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On behalf of everyone at ProAssurance

# congratulations

on your well-deserved recognition!

Congratulations to all winners of the annual PAMED Awards, which honor physicians who go above and beyond to provide exceptional service to their patients and communities. We recognize their commitment, compassion, and achievements in their respective medical fields. ProAssurance further extends our gratitude to all physicians who dedicate their time and expertise to improve lives. The work you do matters, and we commit to providing solid and comprehensive protection for your unique practice.



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# Contents

## 2025 AWARDS

- 4 A Message From PAMED EVP
- 5 A Message From PAMED President
- 6 Distinguished Service Award
- 7 Community Voluntary Service Award
- 9 Top Physicians Under 40
- 22 2025 Awards Celebration
- 24 National Doctors' Day
- 28 Innovation Grant Recipients
- 37 Everyday Hero Awards



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MEDICAL SOCIETY®  
ADVOCATE. EDUCATE. NAVIGATE.

## Congratulations on all of your accomplishments in 2025!

From the PAMED Executive Vice President & CEO, Martin P. Raniowski, MA, FCPP, CAE

As CEO, I have the privilege of being involved in many aspects of the Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED).

This year, PAMED has continued to build on a strong foundation of service, strategy, and collaboration, expanding our reach, deepening our relationships, and delivering measurable value to the physicians we serve. None of it happened in a vacuum.

We've remained steadfast in our advocacy against scope of practice expansion bills. Together with our primary care physician coalition partners, we've countered misleading public relations campaigns and worked closely with specialty organizations to protect the integrity of physician-led care. These efforts underscore the power of the physician voice where it matters most.

But our advocacy didn't stop there. PAMED has spoken out forcefully on behalf of public health—championing the importance of vaccines, defending evidence-based medicine, and raising awareness about the growing influence of private equity in health care. We believe that transparency, accountability, and patient-centered care must remain at the heart of our health system.

I also have the honor of celebrating physicians who are making a significant impact on their practice and patient care. Richard Wender, MD is our 2025 Distinguished Service Award for his decades-long leadership in primary care, public health, and cancer prevention. As Chair at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine, his work has shaped global screening guidelines. Ada Emuwa, MPH, MD receives the Community Voluntary Service Award for her tireless advocacy for underserved communities. A Yale-trained physician with a Harvard public health degree, she serves at Penn Medicine Lancaster and on the Community Health Council of Lebanon County.

Our Top Physicians Under 40 award recognizes young physicians across the Commonwealth who bring unique perspectives to the practice of medicine. Among this year's recipients are those making a difference in their communities, those passionate about women's health, and first-generation physicians who are blazing new trails.

Our 2024/25 Innovation Grant recipients continue to showcase the ingenuity of our physicians, turning their ideas into projects that aim to transform current medical practices. Similarly, our poster contest winners represent some of the brightest young medical students and residents, poised to use their research to advance the future of medicine.

I am incredibly proud to witness all that PAMED, and our members have accomplished this year and celebrate the physicians who continually push the boundaries of quality care for patients in Pennsylvania. We are honored to have you all as members.

**Martin P. Raniowski, MA, FCPP, CAE**  
**CEO/Executive Vice President, PAMED**



## Congratulations!

From the PAMED President, Lynn Lucas-Fehm, MD, JD

Congratulations to all the recipients of PAMED's Top Physicians Under 40, Community Voluntary Service Award, Distinguished Service Award, and Innovation Grant. Your work spans diverse health care models and reflects the passion of physicians who advocate tirelessly within their fields.

This year, PAMED has taken an active role in legislative efforts to regulate private equity in health care. I've had the opportunity to meet with lawmakers at the Capitol and testify before the Senate Democratic Policy Committee to share our concerns and advocate for transparency and accountability in health care ownership.

At the heart of this advocacy is one driving force: our patients. The physicians being honored this year exemplify the values of service, leadership, and commitment to the practice of medicine—and they deserve to be recognized.

We are proud to honor Dr. Richard Wender with PAMED's 2025 Distinguished Service Award, the highest accolade bestowed upon our members. As the Robert G. Dunlop Professor and Chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Wender's leadership has strengthened primary care, expanded residency programs, and cultivated impactful community partnerships.

We also celebrate Dr. Ada-Nkem Emuwa, recipient of the 2025 Community Voluntary Service Award, for her unwavering dedication to advancing health equity, promoting diversity, and serving underserved communities through advocacy and compassionate care.

Our Top Physicians Under 40 continue to inspire with their energy, innovation, and commitment to shaping the future of medicine. Their contributions remind us that the profession is in good hands and that the next generation of physician leaders is already making a difference.

I am incredibly proud of all that PAMED has achieved this year and honored to celebrate the physicians who push boundaries to ensure safe, effective, and patient-centered care across Pennsylvania. We are grateful to have you as members.

**Lynn Lucas-Fehm, MD, JD**  
**President, PAMED**



## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Richard Wender, MD

### A Champion of Public Health



**R**ichard Wender, MD, a trailblazer in public health and family medicine, has been named the 2025 recipient of PAMED's Distinguished Service Award and highest honor. With more than four decades of clinical practice and leadership, Dr. Wender has dedicated his career to advancing primary care, championing health equity, and transforming cancer prevention on both local and national levels.

As the Robert G. Dunlop Professor and Chair of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, Dr. Wender has led initiatives that have reshaped care delivery. Under his leadership, Penn launched its first Addiction Medicine fellowship, expanded residency programs, and rolled out a community-based COVID vaccination campaign.

His department has also secured significant funding to address health disparities and strengthen

public health infrastructure. Dr. Wender's influence extends far beyond Pennsylvania. As the first primary care physician to serve as National President and later Chief Cancer Control Officer of the American Cancer Society, he helped launch national efforts like the HPV Vaccination and Lung Cancer Roundtables and the landmark 80% by 2018 colorectal screening campaign—an initiative that led to millions more Americans receiving life-saving screenings.

Despite his national impact, Dr. Wender remains grounded in his role as a family physician in Philadelphia, continuing to provide compassionate care for patients. "Being a physician is a privilege," he shared. "And being trusted in leadership positions has given me the chance to have even greater influence."

Dr. Wender joins a distinguished legacy of honorees, including Dr. Jonas Salk, and will be formally

recognized at PAMED's Annual Meeting in October 2025. His career stands as a testament to the power of medicine to drive change, one patient, one policy, and one community at a time. ◆



## COMMUNITY VOLUNTARY SERVICE AWARD

Ada-Nkem Emuwa, MD, MPH

### Medicine in Service of Community

**A**da-Nkem Emuwa, MD, MPH, recipient of PAMED's 2025 Community Voluntary Service Award, is a physician whose impact reaches far beyond the clinic walls. A Yale-trained doctor with a master's in public health from Harvard, Dr. Emuwa has built a career rooted in advocacy, equity, and service.

Her journey has taken her from leading HIV programs and public health initiatives to her current role at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, where she continues to champion patient-centered care.

Her commitment to underserved communities is evident in every facet of her work. Whether serving on the Board of Directors for the Community Health Council of Lebanon County or co-leading The Wheel of Hope Initiative, Dr. Emuwa designs programs that uplift women and children through education, health care, and economic opportunity. She also volunteers with Patients R Waiting, an initiative focused on increasing minority representation in

medicine and provides free mental health care through The Network Initiative.

"This award is humbling recognition," Dr. Emuwa shared. "To be honored by my peers is deeply meaningful—and it

motivates me to keep doing what I can from where I am." Her dedication to public health, diversity, and community empowerment makes her a truly inspiring figure in Pennsylvania's medical landscape. ◆

"To be honored by my peers is deeply meaningful—and it motivates me to keep doing what I can from where I am."





# The Pennsylvania Medical Society's 2026 Awards Nominations are OPEN!

Nominate an outstanding physician for one of these awards today!

[www.pamedsoc.org/awards](http://www.pamedsoc.org/awards)

**Deadline: Monday, February 16**

## Top Physicians Under 40

Know of a rising star? A young physician who is already going above and beyond and making waves in the medical profession? We want to recognize their achievements!

**We're looking for PAMED members who are:**

- Dynamic physicians under 40 who are making a significant impact in their specialty or community.
- Innovators who are advancing medical practice, research, or education.
- Leaders who inspire others with their dedication, compassion, and expertise.

## Community Voluntary Service Award

Awarded every other year, the Community Voluntary Service Award celebrates members who go beyond the call of duty to serve their communities. Nominees must have engaged in volunteer community service that may be described as distinguished for one or more of the following reasons:

- Duration of service
- Significance of impact on one or many lives
- Physician's courage
- Physician's selflessness
- The overcoming of difficult circumstances or limitations

**We're looking for PAMED members who exemplify true altruism and commitment to community well-being.**

## Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award is PAMED's highest accolade, presented to a member who has demonstrated unparalleled commitment and outstanding achievements in the field of medicine over a lifetime.

