

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

MARNIX E. HEERSINK SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.

UAB MEDICINE.

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AS I REFLECT ON 2024, the word that springs to mind most readily is *momentum*. The past decade saw tremendous transformation for our school, and 2024 was a year of building on our strengths and cementing our role as an engine for progress in Alabama.

We continued to make impressive strides in biomedical research, and our growing reputation was recognized in February when National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Monica Bertagnolli, M.D., delivered the Department of Surgery's annual Kirby I. Bland, M.D., Endowed Lecture. In addition to presenting a fascinating lecture, Bertagnolli met with medical students, residents, and clinician-scientists to share her insights and learn more about our dynamic research enterprise.

The future of our patient care mission was strengthened when the UAB Health System assumed ownership of Ascension St. Vincent's Health System in central Alabama (read more on page 8). This is a transformational opportunity to combine and optimize our collective strengths to fortify the health care landscape in Alabama for generations to come.

Our medical education mission has seen important advances, including increasing the size of the incoming class of medical students, and beginning construction on a new atrium at Volker Hall, our campus' medical education hub (read more on page 7).

Community engagement continues to be a key priority, and our valued partners are a crucial element of our success. You will learn more about these innovative partnerships and the good they bring about in this Annual Report.

I am immensely proud to share some of the myriad ways our school impacts the people of our city, state, and beyond. As I look to the year ahead, I am confident our momentum will propel us to new heights of excellence.



ANUPAM AGARWAL, M.D.
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR MEDICINE AND DEAN
JAMES C. LEE JR. ENDOWED CHAIR
UAB MARNIX E. HEERSINK SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UAB is ranked in the top 1% of all
NIH-funded institutions, including private,
public, and international organizations

THE HEERSINK SCHOOL OF MEDICINE IS RANKED #12 AMONG PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES FOR NIH FUNDING.

BY THE NUMBERS



6,947

FACULTY AND STAFF

1,824

FULL-TIME FACULTY

1,084

RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS

818

MEDICAL STUDENTS

387

GRADUATE BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES PH.D. STUDENTS

364

NIH-FUNDED PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

BUILDING THE FUTURE

The UAB campus is rapidly being reimagined through numerous new construction and building renovation projects. These include projects that directly support the goals of UAB's Forging Ahead strategic plan and Research Strategic Initiative: Growth with Purpose, which set a goal of increasing research expenditures to \$1 billion, from \$774.5 million in fiscal year 2023. Several projects also advance the Heersink School of Medicine's strategic goals across its mission pillars in clinical care, medical education, and biomedical research.

The 175,000-square-foot **Altec/Styslinger Genomic Medicine and Data Sciences Building and Marnix E. Heersink Institute for Biomedical Innovation Conference Center** will bring together researchers, equipment, and staff for the Hugh Kaul Precision Medicine Institute, the Department of Biomedical Informatics and Data Science, the Heersink Institute for Biomedical Innovation, the Heersink Institute for Global Health, and the Center for Clinical and Translational Science, among others. It will accommodate an estimated 80 existing and new faculty and include space for computational research, research support, offices, administrative and scientific collaboration, and meeting spaces. The building is expected to increase UAB's research capacity by 16 percent and help scientists generate millions in new grants.

The project is funded by philanthropic gifts from the Altec/Styslinger Foundation and Dr. Marnix and Mary Heersink as well as \$50 million from the state of Alabama via the Public School and College Authority, and funds from the Heersink School of Medicine, Jefferson County, and the City of Birmingham. The building is expected to be ready for occupancy in spring 2025.



The nearly completed Altec/Styslinger Genomic Medicine and Data Sciences Building and Marnix E. Heersink Institute for Biomedical Innovation Conference Center.





A rendering of the **new Volker Hall atrium.**



For the past several years, **Volker Hall**—the undergraduate medical education hub on the UAB campus—has undergone a remarkable transformation. Renovations have added new learning spaces, including the Heersink Active Learning Center, student study and relaxation areas, administrative offices, meeting areas, and technology upgrades.

In July 2024, construction kicked off on Volker Hall's new, 3,800-square-foot atrium. Made possible by gifts from the Heersink Family Foundation as well as funding from the Heersink School of Medicine, the atrium will be a gathering place that includes student study areas, lounge space, and a coffee bar. Natural light will stream in through multi-story glass windows, and the space will include a plant wall and other greenery. Completion is scheduled for summer 2025.

The **Science and Engineering Complex** will be home to basic sciences programs in the UAB College of Arts and Sciences, including the Departments of Biology and Physics and teaching labs for the Department of Chemistry. The \$76 million, 138,842-square-foot facility will house classrooms, faculty and staff offices, and collaboration rooms designed to foster team-based learning and collaborative research. In July 2023, UAB broke ground on **Gorrie Hall**, which will be home to the School of Engineering. Construction is expected to be complete in the summer of 2025.

A groundbreaking ceremony took place on June 28, 2024, for the new eight-story, \$190 million **Biomedical Research and Psychology Building**. The 225,000-square-foot facility will house research-intensive faculty from the Heersink School of Medicine and the UAB College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Psychology, and includes wet and dry laboratories and research support spaces. Championed by retired United States Senator Richard Shelby, the building is supported by \$152 million in federal funding as well as funds from the Heersink School of Medicine and the College of Arts and Sciences. Construction is expected to be complete in spring 2027.

UAB hosted the ribbon-cutting for a new childcare facility on April 30, 2024. The new facility serves more than twice as many children—including 228 children and 46 infants—than the previous childcare facility accommodated. The **Early Learning Center** encompasses 18,500 square feet of space, including classroom and operational space, and a 9,700-square-foot exterior playground. The new center offers reduced tuition and discounted childcare to UAB faculty, staff, and students.

GROWTH

ADVANCING CARE FOR ALABAMA

A remarkable turning point in the growth journey of UAB Medicine occurred in June 2024 when the University of Alabama System Board of Trustees approved an agreement with Ascension for UAB Health System Authority to assume ownership of Ascension St. Vincent's Health System in central Alabama. The transition, which was finalized in fall 2024, includes the hospitals at Birmingham, Blount, Chilton, East, and St. Clair, as well as the One Nineteen Campus; the Trussville Freestanding Emergency Department; and imaging centers and other clinics that are part of Ascension Medical Group. The included Ascension St. Vincent's operations and sites of care now have a new name: UAB St. Vincent's.

"Patients will continue to have access to the health care services and providers they've come to trust, and

ultimately gain access to a larger care network," said UAB Health System CEO Dawn Bulgarella, who also serves as CEO of the UAB/Ascension St. Vincent's Alliance.

"The UAB Heersink School of Medicine is closely aligned with the UAB Health System. By working together, we will be stronger for our patients, our communities, and our employees," said Anupam Agarwal, M.D., senior vice president for Medicine and dean of the Heersink School of Medicine.

At a time when hospitals are closing across the nation, UAB Health System has made it a priority to strengthen Alabama hospitals, support care providers, and increase community outreach and service through innovative partnerships that improve the state's health care ecosystem.

Sites of care in the UAB St. Vincent's agreement include all of the Ascension St. Vincent's hospitals in central Alabama including **Birmingham, Blount, Chilton, East and St. Clair**, as well as the **One Nineteen Campus; the Trussville Freestanding Emergency Department;** and imaging centers and other clinics.

THE FULL STORY



Read more at go.uab.edu/ascensionagreement



**UAB HOSPITAL, WITH 1,207
LICENSED BEDS, IS THE
8TH LARGEST HOSPITAL
IN THE NATION AND THE
4TH LARGEST PUBLIC
HOSPITAL IN THE U.S.**

ACCOLADES

Best Regional Hospital for Equitable Access, U.S. News & World Report

Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Gold Plus Award, American Heart Association

Best Hospitals in the U.S., Women's Choice Awards

350+ UAB physicians ranked among the **Best Doctors in America**.

RANKINGS



For 11 consecutive years, **U.S. News & World Report** has ranked UAB Hospital the Best Hospital in Alabama, with seven adult specialties ranked in the top 50 for 2024/2025:

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|
| Rheumatology | #10 | Neurology and Neurosurgery | #42 |
| Obstetrics and Gynecology | #18 | Geriatrics | #45 |
| Ear, Nose, and Throat | #23 | Cardiology/Heart Surgery | #50 |
| Cancer | #40 | | |

CLINICAL IMPACT



1.9M

CLINICAL
VISITS

*FY23 DATA

- 33K+ surgeries performed
- 775K+ imaging exams performed
- 139K+ emergency department patient visits
- 163K+ telemedicine visits
- 29.4M medication doses dispensed

PATIENT CARE

EXPANDING ACCESS

In addition to the UAB Health System Authority assuming ownership of Ascension St. Vincent's Health System in central Alabama (learn more on page 8), 2024 saw other significant developments that will enhance access to care for people in the greater Birmingham area and beyond.

UAB Medical West, an affiliate of UAB Health System, celebrated the transition from its former hospital location—which had been in use since 1964—to a new, \$400 million, state-of-the-art hospital with a ribbon-cutting on July 11, 2024.

