

Bridges

A magazine of connections and community for OHSU School of Medicine alumni



Fall 2023

Guardians of Health in the Klamath Basin

P. 12





David Jacoby, M.D.

I invite you to learn more at www.ohsu.edu/som and contact me at somdeansoffice@ohsu.edu.

Looking to the Future

THIS FALL, IT FINALLY FEELS LIKE WE ARE BACK. This year’s White Coat Ceremony, the mixer for new residents and fellows, and a breakfast for new graduate students were particularly joyful. In October, we brought back a reception for new faculty members to celebrate and fortify our academic community.

And OHSU is looking to the future.

In mid-August, OHSU and Legacy Health signed a nonbinding letter of intent to combine and create a comprehensive, integrated health system to offer high-quality, essential health care services to patients throughout Oregon and beyond. (Read more on p. 4.) As we work through due diligence, alumni may appreciate hearing the sense of possibility this integration holds.

OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital already partners with Legacy’s Randall Children’s Hospital in pediatric surgery, pediatric neurosurgery, pediatric rheumatology and beyond. “Bringing OHSU and Legacy together is the single best thing we can do for Oregon’s children, bar none,” Dana Braner, M.D., chair of pediatrics, says. “Partnering to build an even better children’s hospital for the state helps every child.”

Nathan Selden, M.D., Ph.D., chair of neurosurgery, adds, “OHSU and Legacy are Oregon-grown, Oregon-owned and Oregon-operated. Legacy brings a deep commitment to community health and a large primary care network. OHSU is a nationally recognized academic health center with extensive funding in basic research. Together, we share unique capabilities in women’s and children’s health, cancer treatment and trauma care. And we do more than any other in Oregon to train the next generation of clinicians.”

“A combined OHSU and Legacy network will bring leading-edge care in more specialties, to more Oregonians,” Selden says, “while supporting the clinicians who deliver that care as part of larger, more flexible teams.”

George Keepers, M.D., chair of psychiatry, helped design Unity Behavioral Health Center, the OHSU, Legacy Health, Adventist and Kaiser partnership that has dramatically improved psychiatric care in Portland, Ore. “Combining health care systems is a complex and challenging task, but our experience at Unity bodes well,” Keepers says. “I have no question that, for patients and for Oregon, it will be worth all of our efforts.”

David Jacoby, M.D.
Dean, OHSU School of Medicine

ON THE COVER
Glenn Gailis, M.D. R ’75, dons the Batman costume to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking tobacco. In full get-up — with the slogan “Kick Butts” added to his cape — he roams downtown Klamath Falls picking up discarded cigarette butts and engaging anyone he meets with his anti-smoking message. Story p. 17.

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Ben Vallejos

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Change can't happen if we see things just one way.
That's why diversity is important to who we are.
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Three out of 4 primary care physicians practicing today in Oregon’s Klamath Basin trained in the local Cascades East-OHSU Family Medicine Residency Program, including Stewart Decker, M.D. R ’17, above.

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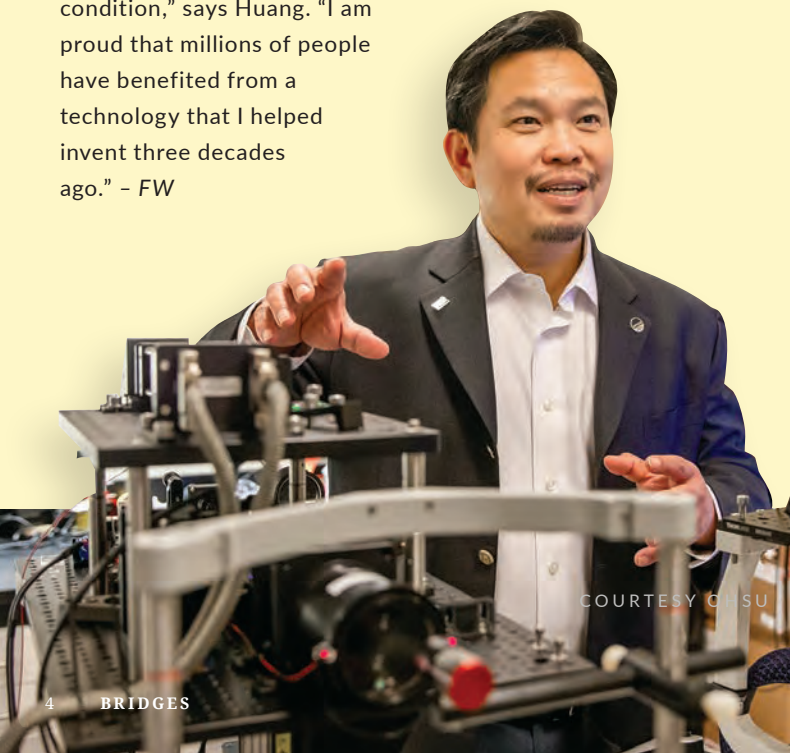


RYAN K. MORRIS AND THE NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MEDALS FOUNDATION

AWARD-WINNING ACHIEVEMENT

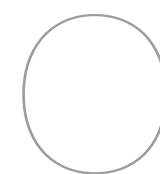
OHSU ophthalmologist, scientist and inventor David Huang, M.D., Ph.D. (above, second from left), received the nation's highest honor for technological achievement in October. President Joe Biden presented Huang and others with the National Medal of Technology and Innovation for co-developing the imaging technology known as optical coherence tomography, or OCT, which routinely helps prevent blindness. The medal recognizes American innovators whose vision, intellect, creativity and determination have strengthened America's economy and improved its quality of life. In September, Huang, professor of ophthalmology and biomedical engineering, received the 2023 Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award, the United States' most distinguished biomedical research award, for co-inventing OCT.

