

# In Ignotis “Into the Unknown”

## Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

As we enter the final stretch of 2025, I am reminded of the extraordinary dedication and spirit of our faculty, staff, and trainees. Together, we continue to advance clinical care, research, and education while strengthening our bonds with the communities we serve. This season brings with it both opportunities and responsibilities. As a reminder, all healthcare personnel are required to receive the **flu vaccine** by Friday, December 5th. Occupational Health is currently administering vaccinations, and documentation can be submitted by email if you receive your vaccine elsewhere. Protecting our patients and one another remains central to our mission.

On the research front, I encourage you to consider submitting your work to the Society of Hospital Medicine’s Research, Innovations, and Clinical Vignettes (**RIV**) **competition for SHM Converge 2026**, to be held in Nashville. Abstract submissions are due by November 24th. Additionally, the Office of Research has announced Round 2 of **SPARK** funding to support collaborative projects between VHS and Sentara. Applications are due October 28th, and I strongly encourage teams to apply.

Important updates that shape our daily practice; CMS has released revised guidelines on Evaluation and Management (E/M) Services and compliance; please be sure to review them carefully. If you have not received the updated booklet, reach out and we will email you with a copy.

Since our integration with ODU, several transitions are underway including change in **REDCap** server. The migration of REDCap to a new North Campus server will enhance stability & security, though it will require updating your project links & saved shortcuts. Please note this change to avoid disruptions in your research work.

I am thrilled to share that through the generosity of our donors, we have secured **philanthropic commitments** to support one additional Palliative Medicine Fellow and one additional Geriatrics Fellow. These investments in education will yield tangible benefits for patient care in our region for years to come.

The Sentara-EVMS Comprehensive **Sickle Cell Program** recently participated in the 32nd Annual Walk for Sickle Cell Awareness at Norfolk State University. Their visible leadership in connecting with patients, families, and the broader community is an inspiring example of how we extend our mission of care.

Finally, I invite you to celebrate the close of another successful year together at **Winterfest 2025 on December 5th**. This annual gathering is a cherished tradition, offering a chance to relax, reflect, and enjoy one another’s company. Please RSVP so we can plan accordingly.

As always, I am deeply grateful for your commitment and contributions. The momentum we are building—in research, education, and community engagement—sets us on a path for an even more impactful 2026.

## Peer Reviewed Publications

- 1) Sitbon O, Sahay S, Escribano Subías P, Zolty RL, Kingrey JF, Ryan JJ, Sobol I, Sood N, **Benza RL**, Channick RN, Chin KM, Frantz RP, Ghofrani HA, Hemnes AR, McLaughlin VV, Vachiéry JL, Zamanian RT, Ter Veer A, Roscigno RF, Mottola D, Parsley E, Aranda R, Zisman LS, Howard LS; TORREY Study Investigators. Seralutinib for the Treatment of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension in Adults: TORREY Open-Label Extension Study. *Adv Ther.* 2025;42:5104-5123. PMID: 40788460
- 2) **Carbone S**, Patel KV. Semaglutide in HFpEF and Obesity: Targeting Both for Functional Gains. *JACC Heart Fail.* 2025;13:102665. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40992091.
- 3) Phillips SA, Sill JD, **Qayyum R**. Interventions to reduce readmissions after pneumonia hospitalization: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Hosp Med.* 2025;20:988-997. PMID: 40369830
- 4) **Carbone S**, Salmons H, Ahmed SI, Billingsley HE, Reavey-Cantwell A, Markley R, Golino M, Del Buono MG, Damonte JI, Pinel S, Franco RL, Abbate A, Earthman CP. Body composition in patients with obesity-related heart failure with preserved ejection fraction: A comparison study. *JPEN J Parenter Enteral Nutr.* 2025. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40974238.
- 5) De Bie E, Correa-Jaque P, Jones R, Bogaard HJ, Chan J, Church C, et al., **Benza RL**, et al. Inflammation and obesity correlate in pulmonary hypertension but associate with diverging outcomes. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med.* 2025 Aug 11. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40788756.
- 6) Sahay S, Visovatti S, Tonelli AR, Villasmil Hernandez N, Austin ED, Badagliacca R, et al., **Benza RL**. International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation (ISHLT) consensus statement on risk stratification in pulmonary arterial hypertension. *J Heart Lung Transplant.* 2025 Sep 5:S1053-2498(25)01951-5. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40910964.
- 7) Montgomery W, **Pierce F**, Alie-Cusson FS, Alsheekh A, El Sayed HF, Panneton JM. In Situ Laser Fenestration for Zone 2 TEVAR: A 15 Year Experience Demonstrating Its Safety, Efficacy, and Durability. *J Vasc Surg.* 2025:S0741-5214(25)01680-5. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40934992.

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## Congratulations to Our Distinguished Faculty



We are proud to recognize four Department of Medicine faculty members named to Stanford University’s “Top 2% Scientists Worldwide”.



## Researcher Spotlight — Manasi S. Shah, MD

**Please tell us about yourself:** I grew up in Mumbai surrounded by endocrinology—both my parents are diabetes specialists. Attending their childhood diabetes camps and watching friends manage their condition inspired my career path. I've trained across India and the United States, progressing from multinational clinical trials to basic science and now translational research, combining clinical medicine with research at every stage.