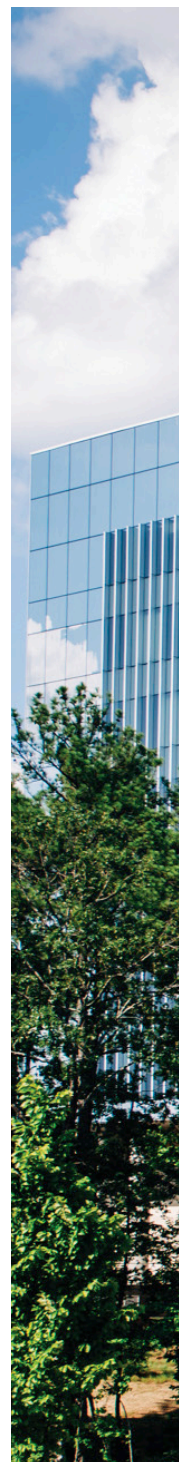
Located in West Jefferson County, the new hospital campus includes a 412,000-square-foot, nine-story hospital with 200 beds and a 127,000-square-foot, seven-story medical office building. The facility features a new surgical and endoscopy suite, including robotic surgery and 12 operating rooms, state-of-the-art imaging technology, and more intensive care beds.

UAB Medicine offers multiple specialty clinics in the new medical office building, including neurosurgery, physical medicine and rehabilitation, cardiology, interventional cardiology, pulmonary, and rheumatology clinics. Additional UAB Medicine specialty clinics, including an endocrinology clinic and a pain clinic, are expected to open in January 2025.

Located less than 30 miles from the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge, the building was designed around nature. Each floor highlights flora native to Alabama, such as the Cahaba lily, azalea, and flowering dogwood. The facility also features a pond with walking trails, rock walls reminiscent of the Cahaba River shoals, floor-to-ceiling windows, rocking chairs, and fireplaces.

Another UAB Health System affiliate, Cooper Green Mercy Health Services, celebrated the ribbon-cutting for a new, five-story, 211,000-square-foot facility on November 20, 2024. The full-service ambulatory care facility includes primary and specialty care clinics; physical, occupational, and speech therapy; urgent care; laboratory services; imaging; and a pharmacy.

In addition, eligibility criteria changes will help more Jefferson County residents access care at Cooper Green. As approved by the Jefferson County Commission, Cooper Green will evaluate income based on the individual seeking to enroll. Formerly, Cooper Green followed the federal definition of household income, which compares the sum of all working adults in the household's income to the Federal Poverty Guidelines. With the change, a person meets the criteria to be enrolled in low- or no-cost plans at Cooper Green if they make \$29,160 a year or less.









PATIENT CARE

TELEHEALTH STRENGTHENS RURAL CARE

States across the country are grappling with hospital closures and a lack of health care providers in rural areas, and Alabama is no exception. UAB Medicine has made it a priority to strengthen Alabama hospitals, support care providers, and increase access through innovative partnerships that improve the state's health care ecosystem.

Telehealth has emerged as a powerful approach in this effort. In June 2024, UAB Medicine partnered with Whitfield Regional Hospital in Demopolis, Alabama, to launch the first UAB Tele-Intensive Care Unit expanded hospital. Whitfield now has access to 24-hour Tele-ICU support, including a team of experienced ICU nurses and tele-intensivists stationed at UAB. The Tele-ICU allows patients to receive vital care closer to home, saving valuable time and extending much-needed services.

Whitfield's eight-bed ICU is monitored remotely 24/7 by the UAB Medicine Tele-ICU team via state-of-the-art technology, including high-definition cameras, microphones, and speakers. Computer intelligence systems allow UAB Medicine nurses to monitor

a patient's condition around the clock and alert the patient's bedside team to any changes that may require additional care from the hospitalists or remote ICU intensivists. The Tele-ICU also enables patients to receive care from a UAB Medicine specialist that may not be available in-house.

In 2018, UAB Medicine launched its tele-stroke program at Whitfield Regional Hospital. Today, 29 hospitals and freestanding emergency rooms across the state, mainly in rural areas, have an immediate link to a UAB Medicine stroke expert, and the program has provided nearly 7,000 consults for patients.

The success of UAB Medicine's tele-stroke program has led to an expanded scope for other neurology care. In 2020, UAB Medicine added general neurology consults for emergency and routine care of seizures, migraines that mimic stroke, flare-ups of multiple sclerosis, and other conditions. There also is a remote EEG service, in which an expert neurologist will read and interpret an EEG carried out by a hospital's on-site technicians.

BY THE NUMBERS



29 hospitals with an immediate link to a UAB Medicine stroke expert

7K tele-stroke consults for patients in the network

PIONEERING CARDIAC CARE

In 2024, the UAB Cardiovascular Institute made groundbreaking strides in cardiac care, pioneering several advanced procedures. These developments promise to improve treatment for conditions affecting millions of Americans and provide better outcomes for high-risk patients.

UAB electrophysiologists were among the first in the nation to use pulsed-field ablation to treat atrial fibrillation. According to Tom McElderry, M.D., an associate professor in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease and co-director of the UAB Heart and Vascular Center, this novel therapy uses fast, high-energy electrical pulses to ablate pulmonary veins and atrial tissue safely and effectively.

“Pulmonary veins can fire impulses rapidly,” McElderry said. “Those impulses are conducted down the vein, into the heart, and can knock it into atrial fibrillation, an irregular and rapid heart rhythm. The condition affects nearly 6 million people in America.”

Pulsed-field ablation disrupts the cellular membranes of the tissue, irreversibly preventing those membranes from conducting electricity. This protects the heart from the rapid impulses that can cause atrial fibrillation.

UAB electrophysiologists were the first in the world to complete an electrophysiology procedure using a new vascular closure system that helps stop bleeding after procedures employing venous vascular access.

The system uses collapsible disc technology and a collagen patch to close venous access after surgery. The new device’s larger collagen volume allows closure of the larger access sheaths commonly used in procedures like pulsed-field ablation of atrial fibrillation and left atrial appendage occlusion.

This closure mechanism eliminates the need for manual compression and enables patients to ambulate earlier, which leads to earlier discharge and an overall increase in patient satisfaction. When the mechanism’s sheath is removed from the vein, a collagen patch is applied and serves as a plug, reducing discomfort for the patient.

Finally, a team of interventional cardiologists and cardiovascular surgeons were among the first in the world to complete the first valve-in-valve procedure using a new transcatheter aortic valve replacement system.

The new system offers surgeons a larger coronary access window and increased space to facilitate access to a patient’s coronary arteries. This leads to lower mortality and stroke rates and better patient outcomes. The device is used to treat patients with symptomatic severe aortic stenosis who are at high or extreme risk for open-heart surgery.

Aortic stenosis occurs when the heart’s aortic valves narrow, reducing or blocking blood flow from the heart to the rest of the body, which can be fatal.

Pulsed-field ablation is a novel therapy used to treat atrial fibrillation.



HIGHLIGHTS

The UAB Health System and Infirmary Health in Mobile, Alabama, entered into a relationship to bring collaborative, comprehensive cancer services to patients in southern Alabama, southeast Mississippi, and the Florida panhandle.

The goal of the partnership is to decrease the burden of cancer, improve outcomes, and expand cancer scientific discovery through increasing the footprint and resources of both organizations.

Curtis Rozzelle, M.D., professor in the Department of Neurosurgery, performed the first deep brain stimulation procedure and implanted the first NeuroPace responsive neurostimulation device for epilepsy at Children's of Alabama, offering a new treatment option for pediatric patients who experience drug-resistant seizures.

On March 6, 2024, **UAB physicians delivered a second set of rare double uterus "twins"** within a four-month period when Shellie and John Pascoe welcomed Kaylee and Kamden Pascoe. Shellie has a double uterus, or uterus didelphys, a rare congenital anomaly that occurs in 0.3 percent of women. She became pregnant with one baby in each uterus, known as a dicavitary pregnancy, which is an estimated one-in-a-million pregnancy in women with a double uterus. In December 2023, UAB physicians delivered two daughters in another dicavitary pregnancy to Kelsey and Caleb Hatcher.

The new UAB Brain Aging and Memory Hub opened on April 19, 2024. The hub houses the Division of Neuropsychology and the Division of Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology in the Department of Neurology. In addition, the Alzheimer's Disease Center and the UAB Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute are housed in the new space. The nearly 20,000-square-foot Brain Aging and Memory Hub is located on the newly renovated fifth floor of UAB Callahan Eye Hospital.

The **UAB startup TIXiMED, Inc., obtained clearance from the United States Food and Drug Administration to proceed to clinical trials under an Investigational New Drug for TIX100, its novel oral Type 1 diabetes drug.** The development of TIX100 is based on decades of research by Anath Shalev, M.D., the Nancy R. and Eugene C. Gwaltney Family Endowed Chair in Juvenile Diabetes Research in the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism and the director of the UAB Comprehensive Diabetes Center. TIX100 is a potent, effective, and specific TXNIP inhibitor and as such functions differently from any approved diabetes drug. By promoting proper islet cell function, it further targets a key underlying cause of the disease.



