



# UCSF Department of Medicine ZUCKERBERG SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL

## STAFF IS ZSFG'S CORNERSTONE

*Zuckerberg San Francisco General Department of Medicine's success is built upon the work of its employees, hundreds of which are staff members. This month, the DOM recognizes the tremendous — and life-saving work — of its staff.*

*Fulfilling the Department of Medicine's mission of exceptional clinical, research and educational work, the staff at ZSFG promotes the ideals of the institution through diverse backgrounds and training. The staff's outstanding work is represented by these six individuals:*

### Elaine Dekker

*Infection Control Coordinator | HIV, Infectious Disease and Global Medicine*

San Francisco was always in Elaine Dekker's blood. Her extended family was raised in San Francisco and she always knew she would eventually come back. For 20 years, she traveled all over the world as an Air Force nurse.

"I'm one of your last Jill of all trades — in terms of nursing," Dekker said. "I did not go in with a specialty focus. I was open to wherever they needed me to be, which is why I worked so well with the Air Force."

Open to different roles allowed her to find her true passion, she said. It was at the Air Force, when she was assigned a role in infection control, where she unexpectedly found a passion that stuck.

"I went fighting and screaming because I didn't want to do the job," she said. "I had no interest in infection control, but after five to six years in it, I found out I enjoyed it. But it was never a sole practice until here (ZSFG)."

After retiring from the Air Force, Dekker joined UCSF and ZSFG in 2007 as the Infection Prevention & Control Program Manager.

"I thought it would be fun to come back to San Francisco," Dekker said.

Her passion for infectious disease has only



*From top left to right: Elaine Dekker, Christopher Baker, Tamara Clark.  
From bottom left to right: Karla Iniguez, Violet Garcia, Eva Lo.*

grown at ZSFG.

"I've been all over the world and I've seen a lot of infectious diseases, including our home grown ones," Dekker said. "And the thought was, if I could prevent infectious disease from spreading, I am a patient advocate."

### Christopher Baker

*Lab Manager, Immunology Core | Experimental Medicine*

As the tech director for the Core Immunology Lab, Christopher Baker has his hands in many pieces of research at ZSFG. He provides research techniques, processing and training. Everything he does aides the important research done inside and outside UCSF.

"We are contracted with a bunch of different groups, so we have 20 to 30 active studies going on," Baker said. "My job is to take information from meetings and translate it into

work that will be performed in the lab. My job is kind of: take a look at the scope of the project and try to look for the assays we are going to be using and oversee the lab and get the lab on the same page as the director is."

He takes a study, evaluates it and creates a roadmap to build an analysis.

"I've been drawn to (this) because my grad work was in HIV," he said. "I was kind of drawn to infectious disease field in general, and in grad school I focused on infections and the community. I've always been interested in the arms race between pathogens and the immune system."

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**Tamara Clark**

*Deputy Director for Science and Administration | HIV, Infectious Disease and Global Medicine*

For nearly 10 years — after graduate school — Tamara Clark wanted to get closer to the origins of her career. As someone who cared deeply about infectious diseases and its effect on populations, Clark decided to move to Africa — Zimbabwe in 1999, later Uganda — for clinical research trials.

“I had a strong passion for making a change and I’ve always loved travelling and experiencing new cultures,” she said. “So travelling 10 years in Africa isn’t something I set out to do, but definitely, it was a great time for me. I really enjoyed my time. Just working with the teams out there. It was difficult at times, but it was very, very rewarding. I think initially what took me out there was just a new experience and working where I could help, but it changed into a longer-term thing. I loved it.”

Now, Clark serves as the Deputy Director for Science and Administration, working closely with clinical-trial research of infectious diseases in East Africa. Today, it’s a lot of coordinating and phone calls — at all times of the day — but it’s extremely rewarding.

“What we are doing in HIV and community health ... is really empowering,” she said.

**Karla Iniguez**

*Clinical Research Coordinator at UCSF’s Positive Health Program | Cardiology*

Karla Iniguez never expected to find herself working at a hospital. To her, hospital workers were doctors, nurses and nothing more. That didn’t change until an UC Berkeley aide helped Iniguez — a psychology student — find an internship at the ZSFG CARE program.

“Once I started with the patients and learning about the population — and what I could do to help — I really liked that experience,” she said. “Through this project, patients were telling their own stories, it wasn’t just about cancer. It was about financial struggles, going through everything in their lives — immigration things — and other challenges beyond just help. I bonded with the patients.”

