

# Neurology News & Notes

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## Message from the Chair

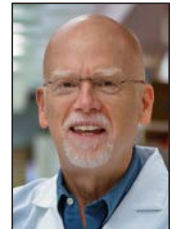
I'm extremely proud of our department for giving an excellent showing at the American Academy of Neurology 75th Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts! We had a large portion of our faculty and trainees present posters, direct and speak in courses, and/or present at plenary sessions. Take a look at the pictures below to see our department at the AAN Annual Meeting.



Additionally, thank you to everyone who showed up to our department's reception Tuesday, April 25. From the feedback we received, we had a great timeslot, location, and the best food! The open bar may have also helped positive reviews. It was great to see so many alumni of the residency training program as well as formal Pitt Neurology faculty. We are already looking forward to planning our reception for the next annual meeting! A special thank you should be said to Lauren Stanick and Samantha Kunvatanagarn for event planning and making sure everything went according to plan.

I'm encouraging all of our staff to check out the Staff Section in the newsletter below; all staff are welcome to contact Lauren Stanick for the chance to feature content ideas. While this newsletter most often features faculty and trainees, we would like to feature staff just as often.

I want to give a personal note of gratitude to Tim Greenamyre, MD, PhD, for his personal bravery as well as his career-long dedication to making discoveries about the underpinnings of Parkinson's disease, which have led to advances in reducing disease prevalence and severity. [In this article in Science Magazine](#), Dr. Greenamyre shares his personal story which will inspire an even broader audience to join in the fight against Parkinson's disease.



I'm very excited about the future of the department - with bright minds and dedicated faculty and staff, we will no doubt continue evolving in a positive direction!

With great appreciation,

Page B. Pennell, MD, FAES

*Chair and Henry B. Higman Professor of Neurology*

# American Academy of Neurology 75th Annual Meeting, April 22-27

## University of Pittsburgh Department of Neurology Reception

Our department had an amazing reception that was hosted at the Omni Boston at the Seaport Hotel; our reception was so popular people even stayed for an “after party”! We’re looking forward to another successful reception next year.



*Incoming resident Matthew Flounders,  
Residents Yi Li and Aaron Nehamkin*



*William Kerr, Araya Puwanant, Zongqi Xia,  
Richard Fang*

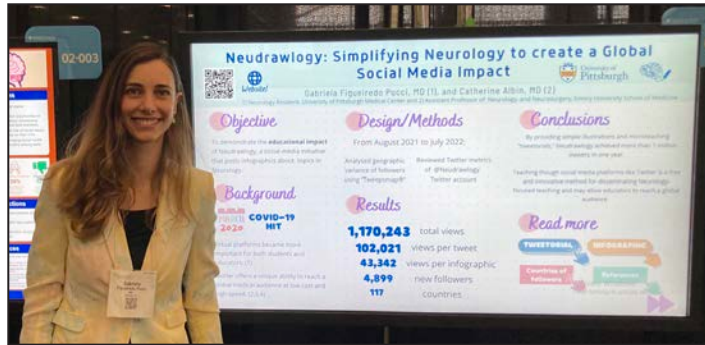


*Christina Vaughn, Christopher Cummings, Kelly Baldwin,  
Sasa Zivkovic, Janet Waters, Page Pennell*