"OCT may not be as well-known as other major imaging modalities, such as MRI or CT scans, but if you have a serious eye condition, chances are that you received an OCT scan to help diagnose and manage your condition," says Huang. "I am proud that millions of people have benefited from a technology that I helped invent three decades ago." – FW



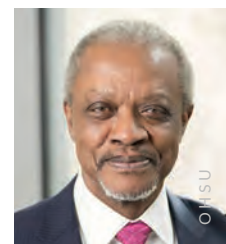
COURTESY OHSU

OHSU, Legacy Health Sign Letter of Intent to Integrate



OHSU and Legacy Health announced on Aug. 16 that the two organizations have signed a nonbinding letter of intent to combine and create a comprehensive, integrated health system.

The combined system — with more than 32,000 employees and 100-plus locations, including 10 hospitals, and more than 3 million patient visits a year — will be the largest employer in the Portland, Oregon, metro area. It will focus on



OHSU President
Danny Jacobs,
M.D., M.P.H.

amplifying the region's leadership in patient- and community-focused health care, education, research and innovation.

As part of the agreement, OHSU intends to make a capital commitment of approximately \$1 billion over 10 years, financed mostly through bond offerings, to support primary- and community-based services that will be part of the combined system. This commitment will better enable the combined organization to expand services, including clinical programs, sites of care, technology solutions and new care models, while maintaining and growing essential services, including preventive medicine, population and public health.

The organizations are working toward reaching a definitive agreement in the coming months. The transaction is expected to close in 2024 and is subject to regulatory review and customary closing conditions.

"We look forward to our next chapter with Legacy and the exciting potential of our combined strengths and vision," says OHSU President Danny Jacobs, M.D., M.P.H.

"This is a bold and visionary proposal," says OHSU School of Medicine Dean David Jacoby, M.D. "The success of this undertaking will be a historic moment not only for both institutions but for Oregon."

OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital already partners

with Legacy's Randall Children's Hospital in pediatric surgery, pediatric neurosurgery, pediatric rheumatology and many other areas. During the triple-demic of 2022 (COVID-19, RSV, influenza), both Randall and Doernbecher increased their capacity as much as three-fold to serve every child in Oregon who required the specialized care that the two hospitals could provide.

"Bringing OHSU and Legacy together is the single best thing we can do for Oregon's children, bar none," says Dana Braner, M.D., chair of pediatrics. "Partnering to build an even better children's hospital for the state helps every child."

Research leaders in the school are reflecting on Legacy's specialty research and how they could amplify each other's work. "The additional patient data that a larger health system would yield will also serve the research mission — from population health to specific disease data," adds Dean Jacoby. "In our education mission, we already have learners who rotate and residents who train at Legacy hospitals and clinics, and we expect to build on these with new opportunities."

Once finalized, OHSU will be the combined system's parent entity and the entire system will be under the ultimate governance authority of the OHSU board of directors.

– OHSU Communications

Ph.D. Graduates Opt Out of Postdoctoral Training in Greater Numbers

The majority of the school's Ph.D. graduates remain in research and science-related positions, but over the last four years, the trend shows that at graduation, increasing numbers are now choosing to leave academia.

Historically, exit surveys have shown 50% or more of the school's Ph.D. graduates chose postdoctoral fellowships upon graduation (shown in bar graph, dark blue). In 2019, that trend began to change. In three of the last four years, less than 40% of Ph.D. students chose a postdoctoral fellowship.

"The odd year was 2021 — the peak of the COVID-19 epidemic when graduating students had many reasons not to move or change career direction," says Allison Fryer, Ph.D., associate dean of graduate studies.

In 2012, the national Biomedical Research Workforce Working Group published a report that recommended graduate programs prepare students for non-academic careers because, at the time, there was a surplus of postdoctoral fellows unable to find academic positions. Consequently, many graduate programs, including the school's, began offering students opportunities to build career skills in preparation for a broader array of careers.