Leaders from the Heersink School of Medicine, UAB Health System, the state of Alabama, Jefferson County, the University of Alabama System, and others celebrated the ribbon-cutting at UAB Medical West Hospital on July 11, 2024.

Plans were approved for the **UAB Health System to transition to a new EHR platform, EPIC**, for electronic health records, revenue cycle, and clinical research functions. Adoption and integration of the system across UAB Health System entities—including the recently acquired St. Vincent's—will streamline processes for care providers, administrators, and support staff and allow patients' medical records to follow them seamlessly.

The UAB Spain Rehabilitation Center was one of 15 rehab facilities in the nation to be named a Dr. Joanne Smith Memorial Rehabilitation Innovation Center by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The designation recognizes rehabilitation facilities that care for patients with highly complex medical conditions, conduct multidisciplinary rehabilitation research, and educate a high number of medical residents.

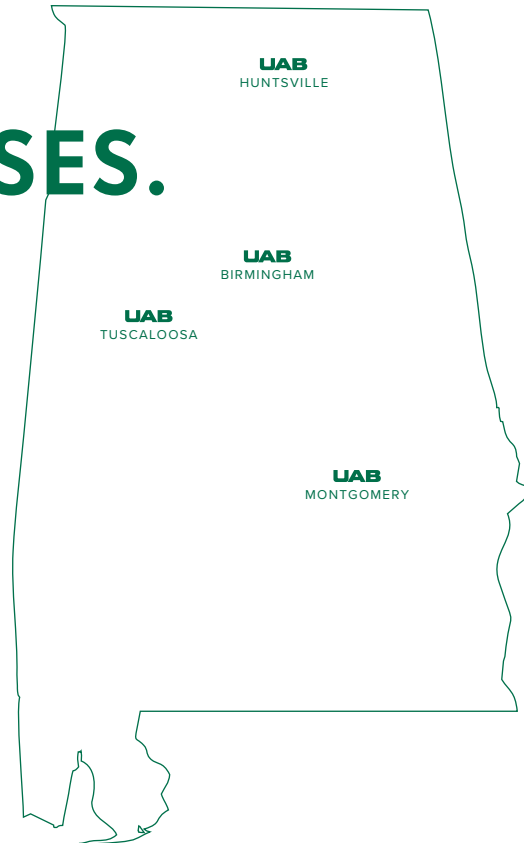
FOUR CAMPUSES. ONE MISSION.

Huntsville

Birmingham

Tuscaloosa

Montgomery



CLINICAL TRAINING SITES

UAB Hospital
UAB Hospital–Highlands
Birmingham VA Health Care System
Children’s of Alabama
Montgomery Campus
Huntsville Campus
Tuscaloosa Campus
Selma Family Medicine

**1,084 RESIDENTS
AND FELLOWS IN
103 ACCREDITED
TRAINING PROGRAMS**

818 STUDENTS IN 10 PROGRAMS

- M.D.

M.D./MBA

M.D./Ph.D.

M.D./MPH

M.D./MSHA
- M.D./MSPH

Bachelor/M.D.

Primary Care Track

Rural Medicine

Blaze to M.D.

2024 INCOMING CLASS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 190 students | 21-33 age range |
| 50 undergraduate institutions | 155 Alabama residents |
| 508.7 mean MCAT | 35 out-of-state residents |

CLASS OF 2024 RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY

278

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

110

PUBLISHED ABSTRACTS

733

PRESENTATIONS

MATCH RESULTS

99% MATCH RATE

Students matched at **80 institutions** in **26 states**, with 47 staying in Alabama and 29 staying at UAB.

TOP SPECIALTIES

- 30 Internal Medicine

17 Family Medicine
- 14 Surgery

13 Anesthesiology
- 13 Obstetrics/Gynecology

12 Pediatrics

MEDICAL EDUCATION

AI IN MEDICINE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping medicine, and one of the many ways the Heersink School of Medicine has responded is by developing new training programs, including an AI in Medicine Graduate Certificate and an AI in Medicine Master of Science (M.S.) degree, that prepare trainees for new opportunities in health care technology and innovation. Both programs are established collaboratively with the Marnix E. Heersink Institute for Biomedical Innovation.

The AI in Medicine Graduate Certificate emphasizes the practical application and integration of artificial intelligence principles and tools. Students learn to design and implement effective approaches for

improving people's health through greater precision in predictive modeling, improved diagnostics, and other advances.

The M.S. in AI in Medicine program—the first of its kind in the Southeast—will examine the evolving intersection of data science, machine learning, and medicine, from the foundations of AI in health care to emerging trends. The integrated curriculum is developed in collaboration with the UAB Schools of Engineering, Business, and Health Professions and the College of Arts and Sciences. The M.S. in AI in Medicine program will welcome its first cohort in spring 2025.

ALABAMA SCHOOL OF HEALTHCARE SCIENCES PARTNERSHIP

The Heersink School of Medicine is proud to support an innovative initiative aimed at fostering future generations of health care providers for rural Alabama. Slated to open in Demopolis in fall 2026, the Alabama School of Healthcare Sciences (ASHS) will become the state's fourth residential high school.

The school will offer a unique curriculum with hands-on clinical training in STEMM (science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine). Students will be exposed to a variety of health care fields as well as internships and employment opportunities with partner hospitals and clinics across the state. ASHS students will be prepared to enter the workforce immediately following high school, earn health care credentials at a community college, or enter a four-year college or university for further training.

According to Majd Zayzafoon, M.D., Ph.D., MBA, assistant dean of International Medical Education in the Heersink School of Medicine and professor in the Department of Medical Education, at the request of Alabama Governor Kay Ivey, the Heersink School of Medicine helped develop the vision for the school, working with a group of stakeholders in government, health care, education, and finance.

"As part of Governor Ivey's vision to provide opportunities for young Alabamians to be the most equipped for health care jobs, we were honored when her administration asked us to help," Zayzafoon said. "We were excited to take part because the ASHS initiative is not only beneficial for the state as a whole, but also aligns perfectly with our mission to enhance the health and well-being of all Alabamians."

“

**HOPELESSNESS
IS THE ENEMY
OF JUSTICE ...
HOPE IS KEY
TO OUR CAPACITY
FOR HEALING
THE WORLD.**

Bryan Stevenson, the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, a human rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama, delivered the Commencement keynote address on May 18, 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS

On March 23, 2024, Equal Access Birmingham, the medical student-run free clinic, **launched a Street Medicine Program**, which conducts monthly visits to Birmingham's George Ward Park to establish care and provide on-the-spot treatment to patients experiencing homelessness.

In May 2024, the **Cahaba+UAB Family Medicine Residency** was one of only two programs nationwide to receive the **American Association for Physician Leadership's prestigious 2024 Leape Ahead Award**. The Cahaba+UAB program offers four tracks: The Urban, Rural, and Frontier tracks serve counties in the Alabama Black Belt, while the Highlands track is based in Birmingham out of UAB Hospital-Highlands. To date, the residency has trained 62 residents in primary care in underserved parts of central Alabama, with 75 percent of graduates entering primary care in medically underserved communities.

On June 10, 2024, a **cutting from the descendent of the original Hippocrates tree**—under which Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, is said to have taught his pupils 2,400 years ago—was planted at the Heersink School of Medicine's Montgomery Regional Medical Campus (MRMC). The planting included a short ceremony attended by MRMC Dean Louis Lambiase, M.D., medical students, and other campus leaders as well as Baptist Medical Center South leaders and local media. In Alabama, there are Hippocrates tree cuttings planted on the UAB medical campuses in Birmingham and Huntsville.

Leaders from the Mary Heersink Institute for Global Health at UAB participated in the **Global Health Consortium Symposium** hosted by the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in Manipal, India, April 21-May 3, 2024. UAB is part of the Global Health Consortium of 10 institutions in high- and low-income countries. The symposium was offered as part of the UAB Master of Science in Global Health degree jointly provided by the Heersink School of Medicine and the UAB School of Public Health. The event served as a platform for students from collaborating universities to engage in learning experiences focused on health system mapping supported by faculty.

In August 2024, the Heersink School of Medicine Graduate Medical Education office hosted a **grand opening for the newly completed GME Wellness Center**. The Wellness Center is designed to reduce stress and foster community among trainees. It offers five zones specifically designed to meet the wellness needs of residents and fellows, including a hospitality area with a kitchen and lounge, a study zone for quiet work, a designated room for mothers equipped with lactation stations, a meeting area, and an activity zone with exercise equipment.



On August 10, 2024, the **White Coat Ceremony** welcomed the incoming class of medical students, which **increased from 186 to 190 students in 2024**. The school plans to continue to grow the incoming medical student class size to 200 over time, with approval from the Board of Trustees and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. At the ceremony, each of the members of the entering class were presented with the traditional white coat, provided by the school's Medical Alumni Association.

To positively impact medical education while growing much-needed clinical support for a vulnerable region of Alabama, **the Department of Family and Community Medicine assumed leadership of the Selma Family Medicine Residency Program** on October 1, 2024. The program, launched in 1975, is one of the longest tenured programs in the country and one of the only training programs offering residents a completely rural experience.

