

Faculty Updates



Alexander Aretakis MD, Assistant Professor, Orthopedics (COS)

Dr. Aretakis joined Orthopedics in COS in September 2025. A Colorado native, after attending Northwestern University and University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Dr. Aretakis returned to CU for this residency in Orthopedic Surgery. He then pursued advanced fellowship training in pediatric orthopedic surgery at Nemours Children's Health/Al Dupont in Wilmington, Delaware where he honed his clinical and research skills in pediatric spinal deformity. Dr. Aretakis will practice at our Colorado Springs campus, caring for patients with scoliosis and other pediatric orthopedic conditions.



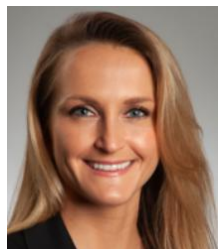
Kristen Berrebi, MD, Associate Professor, Dermatology

Dr. Berrebi completed her residency at the University of MA Chan Medical School. Following residency, she completed her pediatric dermatology fellowship at CHCO. She then served as the Medical Director of Pediatric Dermatology at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC), Stead Family Children's Hospital which is a position she served in for over five years. While at UIHC, Dr. Berrebi built expertise in both procedural and complex pediatric dermatology, as the only academic pediatric dermatologist in the state of Iowa during her tenure. Dr. Berrebi's primary research and clinical interests include benign and malignant cutaneous tumors in children.



Sofia Guelfand Warnken, MD, Assistant Professor, Dermatology

Dr. Sofia Guelfand Warnken joined Dermatology in October 2025. She earned her medical degree from Universidad del Desarrollo in Santiago, Chile, and completed her fellowship in Pediatric Dermatology at AMC. Her clinical interests include genetic skin conditions and vascular anomalies.



Abby Larson, MD, Instructor, Pediatric Surgery/Fetal

Dr. Larson joined Pediatric Surgery in October 2025. She received her MD from Johns Hopkins and completed her surgical residency at Brigham Women's Hospital, during which time she completed a pediatric and fetal research fellowship at CHOP. She completed her surgical fellowship at Children's WI. After completing her Fetal Surgery Fellowship with us, she will be joining the CFCC. Her research interests include: fetal development and therapy for complex congenital anomalies, CDH, and prenatal imaging and prognostication.

Faculty Updates



Dr. Michale Handler, the long-time CCS ASIC and former Chair of Pediatric Neurosurgery retired on Sept 1 2025. With a faculty career spanning 31 years, Dr. Handler dedicated his expertise to building the pediatric neurosurgery department, creating operational pathways within the perioperative space, and creating a framework for delivering the best care possible. He seamlessly led the CCS through numerous challenges over the years including the COVID pandemic, personnel shortages, SPD issues, respiratory virus surges, and daily operational situations. His focus on leading by example

while navigating these stressful experiences helped assuage the fears and anxieties among our teams.

When reflecting on his career, Dr. Handler shared that he is most proud of the growth of the Neurosurgery department that he led for 16 years, and of the brain tumor and epilepsy programs in which he played a key role in developing. He shared that his legacy is the team that will drive to make Children's Neurosurgery the best in the country. His advice to all is to "Be honest with yourself about who you are and what you need and be willing to go for it."

Read more about Dr. Handler story and important contributions [here](#)



The CCS was pleased to appoint, **Dr. Thomas Rauth, Pediatric Surgery**, as the new **ASIC for Clinical Operations** on 9/1/25. Dr. Rauth joined CHCO in September 2024, after having served as the Medical Director of Pediatric Surgical Services at Children's Hospital at Tristar Centennial in Nashville for 10 years. At CHCO, he has quickly gained a reputation not only for his clinical acumen but for his interpersonal skills, ability to collaborate across disciplines and for his drive to foster a positive, team-oriented work environment. Dr Rauth has said, "As I spend more time working with the perioperative physicians and staff, I am

convinced that we succeed in our mission because of the collective effort and dedication of our people. This hospital, like the children it serves, has limitless potential. I'm excited to have the privilege to be part of the team that ensures its continued growth and success."

