



UCSF Department of Medicine ZUCKERBERG SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL

CELEBRATING OUR INNOVATIVE & AMAZING STAFF

ZSFG Department of Medicine Staff Excellence Awards 2020

Each year, our department honors staff who have excelled beyond expectations in the areas of Administrative Support, Leadership, Patient Care, and Research. Staff are nominated by colleagues, reviewed by a committee of staff and faculty, and finalized by department leadership. This year's recipients reflect a commitment to care and innovation as roles flexed and expanded in response to COVID-19. Their work ranges from caring directly with vulnerable patients and creating innovative solutions of data sharing to shouldering additional vital duties and facilitating teamwork in this novel work environment. All demonstrate a dedication to our mission of serving our community with excellence. We recognized award recipients in an [online ceremony](#) on Friday, September 25, 2020.

Excellence in Patient Care Julius Cervania Division of Nephrology

In his over 22 years with ZSFG, hemodialysis technician Julius Cervania has provided not just care for patients, but mentorship of staff and innovation of processes.



Julius Cervania

Not only does Julius surpass his regular patient care responsibilities and the precepting of new staff, he never stops looking for ways to improve the care of patients and assist staff and providers.

"I stand in awe of Julius' dedication to the ZSFG Renal Center and to all of our dialysis patients," wrote his nominator. "Not only does Julius surpass his regular patient care responsibilities

Cervania's personal knowledge of kidney disease informs his education of patients. "It's in my genes, my bloodstream," he said. "My dad passed away from kidney disease. All of my dad's brothers and sisters have had it and have moved on to the other side. I use my knowledge to help others."

With a background and associate's degree in Computer Science, Julius innovated the Dialysis Center's record keeping long before electronic systems. In his first role as front desk attendant, he noticed that nurses were writing notes by hand, and created computerized fillable forms. When Epic rolled out, he assisted in training staff to transition to the system and created a quick-start guide. He helped develop a format that was easy for clinical staff to extract dialysis orders when EPIC is down for monthly maintenance, but patients still need life-saving dialysis. Additionally, Cervania assisted providers in developing a tracking tool for the center's patient dialysis access study.

Cervania also reshaped the monthly provider rounding report for nephrologists, incorporating monthly lab reports and patient vital signs into one rounding report per patient. "Providers previously had to sift through six pages of lab reports and one page of vital sign reports while rounding on patients," wrote his nominator. "Now clinical data is all in one report and on one page, making provider rounding on patients much easier."

While Cervania's technological talents assist the provider team, patient outcomes and experience matter most to him. "We need to understand the patient first," said Cervania. "If we don't understand their needs, we can't help effectively. We may sit down for an hour or more to educate, but it's continuous. We can't win with every patient, but it makes you try and try and try."

Excellence in Research Rebecca Crowder Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Allergy and Sleep Medicine

Research analyst Rebecca Crowder's passion for research has found her mentoring study staff in Uganda, developing tuberculosis notification strategies for partners in the Philippines, and leading early morning and late night calls across global timelines. Most recently, in response to COVID-19, Crowder pivoted to compiling and analyzing data here at ZSFG on the first COVID-19 ICU patients, going global to local.



Rebecca Crowder, MPH

"I have worked with Rebecca since she first started at UCSF, and have continued to be impressed with her dedication, strong attention to detail, and thoughtfulness that goes beyond her position to advance our research mission," wrote her nominator. "She led the protocol development, training of our local staff in Uganda and developed data collection and data management tools that have been critical to the project's success."

While pursuing a Master's in Public Health from UC Berkeley, studying epidemiology and biostatistics, Crowder worked with the California Department of Health. There she met Adithya Cattamanchi, MD, Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Allergy and Sleep Medicine, who exposed her to research opportunities in tuberculosis at ZSFG. After graduating, Crowder sought out a position to further her commitment to serving communities globally with fewer resources.

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"My goal has always been to work with underserved populations, and I think public health touches us all," said Crowder. "Originally, I was more focused on maternal health as an undergrad, and worked with reproductive health in Uganda. A lot of the work we do is based in Uganda, so it's nice to get to reconnect with my host family and communities there."

The ability to see research in outcomes resonates with Crowder. "It's really exciting to be involved with a group that is on the cutting edge of tuberculosis work in different ways and to be thinking about the pragmatic implementation side which work with the public health system that exists. It's not just in a lab, but in people's everyday lives."

"She has gone above and beyond her role as a data analyst," wrote her nominator, "to take a leadership role that ensures a welcoming and supportive environment for trainees and new staff as well as the success of our growing number of projects."