THE HEERSINK SCHOOL OF MEDICINE IS RANKED 27TH IN NIH FUNDING AND 12TH AMONG PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE U.S.

\$586M

TOTAL RESEARCH
FUNDING

\$271M

TOTAL NIH FUNDING

364

NIH-FUNDED PRINCIPAL
INVESTIGATORS

*Preliminary data

INNOVATION AT UAB

| | |
|--|---|
| 124 intellectual property disclosures | 5 start-ups launched |
| 34 licenses executed | 10 start-ups approved, poised for launch |
| 17 U.S. patents issued | \$6.5M revenue generated (unaudited) |

LARGEST NEW AWARDS

| | |
|----------------|---|
| \$68.5M | Orlando Gutiérrez, M.D. CTSA UM1 at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (NIH) |
| \$21.3M | Erik Roberson, M.D., Ph.D. UAB Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (NIH) |
| \$18.6M | Fran Lund, Ph.D. Evolution and Durability of Human T and B Cell Responses (NIH) |
| \$11.5M | Tapan Mehta, Ph.D. Optimizing Effectiveness of Primary Care Delivered Telehealth Interventions to Manage Type 2 Diabetes in People with Physical Disabilities and Multiple Chronic Conditions (PCORI) |
| \$9M | Renee Heffron, Ph.D. UAB Center for AIDS Research (NIH) |

*By total dollars awarded





RESEARCH & INNOVATION

CENTER FOR CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE AWARDED \$82 MILLION

In May 2024, the Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) at UAB announced it was awarded record-breaking funding in the form of four grants totaling \$82 million over seven years from the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Advancing Translational Science (NCATS). Since its establishment in 2008, the CCTS has pursued its mission to enhance the translation of fundamental and clinical research into improvements in human health and health care delivery across the Deep South. The CCTS Partner Network of 11 academic health centers, research institutes, and universities in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi is the foundation of the center's collaborative efforts.

The linked grants include a new, \$68.5 million UM1 grant that will fuel this mission by further developing a well-trained workforce in translational science; by developing a highly integrated digital ecosystem encompassing clinical and biomedical informatics; by involving communities in engaged partnership; and by nurturing a vibrant and efficient research ecosystem.

In addition, three training grants will be funded for five years: the Mentored Career Development K12 Program, the National Research Service Award predoctoral T32, and the National Research Service Award postdoctoral T32. Each program emphasizes a unique aspect of training, from nurturing early career researchers to integrating dissemination and implementation science.

The CCTS saw a leadership transition in 2024, when Orlando Gutiérrez, M.D., was appointed senior associate dean for Clinical and Translational Research in the Heersink School of Medicine and CCTS director. He also serves as the associate vice president of Medicine and Biomedical Research for UAB. Gutiérrez is director of the Division of Nephrology and holds the Marie S. Ingalls Endowed Chair in Nephrology Leadership.

Former CCTS Director Robert Kimberly, M.D., was appointed to the newly created role of senior associate dean for Strategic Initiatives in the Heersink School of Medicine. He is a professor and holds the Howard L. Holley Research Chair of Rheumatology in the Division of Immunology and Rheumatology.

MCMASTER PARTNERSHIP BUILDS ON STRENGTHS

On March 22, 2024, leaders from UAB, the Heersink School of Medicine, and McMaster University met to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to strengthen ties between the two institutions. The partnership originated in 2021 when a transformative gift from Marnix E. Heersink, M.D., named the Heersink School of Medicine and established the Marnix E. Heersink Institute for Biomedical Innovation and the Mary Heersink Institute for Global Health. The gift connected UAB to McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, where Heersink also made philanthropic investments.

Since then, UAB and McMaster have forged collaborations that build on both institutions' strengths.

The collaborative opportunities in the MOU include developing joint master's degree programs; pursuing opportunities in global women's health; enhancing AI/machine learning initiatives to train the future health care workforce; and building capacity in clinical applications of radiopharmaceuticals, including to improve diagnosis of and develop personalized treatments for cancer. "Partnering with an exceptional institution like McMaster in a formal MOU expands and accelerates programs at UAB in exciting ways that promise to benefit the health and well-being of our communities in the South," said Anupam Agarwal, M.D., senior vice president for Medicine and dean of the Heersink School of Medicine.

UNDERSTANDING MEMORY IMMUNE CELLS

Little is known about memory immune cells, which reside in many tissues, poised to react to a second infection or continuing antigen. A five-year, \$18.6 million grant will allow UAB researchers to investigate T and B tissue-resident memory cells, known as TRM and BRM cells, in transplanted lungs, transplanted kidneys, and transplanted uteruses of UAB patients. The transplants permit researchers to study memory cells in tissue over time, learning how the cells got there, whether they will stay or go, how they might differentiate, and what role their progeny will play.

Donor tissue transplants are environments that require immunosuppressant therapy for the recipient. UAB project directors Fran Lund, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Microbiology and director of the UAB Immunology Institute; Paige Porrett, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Surgery and director of both VCA transplantation and clinical and translational research at the UAB Comprehensive Transplant Institute; and Troy Randall, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Clinical Immunology

and Rheumatology and associate director of the Immunology Institute, will take periodic samples from the transplants to address the central hypothesis of their grant—"that the human immune memory compartment is constantly evolving in response to tissue-specific and antigen-specific signals that influence the durability and programming of those cells."

The grant—awarded as part of the National Institutes of Health program titled Cooperative Centers on Human Immunology—will focus on better understanding the fundamental processes that regulate BRM and TRM cells. Indirect benefits that might evolve from the work include how to block immune rejection of transplanted lungs and kidneys; understanding the phenomenon of "immune tolerance" in the uterus, where the immune response is dampened to protect the non-self fetus during pregnancy; or learning how to lessen the damage caused by auto-immune diseases such as lupus, psoriasis, inflammatory bowel disease, or Type 1 diabetes.



NEW CENTERS CATALYZE RESEARCH

The Heersink School of Medicine is home to 25 research centers and institutes, and our faculty participate in another 18 university-wide centers and institutes. These groups are critical resources for our thriving research culture, catalyzing cross-cutting discovery, generating new scientific knowledge, and translating its application to improve human health. In 2024, the Heersink School of Medicine added three new centers in key research areas.

The Center for Lung Analytics and Imaging Research, directed by Surya Bhatt, M.D., MSPH, professor in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care Medicine, will spearhead the introduction of several novel methods for lung imaging to UAB, including magnetic resonance imaging with hyperpolarized xenon, which only seven centers in the U.S. offer currently. The center will also work to develop novel methods—including AI-based methods—of diagnosing and monitoring lung disease.

The Center for Integrative Structural Biology is led by Gino Cingolani, Ph.D., professor in the Department

of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics. The center studies the three-dimensional structure of biological macromolecules, such as proteins and nucleic acids, through techniques like cryogenic electron microscopy, which allows scientists to visualize biological structures at near-atomic resolution. The center focuses on issues related to infection, inflammation, immunity, cancer, and neurodegeneration, with a strong emphasis on drug discovery.

The Center for Neuroengineering and Brain-Computer Interfaces (CNBCI), directed by Nicole Bentley, M.D., associate professor in the Department of Neurosurgery, aims to impact numerous neurological and psychiatric conditions, including stroke, neurodegenerative disorders, cognitive impairment, dementia, and other brain diseases. One of the CNBCI's key goals is to develop brain-computer interfaces that could restore function to a damaged nervous system by interacting with, interpreting, and controlling neural signals.

HIGHLIGHTS

On February 20, 2024, **the Heersink School of Medicine was honored to welcome National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Monica Bertagnoli, M.D.**, as the guest lecturer for the Department of Surgery's annual Kirby I. Bland, M.D., Endowed Lecture. Guests included Alabama Senator Katie Britt and Representative Robert Aderholt.

Clinical Research Forum (CRF) presented the Distinguished Clinical Research Achievement Award to Waldemar Carlo, M.D., professor and co-director of the Division of Neonatology, and Alan Tita, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and senior associate dean for Global and Women's Health, for their study entitled "Azithromycin to Prevent Sepsis or Death in Women Planning a Vaginal Birth (A-PLUS)." Published in The New England Journal of Medicine in 2023, the landmark study created an evidence base for a low-cost intervention that can be used to reduce maternal sepsis and deaths in underserved regions on a global scale.

Heersink School of Medicine faculty leaders participated in the AI in Medicine and Healthcare Symposium at Maastricht University in The Netherlands on May 23-24, 2024. Matt Might, Ph.D., director of the Hugh Kaul Precision Medicine Institute at UAB, and Rubin Pillay, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Marnix E. Heersink Institute for Biomedical Innovation, spoke at the event, which explored patient empowerment, improved health management, and AI's potential for accurate diagnostics and operational efficiency. Discussions also covered AI's role in expanding health care access through affordable, automated solutions, along with ethical and regulatory considerations.

