

BLUE SKY FACULTY FOLIO

INSPIRED





Family Tradition

Continuing a legacy of service in medicine and society

For Adit Ginde, MD, MPH, strong influences of medicine, science, and social impact are visible from the closest branches of his family tree, starting with his parents. His father, Arun, was a neurosurgeon and his mother, Rekha, was a pathologist.

"I was definitely interested in medicine from an early age," says Ginde, Professor and Vice Chair of Research for Emergency Medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. "I tried to keep an open mind, but I always knew that this was a path that I was likely to go on."

Ginde was raised in a Washington, DC, suburb where his parents eventually settled after immigrating from India years earlier.

"My parents came to this country with a good education but with nothing in their pockets and no local family support," Ginde says. "They built a good life from that, instilling the value of education and hard work in their children."

His paternal grandfather, Ramchandra Ginde, established the city's first dedicated department of neurosurgery at King Edward (VII) Memorial Hospital (KEM) in Mumbai, India. While completing a medical school rotation at KEM, others regularly inquired if he was related to the pioneering neurosurgeon whose accomplishments were documented in textbooks.

On his mothers' side, Ginde's grandfather, Harilal Mahimtura,

was a lawyer and social justice advocate in Colonial India. Mahimtura was among the group accompanying Mahatma Gandhi on the Salt March (also known as the Dandi March) civil uprising in 1930 protesting the British monarchy's salt monopoly.

“MY FAMILY SAYS THEY SEE A LOT OF BOTH GRANDFATHERS IN ME – THE WORK ETHIC AND DRIVE AND THE COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL IMPACT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND CARING FOR OTHERS,” GINDE SAYS. “BOTH ASPECTS RESONATE WITH ME.”



Ginde's combined interest in emergency care and public service emerged soon into his training. While studying biology at Rice University in Houston, he joined an effort to launch an on-campus emergency medicine service. Although the school was situated across from Texas Medical Center, it was difficult to get timely ambulance service. In the first class that completed emergency medical technician (EMT) training at Rice, he provided on campus, pre-hospital care until graduating. During this time, he also volunteered with local 911 emergency medical services, providing care to many Hispanic patients, which gave him first-hand insight into the healthcare plight of the underserved.

“It exposed me to medicine in general and to emergency medicine as a specialty,” he says. “It showed me very clearly that I love doing this type of work.”

As an undergraduate, Ginde spent a summer working at the United States Naval Research Lab in Washington, D.C. There, he conducted bench research on blood substitutes that could act as synthetic oxygen-carrying red blood cells and provide protection for both members of the military and civilians from hemorrhaging or chemical poisoning during war, mass casualty events, and other emergencies.

“That was my first real introduction to research and the experience stayed with me,” Ginde recalls.

He returned to community service work while pursuing a medical degree at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, founding a student-run initiative that provided CPR training to students, staff, and neighboring community members. It was also in St. Louis where Ginde met his future wife,

Kara Penn, who owns a consulting business focused on social justice.

After medical school, Ginde says he relished providing acute and episodic care during his emergency medicine residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. He simultaneously earned a Master of Public Health at Harvard where he saw patients with substance use disorders and psychiatric illnesses with no access to primary care.

“I valued making a difference for people in a moment of great need,” he says.

Ginde secured his first research grant during a clinical research fellowship through Beth Israel and Harvard Medical School. He led a study evaluating the feasibility and effectiveness of screening high-risk patients for undiagnosed diabetes in the emergency department setting – often their only contact with the healthcare system.

A TURNING POINT

His path eventually led him to the CU Department of Emergency Medicine, where he's contributed to an impressive body of research since joining the faculty in 2007.

His extensive investigations into the health effects of vitamin D insufficiency attracted national attention. The work culminated in a trial aimed at protecting a vulnerable population: older residents of long-term-care facilities. It demonstrated monthly high doses of vitamin D were effective in preventing acute respiratory infections in these individuals. He led another clinical trial on high-dose vitamin D for treating critically ill patients that was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

"I am fortunate to have gained so much experience in efficient and innovative clinical trials design and implementation," he says.

To date, he has published some 240 peer-reviewed research articles that focus primarily on critical injury and illness, but also address questions of health equity and access.

In 2020, Ginde found himself drawing from his past two decades of mounting expertise and the legacies of both his grandfathers. Faced with the world's largest public health emergency in a century, he would play a leading role globally in studies of treatments for COVID-19.

"I HAD PREPARED MY WHOLE CAREER FOR THIS MOMENT, AND THIS WAS THE MOMENT THAT DUTY CALLED," GINDE SAYS.

"You are doing things for public health purposes, and there was no greater challenge or honor that I could imagine for my career." ■

