

2024 EDITION

UCLA-VA GREATER LA PM&R CONNECTION

EDITORIAL STAFF

Kristen Clark, PGY-3
Anton Pham, PGY-3
Jennifer Tram, PGY-3
Ellie Ok, PGY-2
Jordan Steelquist, PGY-2

A Letter from the Program Director

Dear Alumni and Friends!

Autumn is in the air, but spring is eternal in the hopeful hearts of our ever-growing UCLA/VA Greater Los Angeles PM&R family. With our signature sunny disposition, our LA crew is happy to showcase some PM&R Residency and Pain Medicine Fellowship updates with you in this latest “PM&R Connection” e-newsletter (made possible by our brilliant resident-run editorial staff).

Our PM&R program was founded in 1955 and will soon be celebrating its 70th Platinum Anniversary. Our highly regarded ACGME-accredited PM&R Pain Medicine Fellowship is entering its 24th year and has grown to 5 coveted fellowship positions. We are so proud of the hundreds of bright alumni who have completed their training and contributed to the tight-knit collegial culture here. Our faculty eagerly anticipate mentoring many talented diverse generations to come with each recruitment season (learn more about our local legendary hero, Dr. Quynh Pham, featured in this Edition’s “Co-directors Corner”).

It’s no secret that the key to our success is the strong family of trainees, faculty, alumni, and allies across our associated facilities which include: California Rehabilitation Institute, UCLA, Long Beach VA, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, California Pain Medicine Center, and the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System. Together, we have enjoyed creating educational conferences, physician wellness activities, alumni outreach events, and other adventures to maintain the highest quality clinical learning environment. We plan to feature more highlights from our vast PM&R family in future newsletters. Stay tuned! Stay in touch! Stay engaged!

With warmest regards,



Dixie Aragaki, MD
Program Director, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine/UCLA Medical Center/
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System PM&R Residency
Professor, Department of Medicine, Division of PM&R
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

24K Pure Gold Graduates



Pain Fellowship Graduates

Karim Fahmy, DO, MS
Nicholas Peterson, MD
Rachel Sunico, MD
Grace Zhang, MD



Jessie Bjella, MD, MS

*Congratulations to
the Class of 2024!*



Matt Mekany, MD



Andy Lin, MD



Miad Hadaegh, DO



Christopher Lee, MD



Timothy Nguyen, MD, MBA

Graduation 2024



Michael Davis, DO, MS



Gabriel Sanchez, DO

Pain Fellowship Co-Directors Corner: *Dr. Quynh Pham*

Pain Fellowship Director
UCLA/VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare

How did your interest grow in PM&R?

When I was a medical student at UCLA, we did not have any faculty specialized in PM&R. I learned about the field through my 77 year old roommate who at the time was evaluated by a physiatrist for her leg pain. I did an elective at the VA and was impressed by the easy-going personality of the staff and residents in this field and their ability to establish wonderful rapport and long term relationships with their patients. I particularly love that the role of a physiatrist is to give others a second chance at life whether it be restoring the ability to ambulate, live with less pain, or become independent again.

What are your responsibilities as the pain fellowship director?

As program director, my responsibility is to ensure that we create the best training environment for our residents and fellows. Some of my responsibilities include ensuring that our program meets all ACGME requirements, maintaining updated records for our trainees, creating a safe and supportive educational experience, implementing program policies, developing the educational curriculum and rotation schedules, recruiting and selecting trainees each year and ensuring competencies of our trainees. It takes much more than a program director and hospital funding to create a successful training program. I am very grateful for all the amazing staff who spend so much time and effort to make our program a successful one.

You've mentored all levels of trainees including undergraduate students, medical students, residents and fellows. What do you find most meaningful about mentorship?

I believe that as educators, we have the powerful ability to shape impressionable young minds. I find it immensely rewarding to offer support and guidance to students as they navigate the challenges of obtaining higher education. I was the first in my



family to pursue a career in medicine and went through many trials and errors on this path, so I wanted to help others avoid it. To me, an accomplishment is not gaining a title or receiving an award or accolade but rather opening the door of opportunity for a student to give them a better chance at achieving their goals.

