

ID DIGEST



A DIVISION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NEWSLETTER

June & July 2025



A Message from Wendy Armstrong, MD, FIDSA
Infectious Diseases Division Head

Reading this newsletter makes it clear why I am proud to be part of the CU Division of ID. Represented here are outstanding accomplishments in all of the academic missions—clinical care, education, and scholarship— and in so many cases, these accomplishments represent collaborative efforts by multiple faculty members and fellows. Also clear here is a message of community and kindness—celebrating each other, welcoming new arrivals (Babies! Fellows! Faculty!) and taking care of those far from home. This is a challenging time to be an ID physician, to be in public health, to be in an academic medical center, to be committed to improving the health of those with ever increasing barriers to care. I’m privileged to be facing these times with this community. Thanks.

Featured News



Dr. Cara Wilson's Farewell to MSTP Director Role

Dr. Cara Wilson stepped down as Director of the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) to focus on her research program. Her leadership helped steer the program through major transitions, secure renewal of the MSTP T32 grant, and sustain its nationally recognized summer conference. We thank Dr. Wilson for her transformative leadership and dedication to the MSTP, and we wish her continued success in her research!



Jennifer Spicer, MD, MPH, MHPE
Vice Chair for Education, Department of Medicine

Dr. Jennifer Spicer Appointed Vice Chair for Education in the Department of Medicine

Infectious diseases physician, Dr. Jennifer Spicer, will join the Department of Medicine as the new Vice Chair for Education beginning August 18. Dr. Spicer brings extensive leadership experience in medical education. Her roles while an Associate Professor at Emory University have included Associate Program Director for the Internal Medicine Residency, Director of Distinction in Medical Education, and Course Director for first-year medical students. She also served on the steering committee guiding Emory's transformation of medical education across all degree programs.

We're thrilled to welcome Dr. Spicer into this departmental leadership role and as a new member of our division! Read the [full announcement](#) from Dr. Vineet Chopra, Robert W. Schrier Chair of Medicine.



2025 ID Fellowship Graduation

Congratulations to our second-year Infectious Diseases fellows—Drs. Zachary Cantor, Sawyer Ricker, Braden Sciarra (*Chief Fellow*), and Maxwell Witt—for completing their research presentations and graduating! We are proud of their achievements and are grateful for the passion and commitment they've shown throughout the fellowship. We can't wait to see all they accomplish in their future endeavours!



2025 Faculty Promotions

We're excited to announce the promotion of four outstanding faculty members, effective July 1. Congratulations to all on this well-deserved recognition of hard work and dedication!

Edward Gardner, MD – Promoted from *Associate Professor* to *Professor*

Eddie Stenehjem, MD, MSc – Promoted from *Visiting Professor* to *Professor*

Lakshmi Chauhan, MD – Promoted from *Assistant Professor* to *Associate Professor*

Kejun Guo, PhD – Promoted from *Assistant Research Professor* to *Associate Research Professor*

Patient Experience Quotes

Dr. Steven Johnson: "The best provider I've ever had, I'll miss him when he retires."

"[Dr. Stephen Morris] carefully looked through my chart before he even saw me. He understood exactly

what was going on. He was kind and caring and thorough and came up with a plan that I agreed with and he was his bedside manner was fantastic. I feel like I'm in good hands."

Whitney Schraufnagel: "She's awesome! She's always friendly with a smile. She's very compassionate and caring. I appreciate her."

Dr. Nipun Atri: "Very well prepared. Absolutely knowledgeable. Good listener, very thorough."

"I really enjoyed my visit with **Dr. [Misha] Huang**. She seemed to listen to me, repeat back what I was saying, address the concerns I had. And I feel confident that she's going to try to move things along or help me. So that's all good news."

"**Dr. [Sara] Scherrer** is very knowledgeable, thoughtful and thorough. I never feel rushed. She has an attentive and gentle temperament. I have a complicated medical history so I feel fortunate to have found her as my specialist doctor."

"**Dr. [Brian] Montague** is great. Personable and knowledgeable."

"My health update with **Dr. [Chia-Yu] Chiu** was via video teleconference, an effective and efficient method for my health review and treatment needs. An outstanding visit...he was well-versed with my case and future care requirements."

