

ID DIGEST



A DIVISION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NEWSLETTER

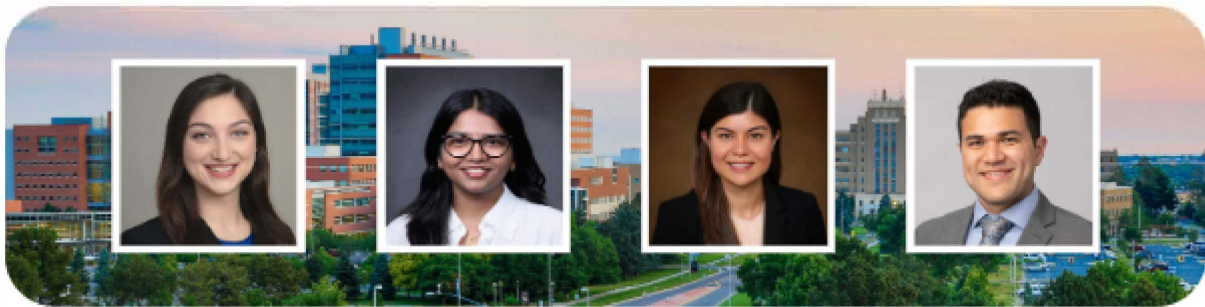
October & November 2025



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

The Division has had a productive fall! I'm particularly excited to see the formation of new working groups that include members across our campuses including the HIV Connect Colorado group featured below, the Transitions of Care Working Group and our Hospital Epidemiology and Antibiotic Stewardship Working Group (this last group pledges that they are going to come up with a catchier name!). These have led to great discussions, sharing of best practices and development of ideas for collaboration. CU ID represented at IDWeek in Atlanta in October, and we have hosted several people for recruitment visits – all of which generate positive buzz that we are the place to be! We have four new fellows joining us in July, and Katherine Frasca organized a fantastic World AIDS Day panel and remembrance December 1 for the medical students and their ID interest group. And by the next newsletter, we'll be able to introduce three new faculty members starting in January! The Division is an exciting place to be right now. Above all, as we enter this holiday season, I feel lucky to be part of the Infectious Disease community which embraces caring and tolerance – I hope everyone finds a little peace as we move into 2026.

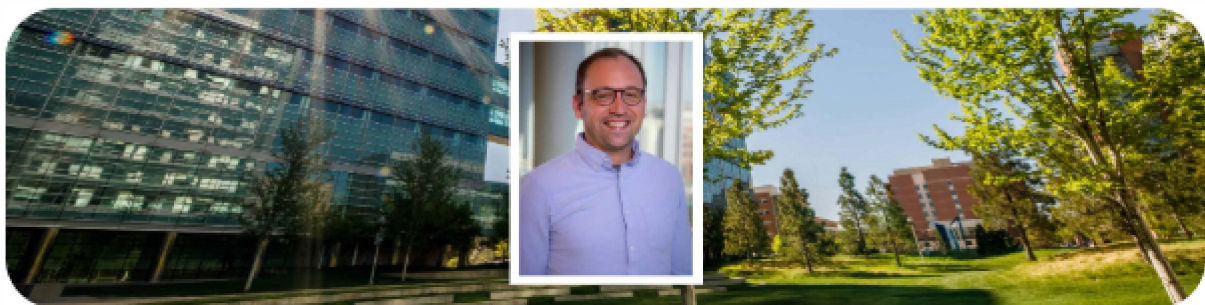
Featured News



Welcoming Incoming ID Fellows

The division is thrilled to welcome a full cohort of outstanding Infectious Diseases fellows next year: **Dr. Caroline Bashour** (OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital), **Dr. Shanmukha (Priya) Peddireddy** (Vassar Brothers Medical Center Northwell Health — Nuvance Health), **Dr. Gavi Roda** (University of Colorado Internal Medicine Residency Program), and **Dr. Sum Park Sarmadi** (Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati). We couldn't be more excited about the exceptional talent joining our team in July.