The National Institute on Aging **awarded an estimated \$21.4 million five-year grant to UAB for an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC)**. In 2020, UAB became an exploratory ADRC to advance research in dementia disparities in the region. The UAB ADRC is the only one in the four-state region of Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana. The center is led by Erik Roberson, M.D., Ph.D., Rebecca Gale-Heersink Endowed Chair and professor in the Department of Neurology.

The NIH renewed a \$9 million, five-year grant for the UAB Center for AIDS Research (CFAR). Created in 1988, the UAB CFAR is a dynamic hub for HIV research in Alabama providing vital support to control the epidemic. The center, which is led by Renee Heffron, Ph.D., Jim Straley Endowed Chair in AIDS Research and professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases, is dedicated to collaborations throughout the world to advance health equity and uplift marginalized populations while focusing on HIV epidemic control.



On September 18, 2024, the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced performer teams to develop the Biomedical Data Fabric (BDF) Toolbox. The BDF Toolbox will consolidate research data from a variety of health disciplines and resolve inconsistencies in how research data is stored and shared. **Matt Might, Ph.D., Hugh Kaul Endowed Chair of Precision Medicine and director of the Hugh Kaul Precision Medicine Institute at UAB, received an \$8.7 million, two-year ARPA-H award for a collaborative project with Maastricht University in the Netherlands, Harvard University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill titled “CHARM: An End-to-End Toolchain for Collecting, Harmonizing, Analyzing, Reasoning About and Manipulating Biomedical Data.”** The project will also address clinical/patient data, and the approach will be fueled by or extend generative AI in significant ways.

HaoSheng Sun, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Cell, Developmental and Integrative Biology, was awarded a highly competitive NIH Director’s Pioneer Award. Part of the High-Risk, High-Reward Research program, the award supports scientists with outstanding records of creativity pursuing new research directions to develop pioneering approaches to major challenges in biomedical, social science, and behavioral research. Sun is also a recipient of a prestigious Freeman Hrabowski Award from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.



Mona Fouad, M.D., MPH, Live HealthSmart Alabama chief executive officer and UAB Minority Health & Health Equity Research Center director.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LIVE HEALTHSMART ALABAMA EXPANDS BEYOND BIRMINGHAM

Live HealthSmart Alabama (LHSA), a program of the UAB Minority Health & Health Equity Research Center (MHERC), works with communities and partner organizations to remove barriers to good nutrition, physical activity, and chronic disease prevention to reduce high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. In addition to key initiatives like the Mobile Market, which provides fresh, nutritious food at affordable prices, and the Mobile Wellness van, which brings no-cost, comprehensive health screenings to communities, LHSA works with residents, businesses, and other organizations to improve partner neighborhoods' built environment, making it safer to exercise by improving sidewalks, adding crosswalks and lighting, and revitalizing parks and green spaces.

“Our team works diligently with partners and the community to implement improvements to policies, systems, and the built environment,” said Mona Fouad, M.D., MPH, LHSA chief executive officer, director of the MHERC, and senior associate dean for Access and Engagement. In 2024, LHSA expanded into central Alabama, thanks in part to a \$2.47 million gift from pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk Inc. The funds support built environment projects in Selma, Demopolis, Camden, and beyond, as well as a new Mobile Wellness van and Mobile Market. LHSA also worked with the Alabama Department of Insurance’s Strengthen Alabama Homes and community leaders to assist with applications for 40 new fortified roofs in Selma.

MOBILE MARKET

- **10K+** customers served in 32 communities
- **46%** of sales in produce
- **43%** of sales using EBT or other assistance

MOBILE WELLNESS

- **3.5K+** comprehensive health screenings provided
- **5%** had an undiagnosed chronic condition
- **700+** connected to health care



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SPENCER FOREMAN AWARD

The Heersink School of Medicine was honored to be selected as the runner-up for the Association of American Medical Colleges' (AAMC) 2024 Spencer Foreman Award for Outstanding Community Engagement. The award is presented to an AAMC-member medical school or teaching hospital with a deep commitment to partnering with the community to identify and address community needs. As one of two finalists out of the 15 institutions that were nominated, Heersink hosted a site visit for the award selection committee on July 16, 2024.



Watch a video highlighting our commitment to community engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TRANSPLANT GAMES OF AMERICA PARTNERSHIP

Birmingham hosted the “world’s largest celebration of life” July 5-10, 2024. The 2024 Transplant Games of America brought together thousands of transplant recipients, living donors, transplant professionals, and spectators for a week of competition and inspiration. The games featured 20 activities ranging from basketball, track and field, and swimming to ballroom dancing, trivia, and singing.

UAB Medicine, home to the UAB Comprehensive Transplant Institute, Alabama’s leading transplant program, served as the presenting medical partner of the Transplant Games of America. Additionally, UAB Sports & Exercise Medicine provided medical coverage for all athletes at the games.

UAB is consistently recognized as one of America’s top transplant centers. To date, more than 16,000 organ transplants have been performed at UAB, including heart, lung, combined heart/lung, liver, kidney, pancreas, and uterus procedures.

“The Transplant Games provides a great opportunity for the public to learn more about the importance of organ transplant donation so that we can continue to save lives, and I’m proud that UAB played such a pivotal role.” said Irfan Asif, M.D., chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine and associate dean of Primary Care and Rural Health.

YEAR IN BRIEF

BIOTECH INCUBATOR OPENING

On January 23, 2024, Southern Research, an incorporated affiliate of UAB, marked the official opening of its Station 41 biotech incubator, one of four programs that make up the newly launched Station 41 biotech commercialization hub. The incubator, located in a newly renovated space on Southern Research's campus, provides wet lab and office space as well as shared lab equipment and services to support biotech startup growth.

AI IN DRUG DISCOVERY

The Systems Pharmacology Artificial Intelligence Research Center (SPARC), a partnership between the Heersink School of Medicine and UAB Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences, was announced March 19, 2024. SPARC, led by Jake Chen, Ph.D., the Triton Endowed Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Data Science, will advance the use of artificial intelligence, systems biology, and quantitative pharmacology in drug discovery through research innovation and interdisciplinary collaborations.

NOVEL HIGH-DOSE INHALED NITRIC OXIDE STUDY

In a first-of-its-kind study published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, physician-scientists including Naman Shetty, M.D., a research fellow in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease and first author of the manuscript, and Pankaj Arora, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease and senior author of the manuscript, discovered that high-dose inhaled nitric oxide therapy may improve oxygenation and reduce the risk of mortality among critically ill Black patients with COVID-19. Notably, the study found inhaled nitric oxide therapy reduced the risk of death at 28 and 90 days in Black patients, a benefit that was not observed in white patients.

HEALTH POLICY MEETING RETURNS

The second annual Montgomery Health Policy Meeting was held April 4, 2024. Sponsored by the Heersink School of Medicine Montgomery Regional Medical Campus and the Kennamer family, the event brings together leaders in government, public health and policy, and medicine to highlight urgent issues affecting the people of Alabama.

CARDIOMYOPATHY CLINICAL GUIDELINE UPDATED

Irfan Asif, M.D., chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine, worked alongside other contributors on the American Heart Association/ American College of Cardiology Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines to develop the latest guidelines for treating patients with common genetic heart disease. The ACC and AHA published their 2024 Guideline for the Management of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, highlighting new and significantly updated practice-changing recommendations since the previous guidelines were published in 2020.

MHERC RECEIVES ALABAMA CEAL GRANT

The UAB Minority Health & Health Equity Research Center was awarded a \$5.6 million, four-year grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to implement the fourth iteration of the Alabama Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) – Alabama CEAL for Healthy Communities. Alabama CEAL works with partners across the state to develop comprehensive and sustainable “Prescriptions for Community Health,” which adapt Food and Exercise are Medicine (FIM and EIM) interventions for use at the community level. The “Prescriptions,” customized for each community, include programming and interventions to address the unique social determinants of health conditions in each area, improve access to local resources, and offer community-level assistance through a cohort of Community Health Coaches.



LANDMARK DRUG TRIAL FOR PITT-HOPKINS SYNDROME

As announced July 5, 2024, a completed Phase 2 clinical trial of a novel drug, directed by UAB researchers, shows promising results for the devastating neurodevelopmental disorder Pitt-Hopkins syndrome, or PTHS. There are currently no approved treatments for this genetic neurological disorder, which presents with autism-like symptoms and affects intellectual ability, speech, and motor skills, causing a range of medical issues and behavioral differences. Cassandra Newsom, Psy.D., director of the Translational Research Core of Civitan International Research Center at UAB, led the Phase 2 trials of the new drug NNZ-2591, produced by Neuren Pharmaceuticals, Camberwell, Australia.



UAB ACQUIRES ADVANCED MRI TECHNOLOGY

As announced July 9, 2024, UAB Highlands MRI Imaging Center acquired a new 0.55 T Siemens Freemax Unit, a greener, smaller, and more efficient MRI machine. UAB is one of the few leading academic institutions with access to this advanced MRI technology, the others being the University of California San Francisco and the University of Michigan. The technology's lower cost to purchase and operate has the potential to expand MRI access to traditionally low resource areas of the state. In addition, the cutting-edge MRI machine leverages artificial intelligence to help increase quality patient care and reduce the environmental footprint of UAB's imaging services.