**Describe the studies you are currently working on:** Absolutely! Trainees are integral to my projects, participating from design phase through data collection with RISE and Sentara Research Office. For my TriNetX living donor study, a medical master's student learned hypothesis framing, data analysis, and abstract preparation (accepted for VHS Research Day). I value involving trainees because it gives them ownership and exposure to unique endocrinology areas.

**Can medical students and residents get involved in your research? If so, how will they be involved?** Absolutely! Trainees are integral to my projects, participating from the design phase through data collection with RISE and the Sentara Research Office. For my TriNetX living donor study, a medical master's student learned hypothesis framing, data analysis, and abstract preparation (accepted for VHS Research Day). I value involving trainees because it gives them ownership and exposure to unique areas of endocrinology.

**What were your research interests, and what have you learned from them?** My diverse research journey spans multinational clinical trials in Mumbai, basic science molecular work, biomarker studies during residency, and adipose tissue biology in fellowship. Each phase taught me critical skills—from asking the right questions to connecting molecular biology with clinical outcomes. I've learned no research experience is wasted; each builds perspectives I now apply to transplant endocrinology.

### Who were/are your favorite mentors/collaborators?

I've learned from exceptional mentors throughout my career: my parents, Dr. Shashank Joshi (India), Dr. Michael Brownlee (NYC), Dr. Paresch Dandona (Buffalo), Dr. Philipp Scherer, Dr. Kyaw Soe and Dr. Toshiharu Onodera (UT Southwestern), and Dr. Elias Siraj, Dr. Fang Fang, and Dr. Salvatore Carbone at EVMS. They generously shared time, insights, and networks to help me grow. I value the collaborative spirit of transplant research, where progress depends on teamwork across nephrology, surgery, nutrition, and basic science—an environment I foster with my own mentees.

## Published Abstracts, Posters, & Presentations

**Ghiorzi J Qayyum R.** Exploring Hematologic Effects of Microplastics: Urinary Mono-N-Butyle Phthalate and Blood Cells Counts. Abstract accepted for 2025 AMA Research Challenge poster symposium; 2025 Oct 22-23.

Jung J, **Sadaeiva D**, Carnell B, King C, Kwak A, **Tahhan S**. Hypervirulent Klebsiella pneumoniae. Presented at: VA ACP Chapter Medical Student Abstract Competition; 2025 Sep; Richmond, VA.

**Okhravi HR.** Invited expert at Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC); 2025 Jul 26-Aug 1; Toronto, Canada. Served as international expert panel member for blood-based biomarkers clinical guidelines, presented ALZ-NET Registry data submission protocols, and spoke at Global Immersion Experience for Zenith Society philanthropists.

**Shah M.** Invited Endocrine Grand Rounds at Rosalind Franklin University/Mount Sinai Hospital, Chicago; 2025 Aug. Presented "Inpatient Diabetes Management" (August 8) and "Obesity Management" (August 15).

## Media Highlights, Awards, Services, Announcements

**Johnson DA.** "Smarter Ways to Manage Refractory Esophageal Strictures" - Medscape [Link to read](#)

**Johnson DA** appeared on the Scope podcast discussing "How to talk with patients about microplastics, GI-health" featured in Gastroenterology & Endoscopy News. [Listen here](#)

**Okhravi HR** featured on WAVY News discussing Alzheimer's disease research and prevention treatments; 2025 Sep 16. [Link here](#)

**37th Annual Research Day** will be held in-person Friday, November 21, 2025. All abstracts due September 2, 2025.

**VCU Wright Center Translational Science Pilot Grant** deadline November 3, 2025.

Contact Pam Dillon: [pmdillon@vcu.edu](mailto:pmdillon@vcu.edu)

Abstract Deadline: **American Academy of Neurology 2026:** October 14, 2025

Abstract Deadline: **ATS 2026:** November 5, 2025

Abstract Deadline: **Endocrine Society:** November 13, 2025 - January 15, 2026

**SPARK Award** - VHS/Sentara Collaborative Research; Submission Deadline: October 28, 2025

Contact: [VHS-EVMSResearch@odu.edu](mailto:VHS-EVMSResearch@odu.edu)



## Research Events:

Hybrid: 5:00-6:00 p.m.

5th Floor Large Conference Room  
& Zoom

10/9/25 - Research Workshop,  
Basis Stats with SPSS— Part 2

10/23/25 - Research Journal Club

**MEDICINE GRAND ROUNDS**

WEDNESDAYS  
12:00 - 1:00 PM

<b>OCTOBER 1</b> Updates in Peritoneal Dialysis	 Usama Hussein, MD
<b>OCTOBER 8</b> TBA	 Michael Eggert, MD
<b>OCTOBER 15</b> Evolution of Research and Healthcare 1975-2025	 Erica Zorhoun, MD
<b>OCTOBER 22</b> We Have Met the Aging, and They are Us	 Jerry Gurwitz, MD
<b>OCTOBER 29</b> TBA	 Michael Henry Ph. D., MD



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Faculty Research  
Interest form

Interested in presenting at the Research Workshop or the Journal Club?

Contact: Atiq Bhatti, MD  
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"One sometimes finds what one is not looking for." Alexander Fleming