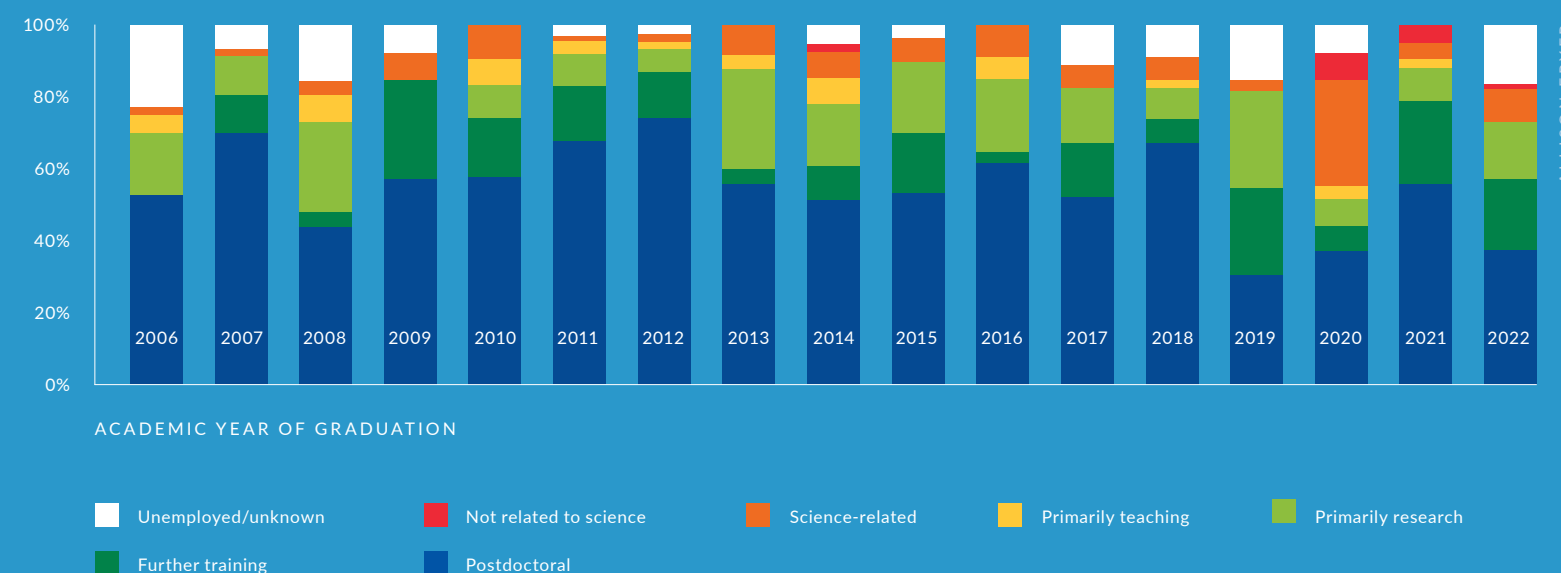
"This led, predictably, to decreased interest in academic careers," says Fryer, "and recently to a national shortage

of postdoctoral fellows."

The effect of graduate programs embracing a wide breadth of career outcomes was ultimately successful, she says, adding that academia remains a desirable career.

"I still love the thrill of discovery and the challenge of creating new knowledge — and testing whether my ideas are 'right', and I especially enjoy educating the next generation of scientists," says Fryer. – KB

Employment plans of Ph.D. graduates upon graduation

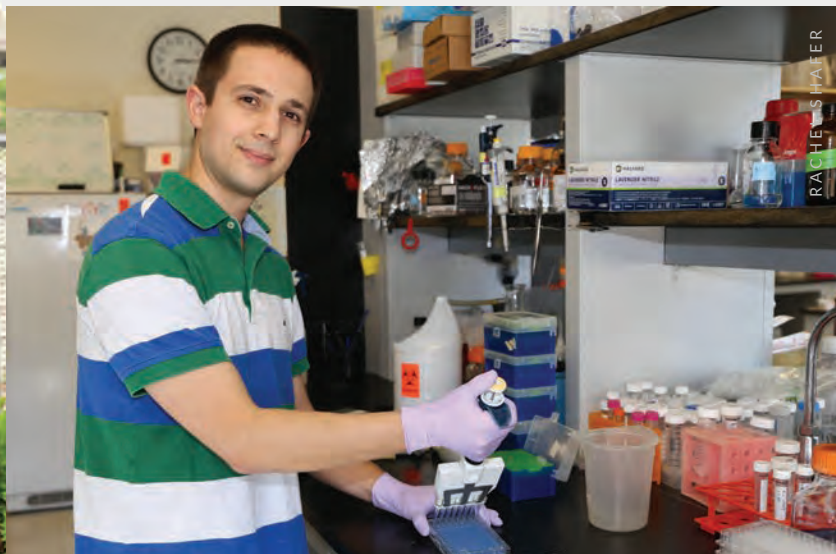


ALLISON FRYER



HIGH-IMPACT RESEARCH

The dissertation by Timothy Bates, Ph.D. '23 (below), entitled “Super Immunity: Elucidating the Optimal Strategies for SARS-CoV-2 Immunity” was selected for the Resko Outstanding Doctoral Thesis Award. Left: Bates with his mentor Fikadu Tafesse, Ph.D., associate professor of molecular microbiology and immunology.



Award-winning Doctoral Thesis Yields Important Findings About COVID-19

This year, the dissertation by Timothy Bates, Ph.D. '23, entitled “Super Immunity: Elucidating the Optimal Strategies for SARS-CoV-2 Immunity” was selected for the Resko Outstanding Doctoral Thesis Award. The award recognizes a graduate student’s notable contributions to biomedical research leading to the completion of an outstanding doctoral dissertation.

In 2017, Bates began his graduate research in the lab of Fikadu Tafesse, Ph.D., associate professor of molecular microbiology and immunology, investigating ways to stop tuberculosis infections using alpaca nanobodies.

But as COVID-19 arrived in Oregon in the spring of 2020, the lab pivoted to focus on the urgent global need to understand the mysterious new disease driven by SARS-CoV-2. Bates’ resulting projects and dissertation yielded important findings about COVID-19, including:

- Vaccination leads to more consistent and robust induction of neutralizing antibodies than infection.
- Breakthrough infection, infection prior to vaccination,

and booster vaccination each provide similar neutralizing antibody counts.

- Longer intervals between vaccination and infection provide larger and higher quality variant-neutralizing antibody responses.

The team’s findings were featured during a White House briefing by Anthony Fauci, M.D., U.S. presidential advisor during the pandemic, cited by World Health Organization policy documents, and even discussed on “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” and “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert.”

