



# UCSF Department of Medicine ZUCKERBERG SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL

## PROBLEM SOLVING HEROINES AND HEROES

ZSFG Medicine division and clinic managers work hand-in-hand with their division chiefs and the ZSFG Department of Medicine administration to carry out our mission in ways both big and small. Working often unnoticeable, these heroines and heroes are a resource for everyone in their divisions. They problem solve and can provide answers, ideas and suggestions for a wide variety of issues. This month we profile three of our extraordinary managers.

**Clarice Estrada, MPA**  
*Ms. Fix-It*

“I always say to people, ‘Just tell me what you need, and we’ll get you there,’” said Clarice Estrada, MPA, division manager for the ZSFG Lung Biology Center. “ZSFG and UCSF are complicated places. Our goal is to navigate the policies on behalf of our faculty and staff so they can use their brainpower to make discoveries.”



The Lung Biology Center is a division of ZSFG, but is physically located at Mission Bay. Its five labs focus on everything from bench research on lung disease to asthma epidemiology. Ms. Estrada and her team oversee research grant management and issues related to compliance, health and safety, and human resources.

She taps into her vast network of contacts to solve problems. “People apologize for bothering me, and I say, ‘That’s my job!’ I love getting questions and finding answers,” said Ms. Estrada. One common



*Neil Powe, with the Department of Medicine Division Managers at the 2018 Staff Appreciation Event*

challenge is helping faculty hire talented lab members who need to jump through hoops around visa and funding issues. She is also an expert in creatively stretching scarce resources. “People often come to me and say, ‘I’ve only got X, but I need to do Y,’” she said. “Sometimes we can partner with others – one group may have funding, and another has lab space. By joining our resources, we can recruit someone exceptional.”

She currently is helping two labs relocate, overseeing everything from renovating space to create a “freezer farm”, arranging for lab animals to be moved, and rerouting phone numbers. “I’m Ms. Fix-It,” she said. “I want to be a partner to the faculty and staff, and view the division manager job as a problem-solver.”

Ms. Estrada worked in a neurobiology lab as a physiology and neuroscience major at UC San Diego, so is familiar with the wet lab environment. She also earned her master’s degree in public administration from the University of San Francisco, and has worked in various positions at UCSF since 2002. In addition to serving as division manager

of the Lung Biology Center, she is also the chief administrator of the Cardiovascular Research Institute and division manager for the UCSF Health Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Allergy and Sleep Medicine.

“People at ZSFG are tied to the mission,” said Ms. Estrada. “The culture is really strong, and I’m very proud to be part of it. It’s fulfilling to contribute to the greater good in my little way.”

**Jon Oskarsson, RN, BScN, MN**  
*We Can Always Do Better*



As nurse manager for the world-renowned Ward 86, Jon Oskarsson, RN, BScN, MN, works to make the clinic a welcoming place for HIV+ patients and those at risk of contracting HIV, and an



inspiring workplace for his team.

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Mr. Oskarsson joined the ZSFG Division of HIV, Infectious Diseases and Global Medicine in 2017, and says it's "a pleasure and a privilege" to work at the place which has been at the forefront of taking care of HIV+ patients since the beginning of the epidemic. "This division is led by visionaries who constantly push for innovative solutions, and that seeps into every fiber of the clinical enterprise," he said.

He oversees a group of registered nurses, licensed vocational nurses, medical assistants, and staff who take care of the front desk and billing. "I'm very blessed with a clinic that's staffed with incredible people," said Mr. Oskarsson. He helps them manage their workloads, troubleshoots scheduling challenges, and provides skill-building opportunities. For example, he recently launched staff trainings around conflict de-escalation and cultural competency.

"The needs of our patient population are immense, and many are in very dire straits," said Mr. Oskarsson. "I try to support my staff in taking care of patients where the solutions aren't immediately evident. For some patients, HIV is but one of many things that is going on."