That bond propelled Iniguez to stay, eventually earning promotions to her current position as the Clinical Research Coordinator for the Division of Cardiology.

“It is a really neat experience to be a resource — especially with the Spanish-speaking population,” she said. “It’s really critical. It’s not just the language but understating where they are coming from.”

**Violet Garcia**

*Clinical Services Coordinator | Gastroenterology*

What started as a position in billing in 1985, Violet Garcia has grown from a typewriter to a computer, and from the front desk to a position that works directly with incoming residents. For a former nursing-hopeful — she always wanted to be a nurse, taking a few college classes in the subject, before working for a bank — it was a dream to work in an area that helped people.

“I always had a passion for helping people,” Garcia said. “Being that Spanish is my first language, I was always translating since I was small — I always translated for my mom. I used to always go to the doctors and translate everything. I wanted to know what it meant. And that’s where it started.”

And since 1985, Garcia has been a consistent part of the Division of Gastroenterology at ZSFG.

“I thought it would be a short-term employment, yet here I am today,” Garcia said. “They’ve given me the opportunity to grow within the division, which I find helpful.”

**Eva Lo**

*Residency Administrator | General Internal Medicine*

As the residency administrator for the San Francisco Primary Care track of the UCSF Internal Medicine Residency Program, Eva Lo helps develop ambulatory curriculum with ZSFG’s Dr. Sharad Jain and Dr. Soraya Azari, scheduling clinics for UCSF residents. The work is integral in developing the next generation of physicians.

She also helps with resident selection, taking part in the interview process.

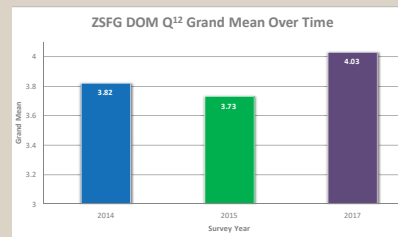
“It feels rewarding to be a part of a program and an institution with a humanitarian mission and to have the opportunity to contribute to that a little bit with the work I do,” Lo said.

Lo joined UCSF in 2005 as a medical school curriculum administrative oversight for the Office of Curricular Affairs office before leaving in 2008. She rejoined UCSF in 2010 in her current role.

*Connor Ramey — Communications Specialist*

**SPOTLIGHT**

ZSFG DOM Gallup poll results



The ZSFG Department of Medicine’s mean score on the 2017 Staff Engagement Survey is 4.03 on a five-point scale. This is an increase of 0.30 from the department’s previous survey in 2015. Let’s continue this strong work in promoting staff engagement. We welcome your feedback.

The Achievement Awards recognize the exceptional performances and contributions from Department of Medicine employees.

Recipients at ZSFG include:

- April Marie Gidda | Gastroenterology
- Gato Gourley | General Internal Medicine
- Susan Lau | Experimental Medicine
- Stephen May | HIV, Infectious Disease & GH
- Tessa Napoles | HIV, Infectious Disease & GH
- Lila Sheira | HIV, Infectious Disease & GH
- Jeanna Waallenta | HIV, Infectious Disease & GH

The SPOT Awards recognize significant employee achievements and contributions, as they occur, for a specific project or task over a relatively short period of time.

- Jessica Ainsworth
- Melissa Akers
- Claudia Ayala
- Doug Black
- Janet Canela
- Maxine Cooper
- Mary Dejesus
- Suzie Demirdjian
- Jay Dwyer
- Cheree Fernandez
- Dianne Garcia
- Violet Garcia
- April Marie Gidda
- Valerie Girling
- Gloria Hernandez-Fisher
- Karla Iniguez
- Elena Jensen
- Victoria Laleau
- Karen Lau
- Rashaan Lyons
- Herman Ma
- George Matta
- Alex Hill McConnell – 2x
- Raeni Miller
- Kelly Musoke
- Adriana Najmbadi
- Natalie Nardone
- James Nix
- Katie O’shea
- Alan Ong
- Carl Pacheco
- Alana Pfeffinger
- Sheila Quimpo
- Carly Rachocki
- Emina Seremet-Muftic
- Katherine Snyman
- Viva Tai
- Binh Tran
- Lynda Tran
- Martha Villa-Guardado
- Peggy Weix
- Dawnee Wong
- Vanessa York