In remarks about Bates and his achievements, Allison Fryer, Ph.D., associate dean for graduate studies, said, “All of these findings are now considered broadly accepted knowledge, but at the time Tim’s publications were important both for the scientific community because they were among the first reports to describe critical features in the interplay between vaccination, infection, virus evolution and viral immunity, and for the larger public community which, just as much as the scientific community, was looking for reasons for optimism regarding scientists’ capacity to understand the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Following graduation in March, Bates stayed on in Tafesse’s lab as a postdoctoral scholar where he’s developing faster and more affordable diagnostics for tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. On Oct. 10, he discussed his research in a School of Medicine Alumni Association Timely Topics webinar. When not in the lab, Bates enjoys spending time with his wife and hiking with their cat in the woods. – RS

WHAT’S NEW IN THE SCHOOL

- Joaquin Cigarroa, M.D., professor of medicine and division head of cardiology, was appointed director of the Knight Cardiovascular Institute earlier this year. Cigarroa takes the helm from Kent Thornburg, Ph.D., who served as interim director of the institute since 2021 and who retired this year after 50 years of service at OHSU.
- The Novel Interventions in Children’s Healthcare, or NICH, program was one of three winners nationwide in the American Diabetes Association (ADA)’s first-ever Innovation Challenge. Michael Harris, Ph.D. (left), professor of pediatrics, successfully pitched the program, which helps young people with diabetes who face incredibly



challenging social circumstances, to judges and the audience at the ADA’s 83rd Scientific Sessions in San Diego.

- Oregon’s Douglas County is the latest community to partner with the Bob and Charlee Moore Institute for Nutrition & Wellness in a statewide effort called the Nutrition Oregon Campaign to end chronic disease through healthy food. While Douglas County leaders are still finalizing their plans, their current proposed goal: By 2033, all babies in Douglas County will be born at a healthy weight, which is a key indicator for lifelong health outcomes.
- Susan Tolle, M.D. (below, right), director of OHSU’s Center for Ethics in Health Care and professor of medicine, Division of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, will retire in December after 34 years of service; a national recruitment will be launched for her successor. The center is internationally recognized for innovation; for example, the Portable Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) program created in 1991 by Tolle and colleagues honors the wishes of Oregonians with advanced illness and frailty to have or to limit medical treatments across all care settings.



CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP ACROSS RACE, GENDER AND BACKGROUND

This year, the Department of Surgery commissioned and hung a new art piece in the center of its hallway on the third floor of Mackenzie Hall. “The work is entitled ‘Women in Surgery’ and the artist, Ameya Okamoto, has devoted her work to the cross section of art and social justice for all,” said Surgery Chair and Professor Ken Azarow, M.D. “This reinforces the department’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion across all of our missions.” The mural was inspired by a photo taken of some of the department’s female surgeons in 2017 during the #ilooklikeasurgeon social awareness campaign.

New Inpatient Addition Will Expand OHSU Hospital on Marquam Hill

By Rachel Shafer

▲ The building is sited to give each patient room maximum views to the outdoors. There are three connection points back to the main hospital. The ends of the tower are accentuated by continuous vertical fins that reinforce the area's design guideline for vertical construction.

◀ **ADDITIONAL CAPACITY** The new building will add 128 licensed, intermediate care inpatient beds and provide shelled space for an additional 56 beds — a net total of 184 new inpatient beds, which increases OHSU Hospital capacity by about one-third.

For years, OHSU Hospital has been at capacity or near capacity.

“We have no beds to take care of patients,” reports V. Liana Tsikitis, M.D., MBA, M.C.R. ’13, professor of surgery. “It delays our elective surgical cases because we get full with more urgent cases daily, yet those elective cases will eventually become urgent.”

She describes performing a small procedure on a patient that day who recovered in the emergency room hallway, a temporary measure to hold the patient over until an operating room and, most important, an inpatient bed became available several days later.

“It’s madness,” she says. “It delays care for our patients, and it’s demoralizing for us physicians because we want to provide timely care.”

She adds, “Our trainees are affected too, because they can’t get the number of cases they need, and they can’t provide the care they want to.”

Oregon and Washington have the lowest number of hospital beds per capita in the country. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, both states have only 1.7 hospital beds per 1,000 residents.

In 2019, the OHSU board of directors approved funding to design an expansion of the hospital at the site of the former School of Dentistry on Campus Drive. (The School of Dentistry relocated to the Robertson Life Sciences Building on Portland’s South Waterfront in 2014.) The new 14-story inpatient addition will increase the number of hospital beds and will connect to OHSU Hospital and Kohler Pavilion by sky bridges.

The arrival of COVID-19 put a temporary pause on the expansion, but the surge of sick patients during the pandemic brought the lack of beds into clear and urgent focus. OHSU

“

It’s giving me the freedom to imagine: What can I do better and what can I do more of?

– V. Liana Tsikitis, M.D., MBA, M.C.R. ’13

- 1 The ground floor lobby is an extension of the building drop-off, bringing materials from the exterior into the interior of the building. The use of natural materials adds warmth and texture. The concierge desk continues the use of natural materials and the welcoming OHSU logo.
- 2 Patient rooms are oriented on the floor plan to allow for a view to the outside from every patient room. The exterior wall is floor-to-ceiling glass allowing for maximum daylight to promote healing and well-being. The connection to the outdoors is emphasized with the use of natural materials and color palette; accent colors come from different regions around Oregon.
- 3 Staff on-call or sleep rooms are provided for overnight shifts and as needed. Dark colors are used to create a quiet space to rest.