"**[Dr. Steven Mudroch]** took the time to be familiar with my case and explained everything thoroughly. I was surprised that this doctor committed the amount of time to talk with me. I felt listened to and cared for."

"**Dr. Michael Haden** is one of the best doctors with Anschutz."

"**[Dr. Hillary Dunlevy]** is one of the best doctors I have ever met. She listens to all of my concerns, she is kind and professional and has given me the best care. Thank you so much."

"**Dr. [Brian] Grundy** was very pleasant and attentive. He allowed me to be part of my treatment plan."

Awards



Dr. Bruce McCollister, Outstanding Educator Awards

Dr. Bruce McCollister was awarded both the Kaiser Permanente Outstanding Pre-Clinical Teacher Award and the President's Excellence in Teaching Award for 2024, the latter chosen by graduating School of Medicine students. Bruce's recognition is a significant achievement and stands as a testament to the meaningful impact and inspiration he brings to his teaching.



Dr. Szu-Wei Huang, R21 Grant

Dr. Szu-Wei Huang, a former T32 trainee and new research faculty member in our division, was awarded his first R21 grant titled "HIV-1 Integrase Interactions with Viral RNA". His research focuses on elucidating the underlying mechanisms for HIV-1 integrase interactions with the viral RNA genome which is required for the formation of infectious virions. This non-catalytic function of HIV-1 integrase is an important therapeutic target for a novel investigational class of antiretrovirals called allosteric integrase inhibitors or ALLINIs.



Dr. Joshua Barocas, R01 Supplement

The Barocas Lab was awarded a supplement entitled "Estimating the cost of peer specialists providing comprehensive healthcare services at a syringe services program" off of their R01 grant.



Dr. Kirk Feters, Susan Mason Educational Endowment Award

Dr. Kirk Feters, ID Fellow, was awarded the Susan Mason Educational Endowment Award for his project investigating the population-level impact of federal HIV-specific housing assistance on HIV incidence.

Pictured: Kirk and Dr. Joshua Barocas with Rick Wedgle, the late Dr. Mason's husband and award establisher.

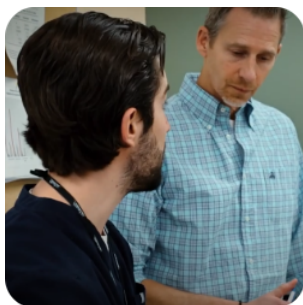
Division Happenings



Department of Medicine Global Health Observership Program

Members of the ID Division have been actively engaged in the Department of Medicine's Global Health Observership Program, offering mentorship and clinical experiences to foreign students and medical graduates from around the world. Since the program's launch, it has welcomed 11 participants from Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, India, and Iran. The ID Division is proudly committed to cultivating international collaboration and extends sincere gratitude to Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez for his dedicated leadership of the program.

Pictured: Members of the ID Division celebrating with Dr. Juan Daniel Murillo Garcia, a medical student from Colombia, who graduated during his observership.



ID Fellowship Program Video

We're thrilled to share our new video showcasing our Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped bring this project to life!

View the [video](#) on our YouTube Channel.



Division Baby Shower

The Division was delighted to host a baby shower for Dr. Rebecca Unterborn, ID Fellow, and Chelsee McFarland, Education Coordinator. We're overjoyed to welcome the two new additions to our ID family this summer! Thank you to everyone who joined in the celebration, and special thanks to Katherine, Sara, and Hillary for coordinating.

Invited Lectures & Traveling Physicians:

- Dr. Larissa Pisney and Lorna Allen, FNP-C, presented a webinar on applied QI for the IDSA's stewardship center of excellence in June. [View the recording](#).