Meet Our Doc: [Thomas Rauth, MD, Pediatric Surgeon](#)

CCS Newsletter

November 2025

New and Noteworthy



The CCS welcomed our third cohort of two new Surgical Advanced Practice Provider Fellows, Katelin Matson and Nicole Kirk on October 1st. Our fellows spend one year rotating through a number of our subspecialties as well as spending time with collaborating units. The Program will begin accepting applications for our next cohort in

January. Learn more about the program [here](#)

Congratulatory Corner



The CCS had **24** faculty members listed in the 5280 magazine's Top Doctors issue 2025- the most ever. See the full list [here](#)

We also had **6** faculty members in Colorado Springs Magazine's Top doctors issue as well. See the full list [here](#)



Congratulations to our **2025 CCS Surgical Innovation Leading Towards Commercialization (SILC) awardees**. The PIs below have been paired with a group of Engineering students at the Design Center Colorado (CU Boulder) to help develop prototypes for their ideas. Learn more about this program [here](#)

Dr. Puranik, Dentistry- LittleBite Dynamics: A Pediatric Dental Device for Occlusal Equilibration in Children

Dr. Katebzadeh, Dentistry- OralSim: Advanced Multi-Modal Oral Environment Simulator for Dental Materials Testing

Dr. Herrmann, ENT- Transcanal Endoscopic Cochlear Implantation (TECI) instrument

Shannon Acker, MD, Pediatric Surgery, was selected by the SOM's Mentored Scholarly Activity Program as the 2025 Mentor of the Year.

Jason Rhodes, MD, Orthopedics, was the winner of the SOM 2025 Surgery Teacher of the Year Award.

Kristina Wilson, MD, Orthopedics, was selected as a National Academy of Medicine State Health Policy Fellow.

Dr. Puranik, Dentistry won a SDM Excellence in Faculty research award and **Dr. Chin, Dentistry** won a SDM Excellence in Service Award. [Celebrating Excellence in Dentistry](#)

Congratulatory Corner (continued)



David Howell, PhD, Orthopedics, and the concussion research program received a new NIH grant (R21), "Multidimensional Sleep Health Intervention to Optimize Concussion recovery: a randomized clinical trial." By challenging current sleep recommendations provided for adolescent patients with concussion, this project seeks to advance rehabilitation strategies for improved concussion management and overall improved health.

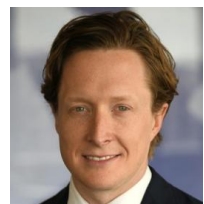
Learn more about Dr. Howell's work [here](#) and [here](#)



Todd Hankinson, MD, Neurosurgery, received a \$250K grant from Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation for the project, "Advancing Biological Understanding of Adamantinomatous Craniopharyngioma for the Design of Clinical Trials." Along with Dr. Mitra, DOP, HEMONC, he also received a 60K grant from the Cancer League of Colorado for the project, "Advancing next generation models for Craniopharyngioma."



Chris Derderian, MD, Pediatric Surgery, has received a K08 grant from the National Institutes of Health to fund five years of his research on fetal growth restriction (FGR), a condition in which a fetus's estimated weight is below the 10th percentile for its gestational age. Dr. Derderian and his team are investigating the epigenetic regulators of FGR. This [article](#) in the Department of Surgery newsroom provides details.



Matthew Stone, MD, CT Surgery, was named at the Rady Chair for Cardiac Surgery. Dr. Stone joined CHCO in 2019. In addition to his focus on neonatal cardiac surgery, he is the Principal Investigator of a basic science laboratory exploring myocardial ischemia-reperfusion injury, ex vivo heart perfusion, novel approaches to single ventricle palliation and applications of advanced imaging in congenital heart disease.

Daniel Wood, MD, Urology, was appointed as the Chief of Surgical Congenitalism in the Department of Surgery.