What has been the most rewarding or fulfilling part of your career?

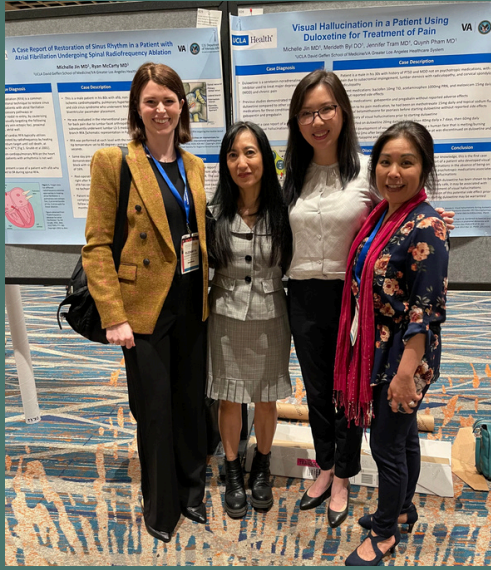
Since English was my second language, I was extremely shy and insecure growing up. I stuttered and could not even say "here" when the teacher called roll. I never imagined that I would be able to speak in front of a group of people. As a PM&R resident, I learned to speak up and address the team during team meetings. The most rewarding part of my career is overcoming shyness and having the opportunity to teach patients, students and trainees. I am also fortunate to learn a skill set that can help others better manage their impairment or pain. Most of all, I am grateful to be working with the most passionate, bright and dedicated colleagues.

Any updates about the pain fellowship?

We have increased our complement from 4 fellows to 5 fellows and added an additional rotation at UCLA. We are still trying to iron out some minor kinks, but so far, everything is going well. In addition, we have added an Interdisciplinary Headache Clinic to the rotation and are anticipating that the fellows will have more hands-on experience with spine procedures and botulinum injections.

Research Accomplishments 2023-2024

- Published Manuscripts: 35+
- Books/Chapters: 31+
- Conference Presentations: 55+
- Funded Projects: 10+
- Editorial Roles: 4



*Association of Academic Physiatrists
(AAP) Annual Meeting 2024 in Orlando, FL*



*American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
(AAPM&R) Assembly 2023 in New Orleans, LA*

Residency Events



Team to Win Volunteering



Let's go Dodgers!



UCLA Inaugural Big 10 Game

Rooftop BBQ



Research Day 2024



Class of 2027



Class of 2026



Class of 2025



Pain Fellowship Team



Happy Hour



Backyard Movie Nights

Board Game Night



Griffith Observatory Hike



Escape Rooms

Halloween Fun



Residency Dinners

*UCLA/VA Greater Los Angeles HS
PM&R Pain Medicine Fellows 2024-2025*

**2024-2025
Pain Medicine
Fellows**



Conor Fowler, MD
Spaulding/Harvard PM&R



Shaima Khandaker, MD
Beaumont Health PM&R



Timothy Nguyen, MD, MBA
UCLA/VA GLAHS PM&R



Gabriel Sanchez, DO
UCLA/VA GLAHS PM&R



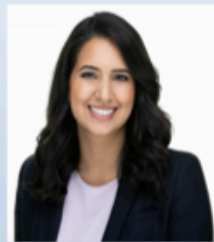
Cameron Strong, MD, MS
U. Washington PM&R

*UCLA/VA Greater Los Angeles HS PM&R Residency
Welcomes the Class of 2025!*

**2024-2025
PM&R PGY-4's**



Merideth Byl, DO



Harmandeep Grewal, DO



Michael Hernandez, MD



Michelle Jin, MD



Brandon Kalasho, DO



Jack Takahashi, MD



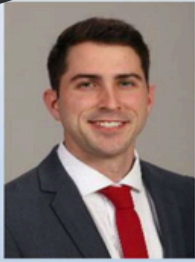
Ayana Taylor, MD



David Underhill, MD

2024-2025
PM&R PGY-3's

UCLA/VA Greater Los Angeles HS PM&R Residency
Welcomes the Class of 2026!



