29

Dean Sampson's First State of the School Address

March 10

Peter Fecci, MD, Named Chair of the Department of Neurosurgery

March 21

More than 160 CU Students Matched with Their Residency Programs

April 1

Clinical Chairs Introduce NIH Gap Funding Program

May 19

Inaugural Class of Medical Students from CSU Branch Celebrate Graduation

May 19

2025 Commencement of the First Class Fully Trained Under the New Trek Curriculum

April 28

School of Medicine Executive Leadership Strengthened with Appointing of Two New Executive Vice Deans, Three New Senior Associate Deans

April 8

School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program is Ranked No. 3 in U.S. News & World Report

May 29

First School of Medicine Town Hall with Dean Sampson

July 1

Fiscal Year Begins with New Funds Flow Model

July 29

U.S. News & World Report Ranks UHealth University of Colorado Hospital No.1 in the State

Sep. 16

The School of Medicine Champions CU Anschutz New Branding Initiative

Oct. 27

Abridge, an AI-Powered Clinical Documentation Solution Funded by CU Medicine, Rolls Out to UHealth and Children's Hospital Colorado Clinicians

Oct. 7

U.S. News & World Report Names Children's Hospital Colorado in Top 10, Best in the State

Oct. 1

Vik Bebarta, MD, Named Chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine

Sep. 16

Board Votes to Transition Faculty Consulting to CU Anschutz Innovations

Nov. 5

Saketh Guntupalli, MD, Named Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology Department

Nov. 18

School of Medicine Receives Full Term of Reaccreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME)

ENROLLMENT AND EDUCATION

Following the ambitious implementation of the new Trek curriculum, the CU Anschutz School of Medicine continues to attract top talent and deliver exceptional outcomes. Our learners are at the heart of everything we do. From a highly competitive applicant pool to national recognition of our programs, these numbers tell the story of our commitment to excellence in educating a compassionate health care workforce for Colorado and beyond.



KEY STATS:

APPLICANT NUMBER:
10k+

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM:
No.3
IN THE NATION

A+ RATING FROM CLASS OF 2025
GRADUATE QUESTIONNAIRE

MATCH DAY HIGHLIGHTS:

37% OF GME GO INTO PRIMARY CARE/INTERNAL MEDICINE

46% OF GME STUDENTS REMAIN IN COLORADO

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE RECEIVES FULL ACCREDITATION

This year, the CU Anschutz School of Medicine received full accreditation for the maximum eight-year term, through the 2032-33 academic year, recognizing and ensuring that CU medical students receive the highest-quality training in classrooms and clinical settings.

The announcement followed an ambitious redesign to the medical school curriculum, known as the Trek Curriculum, which emphasizes the values of leadership, curiosity, and commitment while integrating basic science learning with clinical training.

The accreditation process is a rigorous review of all aspects of medical education — curriculum, training sites, support services, and leadership — to determine whether students are prepared to become practicing physicians with a commitment to lifelong learning. The accreditation process is thorough, involving hundreds of members of the school community since September 2022 in gathering records and preparing the documentation for the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME)'s detailed analysis and site visit.

"I am very proud of the entire team for their dedication and attention to this process," says Dean John Sampson, MD, PhD, MBA. "Their dedication and professionalism are tremendous examples of the work done by everyone at the School of Medicine every day."

Executive Vice Dean for Education Shanta Zimmer; LCME Faculty Lead Bonnie Kaplan, MD, MA; and project manager Kristen Hyden, MS, completed exceptional work that led to the impressive result.