TELEHEALTH OPTIONS FOR CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT STUDY

The Department of Family and Community Medicine is conducting a real-world trial comparing the effectiveness of primary care-based telehealth options, using more than \$11.4 million in funding from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. The multisite study, led by principal investigator and Department of Family and Community Medicine Vice Chair of Research Tapan Mehta, Ph.D., will compare the effectiveness of digital health coaching, remote patient monitoring, and a combination of these options for improving blood sugar levels in people living with physical disabilities, type 2 diabetes, and at least one other cardiometabolic or cardiorenal comorbidity, such as hypertension, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, cancer, or chronic kidney disease.

INAUGURAL BRAIN-PRIME COHORT INTRODUCED

The Heersink School of Medicine introduced four new research focus areas in 2022, including Brain Health and Disease Across the Lifespan. The Brain Health and Disease Across the Lifespan Task Force introduced the inaugural Brain-PRIME (Postdoctoral Research Initiative for Multidisciplinary Exploration) in August 2024 as part of a schoolwide strategic investment in the neurosciences. The goal of the program is to foster a vital pipeline for postdoctoral fellows to drive neuroscience research at UAB to new heights. The cohort includes Aanishaa Jhaldiyal, Ph.D.; Abigail Schwarz, Ph.D.; Allie Smith, Ph.D.; Hee-Kyung Lee, Ph.D.; and Christopher Driskill, Ph.D.

GRANT ESTABLISHES GLOBAL RESEARCH RESOURCE FOR HUMAN TUBERCULOSIS

A \$5.8 million grant led by Adrie Steyn, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of Microbiology and a researcher with the Africa Health Research Institute in Durban, South Africa, will establish the Global Research Resource for Human Tuberculosis, with the goal of transforming the global landscape of TB research by accelerating the study of human TB tissue through providing pathological, cellular, structural, and genetic analysis of resected human TB or postmortem tissue, and disseminating human TB tissue to the global TB research community.

BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD MAKES \$3.6 MILLION PLEDGE

UAB announced that it received a \$3.6 million pledge from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama to support scholarships for students in the Heersink School of Medicine, UAB School of Nursing, and UAB School of Dentistry. The scholarships serve to improve access to quality, affordable health care for all Alabamians and further address health disparities, particularly in rural areas. Scholarship recipients are required to practice in medically underserved areas of Alabama after graduation for a period of three years.

LIVER TRANSPLANT MILESTONE

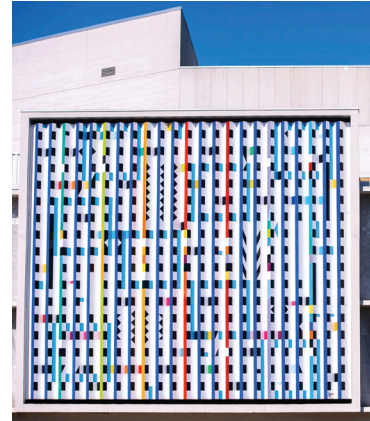
Surgeons performed UAB's 3,000th adult liver transplant. UAB's Liver Transplant Program—the only one in Alabama—distinguishes itself as one of the nation's most experienced, with outcomes that consistently rank among the best in the U.S.

UAB SURGERY HOSTS HALSTED SOCIETY MEETING

The Department of Surgery hosted the 98th Annual Meeting of The Halsted Society September 25-28, 2024. The event also commemorated the 100th anniversary of the founding of The Halsted Society, a prestigious national surgical society.

STEP AHEAD LECTURE FEATURES TUSKEGEE STUDY FAMILY MEMBERS

On October 8, 2024, the Heersink School of Medicine partnered with the UAB School of Nursing, the UAB School of Public Health, and the UAB Health System to host the Step AHEAD: Voices for Our Fathers lecture. The panel discussion featured family members of men involuntarily involved in the U.S. Public Health Service Study on Untreated Syphilis in African American Males in Tuskegee and Macon County, Alabama, from 1932-1972.



NEW UAB CALLAHAN EYE CEO

Jarrold Johnson was named the chief executive officer of UAB Callahan Eye, effective October 1, 2024. With over 25 years of health care industry and leadership experience, Johnson joined UAB from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Pennsylvania, where he served as president of UPMC Carlisle.

LEADERSHIP IN ACADEMIC MEDICINE LECTURE

On October 7, 2024, Jim Yong Kim, M.D., Ph.D., vice chair and partner at Global Infrastructure Partners and former World Bank president, presented the Leadership in Academic Medicine Lecture, "Reflections on 40 Years in Global Health: The Power of Faith in Things Unseen." Started in 2014, this annual lecture brings high-profile leaders to UAB to discuss issues facing academic medicine.



The UAB Arts in Medicine program welcomed the world-famous Gee's Bend Quilters for an artist's residency in 2024.

ANNIVERSARIES

CIVITAN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER 35TH ANNIVERSARY

Since opening in 1989, the center has grown to become a world leader in research and treatment of intellectual and developmental disabilities.

LEARN MORE AT [GO.UAB.EDU/CIRC35](https://go.uab.edu/circ35).

SPAIN REHABILITATION CENTER 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Ranked No. 19 in the nation by U.S. News and World Report's 'Best Hospitals' list, Spain Rehab is recognized as one of the Southeast's leading providers of physical medicine and rehabilitation services.

LEARN MORE AT [GO.UAB.EDU/SPAINREHAB60](https://go.uab.edu/spainrehab60).

UAB ARTS IN MEDICINE 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Today, the multidisciplinary Arts in Medicine program includes eight artists in residence, four creative arts therapists, and one yoga therapist, and provides 115 hours of services per week to clinical units at UAB Hospital, Children's of Alabama, and other clinical partners including the Birmingham VA Whole Health Initiative.

LEARN MORE AT [GO.UAB.EDU/UABAIM10](https://go.uab.edu/uabaim10).

BOARD OF VISITORS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2014, the Heersink School of Medicine engaged a group of leaders in business, academia, medicine, science, and public policy to form the Board of Visitors (BOV). A decade later, Board of Visitors members continue to serve as powerful advocates and advisors on strategy, community engagement, and other initiatives. In addition to providing their invaluable insights and expertise, Board of Visitors members have made generous philanthropic investments in the Heersink School of Medicine totaling more than \$145 million.

Gail Cassell, Ph.D., and Ted Love, M.D., have served as Board of Visitors co-chairs since 2014. “Serving on the BOV has provided me the opportunity me to witness the school’s incredible advancement of research without sacrificing the quality of medical education,” said Cassell, former chair of the UAB

Department of Microbiology who retired from Eli Lilly and Co. as vice president for Scientific Affairs and Distinguished Lilly Research Scholar in Infectious Diseases. She is a senior lecturer at Harvard Medical School and senior scientist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston.

“UAB is a world-class medical institution, and as an African American and an Alabama native, I am proud to support the programs that make UAB Medicine among the best in our nation,” said Love. Love serves as chair of the Board of Directors for the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and on the Boards of Directors for Structure Therapeutics, Royalty Pharma, and Seagen.

As it enters its second decade, the Board of Visitors will continue to elevate the Heersink School of Medicine’s excellence through its invaluable counsel and transformative gifts.

The Heersink School of Medicine is grateful for the service of our Board of Visitors members since 2014:

Mary Battle*
Thomas Blount*
Gail Cassell, Ph.D.* (co-chair)
Sheri Cook, MBA, M.Ac.*
Garry Crowder
William Eugene Davenport
Nancy Dunlap, M.D., Ph.D., MBA*
Sara J. Finley*

Mary Fisher
C.T. Fitzpatrick, CFA
John Gallin, M.D. (deceased)
T. Michael Goodrich*
Harry Greenberg, M.D.*
David Hale
Maryam (Mimi) Head*
Mary Heersink*

Gordon Lee*
James Lee III*
Kevin Lofton
Ted Love, M.D.* (co-chair)
George Lundberg, M.D.*
John Martin, Ph.D.
Martine Rothblatt, Ph.D., J.D.

**Current members*

PHILANTHROPY

The exceptional contributions highlighted here reflect our donors' continued, generous investment in the excellence of our faculty, facilities, and programs throughout the 2024 fiscal year. We are profoundly grateful for their unwavering support.

THE YEAR IN PHILANTHROPY

| | |
|--|---|
| <div>\$78,341,103</div> <div>TOTAL GIFTS</div> | <div>\$2,438,750</div> <div>TOTAL PLANNED GIFTS</div> |
| <div>\$3,422,287</div> <div>ALUMNI GIFTS</div> | <div>\$5,908,940</div> <div>MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP GIFTS</div> |
| <div>14</div> <div>NEW ENDOWED CHAIRS AND PROFESSORSHIPS</div> | <div>6</div> <div>NEW SCHOLARSHIPS ESTABLISHED</div> |
| <div>260</div> <div>CUMULATIVE ENDOWED CHAIRS AND PROFESSORSHIPS</div> | <div>161</div> <div>CUMULATIVE SCHOLARSHIPS</div> |

Marnix E. Heersink, M.D., committed an additional \$5 million to his transformational \$95 million gift that **named the UAB Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine** in 2021, bringing the total naming gift to \$100 million. The gift also established the Marnix E. Heersink Institute for Biomedical Innovation and the Mary Heersink Institute for Global Health and provides support for faculty recruitment efforts, research growth initiatives, and other key priorities. Dr. Heersink is a Dothan, Alabama, eye surgeon, innovator, and entrepreneur, and co-founder of Eye Center South, with six locations across Alabama and Florida.