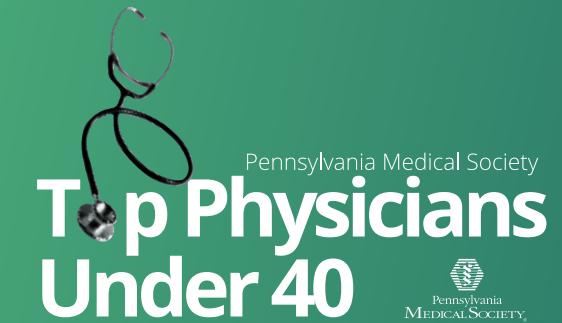
**We're looking for PAMED members who have made exceptional contributions and have significantly advanced the practice and profession of medicine.**

## And, throughout the year, we're always recognizing our Everyday Heroes!

Sometimes our physicians are the unsung heroes of our communities, tirelessly working to improve lives and inspire hope. They don't just heal; they uplift, support, and lead with unwavering dedication. All too often, they go unrecognized. PAMED is dedicated to acknowledging and celebrating our Everyday Hero physicians.

**We're looking for PAMED members who make extraordinary contributions through their daily actions.**

Their commitment, compassion, and resilience are the cornerstones of exceptional care and community well-being.



Pennsylvania's Top Physicians Under 40 Award recognizes the best of the best early career physicians. This year we recognized 28 physicians across Pennsylvania.



**Gregory Epps, MD**  
*Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery*  
Philadelphia County



**Juan Giugale, MD**  
*Hand Surgery*  
Allegheny County



**Nathanael Hoskins, DO**  
*Obstetrics & Gynecology*  
Berks County



**Jason Kaplan, DO**  
*Cardiovascular Disease (Internal Medicine)*  
Lehigh County



**Dana Kirschner, DO**  
*Family Medicine*  
Lycoming County



**Kevin Lynch, MD**  
*Family Medicine*  
Lancaster County



**Sean Mahase, MD**  
*Radiation Oncology*  
Dauphin County



**Seyed Mansouri, MD**  
*Neurological Surgery*  
Dauphin County



[www.pamedsoc.org/awards](http://www.pamedsoc.org/awards)



**Rebecca Marcus, MD**  
General Surgery  
Erie County



**Lauren Mathos, DO**  
Internal Medicine  
Erie County



**Nabeeha Mohy-  
ud-din, MD**  
Gastroenterology  
(Internal Medicine)  
Allegheny County



**Seyedmohammad  
Pourshahid, MD**  
Pulmonary Disease  
(Internal Medicine)  
Philadelphia County



**Jocelyn Fitzgerald, MD**  
Female Pelvic Medicine and  
Reconstructive Surgery  
(Obstetrics & Gynecology)  
Allegheny County

## Shattering Stigma and Shaping Care

In the heart of Pittsburgh, Jocelyn Fitzgerald, MD is leading a quiet revolution that is reshaping how we understand, value, and deliver women's health care. As a urogynecologist and reconstructive pelvic surgeon, she is not only treating complex pelvic floor disorders but also challenging the systemic inequities that have long plagued women's health.

Currently an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Dr. Fitzgerald's career is a testament to academic excellence and fierce advocacy. Her journey began at Penn State's Schreyer Honors College, where she earned dual degrees in neurobiology and women's studies. She later graduated from the University of Pittsburgh's Physician Scientist Training Program, where she began her research into the overlapping mechanisms of bowel and bladder pain, conditions that disproportionately affect women and are often misunderstood.

Her calling to medicine, however, began long before medical school.

"I recognized early on in my career, really as early as high school, that

women had unique health care needs that were being inadequately addressed and holding them back from reaching their full potential," she recalls. "This starts early. There is a lack of adolescent gynecology, misinformation about periods and school and sports, and then a dearth of information about contraception, empowerment in relationships, and family planning."

As she observed how women's health was often overlooked or stigmatized, her purpose became clear.

"As women's bodies transform throughout their life, they are held back by pelvic pain, incontinence, prolapse, and other taboo disorders that are often not addressed with their doctors or publicly," she says. "I knew that it was my calling to give these conditions, and the millions of women who experience them, a voice and the knowledge that they could seek treatment and get on with what is important in life."

After completing her residency at Johns Hopkins and a fellowship at Georgetown University/MedStar Health, Dr. Fitzgerald returned to Pennsylvania with a mission: to elevate the field of urogynecology and ensure that women

across the commonwealth, in both urban and rural areas, have access to specialized care. She now serves as the urogynecology director of the UPMC Chronic Pelvic Pain Clinic and Endometriosis Center, traveling as far as Altoona to treat patients who might otherwise go without care.

But Dr. Fitzgerald's impact extends far beyond the clinic. She coined the term "Gyneconomics" to describe the discriminatory reimbursement and funding disparities in gynecologic surgery and women's health research. Her work in this area has sparked national conversations and earned her prestigious honors, including the 2024 Society of Gynecologic Surgeons Rising Star Award and the 2023 Impact Award from Women Who Rock.

"The work that we do in treating urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse restores women's lives in a way that is deeply important to our economy and communities," she explains. "However, patients and providers are often unaware that our specialty exists, our specialty is extremely undervalued, and the research is underfunded."

Dr. Fitzgerald's research reveals stark disparities in health care funding. "On equivalent procedures between women and men in gynecology and urology, urology procedures reimburse, on average, almost 50 percent more. And when it comes to urinary procedures, it's 150 percent more," she says. "If you're a man with a penis problem walking into a hospital, you're worth 150 percent more money to that hospital than a woman with a vaginal problem. And that's not ok."

One of her top advocacy goals is fair reimbursement for endometriosis surgery. "There is only one code for endometriosis surgery, and it has very low reimbursement," she explains.



"Some of these surgeries can take eight hours, but surgeons get paid the same amount no matter the complexity. Hospitals won't even allow some providers to operate because it's not financially viable. That cost is being passed on to women, who go into debt just for a chance at relief."

Dr. Fitzgerald also fights for proper representation in health care policy. "There are 32 people on the AMA committee that reviews the value of all the codes. Only five are women. Gynecologic surgery doesn't have its own representative, even though every other surgical specialty does," she says. "We're trying to fix that."

Beyond research and policy, Dr. Fitzgerald has embraced the power of social media as a tool for education and advocacy. With over 40,000 followers on X (formerly Twitter), she connects with a national audience. "Social media has been huge for me," she says. "I've gotten to know people I never would have met who read what I shared, got mad, and connected me with people who could make change."

As chair of the Society for Gynecologic Surgeons' Social Media

Committee and social media editor for the journal "Urogynecology," she believes digital platforms are transforming how women learn about their health. "Younger women already know about pelvic floor health, endometriosis, and medical gaslighting because they see it in their feeds. Women in their 60s didn't have that and suffered for years. But the next generation isn't going to accept wearing diapers for 20 years. They're demanding answers."

At the core of everything she does is her connection to patients. "Everyone takes their bladder for granted until it stops working right. My goal is to get women to a place where they don't even have to think about it anymore," she says. "When someone tells me, 'You gave me my life back. I can go to church without leaving twice, I can go on vacation without bringing antibiotics just in case,' that keeps me going."

Her commitment to mentoring the next generation is just as strong. "Medicine is a vocation, not just a profession," she reflects. "There are a lot of meaningful things someone smart and hardworking can do that are easier than being a doctor. But

if you can't imagine doing anything else, and you're OK with the discomfort of the system, it will be incredibly fulfilling."

Being named a Top Physician Under 40 is a proud milestone for Dr. Fitzgerald, but also a platform to advance her mission.

"I have deep love for the commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the health of the women who form the foundations of the

communities we live in," she says. "This nomination validates that the efforts I make every day on their behalf are paying off."

In a field where silence and stigma have too often prevailed, Dr. Jocelyn Fitzgerald is a powerful voice for change. She is uplifting women, transforming care and redefining what it means to be a physician in the 21st century. ●



**Lindsay Goodstein, MD**  
*Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery*  
 Philadelphia County

## Bringing Clarity to ENT

**L**indsay Goodstein, MD, a rising leader in otolaryngology, is redefining how Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) care is delivered in Pennsylvania through her patient-centered and innovative private practice. As the co-founder of Clarity ENT, which opened in April 2023, Dr. Goodstein is fulfilling her vision of personalized, comprehensive care that listens to and supports each patient fully.

After graduating from residency in 2017, Dr. Goodstein began her career at a larger group practice in Montgomery County. However, growing ideological differences and the widespread sale of ENT groups including her former practice to private equity prompted her to forge a new path. "The practice model at my old group felt unsustainable,"



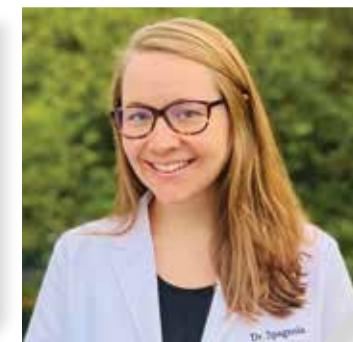
she explains. "With six offices, it was difficult to build a cohesive culture or provide comprehensive care in one place. I wanted to create a single office where we could offer more services and cultivate a team truly committed to long-term patient care."

This vision became Clarity ENT, a small but dedicated practice where quality is prioritized over volume. "I limit my daily patient appointments to ensure I have the time needed to collaborate closely and develop personalized treatment plans," she says. Patients have responded warmly to this approach, especially those dealing with complex chronic conditions such as tinnitus, migraines, and inflammatory sinus issues. "Often, it's not just about medication. It's about making patients feel heard and understood, and that means a lot to them."