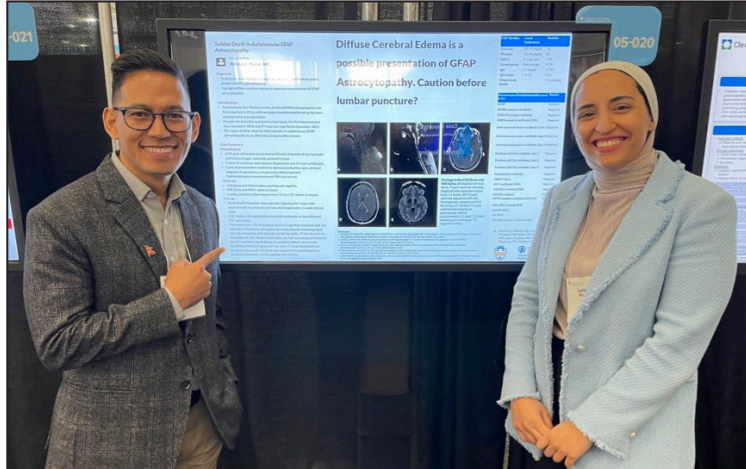


*Bradley Molyneaux and Lawrence Wechsler*

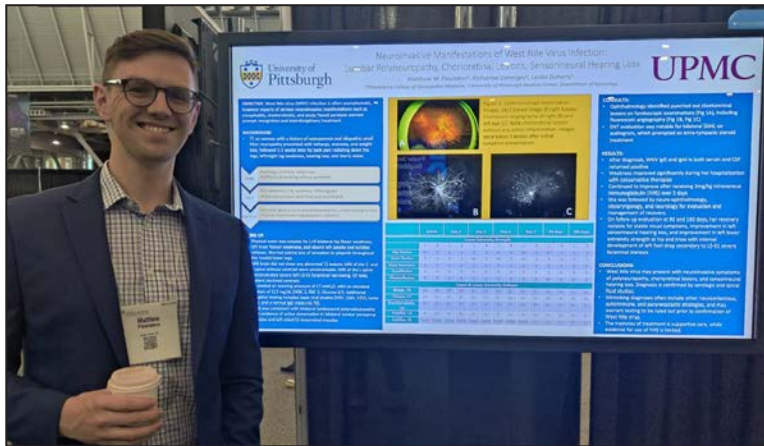
## AAN Poster Presentations



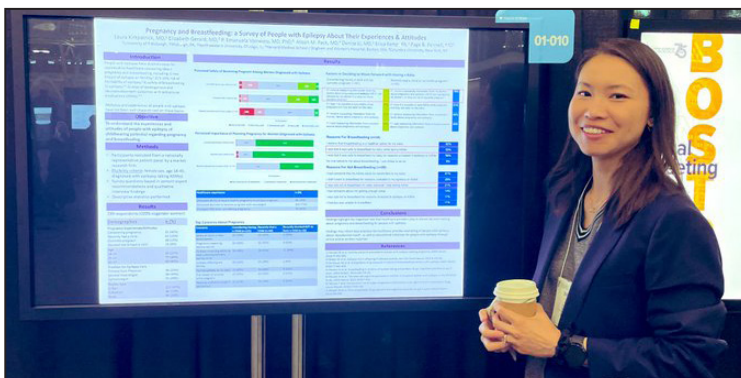
*Gabriela F. Pucci, PGY-1*



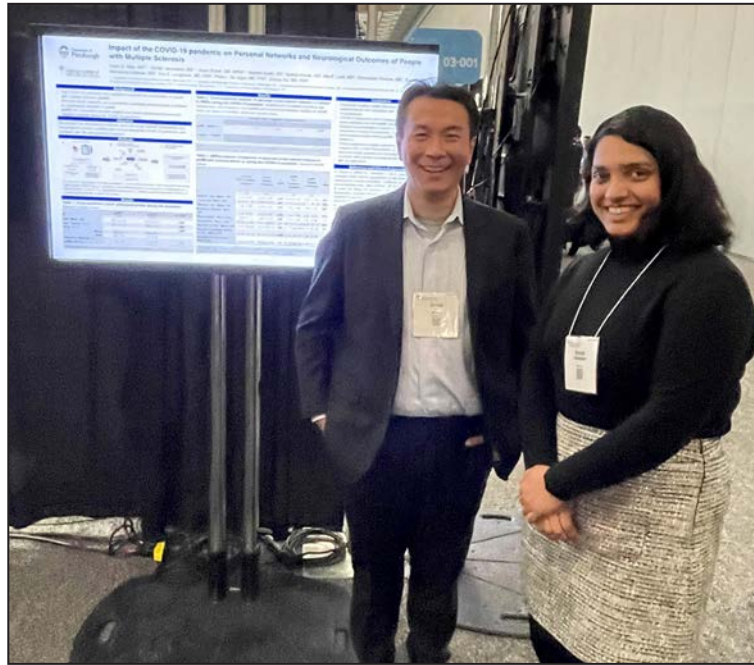
*Bishow Mahat, PGY-3, Lamees Alzyoud, PGY-4*



*Matthew Flounders, incoming resident*



*Denise Li, Women's Neurology fellow*



*Zongqi Xia and Shruthi Venkatesh, PhD student at CMU*

### Seminars, Discussions & Plenary Sessions



*Joanna Fong-Isariyawongse (pictured in middle)*



*Mathura Ravishankar, PGY-4, talks about connecting to patients with language barriers in the "Lost in Translation" Headtalk*



*Raul Nogueira talks about “Endovascular Treatment for Acute Basilar Artery Occlusion: A multi-center Randomized Controlled Trial (ATTENTION)” during the Clinical Trials Plenary Session*



*Janet Waters (pictured far right) directed the “Neurologic Case Studies in Pregnancy” seminar. Robert Kanieck (pictured far left) spoke about headache in pregnancy*

**Thank you to everyone who made the AAN Annual Meeting a great experience for all! We look forward to next year.**



## Clinical Trials, Studies & Research

### Giacobbe, Ravishankar and Doherty Publish Case Report

This is a case of a 75-year-old female who presented with severe headache, left eye ptosis and binocular diploopia, found to have multiple cranial neuropathies on exam. This case reviews the localization and work-up of multiple cranial neuropathies and emphasizes the importance of not prematurely narrowing the differential diagnosis.



## Staff Section

### GET TO KNOW: Michael Whalen, Operations Director



We are excited to welcome Michael Whalen as the new Operations Director for the University of Pittsburgh Department of Neurology! Practice managers, office coordinators, and several administrative staff in the Kaufmann Building will report directly to him. He received a BS in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience and Biomolecular Science from the University of Michigan. He also earned a Master's in Health Administration from the University of Pittsburgh.