Other Updates:

- Welcome New Fellows!
 - Adult Infectious Diseases fellows Drs. Jennifer Chou, Martina King, and Laura Victoria began in July.
 - Pediatric Infectious Diseases fellows Drs. Liliana de Fatima Arriola Montenegro and Artemis Gogos began in July.
 - Neuro-Infectious Diseases and Autoimmune Neurology fellow Dr. Maria Gallanis will begin in September.
- Welcome New Faculty!
 - Charlotte Mitchell, PA, began in June.
 - Dr. Guillermo Rodriguez Nava began in July.
 - Dr. Sarah Scott, Dr. Jennifer Spicer, and Dr. Nate Campbell begin in August.
- Dr. Hayato Mitaka was elected a Fellow of the American College of Physicians (FACP).
- Many thanks to Drs. Rebecca Unterborn, Tommy King, Madison Salam, Brian Grundy, and Steven Mudroch who gave talks to interns as part of their didactic curriculum! They covered a wide range of topics, including HIV, endocarditis, bacteremias, CNS infections, UTIs, gram negative resistance, antimicrobial stewardship, and more.
- The July 2025 Travel Clinic Bulletin has been e-published by Donna McGregor, NP, and Dr. Andrés Henao-Martínez. [Read more](#).
- Chelsea McFarland's baby, Silas, was born on July 30, 2025.
- Rebecca Unterborn's baby, Cooper, was born on August 5, 2025.

**Infectious Diseases
Clinical Trials Unit**

Study Opportunity

Do you have patients with HIV who have difficulty with adherence to oral antiretroviral regimens and don't have full viral suppression? If so, they might be good candidates for the CROWN study which is evaluating the safety and efficacy of CAB LA + RPV LA in people with ongoing HIV viremia. Participants are randomly assigned to one of two groups: 75% of participants will receive CAB/RPV injections and 25% will remain on their oral standard of care regimen. Participants in the standard of care arm will have the option of switching to CAB/RPV injections if they are virally suppressed (HIV RNA < 50) at their month 6 visit.

For more information or to refer a patient, please contact Vanessa Sutton, NP at 303-724-0712 or vanessa.sutton@cuanschutz.edu.

Some Recent Publications



Medical Trainees Madison Martz, Nazar Akhverdyan, & Dr. Sarah Gorvetzian with Dr. Kristine Erlandson, Dr. Lakshmi Chauhan, Dr. Ken Tyler, & Melissa Wilson

A study, titled "Adherence to Bone Mineral Density Screening Recommendations in Older Adults with HIV" and published in *AIDS Research and Human Retroviruses*, was led by two medical students, with a future ID fellow and ID faculty members.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Kirk Feters & Dr. Joshua Barocas

Kirk Feters, MD and ID Fellow, is corresponding author, and Josh Barocas, MD, is co-author of a viewpoint article, "Advocating for Maintaining Housing First Policies" in *JAMA*.

[Read More](#)

Additional Publications by Dr. Joshua Barocas

"Health and Economic Outcomes of Addressing Encampments of Individuals Using Opioids" in *JAMA Network Open*.

[Read More](#)

"Risk factors for multiple skin abscesses among community-recruited people who inject drugs in Los Angeles, CA, and Denver, CO: a cross-sectional study" in *Therapeutic Advances in Infectious Disease*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Grace Kulik & Dr. Kristine Erlandson

Grace Kulik, DPT, former T32 trainee, and current PhD student, led a paper with Kristine Erlandson, MD, for REPRIEVE titled "Prognostic Factors of Physical Function Decline Among Middle-Aged Adults With HIV" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

Additional Publications by Dr. Kristine Erlandson

"Effect of Pitavastatin on Epigenetic Aging Biomarkers in People With HIV: Pilot Substudy of the REPRIEVE Trial" in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

"No evidence of a detrimental effect of pitavastatin on neurocognitive function among people with HIV" in *AIDS*.

[Read More](#)

"No evidence of pitavastatin effect on muscle area or density among people with HIV" in *AIDS*.

[Read More](#)

"Development and acceptability of ViviendoPositivos: A culturally tailored telenovela (soap opera) intervention to improve self-management among Latinos with HIV" in *PLOS One*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Sarah Rowan, Dr. Edward Gardner, & Dr. David Wyles

Sarah Rowan, MD, is senior author of an original investigation, "Hepatitis C Screening in Emergency Departments: The DETECT Hep C Randomized Clinical Trial," published in *JAMA*. Eight co-authors are from our division, campus, and Denver Health.

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Additional Publications by Dr. Sarah Rowan

"Approaches to Offering Hepatitis C Treatment at Syringe Services Programs in the United States: A Scoping Review" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

"Cutaneous Abscess Prevalence and Risk Factors Among People Who Inject Drugs in Denver, Colorado" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

"Use of Epic® to facilitate high-quality randomization of emergency department-based pragmatic clinical trials" *Clinical Trials*.