Gratitude is extended to **Dr. Brian Montague**, **Dr. Michael Haden**, **Chelsee McFarland**, and **Eleanor Shields-Ramirez** for their leadership and hard work throughout this recruitment season.



Announcing the Colorado Poverty and Health Initiative

Dr. Josh Barocas has launched a new initiative spanning our division, the Department of Medicine, and the broader campus: the Colorado Poverty and Health Initiative (CoPHI). This effort is designed to advance interdisciplinary research, education, and policy at the critical intersection of poverty and health.

CoPHI will strengthen the evidence base for addressing the social determinants of health—conditions that precede, co-occur with, and reinforce poor health outcomes. By partnering with community groups and civic leaders, the initiative will translate evidence-based solutions into real-world impact, improving health outcomes across Colorado and beyond.

Under Josh's leadership, CoPHI will be the nation's leading scientific hub for understanding and

addressing these pressing challenges. This is an exciting opportunity for the division that will no doubt shape future research and community impact.



IDWeek 2025

IDWeek 2025 in Atlanta was marked by an impressive presence from the Division. Faculty, fellows, pharmacists, medical students, and collaborators contributed—delivering talks, participating in panels, moderating discussions, and presenting a wide array of posters. The breadth of involvement showcased the Division's leadership in infectious diseases research, education, and clinical innovation.

Patient Experience Quotes

Dr. Michael Haden: "The provider really listened to me. He talked through all of the options and then truly valued my input when we're discussing next steps. I really felt valued as a patient in my visit with him."

"Dr. [Laura] Damioli is thorough and listens. She gives easily understandable answers. She exudes caring."

"Dr. [Nipun] Atri has always treated me with respect and great care and concern for my recovery process after my neck surgery. He's played a valuable role in my recovery and he will continue to make important decisions involved with my recovery from neck surgery! My sincere, thanks Dr. Atri!"

"Dr. [Hillary] Dunlevy is a wonderful doctor. She listens with care. She's very attentive. I would recommend her to anyone who needed her care. The entire staff is kind and helpful."

"Dr. [Larissa] Pisney was courteous, kind, diligent in her review and note taking of my lengthy health history. Clear that she had a genuine interest in finding solutions to my particular health concerns. Would highly recommend her to other patients."

Dr. Steven Mudroch: "I was a little nervous about this appointment as my previous provider had left u health but Dr. Mudroch was so kind, very welcoming and really put me at ease. He actively listened to my concerns and provided great advice and education leaving me feeling confident about trusting my care to him."

"**Dr. [Sam] Kaplan** always fully discusses my care, her concerns. The uncertainties in my care, and anything she believes I need to understand. She is always thoughtful and considerate. I am so thankful to have her as a doctor!"

Dr. Chia-Yu Chiu: "I love this doctor. Great communication and bed side manner."

Awards



Dr. Rachel Kuker, Antimicrobial Stewardship Award

Rachel Kuker, DNP, was the recipient of the most recent Antimicrobial Stewardship Award "Shorter is Better"! Rachel was nominated and selected for this award for her efforts advocating for the shortest effective durations for her patients.



Dr. Margaret Fitzpatrick, VA Merit Review Grant

Margaret Fitzpatrick, MD, MS, was awarded a VA Merit Review Grant. "Evaluating a Multimodal Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Intervention to Improve Diagnosis and Treatment of Urinary Tract Infections in Veterans with Neurogenic Bladder", with a projected start date of 7/1/26. It's a 4-year project that will be a multi-site study at the Denver VA and Hines (Chicago) VA looking at a new bundled antibiotic stewardship intervention targeting UTIs in Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury and Multiple Sclerosis.



Dr. Lindsay Nicholson, STRIVE Network Trial

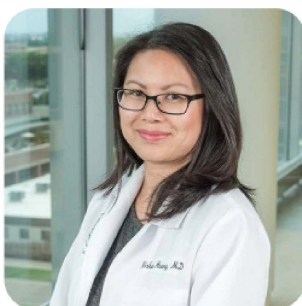
Lindsay Nicholson, MD, was approved for a STRIVE network trial, “STRIVE Trial 3: Steroid Treatment for Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (STAR)”.

