

## Faculty Updates



**Mohammed Alshareef, MD**  
**Assistant Professor, Neurosurgery**

Dr. Alshareef joined Neurosurgery in February 2024. He received his MD and completed his residency at the Medical University of South Carolina. He completed his fellowship here at AMC and recently finished a Pediatric Neurosurgery Spine fellowship at Shriners Children's in PA. Dr. Alshareef will have a research lab focusing on complement activation and its effects on the pathologic neuroinflammatory response. His clinical interests include the treatment of hydrocephalus, pediatric spinal pathologies and deformity correction.



**Emily Downs, MD**  
**Assistant Professor, Cardiothoracic Surgery**

Dr. Downs joined CT Surgery on January 1, 2024. She came back to CHCO from the University of VA and Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters. Dr. Downs completed her MD and residency at the University of Virginia as well as a Congenital Cardiac Surgery Fellowship here at Anschutz. Her research interests include outcomes in congenital heart surgery and pediatric critical care.



**Priya Chandrasekaran, DDS**  
**Assistant Professor, Dentistry**

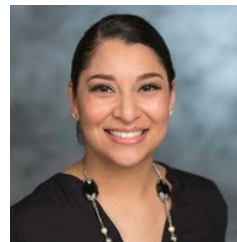
Dr. Chandrasekaran joined Pediatric Dentistry in February 2024. Prior to joining CHCO Dr. Chandrasekaran received her DDS from the University of Detroit Mercy and her certificate in Pediatric Dentistry from NYU Lutheran. Dr. Chandrasekaran is eager and excited to take on the role of our Pre-doctoral Program Director. In this role she will oversee the education of dental student clinical activities in the Doctor of Dental Surgery program.



**Timothy Irwin, MD**  
**Assistant Professor, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**

Dr. Irwin is joining Plastics on March 1, 2024. Dr. Irwin attended Pennsylvania State University and completed his residency at General Brigham/Harvard as well as a fellowship at Shriners in PA. Clinical interests include hand/upper extremity surgery, congenital differences, limb deficiencies, complex post-traumatic deformities, spasticity, spinal cord injuries, and microsurgical reconstruction throughout the body.

## Staff Transitions



We were very proud to announce that **Claudia Mata**, Senior Research Services Professional for ROCS accepted a new position as the Research Manager for Pediatric Surgery effective Jan 1, 2024. Claudia has played a critical role supporting the growth and development of the ROCS team over the past 6 years. In her new role, Claudia will be charged with directly supporting research efforts within Pediatric Surgery, helping to take this important work to the next level. Please join us in thanking Claudia for her important contributions to the CCS. We all wish her the very best in her new and exciting role.



The CCS is very happy to introduce **Allyson Calderon** as a new research coordinator in our **ROCS team**. Ally will be joining us at the end of February and is coming from the Department of Neurosurgery where she served as a research coordinator. Ally has a BA from Metropolitan State University of Denver and worked in consulting prior to coming to Anschutz. Welcome Ally!

Please continue to submit any requests for **ROCS services** through our intake form [here](#)

## Education Updates



In October the CCS welcomed our first cohort of **our Surgical Advanced Practice Fellowship**. This unique one-year fellowship is dedicated to enhancing the development of early-career Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants who wish to pursue a career in a pediatric surgical specialty. Fellows are exposed to all facets of pediatric surgical care including rotations in pediatric surgical co-management team, critical care, pediatric surgery, urology, neurosurgery, ENT, orthopedic surgery and more. Our current fellows, **Amber Matzoll** (left) and **Rachel Torry** (right) are doing great completing rotations in multiple areas. The program is currently accepting applications for our second cohort. Learn more about the program [here](#)

## Congratulatory Corner



**Phuong Nguyen, MD**, Chief of Pediatric Plastic Surgery, has been appointed as the **Associate Vice Chair of Global Surgery** for the Department of Surgery. Dr. Nguyen has been actively engaged in global surgery since 2004 and has led and participated in surgical capacity building and clinical trips in more than 12 countries and 3 continents. In this role his goal is to create an organized framework for the DOS to build the three pillars of education, research and clinical expertise with international partners in a bidirectional format.



**Kristina Wilson, MD, Orthopedics** was selected out of a very competitive application pool to be a part of the 2024 Captains of Inclusion Development Program at CHCO.

**Todd Hankinson MD, Neurosurgery** received funding from the LEAD Center in the SPH for a project entitled, "Exploring brain, cognitive, and behavioral contributions to obesity in youth with Craniopharyngioma: a pilot study."

## New and Noteworthy

### [Improving Vision Care for Patients with Down Syndrome](#)

**Michael Puente, MD**, Ophthalmology leads the UHealth Pediatric-Adult Transition Clinic, and is working to create better guidelines and options for patients with developmental disabilities and Down syndrome (click above to read article)



Kudos to the team in the **Department of Ophthalmology** for bringing excellent clinical care directly to patients. Read [here](#) about how **Lauren Mehner, MD, MPH**, and **Emily McCourt, MD**, each spend a day per month at Denver's Anchor Center for Blind Children tending to patients in an environment that's familiar, convenient, and comfortable.

## Congratulatory Corner



**Chaitanya Puranik, DDS, Dentistry** is part of a collaborative team that was awarded 1 of 9 **Anschutz Acceleration Initiative Awards** in January. The project, Multi-material 3D Print Processing of Antimicrobial and Antifungal Dental Prosthetics, will be led by Jeffrey Stansbury, PhD, Senior Associate Dean for Research and Professor, Craniofacial Biology. Read more [here](#)



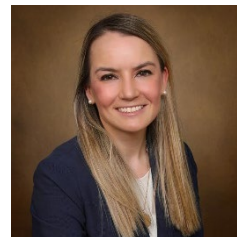
**Allyson Alexander, MD, PhD Neurosurgery** has received a mentored clinical scientist development award (K08) from NIH for her project, "Getting Excited about Cortical Malformations: Discovering the Mechanisms Leading to Seizure-prone Neurons in Malformations of Cortical Development." Dr. Alexander studies basic mechanisms of how epilepsy develops using human and mouse models.



**Pepe Diaz Miron, MD, Pediatric Surgery** has been selected as a CCTSI K12 scholar and has received funding for his project, "Understanding Variation and Clinical Factors Associated with the use of Extracorporeal Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation in Children (ECPR)."



**Aubrey Armento, MD, Orthopedics** received a K12 award for her project entitled, "Understanding Exercise Behaviors and the Impact of Pre-treatment Weight-bearing Exercise on Bone Health in Female Adolescents with Restrictive Eating Disorders."



**Kristine Corkum, MD, Pediatric Surgery** received a grant from the Cancer League of Colorado for her project, "Validation and Implementation of Pediatric Oncofertility Risk Calculator for Children Diagnosed with an Extracranial Tumor."