[Read More](#)

"Effect of Routine Opt-Out HIV Screening on Emergency Department Operational Metrics: Results From the Pragmatic Randomized HIV TESTED Trial" in *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Hayato Mitaka, Dr. Alyssa Castillo, & Dr. Karrine Brade

Hayato Mitaka, MD, with co-authors Alyssa Castillo, MD, and Karrine Brade, PharmD, published a recent paper titled "Underdosed and Underappreciated: Why Japanese Community-Acquired Pneumonia Outcomes With Ampicillin-Sulbactam May Not Translate Globally" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

Additional Publication by Dr. Hayato Mitaka

Hayato Mitaka, MD, published a paper titled "Fournier gangrene is associated with increased length of stay and higher healthcare costs compared to non-perineal necrotizing soft tissue infections: a retrospective analysis of the National

Inpatient Sample (2016–2020)" in *Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiology*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Chia-Yu Chiu

Chia-Yu Chiu, MD, published a paper titled "Beyond the HIV Organ Policy Equity Act: Roadmap to expanding kidney and liver transplants for people with human immunodeficiency virus utilizing grafts from donors with human immunodeficiency virus" in the *American Journal of Transplantation*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Michelle Barron

Michelle Barron, MD, is a co-author of an original investigation, "Estimated 2023-2024 COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness in Adults," in *JAMA Network Open*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Andrés Henao-Martínez

Andrés Henao-Martínez, MD, PhD, published multiple recent papers:

"Health Hazards of Migration in People Seeking Asylum in New York City, 2023" in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

[Read More](#)

"Voriconazole versus isavuconazole for invasive aspergillosis: a retrospective analysis in a medically insured U.S. population (2017-2020)" in *Therapeutic Advances in Infectious Disease*.

[Read More](#)

"Adjunctive β -lactams for *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteremia: a narrative review" in *Therapeutic Advances in Infectious Disease*.

[Read More](#)

Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez & Dr. Martin Krsak

"Impact of Substance Use Disorders on Outcomes of Medically Insured Persons Receiving Multiweek Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy: a Claims-based Cohort Study From 2015 to 2020" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez & Dr. Leland Shapiro

"Letter to the Editor: Re-evaluating Immune-Based Strategies for Cryptococcal Meningitis in Non-HIV Populations" in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Dan Pastula, Dr. Lakshmi Chauhan, & Dr. Ken Tyler

Dan Pastula, MD, Lakshmi Chauhan, MD, and Ken Tyler, MD, along with other neurology faculty, published a study titled "West Nile Virus Neuroinvasive Disease in Patients Treated With Anti-CD20 Therapies" in *Neurology Clinical Practice*.

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News Features

UCHealth Today

How travelers can stay safe as measles cases rise

"If you know that you've had two vaccines, then you're set. There's nothing more you need to do," said **Dr. Michelle Barron**.

[Read More](#)

UCHealth Today

UCHealth offers prevention tips as West Nile season returns to Colorado

"The fact that we know there are positive mosquitoes now, means people are at risk for contracting West Nile virus," said **Dr. Daniel Pastula**, chief of neuroinfectious disease and global neurology at UCHealth.

[Read More](#)

Yahoo News

Officials issue warning after confirming troubling West Nile virus trend:

'It is much better to avoid getting this'

"I have seen healthy 20- and 30-year-olds with severe West Nile disease and permanent neurological damage," **Dr. Daniel Pastula**, chief of neuroinfectious diseases and global neurology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

[Read More](#)

Denver Post

Denver confirms presence of West Nile virus as season starts early along Front Range

"Mosquitos need standing water to breed, so storms that leave puddles could benefit them. But the amount of rain is only one factor in how many people will become severely ill with West Nile," said **Dr. Daniel Pastula**.

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The Colorado Sun

Why has Colorado seen so many "breakthrough" measles infections in vaccinated people?

Infectious diseases experts **Dr. Daniel Pastula** and **Dr. Michelle Barron** provide insight.

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Call for Submissions

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Visit the [ID Division Website](#)

