

ID DIGEST



A DIVISION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NEWSLETTER

December 2025 & January 2026



A Message from Wendy Armstrong, MD Infectious Diseases Division Head

The Division is kicking off the winter season with a full heart and a lot to celebrate. I hope everyone had a restorative and joyful holiday season, and that the start of 2026 is bringing a sense of renewed resolve. We are entering the new year with tremendous momentum.

We welcomed three new faculty members, Drs. Carolee Estelle, Kathryn Bowman, and Tyler Brown! Carolee joins us from UTSW where she was the Associate Hospital Epidemiologist at Parkland and was recruited to be the Hospital Epidemiologist for AMC. She has been active and on the Board of Directors at SHEA. Katy is a physician-scientist studying antibody-mediated immune responses in tuberculosis, HIV/TB co-infection, and other respiratory infections, supported by a K08 focused on antibody-dependent innate effector function in TB progression among HIV co-infected individuals. Tyler is a physician-scientist whose work centers on microbial evolution and the epidemiology of infectious diseases. His K08 investigates the geographic origins and spread of drug-resistant *M. tuberculosis* in South Africa using genomic and mobility data, and he is developing new projects on TB transmission dynamics, prevention strategies, and the genomic epidemiology of antibiotic-resistant *Klebsiella pneumoniae* in the United States. Please join me in welcoming these three new fantastic members to our ID community!

The Colorado Infectious Diseases Symposium is returning for its second year on April 18, 2026. Last

year's inaugural event was a highlight for our community, and we're excited to build on that success this spring.

We also have an impressive slate of awards and appointments to celebrate across all of our sites. Please join me in congratulating Drs. Kellie Hawkins, Lindsay Nicholson, Karen Wendel, Edward Gardner, Guillermo Rodriguez-Navia, Kristine Erlandson, Chia-Yu Chiu, Joshua Barocas, Hillary Dunlevy, Steven Mudroch, and our outstanding IDGP Medical Assistant, Nancy Olague. Read more below for details on their accomplishments which reflect the dedication, expertise, and collaborative spirit that make this Division such an inspiring place to work. There is so much to be proud of as we step into 2026, and I'm grateful every day to be part of a community that leads with curiosity, compassion, and commitment. I'm looking forward to everything we'll accomplish together this year.

Featured News

SAVE THE DATE!



The second annual **Colorado Infectious Diseases Symposium** will take place on April 18, 2026! Mark your calendars for this event at the Anschutz Medical Campus. More details and registration are coming soon.



Dr. Kellie Hawkins & Dr. Lindsay Nicholson Named to Clinical Excellence Society

Dr. Kellie Hawkins and Dr. Lindsay Nicholson were selected for induction into the Department of

Medicine's Clinical Excellence Society (CES), an exceptionally competitive and prestigious recognition of exemplary clinical care. This year, only 14 clinicians were chosen from nine divisions across the Department of Medicine following a rigorous review process. Candidate materials were evaluated by senior internal faculty as well as external "Master Clinicians" from the University of Michigan, Emory University, the University of California–San Francisco, and Johns Hopkins University. Their qualifications were exceptional and reflected longstanding excellence in clinical care, professionalism, and contributions to quality, research, and education.

Lindsay and Kellie will join Dr. Lakshmi Chauhan and Dr. Tim Jenkins among the distinguished ranks of CES inductees. Congratulations to Kellie and Lindsay!

Patient Experience Quotes

"A very good and pleasant experience. **Dr. [Thomas] Campbell** gave me a complete update and was kind, courteous and professional."

Dr. Jennifer Spicer: "I am very impressed with the comprehensive knowledge possessed by this provider and the team at ID clinic. I had a choice of many providers in Metro Denver and sought out Dr. Spicer."

"Whitney [Schraufnagel] is THE BEST. She is caring, knowledgeable, empathetic, professional, and courteous."

Dr. Kristine Erlandson: "Clear communication and genuinely patient-centered approach made the visit excellent."

"I truly appreciate the professionalism, knowledge and sense of responsibility for patient care of **Dr. [Larissa] Pisney**. In spite of having complex medical problems, I always look forward to talking with Dr. Pisney and feel more hopeful after our visits."

"Dr. [Sara] Scherrer has been my physician for seven years and I cannot recommend her highly enough. She listens, she fully answers my questions, puts me at ease and treats me as a person, always in a sensitive and kind manner. I also have a complicated medical history, which due to its nature is becoming more complicated, and Dr. Scherrer is right on top of it at every visit. She is the best."