A gift from Heersink School of Medicine Board of Visitors Co-chair and former UAB Department of Microbiology Chair Gail Cassell, Ph.D., her husband Ralph Cassell, and their daughter Cynthia Cassell, Ph.D., established the **Cassell Family Bi-directional Training Initiative** within the Mary Heersink Institute for Global Health. In partnership with Partners in Health/Socios en Salud, the program supports bidirectional training of physicians in a clinical UAB fellowship program and physicians in senior training from medical schools in Lima, Peru.

Heersink School of Medicine Board of Visitors Co-chair Ted Love, M.D., and his wife Joyce Y. Love established the **Ted W. Love, M.D., and Joyce Y. Love Endowed Support Fund for Sickle Cell Disease**. The \$5 million fund benefits the UAB Lifespan Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center, which brings together scholars and researchers working to discover new ways to treat patients with sickle cell disease.

A planned gift from James Buchanon established the **Dewey Buchanon Medical Student Endowed Support Fund** to honor his parents, Dewey and Evelyn Bailey Buchanon. The fund will be used to support medical scholarships and research stipends for promising medical students interested in cancer research.

Buchanon, a Cullman, Alabama, native, worked in aeronautical engineering in Southern California, where he lived for more than 60 years. He passed away on December 20, 2021, at the age of 84.

Mildred Elmore Hulse established the **John Durr Elmore, M.D., Endowed Chair in Psychiatry** in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology, with the goal of helping to recruit and/or retain an expert clinician for the department. The endowment honors Hulse's father, Dr. Elmore, who practiced psychiatry at the Frank Kay Clinic of Birmingham from 1951 until his retirement in 1989. He served on the part-time faculty of the UAB Department of Psychiatry until 1972, last as a clinical professor of Psychiatry.

The **Hilda B. Anderson Endowed Chair in Nephrology** was established by Charles Anderson Sr., who expanded his father's newsstand into the Books-A-Million retail chain, and the Anderson family's continued generosity increased the corpus of the chair. The chair is held by Timmy Lee, M.D., a professor in the Division of Nephrology and the vice chair for Research in the Department of Medicine, and is the third endowed chair the Anderson family has established in the Heersink School of Medicine. The Anderson family also committed a generous gift to the **O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB** to support the center's leading-edge lymphoma research.

Benjamin and Luanne Russell established the **Benjamin Russell Endowed Chair in Geriatrics** at the Benjamin Russell Center for Advanced Care. The center is located at Russell Medical in Alexander City, a member of the UAB Health System. The endowed chair will be established in the UAB Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, and Palliative Care and will support an expert faculty member who will serve as the center's medical director and develop new models of care, education, and practice.

APPOINTMENTS & HONORS

Anupam Agarwal, M.D., senior vice president for Medicine and dean of the Heersink School of Medicine, was selected as a member of the Leadership Alabama Class XXXIV. Leadership Alabama is a statewide program of Alabama's top leaders who are engaged in creating a network of relationships that seeks mutual understanding of problems and priorities for the state's future.

Namasivayam Ambalavanan, M.D., professor and co-director of the Division of Neonatology; **Herbert Chen, M.D.**, chair of the Department of Surgery; and **Jasvinder Singh, M.D.**, professor in the Division of Immunology and Rheumatology, were elected to the Association of American Physicians for 2024.

Pankaj Arora, M.D., associate professor in the Division of Cardiovascular Disease, and **Vikas Dudeja, M.D.**, Endowed Professor in Gastrointestinal Oncology and director of the Division of Surgical Oncology, were elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation's new active and international members for 2024.

Smita Bhatia, M.D., MPH, distinguished professor in the Division of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology and director of the Institute for Cancer Outcomes and Survivorship, received the 2024 American Society of Clinical Oncology-American Cancer Society Cancer Prevention Award.

Jeffrey Blount, M.D., MPH, professor in the Department of Neurosurgery and director of the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery, was awarded the 2024 Humanitarian Award by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons.

Cheri Canon, M.D., president of the University of Alabama Health Services Foundation, P.C., and chief physician executive of the UAB Health System, assumed the presidency of the American Board of Radiology, following two years as president-elect.

Waldemar Carlo, M.D., professor in the Department of Pediatrics, co-director of the Division of Neonatology, and Edwin M. Dixon Endowed Chair, and **Alan Tita, M.D., Ph.D.**, professor and senior vice chair for Research and Innovation in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and senior associate dean for Global and Women's Health, were recognized by Clinical Research Forum at the Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement Awards on April 2, 2024, for their study "Azithromycin to Prevent Sepsis or Death in Women Planning a Vaginal Birth," earning one of two Distinguished Clinical Research Achievement Awards for 2024.

Yuying Chen, M.D., Ph.D., professor and vice chair of Research in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, was named to the American Spinal Injury Association 2024 Board of Directors.

Daniel Chu, M.D., professor and director of the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery, received the prestigious James IV Association of Surgeons' Traveling Fellowship award for 2024-2025.

Christine Curcio, Ph.D., and **Cynthia Owsley, Ph.D.**, both professors in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, were jointly awarded the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Proctor Medal for 2025, the first time the medal has been awarded jointly to two women.

Lisa Curtis, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Nephrology, was appointed as associate dean for Research and Training in the UAB Graduate School and Global Affairs, effective May 1, 2024. In this role, she leads the Office of Postdoctoral Education, the Training Grant Support Office, and training in Responsible Conduct of Research, and oversees postdoctoral fellows' training and research activities.

Anindya Dutta, MBBS, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Genetics, was announced as the 2025 recipient of the American Society for Investigative Pathology Rous-Whipple Award, presented to a senior scientist with an illustrious research career who has contributed to the advancement of understanding disease while maintaining productivity in multiple areas, from mentorship to leadership in pathology.

Alice Goepfert, M.D., professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and associate dean for Graduate Medical Education, was named by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education as a recipient of the Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Award, presented annually to two designated institutional officials across the U.S. who demonstrate excellence in supervising graduate medical education programs.

Orlando Gutiérrez, M.D., was appointed senior associate dean for Clinical and Translational Research in the Heersink School of Medicine and director and contact principal investigator of the UAB Center for Clinical and Translational Science, effective April 1, 2024. In this role, Gutiérrez also serves as associate vice president of Medicine and Biomedical Research for UAB.

Caroline Harada, M.D., associate dean for Strategic Initiatives-Medical Education, received the 2024 Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges. The award honors a medical school faculty physician who exemplifies the qualities of a caring and compassionate mentor to medical students.

Shuko Harada, M.D., professor in the Division of Genomic Diagnostics and Bioinformatics, was named Clinical Scientist of the Year by the Association of Clinical Scientists and sworn in as president of the organization at their annual meeting April 1-4, 2024.

Louis Justement, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Microbiology, was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in the section of medical sciences for his distinguished contributions to the field of immunology and outstanding service in science policy.

Kierstin Kennedy, M.D., clinical associate professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Population Science, was elected to a three-year term on the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education Board of Directors.

David Kimberlin, M.D., professor in the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, was appointed to the United States National Sustainability Committee for the Elimination of Measles, Rubella, and Congenital Rubella Syndrome.

Robert Kimberly, M.D., professor in the Division of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology and the Howard L. Holley Research Chair of Rheumatology, assumed the newly created role of senior associate dean for Strategic Initiatives in the Heersink School of Medicine, effective April 1, 2024.

Bruce Korf, M.D., Ph.D., associate dean for Genomic Medicine and distinguished professor of Genetics in the Heersink School of Medicine, received the 2024 American College of Medical Genetics Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine's David L. Rimoin Lifetime Achievement Award in Medical Genetics.

Morissa Ladinsky, M.D., professor in the Division of Academic General Pediatrics, was selected for a six-year term on the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on State Government Affairs effective July 1, 2024.

Marissa Natelson Love, M.D., associate professor in the Department of Neurology, was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Neurology.

Farah Lubin, Ph.D., was appointed to the Society for Neuroscience's Government and Public Affairs Committee, which oversees and assesses the organization's efforts to advocate for neuroscience research.

Fran Lund, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Microbiology and director of the Immunology Institute, was named a 2024 Distinguished Fellow of the American Association of Immunologists.

Cristina Magi-Galluzzi, M.D., Ph.D., chair of the Department of Pathology, was named vice president of the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology for 2024-2025, president-elect for 2025-2026, and will serve as president for 2026-2027.