#### *What is the purpose of your position?*

**MW:** This position has oversight of operations at our outpatient practice locations, helping to lead and support our wonderful team of practice managers and office coordinators. My responsibilities include working to improve our revenue cycle metrics in the practices, implementation of quality, safety, and patient satisfaction initiatives at the practice level, managing HR functions in the outpatient realm, and establishing policies and standard work to streamline outpatient operations.

#### *How is your position different from Kimberly Murin's?*

**MW:** My position as Director of Operations focuses more intentionally on providing support for our outpatient clinical and administrative staff as it relates to the policies, procedures, and workflows that impact their day-to-day work, with some oversight of goal implementation and clinic improvement. Kimberly's position as Division Administrator has a larger scope of responsibility; she works closely with Jessica Saunders and Dr. Pennell at a department level, which includes research, education, and both inpatient and outpatient oversight responsibilities. She also works with the division chiefs to develop, plan, and implement strategic priorities.

#### *In what capacity should our staff in the Kaufmann Building expect to see you?*

**MW:** My office is located in Suite 811 and I have an open door policy – always will-

ing to chat about anyone's questions or concerns. I also love to bake, so you may see some of my concoctions in the kitchen up for grabs!

***What's your experience dealing with healthcare administration?***

**MW:** I previously worked as a Practice Administrator overseeing movement disorders, vascular neurology, and neuroimmunology with the Neuroscience Service Line at OhioHealth, a 15-hospital health system based in Columbus, Ohio.

***How will you be supporting our community neurology locations?***

**MW:** I'll be working closely with the office managers to implement policy and practice changes and will serve as an additional resource to the providers and staff to solve issues. With this position now in the department, leadership will have more time and presence in the practices.

***Can you give us some fun facts about yourself?***

**MW:** I'm an avid kayaker and hiker, so my friends and I are planning a national parks road trip for 2024. As a foodie, I'm always looking for restaurant, bakery and brewery recommendations in Pittsburgh – if you have a favorite spot to grab a bite to eat in the city, let me know!

**UPMC Hosts 5th Annual Huntington's Disease Patient, Family, and Caregiver Education Day**

UPMC hosted the 5th Annual Huntington's Disease Patient, Family, and Caregiver Education Day on Saturday, April 22, 2023. Included in the day was a visit from Starkiller Garrison, the local regiment of the 501st Legion of Star Wars enthusiasts. This group regularly dresses in character to attend non-profit events; these "bad guys doing good" made the Huntington's disease event even more special now that they've joined the fight to "Cure HD" with the UPMC and HDSA Center of Excellence staff!



*From Left to Right: Tammy Makoul, Dr. Melanie Peterson, Dr. Morgan Faeder, Marissa Kopacko, Kirra Mediate, Dr. Valerie Suski, Kathy Brandfass.  
Front Row: Patty Conlon, Clinical Research Coordinator.*

## Milestones & Recognition



Congratulations to Claire Yanta, MD, on being promoted to Associate Professor of Neurology!

## Funding & Career Development Opportunities

### Neurology Philanthropy Partners

#### Why should you partner with philanthropy?

1. Philanthropy can result in direct funds for your research, equipment, training, and patient care needs
2. Learn more about how our partners can engage your patients, families, and department alumni to express gratitude to support our mission
3. Work with a partner to come up with a customized approach that works best for you
4. Justin and Stacie are available to meet with you virtually or in-person at your convenience



**Justin Meyer**

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## Upcoming Events

### 2023 EEG and Epilepsy in Clinical Practice, September 14-16

This program is an opportunity for a wide range of professionals to expand their knowledge and acquire and improve competencies for providing care to patients





Scan the QR code to visit our course website

with epilepsy and related conditions. This is a 2.5-day course designed to introduce core clinical epilepsy and EEG, as well as cutting edge pre-surgical evaluation techniques for drug resistant (DRE) epilepsies. A didactic and interactive format include workshops at the end of each day to encourage audience participation.

Who should attend: Neurologists, neurocritical care specialists, psychiatrists, neurosurgeons, internal medicine and family practice physicians, advanced practice providers, technologists, and trainees in these disciplines.

### **Frontiers in Neurosurgery and Neuromodulation: Innovation and Leadership in Epilepsy, Movement Disorders and Spasticity Conference, September 28-29, 2023**

The Department of Neurology will have several faculty members speaking at this conference. Join the University of Pittsburgh Department of Neurological Surgery for this two-day presentation and discussion on innovations in epilepsy, movement disorders, and spasticity care. Sessions will be centered around current state-of-the-art treatment methods as well as the future of the neuromodulation field.

Who should attend: Neurologists, general practitioners, mid-level providers, students, and surgeons.

View the course agenda and register here: <https://bit.ly/3B7LONB>