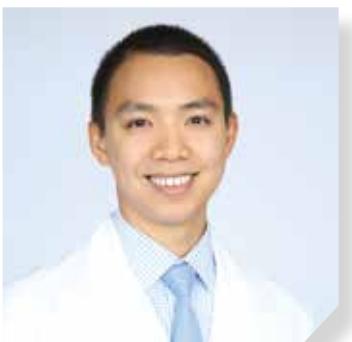
Prompt access to care is another key principle for Dr. Goodstein. "We prioritize seeing patients within 48 hours when they're sick, which is rare nowadays," she notes. Beyond timely care, the welcoming atmosphere and team dynamic are central to the patient experience. "Our staff knows frequent patients by name, inquires about their families, and makes them feel valued from the moment they step through the door. Everyone from receptionist to medical assistants is an integral part of delivering exceptional care."



**Danielle Rubinstein, DO**  
*Geriatric Medicine  
(Family Medicine)*  
 Lancaster County



**Chasity Spagnola, DO**  
*Family Medicine*  
 York County



**Enoch Tse, MD**  
*Family Medicine*  
 Lycoming County



**Alexander Whiting, MD**  
*Neurological Surgery*  
 Allegheny County



**Andrew Williams, MD**  
*Ophthalmology*  
 Allegheny County

Innovation drives much of what she does. "The future of ENT and many surgical specialties is in office-based procedures," she explains. Dr. Goodstein recently introduced the Tula Office Myringotomy and tube placement, a minimally invasive procedure performed on children awake in the office. "Parents appreciate avoiding anesthesia and the quick recovery time. Kids can return to daycare the same day, and parents don't miss work." She credits the autonomy of private practice with enabling her to pioneer such advances, which larger institutions often delay due to bureaucratic hurdles.

Yet, the business side of private practice has presented challenges, particularly billing and insurance. "Med school and residency didn't prepare me for this," Dr. Goodstein admits. Thankfully, support from networks of



private practice physicians and hiring administrative help have made managing these hurdles possible. Her overarching goal remains to preserve Clarity ENT's unique, patient-focused model amid ongoing pressure from larger groups seeking to acquire smaller practices. "I want to keep Clarity ENT small and personable for as long as possible."

Being recognized as a Top Physician Under 40 is especially meaningful. "As a small practice, this acknowledgment means a great deal," she shares. "It helps us gain visibility and reach more patients who can benefit from the personalized care I'm passionate about."

Looking ahead, Dr. Goodstein is hopeful about the evolving landscape for independent practices. "There's a real opportunity for private practices to thrive as the health care system adapts," she says. She believes that with the right support and innovation, independent ENT providers can continue to deliver personalized, high-quality care.

Dr. Goodstein encourages new physicians to fully embrace the diversity of ENT, from general practice to office-based procedures, seeing this broad approach as key to the specialty's future success. "This specialty is so diverse and rewarding. I hope new physicians embrace every aspect, from general ENT to office-based care, not just the surgical subspecialties. That's where the future is." ●

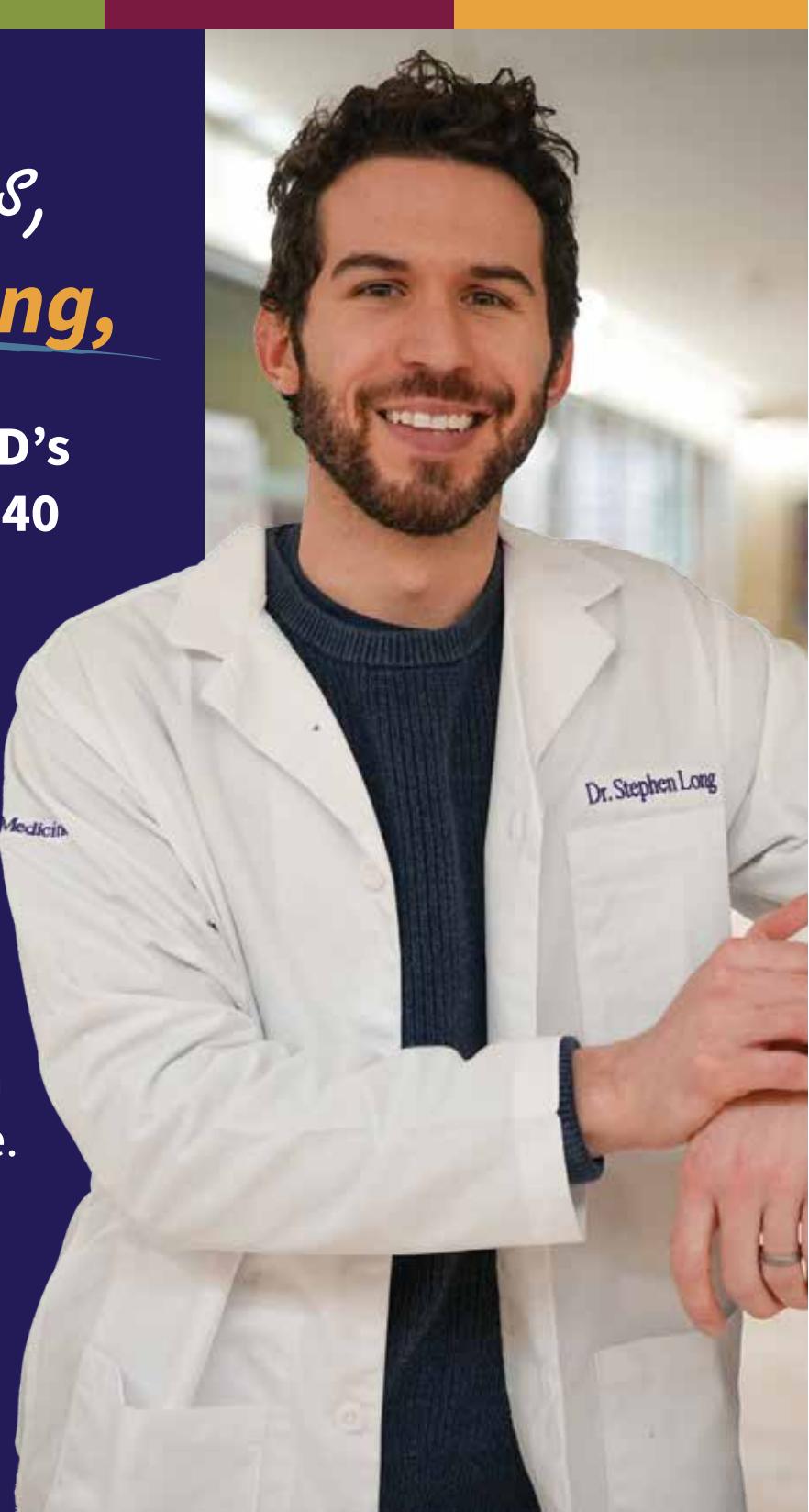
# Congratulations, **Dr. Stephen Long,**

## for being one of PAMED's Top Physicians Under 40

The statewide honor reflects Dr. Long's outstanding leadership, compassionate care, and commitment to advancing community-focused medicine. We are grateful for your dedication to our mission and the patients we serve.



570.230.0019 | [TheWrightCenter.org](http://TheWrightCenter.org)



## A Steady Hand, A Visionary Heart

In the ever-evolving landscape of modern medicine, few physicians embody both the art and science of healing as seamlessly as Stephen S. Long, MD. A native of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Dr. Long has quickly become a transformative figure in Northeast Pennsylvania's health care community, earning accolades not only for his clinical excellence but also for his unwavering commitment to education, equity, and wellness.

From the earliest days of his medical training, Dr. Long found fulfillment not just in the intellectual rigor of medicine, but in the human connections it fostered. "The most fulfilling parts of medicine have always been the opportunities to be a reliable, steady presence for my patients," he reflects. "And to be part of the education of medical students, residents, and students in other health care professions."

That dual passion, for patient care and medical education, has shaped every step of his journey. After graduating from Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine in Scranton in 2020, Dr. Long pursued a rigorous internal medicine and pediatrics residency at MaineHealth Maine Medical Center in Portland. The Med-Peds

"I'm interested in physician wellness because I believe that caring for those who care for others is essential to a thriving health care system."

path offered him the flexibility to explore both primary care and subspecialties like cardiology, while nurturing his love for working with children, a love he discovered unexpectedly during medical school. "I never thought I'd enjoy taking care of kids from a medical standpoint," he admits. "But the skillset it requires is so fun to sharpen, being open, meeting them where they're at, being on their level."

Now dual board-certified in internal medicine and pediatrics, Dr. Long returned to Northeast Pennsylvania with a mission to serve the community that helped shape him. Since joining The Wright Centers for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education just six months ago, he has become a cornerstone of care at two of its busiest health centers in Jermyn and South Abington Township. His ability to address complex medical needs with empathy and precision (especially in underserved populations) has redefined health care delivery in the region.