Excellence in Leadership

Jon Oskarsson Division of HIV, Infectious Diseases, and Global Medicine

Hailing from Iceland, by way of Canada, nurse manager Jon Oskarsson discovered the meaningful intersection between patient care and academia



Jon Oskarsson, RN

within the red brick walls of the Ward 86 outpatient clinic.

"On the one hand you have with UCSF this very rigorous world-renowned scientific institution, a giant in academia; and then you get to practice at ZSFG, a safety net hospital. It

gives a unique balance. Science informs practice and practice informs science."

With a background in both clinical and academic organizations, Oskarsson is able to adroitly navigate the shifting currents of focus and need, ranging from finding creative solutions to aligning work groups, such as social workers and clinical staff, to facilitating complex HR situations with the division manager and administration. "He

does this with tact and practicality," wrote his nominators. "He cares about both our patients and staff - our division would not be the same without his leadership and integrity. His responsibilities besides clinical functions extends to the well-being of his staff and others for long-term growth."

Oskarsson values the opportunity to lead and connect within the legacy of the division. "Immediately I was smitten with the mission-driven approach here and how deeply rooted it is in patient care," he said. "This place is steeped in the history of HIV and the response to it, and how incredibly instrumental scientists who have practiced here informed the public and world. UCSF at ZSFG is responsible for so many of the innovations. We're all working towards this goal and mission."

Excellence in Administrative Support Binh Tran

Division of General Internal Medicine

Binh Tran's journey through UCSF has traversed four campuses, beginning as a part-time employee



Binh Tran

at the UCSF bookstore ten years ago, with roles at Mt. Zion DGIM and Cardiovascular Research Institute at Mission Bay, before arriving at ZSFG in his role as research financial analyst. Tran sought out ZSFG due his meaningful connection to its mission.

"I'm an immigrant and grew up in the Tenderloin, and the mission of ZSFG helping the vulnerable really benefitted my family personally, so I wanted to give back somehow," explains Tran. "Not really having healthcare, my parents, and even I, as a younger adult, had healthcare here. I saw how people who may be hard to understand or speak another language received care and respect. The people here are dedicated to helping."

Tran's drive to help others informs his dedication as a research financial analyst for his division.

"Binh is the ultimate team player," wrote his nominator. "He was more than willing to take on additional work and answer questions from other research teams that were outside of his current

portfolio. No matter how his project scope might change, he is always up to date on the status of the grants that he oversees."

Tran notes that his ability to contribute in his role, communicating with staff and managing financial projects is his way of helping so that providers can focus on patients. Additionally, he is rewarded by working to support programs that provide tangible outcomes to the community. "One of the programs that our team manages that I'm most proud of is the food insecurity program," said Tran. "Growing up as an immigrant in the Tenderloin, there's a food desert, and experiencing some food insecurity, that really resonates with me. It doesn't make any sense that with how much wealth SF has accumulated, twenty years later this is still the case."

Tran hopes to continue to focus his work supporting programs related to homelessness, food insecurity, and access to medical care in the Tenderloin, where he says there is only one doctor currently. He encourages everyone to find a way to share their skillset, knowledge, and experience.

"Don't be ashamed of where you're coming from," said Tran. "Every little bit helps for our community. I would say that everyone can contribute in some way. The fact that you actively care and are trying to help is what counts at the end of the day."

Brooks Bigart

Editors: Neil Powe, Laurae Pearson

SPOTLIGHT

Please get your flu shot!

The Wellness Center in Building 5 is offering vaccinations Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 7:00 AM - 3:30 PM. Please complete the online form prior to arriving. UCSF is aiming for 100% completion by Nov. 1. Find more information at www.occupationalhealthprogram.ucsf.edu/flu-vaccination-outreach.

Sarah Goglin, MD, Division of Rheumatology, and **Vanessa Thompson, MD**, Division of General Internal Medicine, were announced as new members of the Haile T. Debas Academy of Medical Educators.

Meghan O'Brien, MD, Division of Hospital Medicine; **Binh An Phan, MD**, Division of Cardiology; **Harini Sarathy, MD**, Division of Nephrology; and **Neeta Thakur, MD**, Division of Pulmonary, were awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award for 2020, and **Antonio Gomez, MD**, Division of Pulmonary, and **Scott Steiger, MD**, Division of General Internal Medicine, were awarded the Excellence in Interprofessional Teaching Award 2020 by the Haile T. Debas Academy of Medical Educators.

Vanessa Thompson, MD, Division of General Internal Medicine, received the UCSF Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Medical Education Award.