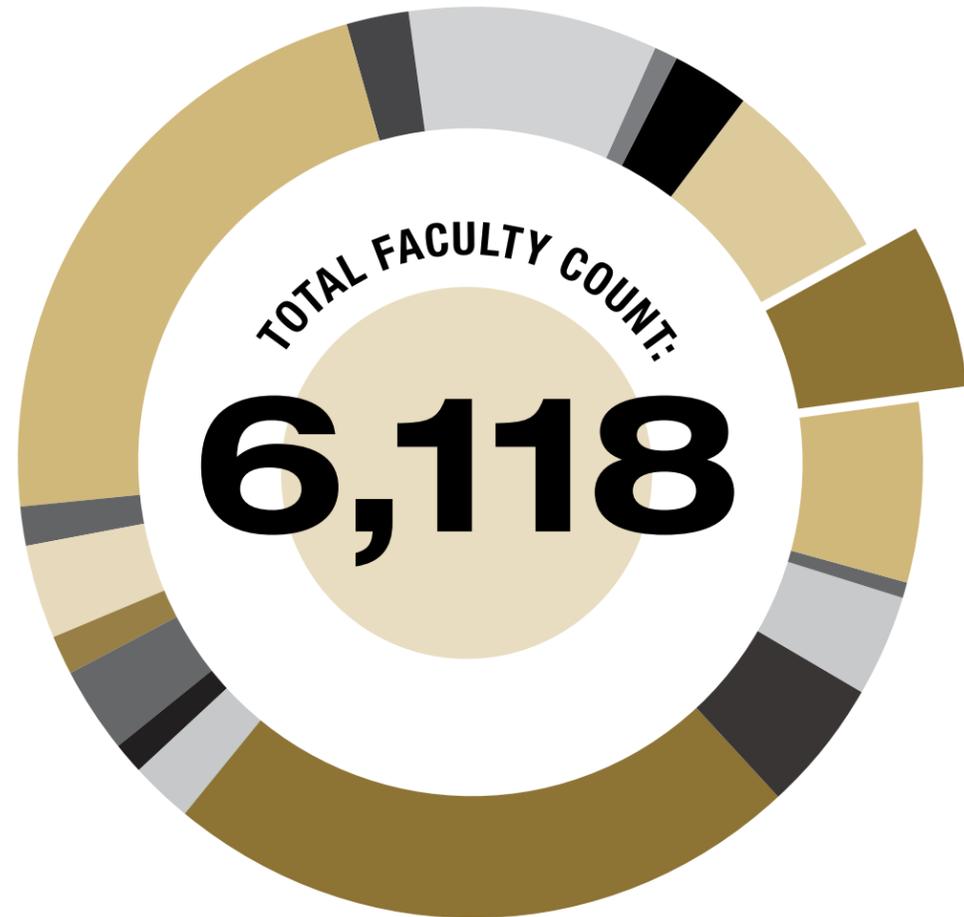
"Full accreditation means we are free to continue the cutting-edge curricular advances and innovations that our school is known for," Zimmer says. "I am excited about our ongoing plans to make medical education better and more responsive to the needs of our patients. Our faculty are role models inspiring our students to become outstanding physicians."

Scan to view the full story in the School of Medicine newsroom.



FACULTY SNAPSHOT

School of Medicine faculty continue to distinguish themselves through national recognition, scholarly achievement, and leadership in their fields. 2025 brought significant growth to our faculty ranks, alongside numerous awards that reflect both individual excellence and collective impact.



BASIC SCIENCE DEPARTMENTS:

371

across six departments

Clinical Departments:

- Anesthesiology:** 381
- Dermatology:** 41
- Emergency Medicine:** 213
- Family Medicine:** 289
- Medicine:** 1,396
- Neurology:** 133
- Neurosurgery:** 81
- OB-GYN:** 181
- Ophthalmology:** 81
- Orthopedics:** 200
- Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery:** 96
- Pediatrics:** 1,351
- Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation:** 137
- Psychiatry:** 552
- Radiation Oncology:** 37
- Radiology:** 182
- Surgery:** 394

FACULTY HONORS AND AWARDS



Neill Epperson MD,

Chair, Department of Psychiatry,
New Member of the National
Academy of Medicine



Richard Krugman MD,

Former Dean of the School of Medicine,
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Health Policy Fellows Program Lifetime
Achievement Award