But Dr. Long's impact extends far beyond the exam room. As associate program director of faculty development at The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, he has introduced innovative mentoring and training programs that prepare residents and fellows to meet the challenges of modern medicine with both expertise and humanity.

"Throughout my career, I hope to continue to hone and advance the medical education system both locally and nationally," he says, "to provide the best care possible to our community."

His dedication to physician wellness is equally resolute. Recognizing the pressures and emotional toll of the profession,



**Stephen Long, MD**  
*Internal Medicine/Pediatrics*  
Lackawanna County

Dr. Long plans to advocate for and support his colleagues throughout his career. "I'm interested in physician wellness because I believe that caring for those who care for others is essential to a thriving health care system."

Dr. Long's contributions to research and quality improvement began early. At Geisinger Commonwealth, he led a project aimed at reducing catheter-associated urinary tract infections at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center and contributed to clinical cardiology research through planning, statistical analysis, and literature reviews.

Now, as he is considered for a prestigious award recognizing his work, Dr. Long remains grounded in gratitude. "I am honored to be considered," he says. "I'm so grateful for the influence the community in Northeastern Pennsylvania has had on my career and professional development. To be recognized in any way for my work so far in this community is a tremendous honor."

With compassion as his compass and education as his engine, Dr. Stephen S. Long Jr. is not just practicing medicine... he's shaping its future. ♦



**Suraj Malhan, DO**  
*Neurology*  
 Philadelphia County

## Pushing Boundaries in Headache Research and Education

**A** headache specialist at Thomas Jefferson University, Suraj Malhan, DO has emerged as a leading figure in migraine research, advocacy, and education, driven by a deeply personal journey and an unwavering commitment to patient-centered care.

"My journey into medicine began when I found my father with a severe anoxic brain injury," Dr. Malhan recalls. "I was powerless to help beyond calling for an ambulance. Caring for him after his recovery showed me that medicine is more than science; it's about advocacy, resilience, and human connection."

That moment sparked a lifelong dedication to neurology and headache medicine. Today, Dr. Malhan's research spans migraine, idiopathic intracranial hypertension, and cutting-edge treatments like CGRP inhibitors. His work has been recognized at major conferences including the American Academy of Neurology, the American Headache Society, and the European Headache Congress.

"I'm passionate about advancing real-world treatment effectiveness," he says. That passion has earned

him prestigious honors such as the Frontiers in Headache Research Award and the American Headache Society Advocacy Award. His induction into the Gold Humanism Honor Society further reflects his commitment to compassionate care.

But Dr. Malhan's impact extends far beyond the clinic. He is a tireless advocate for patients with headache and neurological disorders, leading initiatives through organizations like Miles for Migraine, the American Migraine Foundation, and the Alliance for Headache Disorders Advocacy. "Advocacy is essential," he explains. "It's how we influence policy and improve patient access to care."

His vision for the future is equally ambitious. Dr. Malhan aims to establish a cervicogenic headache clinic that integrates osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) within a multidisciplinary model. "I'm dedicated to improving outcomes for those suffering from migraine and other headache disorders by integrating novel therapeutics and OMT," he says.

Education is another cornerstone of his mission. Recognizing the challenges

**"Through innovative treatments, research, and advocacy, I work to restore function and dignity to those whose daily lives are disrupted by chronic disease," he says. "I chose medicine to ensure that no patient or their family faces that battle alone."**



trainees face, Dr. Malhan is developing an AI-powered question bank to enhance board exam preparation for headache specialists. "I want to leverage adaptive learning to help trainees strengthen their knowledge and clinical reasoning," he explains.

Most recently, Dr. Malhan presented at the Pennsylvania Medical Society's annual House of Delegates, where he spoke about harnessing technology, especially social media, to elevate public health messaging. "We have powerful tools at our fingertips," he said during the session. "It's time we use them to amplify awareness, combat misinformation, and connect with patients in meaningful ways."

With multiple national and international presentations and publications under his belt, Dr. Malhan continues to push the boundaries of headache medicine. "Medicine is more than a profession to me—it's a commitment to advancing patient care, research, education, and advocacy," he says. "This nomination reflects not only my efforts but also the incredible mentors, colleagues, and patients who inspire me daily."



For Dr. Malhan, the goal is clear: to bridge clinical practice, research, and healthcare policy in order to improve quality of life for patients. "Through innovative treatments, research, and advocacy, I work

to restore function and dignity to those whose daily lives are disrupted by chronic disease," he says. "I chose medicine to ensure that no patient or their family faces that battle alone." ♦





**Jyothi Punnoose, DO**  
Hospitalist  
Lancaster County

## Pushing Boundaries in Headache Research and Education

**A**t WellSpan Ephrata Community Hospital, leadership is more than a title, it's a calling. And few embody that calling more fully than Jyothi Punnoose, DO, whose compassionate leadership and advocacy have reshaped the hospital's culture and elevated the standard of care across the region.

"I believe my calling in medicine is to be a leader that facilitates a safe health care setting for providers by aligning resources and processes needed for optimal patient outcomes," she said. "It has been my joy to understand that patient-centered process optimization inherently lead to physician satisfaction in their respective specialties."

As Director of Hospital Medicine, Dr. Punnoose leads with a rare blend of clinical excellence, operational insight, and human-centered vision.

Under her leadership, WellSpan Ephrata has dramatically reduced thousands of excess hospital days, improving both patient outcomes and the overall care experience. Her efforts in physician communication have earned the hospital accolades, while her stewardship of the human experience and length-of-stay initiatives has created a ripple effect of efficiency and empathy throughout the system.

But Dr. Punnoose's impact extends far beyond metrics. She is a tireless advocate for health equity, partnering with WellSpan's Health Equity and Community Engagement department to improve care for the Amish community. Her deep understanding of cultural nuances and her commitment to underserved populations have led to innovative financial packages and tailored outreach programs that bridge



gaps in access and understanding.

She said, "Reducing health care disparities has been a passion for me. I have advocated for increasing health care access to the plain community during my time near New Wilmington, PA and since my transition to Lancaster."

Given the disparities in health care literacy, she also enjoyed presenting medical topics for the senior citizen forum for the American Diocese of the Indian Christian Orthodox Church.

"I aspire to continue advocating for underrepresented communities," she said.

Mentorship is another cornerstone of her leadership. Whether guiding a nurse through career growth without compromising family time or mentoring hospital employees outside her department, Dr. Punnoose is a beacon for those navigating the complexities of health care careers, especially women facing underappreciated barriers. Her passion for mentorship also reaches into the community, where she volunteers with local high schools, technical trade schools, and the Lancaster Chamber's Discovering Paths Mentoring Program.

Her dedication to service is deeply rooted in her personal journey. Inspired by her mother, a nurse and later a cancer patient, Dr. Punnoose's childhood was shaped by mission trips to Asia and summers spent at the Sisters of St. Joseph convent in Kansas.

"I witnessed firsthand the power of presence and compassion in healing. These formative experiences ignited a lifelong commitment to medicine, advocacy, and leadership."

Dr. Punnoose's academic path reflects her multifaceted approach to health care. With a doctorate in medicine, a health care-focused



MBA, and a master's in operations, she brings a systems-level perspective to clinical practice. She is currently pursuing her Fellowship in the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE), further solidifying her role as a strategic leader in an ever-evolving healthcare landscape.

Her community involvement is equally inspiring. A former adult ESL teacher and current Sunday school educator in the Indian Orthodox Christian Church, Dr. Punnoose has led youth programs focused on outreach and service. She is also seeking

training through the Bridge Out of Poverty Program and helped launch a landscaping company to support high school graduates facing financial and psychosocial challenges.

Whether on a clinical shift or in an administrative role, Dr. Punnoose remains steadfast in her mission. "My goal has always been to be our patients' trusted partner as they navigate through what may be one of the most vulnerable phases of their lives," she said. "Today, I get to do precisely that and it is certainly a start to what I dreamt I would get to do!"

**"I witnessed firsthand the power of presence and compassion in healing. These formative experiences ignited a lifelong commitment to medicine, advocacy, and leadership."**

## Changing the Face of Medicine: Dr. Matthew Simpson's Mission

Long before he wore a white coat, Matthew Simpson, MD understood the power of care, and he has spent his life making sure others feel it too. Growing up, he witnessed the impact of chronic illness on his family and neighbors, and how preventable conditions could worsen due to a lack of access to care, education, and resources. "I knew early on that I wanted to be part of the solution," he says. "I wanted to not only treat patients but also empower them with knowledge and work to bridge the gaps in health care equity."

Now completing his internal medicine residency at Allegheny General Hospital, Dr. Simpson has already distinguished himself as a clinician, educator, entrepreneur, and advocate. As a first-generation African American physician and an international medical graduate, he has overcome multiple layers of systemic barriers. Black men

make up less than 2.5 percent of U.S. physicians, and international medical graduates face additional challenges in securing residency positions and leadership roles. Dr. Simpson has used his platform to open doors for others while excelling in his own career.

His clinical work is already improving outcomes for vulnerable patients across Pennsylvania. His research on COPD readmission rates led to the development of a care package that includes pharmacist-led inhaler education, coordinated follow-up, and transportation support. These interventions help patients stay healthier and avoid unnecessary hospitalizations. "I'm passionate about using evidence-based strategies to make care more effective and accessible," he explains.