This rendering shows the OHSU Hospital expansion looking to the west from Campus Drive on Marquam Hill near OHSU’s existing Casey Eye Institute. The main pedestrian and parking access is from lower Campus Drive. The bottom of the building is made of warm-colored metal louvers to complement the surrounding landscape of Campus Drive.

broke ground on the new building in spring 2022 with expected opening in 2026.

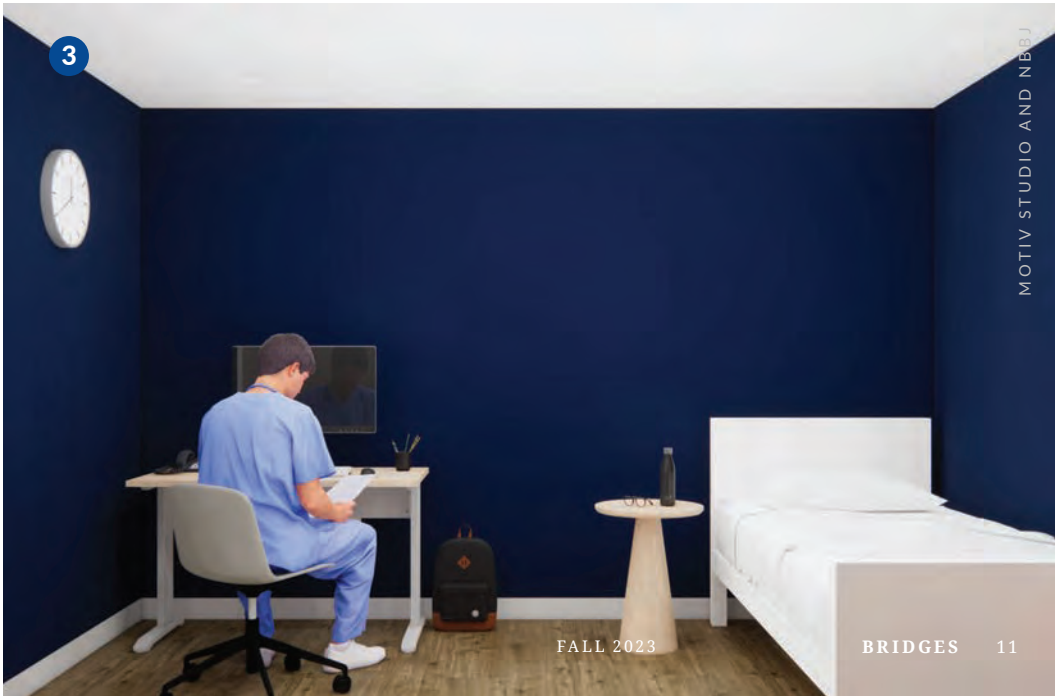
The new building will add 128 licensed, intermediate care inpatient beds and provide shelled space for an additional 56 beds — a net total of 184 new adult inpatient beds — increasing hospital capacity by about one-third.

The building’s base is comprised of a ground floor lobby and three floors of parking and mechanical space before rising into two patient wings on each floor. The building will be capped by a green roof to reduce stormwater runoff, cool roof surface temperatures and promote other environmental benefits.

Volunteers known as diversity champions are helping ensure the project — from the design to its use — consider underserved populations. The goal is for the new building to better meet the needs of a more diverse employee workforce and patient population.

If the OHSU-Legacy integration is finalized next year (see p. 4), the construction will proceed regardless, OHSU officials say, because there continues to be a pressing need for hospital beds. Meanwhile, the OHSU board of directors will review a proposal for a separate Doernbecher addition dedicated to expanding neonatal intensive care and perinatal services.

While the exact types of services in the new OHSU Hospital building are still being determined, Tsikitis is excited by the possibilities of growth and innovation that the new space will support. “Instead of being reactionary all the time, it’s giving me the freedom to imagine: What can I do better and what can I do more of? That opportunity excites me.”



“

It's a dream come true for me to return to Klamath and help fill the need for physicians in rural Oregon.

— Mikayla Stevens, M.D. '21

BEN VALLEJOS

Coming Home to Community Medicine

By Romel Hernandez

Three out of 4 primary care physicians practicing today in Oregon's Klamath Basin trained in the local Cascades East-OHSU Family Medicine Residency Program. Its formula for workforce success? Unwavering commitment to rural health, innovation and community.

Mikayla Stevens, M.D. '21, spent her early childhood living with her mom in a trailer in Klamath Falls, Ore., where her family made ends meet with food stamps. In school, she worked hard, becoming the first in her family to earn a college diploma and eventually earning her medical degree from OHSU.

When the time came for Stevens to decide where to complete her three-year family residency, a place where she could settle down and establish herself as a family practitioner, she felt there was only one choice: back home to Klamath Falls.

“Getting to serve my own community was important to me,” says Stevens, in her third and final year in the Cascades East-OHSU Family Medicine Residency Program in partnership with Sky Lakes Medical Center. “It was really about coming home.”

COMMUNITY PRACTITIONER

Mikayla Stevens, M.D. '21, a third-year resident who grew up in Klamath Falls, sees patients at the town's Cascades East Family Medicine clinic.

“

Our residents are learning to be excellent in more flexible ways, which will enable them to adapt to the needs of their community and ultimately thrive, especially in places with scarce resources.