R. Cameron Allred
Midwestern U AZ COM



Antonio Casco-Zuleta
Case Western Reserve U SOM



Catherine Cho
Touro Univ COM-CA



Kristen Clark
Stony Brook U SOM



Kyle Kinder
U Iowa Carver COM



Sam Olson
Stony Brook U SOM



Sneh Patel
U Miami Miller SOM



Anton Pham
Rocky Vista Univ COM



Jennifer Tram
UC San Diego SOM

2024-2025
PM&R PGY-2's

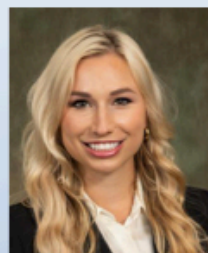
UCLA/VA Greater Los Angeles HS PM&R Residency
Welcomes the Class of 2027!



Alyssa Anderson



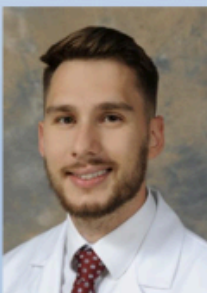
Austin Davis



Helena Drolshagen



Andrew Lai



Anthony Loffredo



Ellie Ok



Jordan Steelquist



Maya Tarasenko

New Faces Coming Soon!



UCLA/VA Greater Los Angeles HS PM&R Residency Welcomes the Class of 2028!

**2024-2025
PM&R Interns**



Brandon Agundez, MD



David Alfaro, MD



Sadaf Chaudry, MD



Nashra Javed, MD



Gillian Mathews, DO



Dylan Tookey, MD



Justin Tram, MD



Ethan Wilson, MD

**2025-2026
Pain Medicine
Fellows**

Welcome Pain Fellowship Class of 2026



Michael Bazzi, DO



Harman Grewal, DO



Michael Hernandez, MD



Michelle Jin, MD



Monica Schmitt, DO

Nova Southeastern University

A.T. Still University of Health Sciences

CDU/UCLA School of Medicine

Stanford University

University of North Texas Health Science Center

UCI PM&R Residency Program

UCLA/VA PM&R Residency Program

UCLA/VA PM&R Residency Program

UCLA/VA PM&R Residency Program

NYU Grossman PM&R Residency Program

Check out our new website!

UCLA Health Find Care Patient Resources Treatment Options Locations Discover Find a Doctor


Home > Departments > Medicine > Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Residency >

PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION RESIDENCY

Program Details

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Residency

Our Mission



To provide comprehensive state-of-the-art health care to maximize quality of life and functional independence by incorporating excellence in education, research, and patient care into evidence-based practice of physical medicine and rehabilitation management with interdisciplinary teams in a diverse inclusive clinical learning environment.


- Program Details -
- Clinical Sites
- Community Engagement
- Resident Committees
- Applicant Information
- Our Faculty
- Our Residents +
- Our Fellows +

PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION RESIDENCY

Class of 2027

Our Residents

- Class of 2027
- Class of 2026
- Class of 2025
- Alumni +
- Life in Los Angeles
- Testimonials



Meet the Residents



<https://www.uclahealth.org/departments/medicine/physical-medicine-rehabilitation-residency>

*Find us at the AAPM&R
meeting in San Diego!*

UCLA / VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System
PM&R Residency and Pain Medicine Fellowship

2024 Alumni Reception

Thursday, November 7th
7:00-9:00 pm



Regatta A — 4th Floor
Harbor Tower

**Manchester Grand Hyatt
San Diego**

1 Market Place

San Diego, CA 92101



VA

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

UCLA Health

#aapmr24

**SAN DIEGO, CA & VIRTUAL
NOVEMBER 6-10, 2024**

GET CONNECTED
Alumni Receptions at #aapmr24