Outside the hospital, Dr. Simpson is equally committed to community health. He volunteers at homeless



**Matthew Simpson, MD**  
*Internal Medicine*  
Allegheny County

shelters and soup kitchens and helps grow fresh produce for underserved patients through the Healthy Foods Resident Physician Garden. His efforts were even featured on Highmark's Health Food Vlog, highlighting his dedication to addressing the broader social factors that influence health.

As the founder and CEO of Top MD LLC, Dr. Simpson has helped hundreds of students, residents, and nurses, many from underrepresented backgrounds, pass board exams and achieve their professional goals. The company earned the 2024 Global Recognition Award, and he was a finalist for the American Business Award Under 40 and the Goodwill SWPA Power of Work Awards. "Medical education is one of my greatest passions," he says. "I want to create structured mentorship programs, research opportunities, and scholarship funding to support aspiring health care professionals."

His leadership in diversity and mentorship is equally impactful. He founded Black Men in Residency, or BMR, to

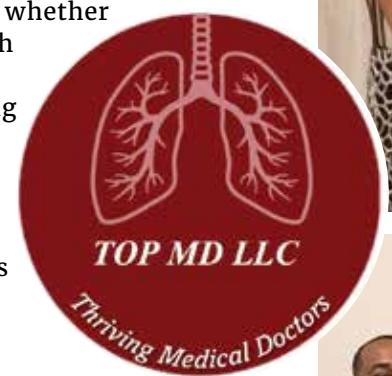


support Black medical students and help them navigate the challenges of medical training. As associate program director of the TRIUMPHS program, he mentors high school students from underrepresented backgrounds, offering career guidance, interview preparation and shadowing opportunities. He also supports gender equity through his involvement with Women in Residency Life and serves on the Resident Physician Council, where he advocates for wellness, mental health and a culture of compassion among his peers.

Dr. Simpson is deeply honored by his Top Physicians Under 40 nomination. "This recognition is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion I have poured into my journey as a physician, mentor, and advocate for medical education and health care equity," he says. "It's incredibly rewarding to see that my work, whether in the ICU, through Top MD, or in research, is making a meaningful impact."

Looking ahead, Dr. Simpson will begin a prestigious Pulmonary and Critical Care Fellowship in July 2025. He plans to become a medical director of multiple ICUs, with a focus on lung transplantation and advanced critical care. He also envisions expanding Top MD into a national mentorship and scholarship platform and launching real estate ventures to provide discounted housing for medical trainees.

"Ultimately, my goal is to leave a legacy of service, mentorship, and innovation," he says. "I want to ensure that health care is not just a privilege for some, but a right for all." ◆



## 2025 AWARDS CELEBRATION



This year, PAMED had the privilege of honoring physicians whose dedication, leadership, and innovation continue to elevate the practice of medicine across our state at not one but two locations throughout the state. In Hershey and Latrobe, we recognized the extraordinary achievements of the 2025 Top Physicians Under 40, along with distinguished awardees whose service exemplifies the very best of the profession.

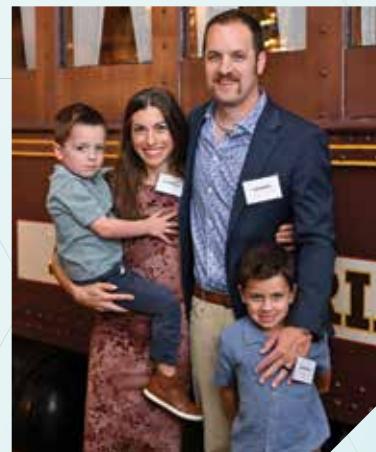
In Hershey, PAMED proudly celebrated the 2025 Top Physicians Under 40 alongside two remarkable leaders. Ada Emuwa, MD, MPH, received the Community Voluntary

Service Award for her tireless commitment to advancing public health and serving communities in need. Richard Wender, MD, was honored with the Distinguished Service Award, recognizing his decades of leadership, mentorship, and advocacy for patients and physicians alike. The evening was filled with heartfelt moments as families, colleagues, and community members joined together to applaud these honorees.

Later in Latrobe, PAMED once again gathered to celebrate the 2025 Top Physicians Under 40. This group of rising leaders represents the next generation of medical excellence, embodying

compassion, innovation, and resilience in patient care. Their accomplishments remind us that the future of medicine in Pennsylvania is bright, and that the commitment to improving lives remains at the heart of the profession.

Together, these celebrations highlighted the breadth of talent and service within Pennsylvania's medical community. PAMED extends its deepest gratitude to everyone who joined us in Hershey and Latrobe. Your support made these celebrations truly memorable, and we look forward to continuing this tradition of recognition in the months ahead. ●





We were #PAMEDProud to celebrate Doctors' Day in 2025!  
Congratulations to all our 2024 physician honorees,  
including these PAMED members:

Maneesh Ailawadi, MD  
Northampton County  
General Surgery

David Almeida, MD  
Erie County  
Ophthalmology

Janiece Andrews, MD  
Cumberland County  
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Matthew Berger, MD  
Luzerne County  
Psychiatry

Adam Biuckians, MD  
Lancaster County  
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Anne Cadau, MD  
Schuylkill County  
Family Medicine

Choudhary Anwar Chahal, MD,  
PhD  
Lancaster County  
Cardiovascular Disease

Ryan Collins, MD  
Lycoming County  
Pathology-Anatomic & Clinical

Lindsay DeArment, DO  
Lancaster County  
Family Medicine

Hyatt (Tracy) DeGreen III, DO  
Lancaster County  
Hematology & Medical Oncology

Darlene Dunay, DO  
Lackawanna County  
General Practice

Joseph English, MD  
Lycoming County  
Occupational Medicine

Amtul Sakina Farheen, MD  
Lebanon County  
Neuromuscular Medicine (Neurology)

Molly Fisher, MD  
Allegheny County  
Internal Medicine

Scott Fleischer, MD  
Philadelphia County  
Psychiatry

Timothy Flynn, MD  
Montgomery County  
Pediatrics

Abby Geletzke, MD  
Lancaster County  
Surgical Oncology

Maria Gioia, DO  
Allegheny County  
Family Medicine

Gaurav Goel, MD, FACP  
Allegheny County  
Hematology & Medical Oncology

Gerald Goltz, MD  
Allegheny County  
Endocrinology, Diabetes &  
Metabolism

Eric Griffin, DO  
Allegheny County  
Family Medicine

Marilyn Heine, MD, FACEP, FACP,  
FCPP  
Bucks County  
Hematology & Medical Oncology

Bruce Hoffman, MD, MACR  
Philadelphia County  
Rheumatology

Alexandra Johnston, DO  
Allegheny County  
Internal Medicine

Molly Kastner, MD  
Philadelphia County  
Family Medicine

Korush Khalighi, MD  
Northampton County  
Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology

Whoon Jong Kil, MD  
Lycoming County  
Radiation Oncology

Caren Kirschner, MD  
Montgomery County  
Pediatrics

Alan Kivitz, MD, CPI, MACR  
Blair County  
Rheumatology

Juanita Kreiser, DO  
Dauphin County  
Geriatric Medicine

Marc Kress, MD  
Montgomery County  
Geriatric Medicine

Mahesh Krishnamurthy, MD  
Northampton County  
Internal Medicine

Amit Ladani, MD, FACC  
Allegheny County  
Cardiovascular Disease

Zachary Landis, MD  
Lancaster County  
Ophthalmologist

Scott Lim, DO  
Erie County  
Dermatology

Abbey Lindholm, DO  
Allegheny County  
Family Medicine

Stephen Long, MD  
Lackawanna County  
Internal Medicine/Pediatrics

Richard Lorraine, MD  
Montgomery County  
Internal Medicine

Lynn Lucas-Fehm, MD, JD  
Philadelphia County  
Radiology

Kahldoun Makhoul, MD  
Northampton County  
Family Medicine

Monica Malhotra, MD  
Allegheny County  
Hematology & Medical Oncology

Ajay Marwaha, MD  
Lancaster County  
Nuclear Cardiology

Heather Mascio, DO  
Delaware County  
Nephrology

Lauren Mathos, DO  
Allegheny County  
Internal Medicine

Carl Mele, MD  
Berks County  
Gastroenterology

Prerna Mewawalla, MD  
Allegheny County  
Hematology & Medical Oncology

Ziba Monfared, MD  
Northampton County  
Family Medicine

Susheel Muralidharan, MD  
Erie County  
Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine

Megan Murphy, DO  
Lancaster County  
Family Medicine

Linda Nadwodny, DO  
Montgomery County  
Family Medicine

Heather Osher, DO  
Montgomery County  
Family Medicine

Samir Pancholy, MD,  
FACC, FAHA, MSAI  
Lackawanna County  
Cardiovascular Disease

Umang Patel, DO  
Bucks County  
Hospitalist

Jack Peterson, DO  
Crawford County  
Family Medicine



Anjana Ranganathan, MD  
Bucks County  
Hematology & Medical Oncology

Angel Raposa, MD  
Blair County  
Nephrology

Alvaro Reymunde, MD  
Luzerne County  
Pediatrics

Anuja Manju Sabapathy, MD  
Erie County  
Pediatric Hospital Medicine

Douha Sabouni, MD  
Northampton County  
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Hayman Salib, MD  
Northampton County  
Hematology & Medical Oncology