— Joyce Hollander-Rodriguez, M.D. '00 R '03



In a rural region struggling to provide adequate access to health care, Cascades East has been a success story in the Klamath Basin since it accepted its first family medicine residents in 1994. The program has grown to its current size of 25 residents (expanding soon to 27) based at Sky Lakes, the sole full-service hospital in a 10,000-square-mile swath of south-central Oregon and northern California, and its presence there is making a positive difference.

“Our residents come from across the country, so there are many pathways that lead them to our program,” says Joyce Hollander-Rodriguez, M.D. '00 R '03, the school's associate dean of graduate medical education and herself a 2003 graduate of Cascades East. “Ultimately, we want people who align themselves with our mission, who are seeking that deeper connection and continuity with their community. We've learned that residency training in a rural setting is the most important factor in whether doctors choose to establish their practices in a rural environment.”

Building out the medical community

The Klamath Basin is renowned for its high desert landscapes and natural splendor — particularly as the gateway to Crater Lake National Park. The Klamath Tribes, the basin's original and continued inhabitants, describe its abundant forests, lakes and wetlands as “this rich land east of the Cascades.” Today the basin is also dotted with cattle ranches and farms growing crops such as wheat and potatoes. Locals as well as visitors prize the region for its array of outdoor activities, including hiking, biking, fishing and birdwatching. With its 300-plus sunny days every year,



CONNECTIONS

In addition to seeing patients in clinic, Stevens practices at the Sky Lakes Family Birthing Center delivering babies. “I like the chance to connect with my patients here,” she says. When time allows, she also helps promote medical careers to local high school students.

Klamath Falls bills itself as the “City of Sunshine.”

But Klamath's close-knit community also faces significant social challenges, shared by many rural areas across the state and country. Klamath County rates near the bottom of Oregon's counties by nearly every socioeconomic and health measure. In Klamath County, 1 in 5 residents live in poverty, nearly twice the state average. The county's rates of unemployment and high school graduation — as well as health indicators such as diabetes and smoking — are worse than the state averages.

Limited access to medical care only exacerbates existing inequities by creating what public health researchers define as the “rural mortality penalty.” The term describes the disparities in mortality rates in rural versus urban and suburban communities, directly due to poverty and a range of related risk factors, including a dearth of health resources. Klamath County has 920 people per primary care physician compared to Multnomah County's rate of 670. The average life expectancy for Klamath residents is 75.5 years versus residents of Multnomah County at 79.4 years.

Cascades East is a key part of the strategy for remedying that gap both in Oregon and across the country. About 80 percent of residents who've completed the program over the past two decades have since gone on to practice in rural communities. What's more, a good number of those residents have stayed in the area; 3 out of 4 primary care physicians practicing in the Klamath Basin are graduates of the program.

The long game

There are indicators showing these efforts are making a difference. In the past decade, Klamath's ratio of population to physicians improved nearly 25 percent.

“It can take generations to change patient health outcomes,” says Hollander-Rodriguez. “What we're aiming for at Cascades East is creating a culture of excellence in our health care delivery system — it's about the long game.”

The commitment to excellence starts with selecting the highest-quality residents who want to train in a disadvantaged rural area. Cascades East is a highly competitive program with between 400 to 600 candidates participating in the national residency match for nine open spaces.

PASSION FOR PREVENTION

Following residency, Stewart Decker, M.D. R '17, stayed to work in a place he came to love. “I couldn't find anywhere else as committed to community preventive medicine,” he says.

While the great outdoors is certainly an added attraction, residents and doctors who come to the area to train and work say they mostly value the rural medicine mission and becoming part of a tight-knit community where they get to know patients as neighbors.

“Rural communities are significantly under-resourced, so you have to be smart about how you tackle these issues,” Hollander-Rodriguez says. “In a place like this, you have the advantage of a strong community to help get things done.”

Broad spectrum training

In addition to that sense of mission, many residents are drawn to the program for the opportunity to develop a comprehensive set of medical skills, from obstetrics/gynecology and behavioral health to emergency medicine and minor surgery. In their three years, the family medicine residents also rotate through stints in Portland, Medford



(for neonatal intensive care), and five weeks in a “frontier community” such as John Day, Enterprise or Lakeview.

“You get a really broad spectrum of training here — more so than you might get in a bigger place,” says Grant Niskanen, M.D. R ’96, part of the first class of residents from Cascades East.

The school is also launching a new family medicine residency program next year that begins in Portland and finishes the last two years in Madras in Central Oregon.

Hollander-Rodriguez explains, “Our residents are learning to be excellent in more flexible ways, which will enable them to adapt to the needs of their community and ultimately thrive, especially in places with scarce resources.”

The Sky Lakes Wellness Center is a prime example of that can-do spirit, offering a range of programming to promote good health practices and preventive care. The wellness

FROM ACUTE CARE TO PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Among his many responsibilities, Decker teaches wilderness medicine courses to residents and physicians. In the course below, he’s simulating an injured kayaker presenting with hypothermia and head lacerations while residents Colette Whitney, M.D. (left), and German Ferrer, M.D. ’20 R ’23, practice rescue and field treatment techniques. To promote fitness and community health, Decker and others successfully convinced the City of Klamath Falls to expand the area’s bike lanes and mountain bike trails. He also helped lobby Sky Lakes Health to implement an incentive program for employees who walk, run or bike to work.



COURTESY STEWART DECKER



COURTESY STEWART DECKER

center’s medical director, Stewart Decker, M.D. R ’17, completed his Cascades East residency in 2017 and stayed to work in a place he came to love.