James Markert, M.D., MPH, the James Garber Galbraith Endowed Chair of Neurosurgery and chair of the Department of Neurosurgery, was elected to the American Board of Neurological Surgery Board of Directors.

Sadis Matalon, Ph.D., distinguished professor in the Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, is the 2024 recipient of the American Physiological Society's Physiology in Perspective: The Walter B. Cannon Award, which recognizes the lifetime achievement of an outstanding physiological scientist and APS member.

Ismail Mohamed, M.D., professor in the Division of Pediatric Neurology and associate professor in the Department of Neurology, was elected president of the American Clinical Magnetoencephalography Society for 2024-2027.

Vu Nguyen, M.D., MBA, chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, received the prestigious Paul W. Burleson Award for 2024 from the Medical Association of the State of Alabama.

Paige Porrett, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Transplantation and Vera Hauptfeld-Dolejssek Endowed Professor in Transplant Immunology, was appointed as president-elect of the International Society of Uterus Transplantation. She will serve in the role for two years before assuming the role of president in 2026.

Robert Russell, M.D., MPH, professor in the Department of Surgery and director of Children's of Alabama's Trauma Program, was appointed to the editorial board for The Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery.

Gene Siegal, M.D., Ph.D., Robert W. Mowry Endowed Professor and executive vice chair in the Department of Pathology, received the 2024 ASCP Philip Levine Award for Outstanding Research from the American Society for Clinical Pathology.

Roger Smalligan, M.D., MPH, regional dean of the Huntsville Regional Medical Campus, received the 2024 Alabama Chapter American College of Physicians Laureate Award, which recognizes his commitment and contributions to internal medicine, leadership, and patient care.

Franklin Tessler, M.D., professor emeritus in the Department of Radiology and senior medical officer for Health System Information Services, received the 2024 Lawrence A. Mack Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of Radiologists in Ultrasound.

Alan Tita, M.D., Ph.D., was promoted from associate dean for Global and Women's Health to senior associate dean for Global and Women's Health, effective January 1, 2024. Tita is also the director of the Mary Heersink Institute for Global Health and holds the Mary Heersink Endowed Chair in Global Health.

Kristen Wong, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery, was awarded the Carol and Tom R. DeMeester Traveling Fellowship from the Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract.

Jianyi "Jay" Zhang, M.D., Ph.D., T. Michael Gillian Goodrich Endowed Chair of Engineering Leadership and chair of the Department of Biomedical Engineering, delivered the North American Section of the International Society for Heart Research Lifetime Achievement Award Lecture—"Neonatal Heart Regeneration and Graft-Associated Arrhythmia in Large Mammals"—at the organization's annual meeting on August 23, 2024.

NEW CHAIRS SPOTLIGHT



Thomas Chi, M.D., MBA, was appointed chair of the Department of Urology, effective January 1, 2025. Chi joins UAB from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), where he served as Kutzmann Endowed Professor and vice chair for Clinical Affairs and Regionalization, co-director of the Endourology Fellowship Program, and chief of Urology Subspecialty. He also served as medical director for UCSF Health's Outpatient Surgery Centers at Parnassus and Bayfront and Ambulatory Executive Medical Director.



Cristina Magi-Galluzzi, M.D., Ph.D., was named chair of the Department of Pathology, effective March 4, 2024. Magi-Galluzzi is a professor and holds the Robert and Ruth Anderson Endowed Chair in the Department of Pathology. Before joining UAB in 2018, she was the director of Genitourinary Pathology in the Department of Pathology at the Cleveland Clinic and a professor of Pathology at the Lerner College of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University.



Justin Turner, M.D., Ph.D., became chair of the Department of Otolaryngology effective May 31, 2024. Turner joined UAB from Vanderbilt University Medical Center, where he was professor, vice chair for Research, and director of the Vanderbilt Smell and Taste Center in the Department of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery.

LEADERSHIP

SENIOR LEADERSHIP



Anupam Agarwal, M.D.
Senior Vice President for Medicine and
Dean; James C. Lee Jr. Endowed Chair



Craig Hoesley, M.D.
Senior Associate Dean
for Medical Education



Etty (Tika) Benveniste, Ph.D.
Senior Vice Dean; Associate Vice
President for Medicine and Basic
Sciences



Robert Kimberly, M.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Strategic
Initiatives



Herbert Chen, M.D., FACS
Senior Associate Dean for
Academic Affairs



Jean Ann Larson, Ph.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Leadership
Development, Chief Leadership
Development Officer, UAB Medicine



Victor Darley-Usmar, Ph.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Research
Compliance and Administration



David Rogers, M.D., MHPE
Chief Wellness Officer, UAB Medicine



Mona Fouad, M.D., MPH
Senior Associate Dean for
Access and Engagement



Alan Tita, M.D., Ph.D.
Senior Associate Dean for
Global and Women's Health



Orlando Gutiérrez, M.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Clinical
and Translational Research, Associate
Vice President of Medicine and
Biomedical Research, UAB

ASSOCIATE & ASSISTANT DEANS

Irfan Asif, M.D.
Associate Dean, Primary Care
and Rural Health

Scott Ballinger, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs

Thomas Buford, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Research

Raegan Durant, M.D., MPH
Associate Dean, Access and Engagement

Richard Friend, M.D.
Regional Dean, Tuscaloosa Regional Campus

Cristin Gavin, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Undergraduate
Biomedical Education

William Geisler, M.D., MPH
Associate Dean, Physician Scientist
Development

Alice Goepfert, M.D.
Associate Dean, Graduate Medical Education

Christina Grabowski, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Admissions
and Enrollment Management

ASSOCIATE & ASSISTANT DEANS (CONT.)

Alecia Gross, Ph.D.

Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs
and Development

Caroline Harada, M.D.

Associate Dean, Strategic Initiatives,
Medical Education

Bruce Korf, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Dean, Genomic Medicine
and Chief Genomics Officer

Louis Lambiase, M.D.

Regional Dean, Montgomery
Regional Medical Campus

Kevin Leon, M.D.

Associate Dean, Undergraduate
Medical Education

Nita Limdi, Pharm.D., Ph.D., MSPH

Associate Dean, Genomic Medicine

Michael Mugavero, M.D.

Associate Dean, Clinical
and Translational Research

Roger Smalligan, M.D.

Regional Dean, Huntsville Regional
Medical Campus

Nicholas Van Wagoner, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Dean, Students

Majd Zayzafoon, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Dean, International Medical
Education

William Brooks, M.D.

Assistant Dean, Preclinical Education

Dale Colorado, D.O., MPH

Assistant Dean, Student Experience

Latesha Eloppe, M.D., MSPH

Assistant Dean, Access and Engagement,
Medical Education

Brenessa Lindeman, M.D., FACS

Assistant Dean, Graduate Medical Education

Todd Peterson, M.D.

Assistant Dean, Students

Rubin Pillay, M.D., Ph.D.

Assistant Dean, Global Health Innovation

Marjorie Lee White, M.D.

Assistant Dean, Clinical Simulation

James Willig, M.D., MSPH

Assistant Dean, Clinical Education

Carlton Young, M.D.

Assistant Dean, Access and Engagement,
Medical Student Experience

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Dan Berkowitz, M.D.

Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine

David Bedwell, Ph.D.

Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics

Jianyi (Jay) Zhang, M.D., Ph.D.

Biomedical Engineering

James Cimino, M.D.

Biomedical Informatics and Data Science

Bradley Yoder, Ph.D.

Cell, Developmental, and Integrative Biology

Boni Elewski, M.D.

Dermatology

Marie-Carmelle Elie, M.D.

Emergency Medicine

Irfan Asif, M.D.

Family and Community Medicine

Anindya Dutta, MBBS, Ph.D.

Genetics

Craig Hoesley, M.D.

Medical Education

Seth Landefeld, M.D. (stepped down
September 1, 2024)

Mark Dransfield, M.D. (interim)
Medicine

J. Victor Garcia-Martinez, Ph.D.
Microbiology

Craig Powell, M.D., Ph.D.
Neurobiology

David Standaert, M.D., Ph.D.
Neurology

James Markert, M.D., MPH
Neurosurgery

Warner Huh, M.D.
Obstetrics and Gynecology

Brian Samuels, M.D., Ph.D.
Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

Steven Theiss, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgery

Justin Turner, M.D., Ph.D.
Otolaryngology

Cristina Magi-Galluzzi, M.D., Ph.D.
Pathology

Mitchell Cohen, M.D.
(stepped down December 31, 2024)
Yung Lau, M.D. (interim)
Pediatrics

Teresa Wilborn, Pharm.D., Ph.D. (interim)
Pharmacology and Toxicology

Vu Nguyen, M.D., MBA
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Adrienne Lahti, M.D.
Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology

James Bonner, M.D.
Radiation Oncology

Srini Tridandapani, M.D., Ph.D. (interim)
Radiology

Herbert Chen, M.D.
Surgery

Soroush Rais-Bahrami, M.D. (interim)
Thomas Chi, M.D. (effective January 1, 2025)
Urology



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Megann Bates Cain, MPPM
Assistant Vice President
for Development



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