Tad Scheri, MD  
Allegheny County  
Family Medicine

Melissa Schiffman, MD  
Montgomery County  
Internal Medicine

Jessica Schwartz, DO  
Berks County  
Internal Medicine

Hope Selarnick, MD  
Philadelphia County  
Psychiatry

Jignesh Sheth, MD, FACP, MPH  
Lackawanna County  
Internal Medicine

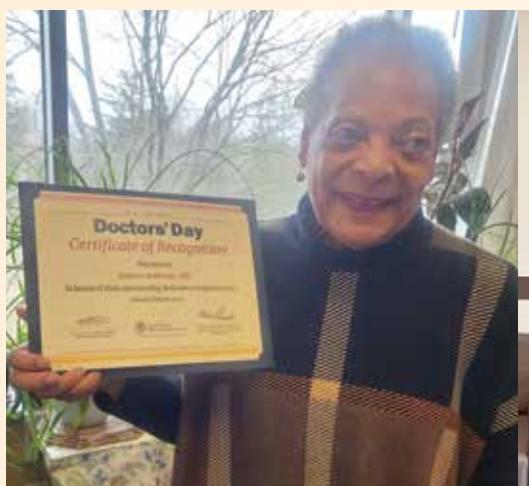
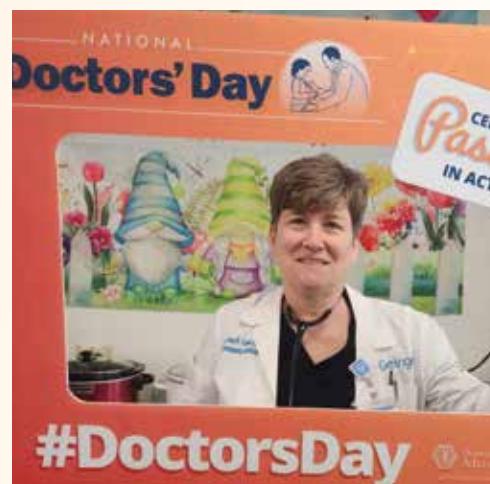
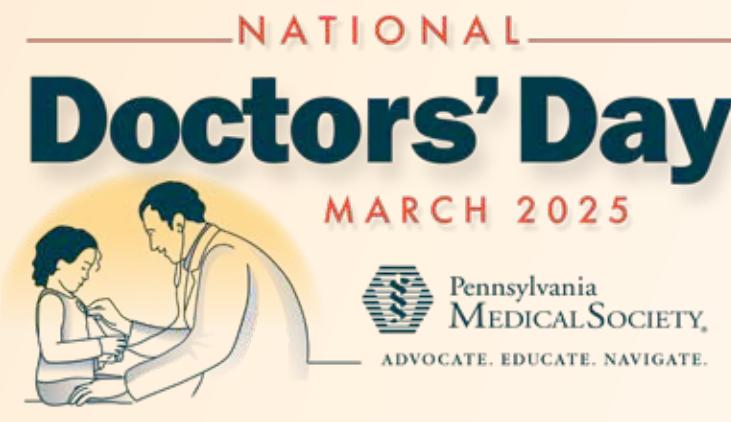
Joan Thode, MD  
Lancaster County  
Pediatrics

Raymond Truex, Jr., MD  
Berks County  
Neurological Surgery

Mark Woodburn, MD  
Allegheny County  
Family Medicine

Heidi Yutzler-Overton, DO  
Montgomery County  
Family Medicine

Jolanta Zelaznicka, MD  
Northampton County  
Rheumatology



### A Mixed Reality Gaming Experience to Reduce Perioperative Anxiety in Parents and Children

#### Recipient

Shawn Safford, MD, MBA, MAS, Professor of Surgery, University of Pittsburgh, Pediatric Surgeon, UPMC Children's Harrisburg, President, American Trauma Society of Pennsylvania

Dr. Safford received his undergraduate degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology from Penn State University, where he was also a University Scholar. That foundation in science and research carried him to the University of Pennsylvania for medical school. After general surgery training at Duke University, he returned to Pennsylvania to complete a pediatric surgery fellowship at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Finally, he spent the earliest portion of his career in the Navy where he was part of an innovative surgery group. This work led to receiving the Innovative Surgery Award for the American Pediatric Surgery Association. This combination

of Penn State, Penn and CHOP training grounded him in both the science and humanity of caring for children. Later in his career, he served at Virginia Tech Carilion, where he became Section Chief of Pediatric Surgery and Vice Chair of Research. There, he worked in close collaboration with engineers and computer scientists, developing extended reality simulation platforms and intelligent coaching systems using artificial intelligence. Those collaborations seeded the core idea of this current project.

The idea for the project came from years of sitting with children and their families on the day of surgery. Dr. Safford said that even with the best clinical care, the anxiety parents



and children feel in the preoperative environment is profound. He saw an opportunity to bridge his clinical experience with his technology work.

"At Virginia Tech, my collaborators and I built extended reality simulators for trauma training and surgical education. I realized those same immersive tools could be adapted to reduce anxiety in children and parents—turning frightening preoperative experiences into interactive and calming ones. With my longtime Virginia Tech collaborators still engaged, and with the Pennsylvania Medical Society's support, we've built the project here in Harrisburg so that families in our state are the first to benefit."

The project is moving forward on multiple fronts. Dr. Safford and his team acquired cutting-edge equipment, including Meta2 headsets, high level computers and laptops and tablets, and established the technical framework in Harrisburg. His research lab is leading programming and data analytics, building two mixed reality games tailored to

pediatric patients and their parents.

Additionally, they are setting up the evaluation side of the project, designing protocols that track both physiological signals and behavioral outcomes so we can rigorously measure impact. It's a truly collaborative effort: the technology backbone and the clinical application rooted in UPMC Central PA.

Dr. Safford believes that innovation always brings surprises. One challenge explained Dr. Safford has been making sure the mixed reality hardware is comfortable and usable for younger children—headsets weren't designed with six-year-olds in mind. Another has been designing game mechanics that engage both children and parents simultaneously, since part of our innovation is that

parents can participate alongside their child.

"We've also had to carefully balance the speed of software development with the realities of clinical rollout. But these challenges have been opportunities too—they've pushed us to refine our approach and to lean on the strengths of our research team and our clinical team," added Dr. Safford.

At its core, this project is about making the surgical experience less frightening for children and their families. If they can reduce preoperative anxiety, we can improve not only the emotional experience, but also clinical outcomes—less stress can mean smoother recoveries and fewer complications.

"Our goal is to create a scalable

model that hospitals across Pennsylvania can adopt," he added. "If we can show measurable reductions in anxiety here in Harrisburg, then this can become a statewide innovation in pediatric care. Long term, I also see this as a bridge between medical excellence and technological innovation—showing that Pennsylvania can lead in both."

The Innovation Grant, said Dr. Safford, is what makes this possible. "It provides the critical seed funding to buy the equipment, develop the games and rigorously evaluate the results. More than that, though, the grant affirms the Society's commitment to supporting physician-led innovation in Pennsylvania. ●

"If we can show measurable reductions in anxiety here in Harrisburg, then this can become a statewide innovation in pediatric care. Long term, I also see this as a bridge between medical excellence and technological innovation—showing that Pennsylvania can lead in both."

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### Revolutionary Overdose Detection and Alert Monitor: A Lifesaving Solution for Immediate Response

#### Recipient

Cameron Baston, MD – Altrumed, LLC

Dr. Baston is the CEO of AltrumMed, LLC, a company focused on medical equipment manufacturing. The company specializes in creating devices designed to save lives through medical solutions. With an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering, he had a brief foray into plasma physics in Los Alamos, then worked as an automotive design engineer in safety systems. He spent a year working in economic and environmental policy before going to medical school at Jefferson Medical School. He then went to the University of Washington in Seattle for his internal medicine residency and chief residency. Dr. Baston came to Penn for a Pulmonary and Critical Care fellowship, and while there, also received a master's degree in clinical Epidemiology and completed a Clinical Ultrasound fellowship. He joined the faculty in 2018 and was promoted to associate professor in 2025.

Drug overdose is a public health crisis. Dr. Baston realized how easily available technologies could be combined to provide safety from overdose for patients exposed to opioids. His personal motivation comes from clinical exposure to the harms of overdose as he worked in the ICU, but also from his earliest friend who died alone of an unintentional opioid overdose 10 years ago.

"She left behind two children, and the idea that I could be a part of a project that would have kept her alive long enough to get into the MAT that could have truly saved her life is an incredible driver for me," he said.

The primary objective is to develop a shoulder-mounted device equipped

with advanced pulse oximetry technology, designed to detect opioid-induced respiratory depression instantly, and autonomously alert emergency services and bystanders. Unlike existing methods that require bystander intervention to diagnose and respond, this device's automatic detection and alert system will ensure rapid deployment of life-saving measures, thus addressing an unmet need in overdose response scenarios. This will not only aim to reduce the mortality associated with opioid overdoses but also significantly cut down on the healthcare costs involved in post-overdose hospitalization and rehabilitation.