Division Happenings

Food Assistance and Patient Care Fund Update

Lisa Lawrence, MSW, continues to apply for grants to support IDGP patients. Lisa recently applied for a small grant of \$5,000 to provide food assistance, particularly for those impacted by the recent SNAP pause. If awarded, the funds will be used to purchase King Soopers gift cards for distribution. Great appreciation is extended to Lisa for her leadership and her ongoing commitment to the care of IDGP patients living with HIV.

Staff and faculty may wish to donate to [AIDS Walk Colorado – Patient Care Fund](#). In the gift designation box, type "AIDS Walk Colorado - Patient Care Fund". Donations are accepted at any time, and the fund is used exclusively for the benefit of IDGP patients living with HIV, supporting purchases such as RTD bus passes, dry food goods from Costco, and King Soopers gift cards for food or gas.



Dr. Misha Huang Appointed Chair of IDSA Antimicrobial Stewardship Curriculum Panel

Dr. Misha Huang has been appointed Chair of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) Antimicrobial Stewardship Curriculum Panel. In this role, Misha will guide the panel’s work in alignment with the goals and strategic plan of the IDSA Professional Development Committee, overseeing the development and maintenance of the organization’s antimicrobial stewardship curricula.



Dr. Dan Pastula Concludes Service on Colorado Board of Health

Dr. Dan Pastula's time on the Colorado Board of Health is coming to a close. First appointed in 2017 by Governor Hickenlooper as an at-large member representing the entire state, he was subsequently reappointed by Governor Polis, unanimously confirmed twice by the Colorado Senate, and unanimously elected Vice President for over two terms. His service included guiding public health efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and contributing as a member of the Governor's Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee (GEEERC). After more than eight years of dedicated service, Dan's work has left a lasting impact on the health of Colorado communities.



Retirement Celebration for Dr. Steven Johnson

In November, a retirement celebration honored Dr. Steven Johnson and drew a fantastic turnout of colleagues and friends. The event recognized Dr. Johnson's many contributions and lasting impact on the field of ID. The Division extends best wishes to Steve for continued fulfillment and success in his retirement.



HIV Connect Colorado

The Division's inaugural HIV working group, HIV Connect Colorado, held its first meeting in November, focusing on plans to advance education, cross-site research, and clinical care. The group aims to reinvigorate the city-wide ID conference previously hosted at the University Club, establish joint CAB meetings twice a year, and create a hub for speaking opportunities at regional and national levels. A new site has also been developed to house information on active clinical trials, while project ideas are being brainstormed for students, fellows, and faculty—including initiatives to combine data across sites.

Those interested in joining can contact [Dr. Kellie Hawkins](#) to be added to the quarterly meeting invite (Monday late afternoon).

Invited Lectures & Traveling Physicians:

- Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez delivered the inaugural Department of Medicine, Dr. Sirus Naraqi Global Health Grand Rounds lecture at the University of Illinois in Chicago on November 18: "Chagas Disease and Neglected Tropical Diseases: Tackling Health Inequalities Among US Immigrant Communities."
- Dr. Eddie Stenehjem gave a talk at Mentorship Academy in Ann Arbor Michigan on November 21.
- Drs. Grace Kulik, Stephanie Dillon, and Evelyn Iriarte Parra gave presentations at the International Workshop on HIV and Aging (Washington DC 2025) where they presented posters and oral abstracts from the HEALTH and SLIM Liver studies. Dr. Jacob Walker presented on the gait speed pilot study in the HIV clinic and served on a panel regarding care models for older adults with HIV. Dr. Kristine Erlandson gave a presentation "Can Exercise Improve Healthspan in People with HIV?".