Kristi Kuhn MD,

Professor of Medicine,
Presidential Early Career
Award for Scientists
and Engineers



Marc Moss MD,

Professor of Medicine,
Honored as a Distinguished
Professor by the University
of Colorado



Catherine Musselman PhD,

Associate Professor of Biochemistry
and Molecular Genetics, Presidential
Early Career Award for Scientists
and Engineers



Ron Sokol MD,

Chief Scientific Officer,
Child Health, Lifetime
Achievement Award by the
American Liver Foundation



Kristina Wilson MD,

Associate Professor of Clinical
Practice in Orthopedics, National
Academy of Medicine's State Health
Policy Fellowship

THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

Amid a federal transition that introduced a challenging funding environment, research at the School of Medicine continues to advance. Strong NIH growth, a thriving clinical trials portfolio, and targeted philanthropic and gap funding underscore our focus on advancing scientific discovery and innovation.

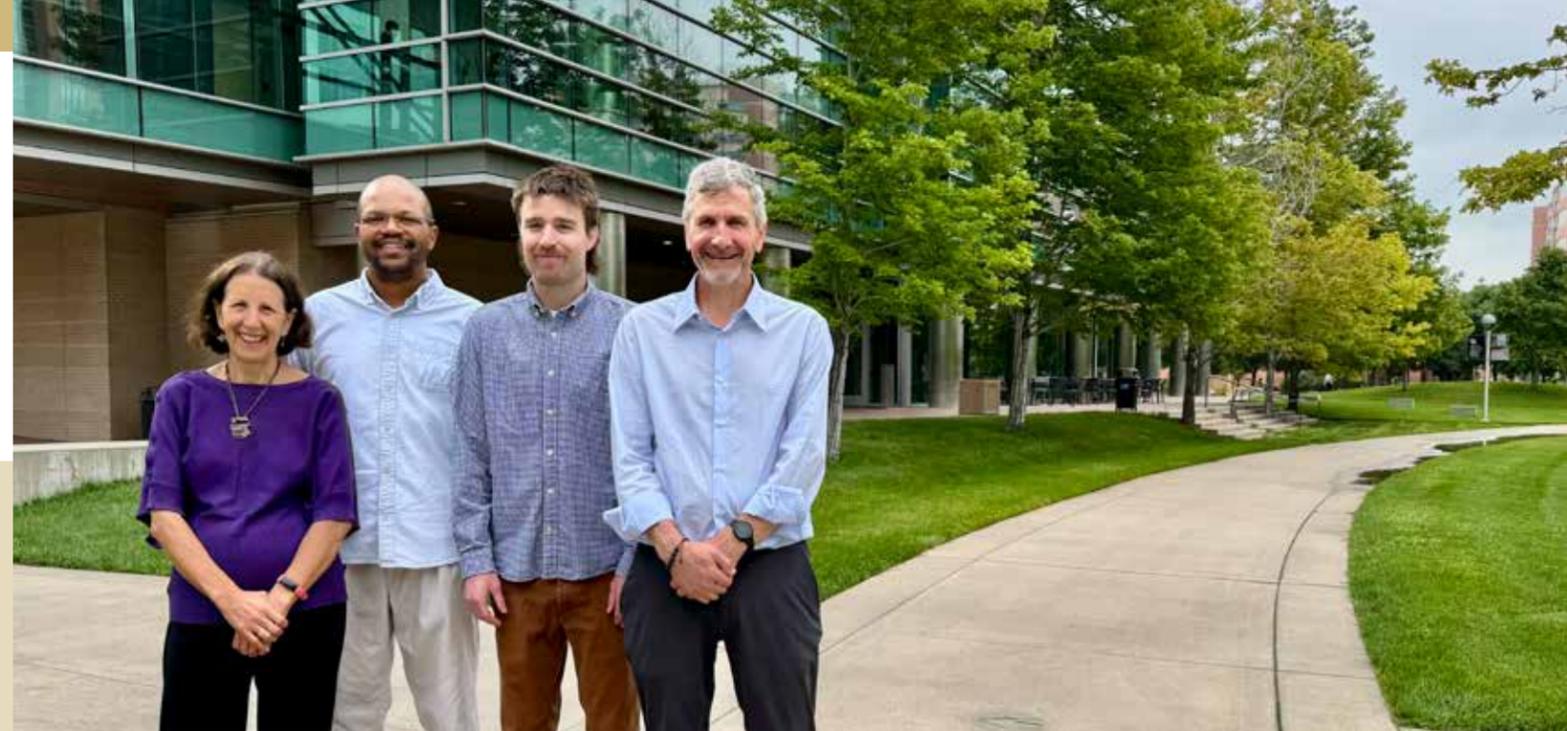
**Total Awards
in FY25:
\$276M**

\$223M
Philanthropic Dollar Amount:

**Total Active Clinical Trials:
3,330**

**Total New Clinical Trials in 2025:
1,280**

**Gap Funding:
\$1.5M**
Distributed by Clinical Chairs



CU CANCER CENTER-LED RESEARCH SHOWS COVID-19 CAN AWAKEN DORMANT CANCER CELLS

By Greg Glasgow

The effects of the SARS-CoV2 virus on the elderly and people with compromised immune systems is by now well-documented, but new research led by University of Colorado Cancer Center Interim Director James DeGregori, PhD, reveals another group that could be affected by COVID infection — cancer patients, in particular cancer patients whose disease has gone into remission.

The results were striking, DeGregori says: Infection of the animal models with either flu virus or SARS-CoV2 led to massive expansion — more than 100-fold — of the previously dormant breast cancer cells in the lungs. Though only breast cancer was modeled in the mice, DeGregori says that the findings are likely applicable to other types of cancer.

In research published in July in the journal Nature, DeGregori and an international research team show that respiratory viral infections such as COVID trigger inflammation that can awaken dormant cancer cells in the lungs, raising the risk of lung metastasis and cancer-related death.