Dr. Lakshmi Chauhan: "The providers were very professional with me, very honest with me, and I really appreciate that. They gave me the best care ever, and they were very attentive and concerned about my health care while at UCHealth."

"Dr. [Chia-Yu] Chiu was amazing! An incredible listener and he genuinely made me feel comfortable and cared for. My husband was impressed and thought he was the best of the best! Thank you."

Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez: "I have always felt comfortable and at ease since I started getting treatment in 2008."

Dr. Hillary Dunlevy is the best provider we have ever had at UCHealth. She consistently stays up to date on our care and makes sure we get the best care through her and her nurses.

Awards



Dr. Karen Wendel, Denver Health Excellence in Education

Dr. Karen Wendel received the Excellence in Education Award from the Denver Health Office of Academic Affairs. As medical director of the Denver Sexual Health Clinic and a longtime leader in STI and HIV prevention, Dr. Wendel has shaped clinical education locally and nationally. Her work with the Denver Prevention Training Center—first as medical director and now as faculty—allows her to train providers and offer technical guidance across the country, strengthening the quality of sexual health care nationwide. Congratulations to Karen!



Dr. Edward Gardner, Denver Health Excellence in Research

Dr. Edward Gardner was honored with the Excellence in Research Award from the Denver Health Office of Academic Affairs. As medical director of the ID/HIV Clinic, Dr. Gardner has led rigorous, long-term work that deepens our understanding of how social conditions, clinical pathways, and community realities influence HIV outcomes—particularly for patients facing homelessness, substance use challenges, or barriers to consistent care. His contributions continue to strengthen Denver Health's ability to serve those most impacted by structural inequities. Congratulations, Ed!



Dr. Guillermo Rodriguez Nava, Denver Health Media Relations Award

Congratulations to Dr. Guillermo Rodriguez Nava who was awarded the Denver Health MIC (media relations) award for "Las Noticias En Español"!



Denver Health ID Clinic Team, Duma Award for Patient Experience

Congratulations to the Denver Health ID Clinic team for taking back the Duma award for patient experience for "Likelihood to Recommend"!



Dr. Kristine Erlandson, CU Anschutz Research Mentor Award

Dr. Kristine Erlandson has been selected as the 2026 recipient of the CU Anschutz Research Mentor Award from the School of Medicine, a prestigious honor recognizing exceptional dedication to research mentorship. Colleagues across the Division enthusiastically supported her nomination, reflecting the deep appreciation for her leadership and guidance. This is truly wonderful news for our community and a richly deserved recognition. Congratulations to Kristine!



Nancy Olague, Partners in Care Award

Nancy Olague, Medical Assistant in the IDGP, has been awarded the Partners in Care Award by the Medical Staff of the University of Colorado Hospital. This honor recognizes individuals who exemplify exceptional service and dedication to patient care. Nancy is profoundly deserving of this recognition, reflecting her outstanding leadership, unwavering commitment to clinical excellence, and deep devotion to the patients and teams she supports. Her contributions continue to elevate the standard of care within the IDGP, and this award highlights the impact of her work across the institution. Congratulations, Nancy!



Dr. Chia-Yu Chiu, AMS Stewardship Award

Dr. Chia-Yu Chiu was the recipient of the most recent AMS Stewardship Award, "Excellence in Penicillin Allergy De-labeling". While on Transplant ID, he identified three patients in a single day who needed penicillin allergy de-labeling. All of which were successfully de-labeled and are now able to receive penicillin antibiotics. Congratulations, Chiu!

Division Happenings



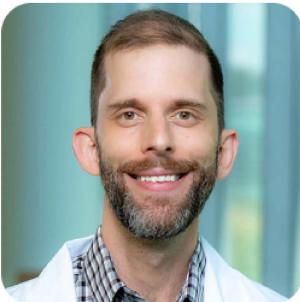
Dr. Joshua Barocas Elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation

Dr. Joshua Barocas was elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), a prestigious nonprofit honor society of more than 3,000 physician-scientists representing all medical specialties. The ASCI is dedicated to advancing research that deepens understanding of disease and improves patient care, and its members are committed to mentoring future generations of physician-scientists. Election to the ASCI is a significant milestone in the physician-scientist career path and an exceptional professional honor. Congratulations to Josh!