Other Updates:

- The Denver Health DACE Clinic (low-barrier care program for people with HIV with adherence challenges) was asked to be part of the RAISE low-barrier learning collaborative. Led by University of Washington and the Fred Hutch Center for AIDS Research, Research Alliance in Implementation Science to End HIV (RAISE) is a NIH-funded initiative to advance implementation science to end the HIV epidemic and includes the learning collaborative. The DACE Clinic was one of six sites chosen to be a part of this program.
- Final in-person visits for the RECOVER Cohort were completed in October. Many thanks to project manager Elen Feuerriegel for coordinating a massively complicated study. The effort represented a strong collaboration with Denver Health (PIs Ed Gardner, Kellie Hawkins), Pulmonary (Sarah Jolley), and the CCTSI, with contributions from many colleagues—including Marisa Brightman, Debra Davis, and Dan Pastula, who helped coordinate with neuro ID fellows conducting neuro exams—alongside numerous research team members who managed visits. RECOVER 2.0 will launch in May, with additional RECOVER clinical trials (baricitinib, semaglutide, low-dose naltrexone) rolling out in the spring. For patients seeking long COVID trials, please contact [Dr. Kristine Erlandson](#).
- Congrats to Evelyn Iriarte Parra, PhD, MSN, RN, mentee of Dr. Kristine Erlandson, who was awarded the national CFAR Adelante Award for her research proposal "A Community-Engaged Approach to Adapt and Pre-Implement SEPA+PrEP in Colorado: An Evidence-Based HIV Biobehavioral Intervention for Hispanic Women"

**Brent Edwards (CU Medical Student)**

Brent Edwards, current CU medical student, published his first first-author publication with mentor Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez, titled "Insights into current coccidioidomycosis therapeutic pathways" in *Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy*.

[Read More](#)**Dr. Sarah Gorvetzian**

Dr. Sarah Gorvetzian, former CU resident and current ID fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, was first-author on an article with faculty members Dr. Kristine Erlandson and Dr. Jacob Walker, titled "Lessons Learned From A Geriatric Referral Model in People With HIV" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)**Dr. Tung Dinh & Dr. Mamuka Kvaratskhelia**

Tung Dinh, PhD, and Mamuka Kvaratskhelia, PhD, published an article, "Oligomeric HIV-1 integrase structures reveal functional plasticity for intasome assembly and RNA binding" in *Nature Communications*. The Salk Institute featured the publication in an [article](#) on its website.

[Read More](#)**Dr. Larissa Pisney**

Dr. Larissa Pisney published an article titled "A research agenda for burn infection prevention: identifying knowledge gaps and prioritizing future directions" in *Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiology*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Shelley Kon, Dr. Randolph Fugit, & Dr. Mary Bessesen

Dr. Shelley Kon, Dr. Randolph Fugit, & Dr. Mary Bessesen published an article 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. Heather Young & Dr. Tim Jenkins

Dr. Heather Young & Dr. Tim Jenkins published two articles:

"Patient harm events: hospital-onset bacteremia vs CMS-reportable events" in *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*.

[Read More](#)

"Assessment of healthcare providers' knowledge and decision-making patterns in peripheral intravenous catheter management in acute care settings" in *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Kellie Hawkins, Dr. Margaret McLees, Dr. Sarah Rowan, Dr. Bill Burman, & Dr. Edward Gardner

Several Denver Health faculty published an article, "The "ART review": formalizing a process to document complex HIV treatment histories and to support treatment optimization" in *AIDS Care*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Guillermo Rodriguez Nava

Dr. Guillermo Rodriguez Nava published two articles:

"Using secure artificial intelligence agents integrated within the electronic medical record for the evaluation of blood culture appropriateness—Northern California, 2025" in *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*.

[Read More](#)

"Use of Intrathecal Amphotericin for Coccidioidal Meningitis" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Chia-Yu Chiu

Dr. Chia-Yu Chiu published an article in collaboration with transplant cardiologist, Dr. Amrut Ambardekar, and transplant pharmacists, Drs. Kelly Schoeppler, Emily Sartain, and Kennedy Concannon titled "Low-Dose Valganciclovir for Primary Cytomegalovirus Prophylaxis After Heart Transplant" in the *American Journal of Transplantation*.