“Dormant cancer cells are like the embers left in an abandoned campfire, and respiratory viruses are like a strong wind that reignites the flames,” DeGregori says.

It is known that people who are treated for their cancers can remain disease free for many years, only to relapse years or even decades later from metastatic disease originating from their original cancer. Extensive research has shown how cancer cells, often as solitary cells or small clumps, can remain dormant at metastatic sites for years or decades, but researchers lack a good understanding of the conditions that favor their reawakening.

DeGregori and his team initiated experiments to ask whether respiratory viral infections, such as the flu virus or SARS-CoV2, could trigger metastatic progression in the lungs.

Featured image: From left, CU Cancer Center researchers Mercedes Rincon, PhD, Felipe Pereira, PhD, Bryan Johnson, and James DeGregori, PhD



Scan to view the full story in the School of Medicine newsroom.

NOTABLE GRANTS AND GIFTS:

\$64M in Palliative Care
This five-year NIH award establishes a Palliative Care Research Consortium to support faculty at the forefront of research dedicated to improving quality of life for people living with serious illnesses.

\$50M for Mental Health
This Anschutz Foundation investment launches the CU Anschutz Campus Mental Health Collaborative, a challenge gift to jumpstart a sweeping investment in mental health.

\$40M to Ophthalmology Research
The anonymous gift to Colorado’s only academic eye center boosts research into treating and curing serious eye diseases while investing in new technology and recruiting top talent.

\$15M to Pancreatic Cancer Research
This gift fuels a data science initiative focused on pancreatic cancer that will build on the compassionate care delivered at CU Anschutz and position the campus at the forefront of cancer research.

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL CARE

Clinical care at the CU Anschutz School of Medicine is provided through a powerful network of academic and community partners, reaching millions of patients each year and earning national distinction. Together, we deliver pioneering treatments—combining specialized expertise, innovation, and a shared commitment to ensuring that every patient receives the highest level of care.