Hillary Dunlevy Named Associate Program Director for the Colorado AIDS Education & Training Center

Dr. Hillary Dunlevy was appointed Associate Program Director for the Colorado AIDS Education & Training Center (CAETC). Hillary brings extensive international expertise in anal dysplasia management and deep experience caring for individuals with complex HIV. As a med-peds trained provider, she plays a pivotal role in bridging pediatric HIV care into adulthood and is a recognized leader in HIV linkage to care. Her appointment reflects exceptional qualifications and a longstanding commitment to clinical excellence, professionalism, and high-quality patient care. Congratulations to Hillary on stepping into this important role!



Dr. Steven Mudroch Named Associate Director, PrEP Clinical Program, IDGP

Dr. Steven Mudroch was selected as the Associate Director of the PrEP Clinical Program for HIV Prevention at the Infectious Diseases Group Practice (IDGP). Steve brings his clinical expertise as a member of the IDGP PrEP Workgroup as well as his leadership in the injectable ART program for HIV treatment at the IDGP to this role. He is currently in the Teaching Scholars Program and aims to enhance community and provider education on HIV prevention for the PrEP program. Please join us in congratulating Steve on this well deserved leadership position!



COPHI Launch Event: 'Prevalence Matters' Symposium

The Colorado Poverty and Health Initiative (COPHI), led by Dr. Joshua Barocas, held its inaugural event on February 4, and there was an outstanding turnout. Colleagues gathered for a morning of energizing talks, thoughtful discussion, and an inspiring look at what's ahead for this new initiative. Speakers highlighted the critical importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration in community-centered health innovation. The enthusiasm in the room made it clear that COPHI is launching with tremendous momentum and shared excitement. Please stay tuned for additional COPHI programming, opportunities to get involved, and updates as the initiative continues to grow!



Happy Holidays from the Division of Infectious Diseases

We hope everyone's holiday season was filled with rest and time spent with loved ones. Thank you to all who gathered at our annual division holiday party on December 18.

Our inpatient workroom holiday décor—with ID-themed tree ornaments and a *mino(cycline)-orah* courtesy of Rachel Hendryx—captured the spirit of the season!

Invited Lectures & Traveling Physicians:

- **Dr. Katherine Frasca** is presenting posters at three upcoming conferences:
 - "Improving Rates of HIV Screening in the Emergency Department Through Clinical Decision Support (CDS)" with Elisa Bye (CU Medical Student) and Braden Sciarra (former ID Fellow) at CROI 2026.
 - "A Board Style Focused Review of Antimicrobials for Medical Students" at the AMC 2026 Medical Education Symposium.
 - "Preliminary development and evaluation of infographics to enhance HIV-prevention education with an open-source large language model" at the AMIA 2026 Amplify.
- **Dr. Joshua Barocas** will present "The Price of Not Knowing: Cost-Effectiveness of Quantitative Neuromuscular Blockade Monitoring in Pediatric Anesthesia" at the IARS and SOCCA 2026 Annual

Meeting.

- **Pranav Padmanabhan** (Barocas Lab) will present "Regaining Our Footing: A United Approach to Combatting Anti-Harm Reduction Narratives" at the 2026 CPDD Annual Meeting.
- **Dr. Shelley Kon** and team had an abstract accepted at SHEA 2026, "Forecasting the Consequences of Collapse in Infection Prevention and Control: A Premortem Analysis Using the Socioecological Model."
- **Dr. Margaret Fitzpatrick** had an abstract, "Adapting the Recurrent Urinary Tract Infection Impact Questionnaire (RUTIIQ) for Populations with Neurogenic Bladder through Cognitive Interviews," accepted for SHEA 2026.

Other Updates:

- The ID Division and Denver Health said goodbye to **Dr. David Wyles** in December. Dave provided steady leadership for the Denver Health ID Division for almost 10 years. Dr. Tim Jenkins has stepped into the role in the interim while the Department of Medicine conducts a national search for his replacement. The position should be posted in the coming weeks.
- **Dr. Tyler Brown** received an Emerging Investigators highlight in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*. [Read it here](#).
- **Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez** is a new panel member for the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) PCP clinical practice guidelines.
- **Dr. Joshua Barocas** was named a Research-to-Policy Collaboration Scholar from Penn State University.
- **Dr. Shelley Kon** was recently featured in a fun DOM social media video on staying healthy in the Olympic Village. [View it here](#).

Some Recent Publications



Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez

Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez published multiple papers.

A seminar "Leprosy" in *The Lancet*.

[Read More](#)

"Opportunistic fungal infection risk and mortality in non-HIV, non-transplant US adults receiving systemic glucocorticoids: An observational cohort study" in *Medical Mycology*.