[Read More](#)

Dr. Chia-Yu Chiu & Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez

Dr. Chia-Yu Chiu & Dr. Andrés Henao-Martinez published an article titled "Seroprevalence and Incidence of Measles, Mumps, and Rubella in Adult Solid Organ Transplant Recipients in the United States: A Large Database Analysis" in *Transplantation*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Andrés Henao-Martínez

Dr. Andrés Henao-Martínez published multiple additional papers:

"Polymerase Chain Reaction–Confirmed Oropouche Virus Disease in Loreto, Perú: A Case Series From December 2023 Through September 2024" in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

[Read More](#)

"Characterization of the clinical features, laboratory findings, and outcomes of human fascioliasis in a global network: a retrospective multicenter study" in *Therapeutic Advances in Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

"Impact of COVID-19 on candidemia: Risk factors and outcomes in a southeastern US cohort" in *Medical Mycology*.

[Read More](#)

Dr. Andrés Henao-Martínez & Dr. Leland Shapiro

"Circulating TNF- α levels in rheumatoid arthritis: a systematic review and meta-analysis and comparison to TNF- α levels in sepsis" in *Therapeutic Advances in Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

Dr. Andrés Henao-Martínez & Dr. Martin Krsak

"Oritavancin for Treatment of Osteomyelitis: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies" in the *Journal of Human Pharmacology and Drug Therapy*.

[Read More](#)



Dr. Joshua Barocas

Dr. Joshua Barocas published two articles:

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

Read More

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

Read More



Dr. Kristine Erlandson

Dr. Kristine Erlandson published multiple papers.

"Exploring the Relationship Between Insomnia and Biological Factors, Substance Use, and Physical Activity in People With HIV in the United States: Insights From the PROSPER Study" in *The Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care*.

Read More

"Lessons Learned From A Geriatric Referral Model in People With HIV" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

Read More

"Melanocortin-4 Receptor Gene Variants and Weight Change Following Switch to Integrase Inhibitor-Based Antiretroviral Therapy" in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*.

Read More

"The Bounce-Back Effect: What Happens After Cessation of Low-Dose Semaglutide in People with HIV" in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

RECOVER:

"Frailty, Pitavastatin, and Major Adverse Cardiovascular Events Among People With HIV" in *JACC: Advances*.

[Read More](#)

"Olfactory Dysfunction After SARS-CoV-2 Infection in the RECOVER Adult Cohort" in *JAMA Network Open*.

[Read More](#)

REPRIEVE:

"Health-related quality of life among people with HIV at low-to-moderate risk for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease in the REPRIEVE Trial" in *AIDS*.

[Read More](#)

"Risk Assessment in a Global CVD Prevention Cohort of People with HIV by PCE, PREVENT, and SCORE2" in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

[Read More](#)

News Features

School of Medicine Newsroom

Take 5: A Program to Cut Back on Antibiotic Prescriptions That Go On Too Long

Even when antibiotics are needed to treat common bacterial infections at urgent care centers, they're often prescribed for more days than necessary, which can increase risk for patients, says **Timothy Jenkins, MD**.

[Read More](#)

Infectious Diseases Special Edition

Educational Campaign Linked to Reduced HAIs at VA Facility

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“We see the impact of healthcare-associated infections all the time, and it causes a lot of morbidity and mortality for our patients,” said **Shelley Kon, MD**, the medical director of infection control and antibiotic stewardship at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, in Aurora, Colorado. “And a lot of these are preventable.”

Tradeoffs

Homeless Camp Sweeps Can Harm Health. Some Cities Are Trying a New Way

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A large national study published in JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association in 2023 estimated that sweeps increase the risk of infection, hospitalization and overdose among people who live on the streets and inject drugs. Lead researcher **Dr. Josh Barocas** said the team also found that displacement increased a homeless person’s likelihood of dying prematurely.

Share Your Updates

Have news for the next *ID Digest*? Send your submissions to eleonor.shields-ramirez@cuanschutz.edu.

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