Patient Visits:

4.7M

Children’s Hospital Colorado:

No.1
in Colorado and Top 5
in the Nation



VA:
Comprehensive
Care for
Veterans

UCHealth:

No.1

in Colorado and Nationally Ranked
in Four Specialties

Denver Health:

No.1 in Colorado
for Social Responsibility
and No.4
Nationally

National Jewish Health:

Leader in
Respiratory
Care



CU SURGEON REMOVES BLADDER CANCER FROM COACH PRIME

By Greg Glasgow

When University of Colorado football coach Deion “Coach Prime” Sanders held a press conference on July 28, 2024, to talk about his recent experience with bladder cancer, he had a CU Cancer Center member by his side.

University of Colorado Cancer Center member Janet Kukreja, MD, director of urologic oncology and associate professor of urology in the CU Anschutz Department of Surgery, was the surgeon who successfully treated Sanders for the disease.

“I trusted and believed in you 100%,” Coach Prime told Kukreja during the press conference.

Kukreja is one of the foremost practitioners of robotic cystectomy, a surgery to remove all or part of the bladder. Using a surgical robot for the procedure is now common, though questions around its ability to completely remove a tumor and surrounding cancerous cells dogged it in its early days in the mid-2000s.

“People were very skeptical of robotic surgery at first — of negative margins and recurrence rates vs. doing an open surgery,” Kukreja says. “Multiple clinical trials were performed, and eventually it was demonstrated that robotic has the same cancer outcomes, the same yield of removal for lymph nodes, and actually decreases the need for transfusions. It also leads to decreased hospital stay and decreased complications.”

In an addition to surgery, there are recently FDA-approved treatments for bladder cancer that Kukreja makes it a point to keep up on, so she can tailor a personal treatment plan for each patient.

“It really depends on where patients are in their life,” she says. “I see a very broad spectrum of patients — from people in their 30s all the way up to people in their 90s. And a 90-year-old’s values are different than a 30-year-old’s values.”

Featured image: Coach Deion Sanders, with left, Janet Kukreja, MD, and right, Lauren Askevold, Sanders’ trainer. Photo by Derek Marckel, CU Athletics.

Scan to view the full story in the School of Medicine newsroom.





FROM CLINIC TO THE BIG SCREEN

This summer, a documentary premier at the Tribeca Film Festival featured 10-year-old Rowan Holler and her pediatrician Jamie Feinstein, MD, MPH, professor of pediatrics at the University of Colorado Anschutz School of Medicine.

Rowan has epidermolysis bullosa (EB), a rare genetic condition that causes the skin to easily blister and develop wounds. The film, “Matter of Time,” chronicles the efforts to find a cure for EB and musician Eddie Vedder’s dedication to the cause. Rowan and Feinstein both appear in the film, which premiered June 12 in New York City.

The documentary follows Vedder through two sold out performances in Seattle in 2023 to raise funds for EB research.

He and his wife Jill Vedder, founder and chairwoman of the EB Research Partnership, took an interest in finding a cure for the disease, which is often fatal, when a close family friend’s son was diagnosed with EB. The film also weaves in the stories of young people living with EB, physicians, and researchers.

“‘Matter of Time’ is a stunning showcase of team science at its best,” Feinstein says. “And that scientific team includes the ever so humble, thoughtful, and dedicated Vedder family. It’s a beautiful reminder of what can happen when everyone comes together with a shared vision and uses their unique talents for good. We’ve gone from having no treatments to truly believing that a breakthrough is within reach, thanks to the unyielding strength and hope of our EB community.”

Featured image: Jamie Feinstein, MD, MPH, left, poses for a photo with musician Eddie Vedder, and researchers Igor Kogut, PhD, middle, and Ganna Bilousova, PhD.

Scan to view the full story in the School of Medicine newsroom.



FROM CAMPUS TO COMMUNITY

The CU Anschutz School of Medicine continues to deepen its impact through programs that open doors, expand opportunity, and meet people where they are. Our faculty expertise reaches far beyond the classroom and clinic walls, and their efforts reflect a broad commitment to community health. The school supports more than 100 programs across Colorado, expanding health care access and improving wellness in every corner of the state.