DOVE is a shoulder-mounted, standalone device that accurately senses opioid overdose based on physiological parameters. Smaller than a matchbox, DOVE uses next-generation pulse oximetry to detect overdoses caused by any respiratory suppressant, not just opioids.

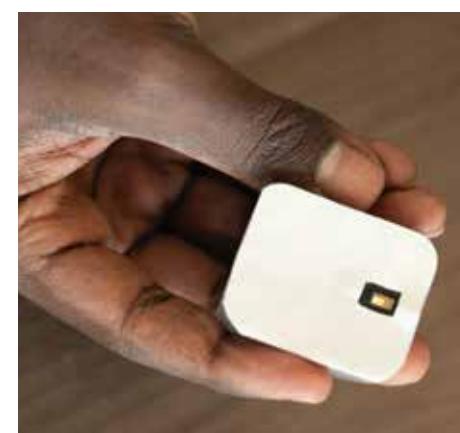
Upon detecting an overdose, DOVE immediately alerts bystanders and first responders, reducing the time to treatment and preventing long-term neurological damage. Building off previous versions of DOVE and related studies, the goal is to incorporate essential technology into a redesigned device and validate it in a simulated setting. Once validated, the finalized devices will be tested on real patients at a hypoxia lab. They will also be conducting outreach in urban, suburban, and rural areas of



Pennsylvania, meeting with health systems, harm reduction centers, etc. to establish a pilot program site location and to build relationships to facilitate device distribution once FDA approval is obtained.

The project has moved slower than planned, but has made some real progress, including meetings with the FDA, some great clinical trials showing the accuracy of the device and some real community support. Perhaps the most important part of this was integrating a user-centric design from the very beginning.

"We knew that this device would only work if people chose to wear it, so we put real effort into finding the form factor, capabilities and specifics that would make it attractive to



people who are actively using."

The initial design and prototype were aimed at using the reversal agent naloxone, so that people could give an injection automatically if no one else was around to do it.

Unfortunately, the regulatory pathway (even though the drug is now effectively over the counter) meant that they had to pivot to a sense-and-alert device to start. The silver lining is that the main fear they've encountered among actively using patients is that they would have a false positive in the device, resulting in unnecessary delivery of naloxone. This device doesn't allow that possibility.

This grant allows researchers to jump the final FDA hurdles for clearance of the device to monitor oxygenation and perhaps more importantly to make the meaningful connections across the state of Pennsylvania with the organizations and government bodies that will eventually be key in getting this device onto people's arms.

In Dr. Baston's mind, the device is analogous to a seatbelt. He believes the road to recovery from substance use disorder is long, treacherous, and with many opportunities for fatal crashes. The DOVE doesn't

prevent overdoses, but he believes it makes them MUCH less likely to be fatal or cause real organ damage. With the unpredictability of the drug supply, having that layer of safety makes people much more likely to reach the destination of suboxone or methadone therapy and the recovery that can bring real healing and a return to living. In the shortest terms, he wants to prevent the 40,000 to 50,000 overdose deaths that happen each year among people who are using alone. This is a public health crisis. Beyond the deaths, the cost of brain and other organ damage from near fatal overdose has enormous personal and financial impacts on the country. ●



**"We knew that this device would only work if people chose to wear it, so we put real effort into finding the form factor, capabilities and specifics that would make it attractive to people who are actively using."**

### Expanding Access to Retinal Care and Research: The Mobile Retina Clinic Model

#### Recipient

David Almeida, MD – Erie Retina Research

Erie Retina Research (ERR) has launched a Mobile Retina Clinic (MRC) initiative aimed at addressing disparities in ophthalmic care and clinical research participation across Pennsylvania. This mobile unit is designed to provide rapid, no-cost retinal screening and follow-up care recommendations, while also facilitating access to clinical trials for populations historically underrepresented in research.

The MRC is equipped with a handheld, smartphone-based fundus camera capable of capturing high-resolution retinal images with diagnostic accuracy comparable to conventional tabletop systems. This portability enables the team to conduct screenings in nontraditional settings—health fairs, senior centers, refugee resource hubs, cultural centers serving Hispanic and

Native American communities, and workplaces—targeting individuals at elevated risk for ocular disease due to age, nutritional status, or limited access to care.

All images are reviewed by a board-certified ophthalmologist, who provides follow-up recommendations. Participants with concerning findings are either invited to ERR's clinic for additional no-cost evaluation or referred to their primary ophthalmologist. In addition to clinical care, participants receive



educational materials on vision health and ophthalmic research.

Importantly, the MRC also serves as a recruitment platform for ERR's 34 active and upcoming clinical trials. By integrating research outreach into community-based screening, the initiative enhances both the accessibility and demographic representativeness of clinical trial cohorts—an increasingly recognized priority in translational research and public health.

This model underscores the potential of mobile health infrastructure to reduce barriers to specialty care and research participation, particularly among underserved and uninsured populations. The MRC represents a scalable approach to community-based ophthalmic outreach that aligns with broader goals of health equity and precision medicine. ●

This model underscores the potential of mobile health infrastructure to reduce barriers to specialty care and research participation, particularly among underserved and uninsured populations.

### Revolutionizing Craniosynostosis Treatment: One-Surgery Craniofacial Distractor for Next-Gen Cranial Vault Expansion

#### Recipient

Alexander Tucker, MD, Attending Neurosurgeon in the Division of Neurosurgery, Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery, Director of Neurosurgery Spine and Co-Director of CHOP Chiari Clinic at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Dr. Tucker attended medical school at the University of Massachusetts, completed neurosurgical training at UCLA, and then pursued a fellowship in pediatric neurosurgery at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and the University of Pennsylvania.

The primary objective of the research is to develop and manufacture a next-generation craniofacial distractor that effectively treats craniosynostosis through cranial vault expansion with a single surgery. The device will be strong enough to withstand active distraction and sufficiently durable through the consolidation period as new bone is forming. It will be made of bioresorbable material that is commercially available and widely used in biomedical applications.

A multi-disciplinary team combining the expertise of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) surgery and the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) Engineering will manufacture a distractor that balances strength, small size, flexibility and biodegradability, using a reverse linear ratchet gear rack and head that allows cranial bones to be moved apart and prevents them from returning to their original position. The novel distractor will be tested in a rabbit model of craniosynostosis. The rabbit model is the gold-standard for craniofacial research, as their skeletal structure has significant homology with humans. The scalp and skull of each

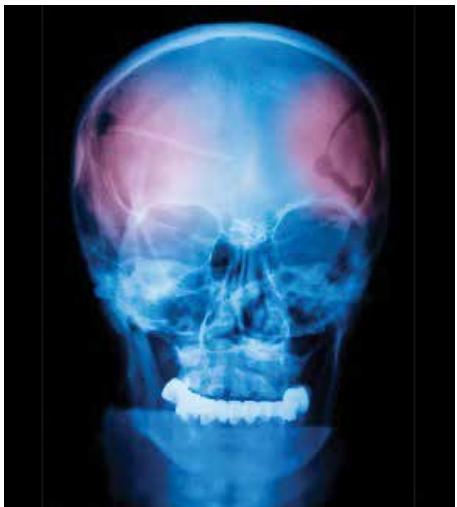
animal will be harvested at the time of sacrifice and examined for signs of infection or irritation.

The idea grew from Dr. Tucker's experience performing craniofacial surgery in young children and recognizing the limitations of current techniques.

"Traditional distraction osteogenesis is effective in treating craniosynostosis, but the devices are made of metal, requiring a second surgery for removal," he explained. "My lab focuses on biocompatible and bioresorbable materials, so we are reimagining craniofacial surgery by leveraging advances in biomaterials to eliminate the need for unnecessary and uncomfortable device-removal procedures."

Dr. Tucker says that one of the biggest challenges has been miniaturizing the device for translational testing. Fortunately, he has an outstanding team of material scientists who have been able to help him overcome these obstacles.

Progress has been very encouraging. The researchers have refined the design, resolved



technical challenges through bench and cadaveric animal testing, and recently launched large-scale animal studies. Early results have been promising, and the device is performing as well as we had hoped. The goal, said Dr. Tucker, is to improve the surgical care of children who require craniofacial procedures by creating safer, less invasive and more effective solutions.

"The Innovation Grant has allowed us to transform an idea into a tangible solution by supporting design, development, and testing. Without the support of the Pennsylvania Medical Society, this work—and the potential to change the way craniofacial surgery is performed—would not be possible," Dr. Tucker added. ●

"The Innovation Grant has allowed us to transform an idea into a tangible solution by supporting design, development, and testing."