[Read More](#)

"Insights into current coccidioidomycosis therapeutic pathways" in *Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Hayato Mitaka

Dr. Hayato Mitaka published a review article titled "Top unanswered questions in antimicrobial management of necrotizing soft tissue infections" in *Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiology*. The article was highlighted in [Editor's Choice](#).

[Read More](#)



Dr. Michelle Haas

Dr. Michelle Haas consults for the Curry International TB Center to provide consultation for providers in the Western Region on TB. As part of this work, Michelle provides ongoing consultation for patients with drug-resistant TB. She just published a case series of patients with relapse and emergent resistance with novel short course regimens for MDR-TB, a growing area of concern both here in the US and globally:

"Relapse and Emergent Resistance With Novel Short-Course Regimens for Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis, United States, 2022–2024" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Sarah Rowan & Dr. Karen Wendel

Dr. Sarah Rowan and Dr. Karen Wendel published an editorial titled "Traditional Risk Factors Plus Prevalence-Based Screening for Syphilis: Time for a Dual Approach" in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Shelley Kon & Dr. Mary Bessesen

Dr. Shelley Kon and Dr. Mary Bessesen published a paper titled "Impact of a Three-Strain Lactobacilli Probiotic (BioK+) on Incidence of Hospital-Onset Clostridioides difficile: A Retrospective Observational Cohort Study" in *Antibiotics*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Nina Millman

Dr. Nina Millman published a paper titled "Disparities in screening, diagnosis, and treatment of diabetes mellitus among people with HIV at a large southeastern academic health center" in *HIV Research & Clinical Practice*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Kristine Erlandson & Dr. Grace Kulik

Dr. Kristine Erlandson and Dr. Grace Kulik published the primary results of their clinical trial titled "Comparing the Effectiveness of High Intensity Interval Training vs Continuous Moderate Intensity Exercise on Physical Function Among Older Adults With HIV" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

Dr. Grace Kulik led an additional paper with Dr. Kristine Erlandson as part of the ALIVE cohort, titled "The association of methadone use with physical function and frailty among persons who inject drugs" in *Addiction*.

[Read More](#)

Dr. Kristine Erlandson published two papers based off of ACTG data. Kristine noted that these data are available to all investigators and encouraged anyone interested in using them to reach out to her directly.

"Modeled Health and Economic Burden of Frailty and Falls Among Adults With HIV" in *JAMA Network Open*.

[Read More](#)

"Monocyte Activation in People With HIV and Tuberculosis Coinfection and Effect of Tuberculosis Preventive Therapy: An Analysis of the ACTG A5279/BRIEF TB Trial" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

Finally, Dr. Kristine Erlandson published a paper in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases* titled "Frailty in People with HIV is Linked to Inflammation, Bone Health, and T cell Exhaustion" and there is an associated [editorial](#).

[Read More](#)



Dr. Sarah Scott & Dr. Joshua Barocas

Dr. Sarah Scott and Dr. Joshua Barocas published a paper titled "Cutting federal funds for HIV testing means not Ending the HIV Epidemic" in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Joshua Barocas and the Barocas Lab

Dr. Joshua Barocas and members of the Barocas Lab published multiple papers.

"Health, Costs, and Injection-Related Infections at a Hypothetical Overdose Prevention Center" in *JAMA Network Open*.

[Read More](#)

"Impact of increased criminal penalties for fentanyl possession on initiation and retention on medications for opioid use disorder in Colorado" in the *International Journal of Drug Policy*.

[Read More](#)

"Estimating community-level prevalence of opioid use disorder: Extrapolating from Medicaid claims data and other publicly available data sources in Ohio, USA" in *Addiction*.

[Read More](#)

"The Erosion of Harm Reduction" in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

[Read More](#)

"Potential Changes in US Homelessness by Ending Federal Support for Housing First Programs" in *JAMA Health Forum*.

[Read More](#)

"The Process and Cost of Developing a Community Advisory Board Focused on Opioid Overdose Deaths" in *Progress in Community Health Partnerships*.

[Read More](#)

News Features

The New York Times

U.S. Flu Cases Are Rising Again

[Read More](#)

"It's certainly gone down. It's not gone by any means," said **Dr. Michelle Barron**, a professor of infectious diseases at the University of Colorado Anschutz.

The Department of Medicine

From Measles to STIs: Infectious Diseases Winter Olympians Should

[Read More](#)

Prepare For

"CU Anschutz infectious diseases physician **Shelley Kon, MD**, explains how Olympians and fans can best protect themselves from illnesses."

Share Your Updates

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