“I was astonished to get to do this job right after my residency,” he says. “I couldn’t find anywhere else as committed to community preventive medicine.”

Deep roots

That community-centric approach to addressing the gap in access to health care is exactly what draws residents like Mikayla Stevens to Cascades East.

“I grew up here, so I know how hard it can be to get in to see a doctor or a specialist,” she says. “When you practice family medicine in a place like this, you have to do so much more than you would in a bigger city.”

Because of her deep roots in Klamath Falls, Stevens frequently treats patients she grew up with, which she views as a unique advantage of the job. She has been on duty in Sky Lakes Family Birth Center when relatives and friends have gone into labor. She once was able to tend to the family of a high school friend in the ICU.

“I think it was comforting for them to see a familiar face,” she says. “Having that personal relationship helped ground them during a difficult time. But whether or not we knew each other growing up, I like the chance to connect with my patients here.”

As a teenager, Stevens didn’t always appreciate the virtues and rewards of small-town life, but she does now. In addition to going through her medical school and residency training for the past seven years, she and her husband are raising their three young children. She says, “It’s so quiet and beautiful, and there are so many outdoor activities minutes from your door. This place has a way of sucking you in — in a good way.”

Going Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

When he retired, Glenn Gailis, M.D. R ’75, donned a black cowl and cape to become Batman.

Following four decades of family practice in Klamath Falls, Gailis was seeking new ways to contribute to his community. He decided to don the superhero costume to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking tobacco. In full get-up — with the slogan “Kick Butts” added to his cape — he makes it his mission to roam the downtown area picking up discarded cigarette butts and engaging anyone he meets with his anti-smoking message.

Like the real Batman, he takes the role seriously, even refusing to reveal his true identity while on the job.

For going “above and beyond the call of duty” throughout his career and into retirement, the Oregon Medical Association recognized Gailis with its 2023 Doctor-Citizen Award. The honor recognizes physicians who have demonstrated a commitment to the advancement of medicine, their patients and their communities.

A medical school graduate of the University of Iowa, Gailis came to Oregon as a family medicine resident in the 1970s after a stint in the Army during the Vietnam War, settling in Klamath Falls in 1975.

“I had the best job in the world here,” he says of his career practicing medicine. “We’re not a wealthy community, we’ve just always had great people.”

In addition to running a thriving family practice for many years, Gailis has been involved in a range of community causes, notably with the Sky Lakes Wellness

Center and the Blue Zone initiative to promote community health and well-being in Klamath Falls.

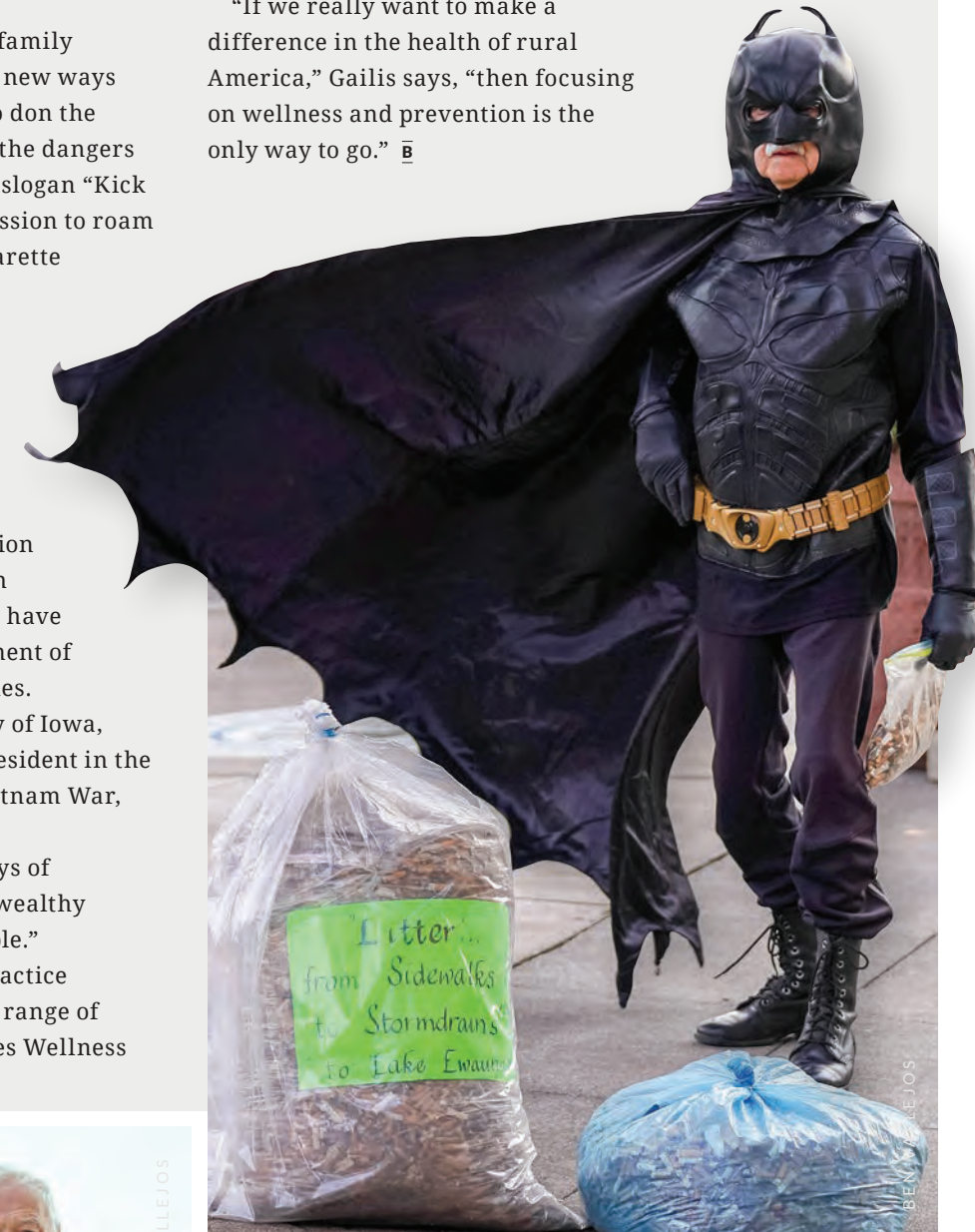
“If we really want to make a difference in the health of rural America,” Gailis says, “then focusing on wellness and prevention is the only way to go.”