Ward 86 links each patient with a team that includes a provider, RN, and social worker, and partners with the San Francisco Department of Public Health and other organizations to create an even wider network of support. The clinic accommodates patients with sometimes unpredictable lives by offering drop-in hours, building in scheduling flexibility so usually at least one member of the care team can see the patient at short notice. "It's very heartening to see when collaborations between clinicians and patients come to fruition, like when homeless patients get housing," said Mr. Oskarsson.

Prior to joining ZSFG, he earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Iceland, worked as a registered nurse at Landspítali University Hospital, then earned his master's degree from the University of Toronto, where he also worked as a research associate and lecturer.

He particularly appreciates Ward 86's commitment to responding in innovative ways to patients' issues, whether that's preventing new infections or addressing food insecurity. "Nothing is beyond the scope of our job," said Mr. Oskarsson. "Our clinical outcomes are incredible, but we can always do better, and that really excites me."

**Jennifer P. Thomas, MPH**  
*A Culture of Caring*

"Taking care of our staff, trainees and faculty is really key, so we're able to take care of our patients," said Jennifer P. Thomas, MPH, division manager of the ZSFG Division of General Internal Medicine (DGIM). "I try to support a culture of care."

As a teenager in the 1980s, Ms. Thomas witnessed the devastating toll of HIV/AIDS on her Sonoma County community. After earning her bachelor's degree in biology at UC Santa Cruz, she was hired by Julie Gerberding, MD, MPH, as a project assistant in the ZSFG Division of Infectious Diseases in 1992, and has worked at ZSFG in various positions ever since. Along the way, she also earned her master's of public health degree from UC Berkeley.



At the DGIM, Ms. Thomas oversees an astonishingly broad portfolio of responsibilities, including finance, IT, safety and security, space issues, faculty credentialing, and human resources. For example, she helps ensure all

clinic shifts are filled and research positions are staffed. She juggles staffing holes when talented faculty are tapped for larger leadership roles, as well as a changing mix of funding sources. "It's always a bit of a Tetris game to make it all work," she said with a laugh.

Ms. Thomas oversaw the division's transition to Career Tracks, a UC-wide redesign of job titles. She worked to make sure that the new job descrip-

**SPOTLIGHT**

The Addiction Medicine Fellowship directed by Paula Lum, MD, Professor (HIV, ID, and Global Medicine), received accreditation by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medicine Education (ACGME) on October 4, 2018.

Sarah Goglin, MD, Assistant Professor (Rheumatology), received the Henry J. Kaiser Award for Excellence in Teaching in a Classroom Setting and a Bridges Curriculum Teaching Award for outstanding coaching.

Bin An Phan, MD, Associate Professor (Cardiology), received a Bridges Curriculum Teaching Award for commitment to teaching.

Claire Horton, MD, Professor (General Internal Medicine), was appointed ZSFG Chief of the Medical Staff, Lukejohn Day, Associate Professor (Gastroenterology), was appointed ZSFG Chief Medical Officer and Urmimala Sarkar, MD, Associate Professor (General Internal Medicine), was appointed Associate Director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations.

tions fully captured the complexity of staff members' work, including appeals to human resources to advocate for more accurate job classifications.

She also coaches faculty and staff, advising them on everything from how to navigate the twin UCSF and San Francisco Department of Public Health bureaucracies, to delivering constructive feedback in the most effective way.

Ms. Thomas works with the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations (CVP), a research center based in the ZSFG DGIM. The CVP's staff has doubled since Ms. Thomas became division manager in 2011, and she helped strategize around personnel decisions as well as the CVP's expansion to sites on 25th Street and Bryant Street.

She is a constant advocate, serving on the UCSF Committee on Family Services to address child care needs as well as pushing for lactation accommodation in the new hospital design.

"The focus on our vulnerable and underserved patients is at the forefront of what keeps me here," she said. "Helping our staff, trainees and faculty find ways to make their own mark on this place is really rewarding."

*Elizabeth Chur*  
*Editors: Neil Powe, Laurae Pearson*