TELEHEALTH PROGRAM EXPANDS VITAL MEDICAL SERVICES IN DENVER SCHOOLS

By Mark Harden

University of Colorado School of Medicine faculty at Denver Health have led the development of a new telehealth program to complement the network of health clinics housed in the Denver Public Schools (DPS) – a program that makes available a host of medical services to thousands of students.

“There are kids who really need to see doctors and nurses, and we can make it possible through technology. That’s what I really love about it,” says Honora Quinn Burnett, MD, MScPPM, an assistant professor of pediatrics who practices at Denver Health, a clinical partner of the CU School of Medicine. Burnett is medical director of the new initiative, known officially as Denver Health Pediatrics at Denver Public Schools School-Based Health Care Virtual Care Program.

When a student comes to the school nurse with anything from headaches or menstrual pain to asthma complaints or ear infections, the school nurse can connect them to a Denver Health practitioner, they can receive over-the-counter medication as needed with parental consent, and then they can go back to class. Parents can be included in the visit virtually or updated after the visit.

So far, the virtual-health initiative has increased access to health services at dozens of schools with more than 11,000 students combined. The program was launched in 2021, a year when chronic absenteeism in DPS rose to 36%. It is seen as a way to keep more students healthy and in class.

“School-based health care, and particularly virtual care, helps vulnerable students who wouldn’t get care otherwise,” says Sandra Cherabie, DO, an assistant professor of family medicine and medical director of Denver Health Pediatrics at Denver Public Schools, the on-site clinic program. “Telemedicine is a powerful way to get children connected to a provider when they have barriers like a lack of transportation, financial constraints, or working parents.”

Scan to view the full story in the School of Medicine newsroom.



ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT

The University of Colorado system generated



\$12.2 BILLION

in economic impact across Colorado in **2025**, highlighting CU's growing role in the state's economy through **education, research, innovation, and health care.**

The university system impact is **led by the CU Anschutz campus**, with

\$5.7 BILLION

in **economic impact.**



The School of Medicine's footprint makes up



40%

of **campus revenue.**

Source: University of Colorado Economic Contribution on the State and Counties of Operations, FY2024–25. Scan to view the full report.



LOOKING AHEAD...

As we look to the year ahead, the CU Anschutz School of Medicine is well positioned to continue advancing its mission amid a dynamic and evolving health care and research landscape. Building on the strong momentum of the past year, we are entering this next chapter with clarity, preparation, and confidence in our ability to adapt and lead.

Our foundation is strong. The school's diversified research portfolio, growing clinical trials enterprise, and sustained success in securing competitive funding provide stability and flexibility as national priorities evolve. Strategic investments in leadership, infrastructure, and philanthropic partnerships further strengthen our ability to support and sustain discovery, education, and patient care.

Across clinical care and community health, our faculty and partners continue to innovate in ways that expand access, improve outcomes, and meet people where they are. Close collaboration with hospital partners, state leaders, and community organizations ensures that we remain responsive to the needs of patients throughout Colorado and beyond, while advancing models of care that are resilient, scalable, and equitable.

We are equally committed to supporting our learners. Through the Office of Medical Education, continued investment in scholarship funds and student support services will ensure that our world-class medical education remains accessible and sustainable for the next generation of physicians and scientists. The Trek curriculum and our broader educational innovations continue to evolve, preparing graduates to thrive in a rapidly changing health care environment.

The opportunities ahead are substantial. We will continue translating discovery into impact, strengthening population health initiatives, expanding collaborative science, and advancing our Top 10 in 10 goals. What defines our school is not simply how we respond to change, but how we prepare for it—thoughtfully, strategically, and together.

With a strong foundation, exceptional people, and a shared sense of purpose, the CU Anschutz School of Medicine is ready for whatever comes next—and poised to continue improving health for the communities we serve.



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