## INNOVATION GRANT RECIPIENTS

### Advancing Skin Graft Survival: Oxygen-Releasing Therapy for Soft Tissue Reconstruction

#### Recipients

Oren Friedman, MD, Director, Facial Plastic Surgery; Co-Director, Facial Plastic Fellowship Program, Department of Otorhinolaryngology, University of Pennsylvania

Sarah Ebmeier: CEO and Founder of Graftable, Inc. BS, Biochemistry, University of Virginia; MS, Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, Yale University

Graftable, Inc., founded in 2022, aims to develop therapeutics that enhance the long-term viability of skin and soft tissues post-trauma or surgery. This year, their multidisciplinary team, under the leadership of Project Director and Clinical Advisor Oren Friedman, MD, was awarded PAMED's Innovation Grant. This grant supports an innovative project to improve the survival and functionality of skin grafts used in reconstructive surgery. Dr. Friedman, with 20 years of experience as a facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon, brings extensive expertise in using nonvascularized autologous tissue transplants (tissue from the patient's own body).

The primary goal of this initiative is to create a new therapy that increases the survival rate of skin grafts, which are crucial for reconstructive surgeries addressing functional losses or aesthetic deformities due to trauma, cancer, or congenital abnormalities. The project aims to achieve better outcomes by addressing the common problem of insufficient oxygen supply to grafted tissues, which often leads to variable survival and the need for additional surgeries.

"If we succeed at making fat transfer predictable," Dr. Friedman emphasizes, "we will have a powerful tool to regenerate damaged tissues and scars and can treat patients faster, with far fewer and less invasive procedures."

**"If we succeed at making fat transfer predictable, we will have a powerful tool to regenerate damaged tissues and scars and can treat patients faster, with far fewer and less invasive procedures."**

Every year, approximately one million patients in the U.S. undergo soft tissue reconstruction. Many face complications due to the limited survival of grafted tissues. Fat grafts, highly susceptible to tissue breakdown, present a significant challenge, with up to 70% of the grafted volume being lost post-surgery. This results in unsatisfactory outcomes and necessitates multiple procedures, increasing the psychological and financial burden on patients.

The Graftable team's project introduces the use of oxygen-releasing microparticles, designed to supply essential oxygen to grafted tissues during the critical period before new blood vessels

form. Developed in collaboration with the Daeyeon Lee Lab at the University of Pennsylvania, these biocompatible (not harmful to living tissue) and biodegradable microparticles release oxygen in a controlled manner directly into transplanted tissues, promoting their survival and integration.

The project involves producing and evaluating oxygen microparticles and testing their efficacy in extending the viability of fat grafts. Collaboration with the Lee Lab will facilitate microparticle production, while the Cooperative Human Tissue Network at the University of Pennsylvania will provide access to human fat grafts for testing. Detailed reports

generated from these tests will be crucial for advancing the project to clinical use.

The success of this project will be measured through various metrics:

#### Increased Graft Survival

Enhancing the viability of grafted tissues, leading to fewer revision surgeries.

#### Early Detection and Intervention

By ensuring consistent oxygen supply, the project aims to identify and address potential complications early.

#### Patient and Provider Satisfaction

Feedback from patients and healthcare providers will be collected to evaluate the perceived value and convenience of the new therapy.

care, reduce the need for multiple surgeries, and enhance the quality of life for individuals undergoing reconstructive procedures. The successful implementation of this therapy could pave the way for broader applications, ultimately benefiting a vast number of patients facing similar challenges.

"Our funding from PAMED was the initial support that enabled us to get our project off the ground," remarks Sarah Ebmeier, CEO and Founder of Graftable, Inc. "Since the Innovation Grant enabled us to get us started, we have been able to raise an additional \$160,000 for the project. We could not have done this without this initial support from PAMED." ●



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# YEAR-ROUND LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

PAMED helps put the **passion** back in the practice of medicine **through leadership development** for all physicians.



**Whether you're taking your first steps into leadership or stepping up to tackle new challenges, our Year-Round Leadership Academy (YRA) helps develop the skillset you need to be successful!**

## Why Join PAMED's YRA?

- **Tailored Learning:** Engage in mini online courses designed to fit your busy schedule.
- **Personalized Coaching:** Benefit from one-on-one coaching that aligns with your goals.
- **Collaborative Insights:** Join our vibrant journal club and exchange ideas with fellow leaders.
- **In-Person Connections:** Attend dynamic sessions that foster real-world learning.
- **Capstone Project:** Complete a project tailored to your practice!

***"The YRA was an excellent experience. I feel that the learning and experience impact will be long term and shape my contribution to medicine and society."***

—Dr. Asare Christian

## Scholarships Available!

Register by February 16, 2026



Go to [www.pamedsoc.org/YRA](http://www.pamedsoc.org/YRA) to learn more and sign up.

Questions: [CMEAdmin@pamedsoc.org](mailto:CMEAdmin@pamedsoc.org)



## Congratulations to These Everyday Heroes!

This award recognizes members who, in the eyes of their colleagues or patients, go above and beyond. Nominations are accepted and awards are given year-round.



**Aaron Grand, MD**  
*Hand Surgery*  
Allegheny County



**Dennis Debias, MD**  
*Family Medicine*  
Montgomery County



**Ganga Ranasuriya, MD**  
*Pulmonary Disease (Internal Medicine)*  
Lycoming County



**Erin McFadden, MD**  
*Hospitalist*  
Lackawanna County



# The Pennsylvania Medical Society's caucus and special sections help **connect** our members!



- **Network with peers**
- **Identify leadership positions**
- **Address topics of interest**
- **Impact PAMED's policy**
- **Get involved statewide**

## Medical Student Section (MSS)

**Helping medical students** begin their career and advocate for the profession of medicine!

## Resident and Fellows Section (RFS)

**Encouraging residents & fellows** to be involved and engage in the future of their profession!

## Early Career Physician Section (ECPS)

**Helping physicians** in the early stages of their career make a difference in medicine!

## International Medical Graduate Section (IMGS)

**Enhancing international medical graduate** participation in organized medicine!

## Women Physicians Section (WPS)

**Encouraging women physicians** to participate in leadership, policymaking, and advocacy!

## Independent Practice Physicians Section (IPPS)

**Supporting independent physicians** and providing choices in healthcare!

## Senior Physician Caucus (SPC)

**Addressing senior physicians'** specific needs and interests.

Learn more about the section that **connects** with you at [www.pamedsoc.org/sections](http://www.pamedsoc.org/sections)



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# Big Wins, Bigger Value: Your PAMED Membership Dollars at Work

Behind every policy win, funding boost, and benefit unlocked is one simple truth: **YOUR MEMBERSHIP DELIVERS**. We're making big moves—with even bigger value for you. This isn't just advocacy; it's a strategic investment in your career, your finances, and your voice in medicine.

## ADVOCACY THAT MOVES THE NEEDLE

### **Reforming Noncompete Agreements**

Hundreds of hours spent lobbying led to legislation capping physician noncompete contracts at just **one year**—a major victory for physician mobility and fairness.

### **Defending Physician-Led Care**

Over a decade of consistent advocacy across five legislative sessions to oppose scope-of-practice expansions by nonphysician providers—protecting quality care and physician leadership.

## TANGIBLE BENEFITS OF LASTING VALUE

### **Expanded Loan Repayment Support**

Our advocacy helped increase Pennsylvania's Primary Care Loan Repayment Program funding by more than **\$3 million**—benefiting clinicians in underserved communities across the state.

### **\$1,300+ in Accredited CME**

Access over **52 credits** of accredited continuing education, including required courses in child abuse, opioids, addiction, and risk management—saving both time and expense.

### **Exclusive Tuition Discounts**

Enjoy **15%-25%** savings at participating universities for members. Additional discounts for employees or eligible dependents may vary.

### **Savings on Essential Services**

Enjoy **10%-25%** discounts on CME, medical scribes, safety training, contract review, insurance, financial planning, and more.

### **Quick Consults—Priceless Legal Insight**

Fast access to expertly prepared summaries on laws, regulations, and policies affecting your practice—equivalent in value to over **\$20,000** in health care attorney fees.

Your membership fuels advocacy, education, and resources that elevate your career and empower your voice. We secure the wins—so you can focus on what matters most: your patients.



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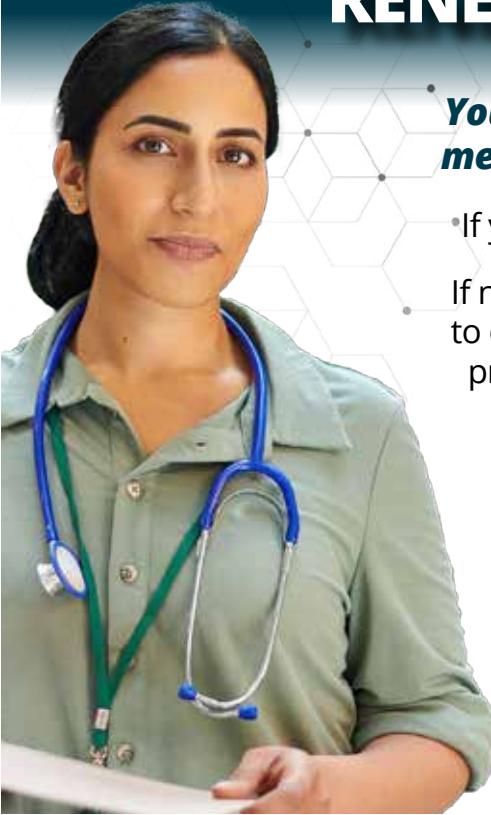


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