BEN VALLEJOS



BEN VALLEJOS



BEN VALLEJOS

Students Live, Learn and Grow Together at Marquam Hill Cooperative

By Anna Lageson

When Nicole Andeen, M.D. '12, flew in to interview for medical school at the OHSU School of Medicine, she had made no overnight arrangements and found Portland shut down by snow.

Then she remembered learning about the Marquam Hill Cooperative on the OHSU website.

"I walked up Marquam Hill and I knocked on the co-op door and asked them if I could stay the night," Andeen says.

The co-op did not usually host interviewing medical students, but one of the 23 bedrooms was available. Andeen was welcomed for the night and completed her interview. After her acceptance at OHSU, Andeen applied and was accepted as a co-op resident.

"My whole impression of OHSU as a medical school was biased by getting to meet the people in the co-op and having their wonderful hospitality," Andeen says.

A home for students

The Marquam Hill Cooperative, located slightly uphill from the OHSU Marquam Hill campus, is the 23-bedroom home of a self-run, self-governed nonprofit student cooperative. Though it initially housed only medical students, any graduate-level OHSU student pursuing a career as a health professional is now welcome to apply for long- or short-term housing.

The Marquam Hill Cooperative started as the Gamma Nu Chapter of the Theta Kappa Psi medical fraternity in 1925.

In 1950, the house changed fraternal affiliation to the Beta Nu Chapter of Phi Beta Pi, and in 1988, the house dropped its affiliation with the fraternity and opened to all graduate students attending OHSU. Under the leadership of William Brady, M.D. '58 (now deceased), the house was established as a nonprofit corporation, becoming the Marquam Hill Cooperative in 1996.

The co-op's community annually consists of OHSU students from all academic class years and may include students from any of the Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry and Public Health.

Co-op applicants are attracted by the proximity to campus and low rent, referred to as dues. Dues include utilities and some basic provisions: paper products, cleaning supplies and kitchen staples. Co-op residents are equally excited to find a community of built-in friends, all working toward similar goals and bonding over shared activities.

More than one married couple spent the early years of their relationship as co-op housemates, including Nicole Andeen and her husband Gabriel Andeen, M.D. '12, M.P.H. '12.

"Living in the co-op was like having a family to come home to," Gabriel says. "Even many years after graduating, we still get together."

Rachel Meek, D.M.D. '22, learned about the co-op on the School of Dentistry's incoming student Facebook page. She was thrilled when her application to the co-op was accepted.

"I didn't know anybody in Portland," Meek says. "That built-in family and friends — it was the support system that I needed when I went to school."

Community in the kitchen

Meek recalls a time when she broke a glass coffee carafe while washing it and deeply cut her hand. Suddenly there were five housemates rushing to help her.

"If there's any place to accidentally hurt yourself doing dishes, this is the place!" she says. "I'm surrounded by 20-plus almost-doctors taking care of me."

The co-op's kitchen remains the center of community bonding. A large central island countertop is surrounded by an industrial-sized range and shared cabinets, with 12 full refrigerators spilling into an adjacent pantry. A tradition passed down over the years: Food meant to be shared is regularly placed on the center island.

Current co-president of the co-op, fourth-year M.D. student Spencer Burt, appreciates the food sharing tradition, which often includes baked goods as well as eggs from the backyard chicken coop built during the Andeens' residency.

An additional bonus of living at the co-op: Students at the early stage of their studies live

alongside students who are further along in many of the programs, creating a natural peer mentorship.

Burt says, "Before we started clinical rotations, a few of the older M.D. students sat us down and wrote out how to make a presentation on our rotations."

He adds, "They wrote it down on a pizza box."

You-plus-one

Living in community requires agreements about chores, responsibilities and a willingness to work through the differences that arise. Nicole Andeen is still guided by the you-plus-one concept: Clean up after yourself, plus one other person.

"You've eaten together, cleaned dishes and carried out the trash, brushed your teeth together," she says. "You gain a different appreciation of others, regardless of whatever faults you might see."

Gracefully sharing space is still a driving principle. "The goal is to have a place where everyone gets along and is around friends," Burt says.

Burt welcomed co-op alumni to a BBQ in October and hopes to host another alumni BBQ next year. A 100-year anniversary celebration is set for 2025, with plans still in development. Alumni are invited to contact current residents at marquamhillcoop@gmail.com for more information. **B**



WELCOME TO THE CO-OP

Left: Co-op residents gather around the table at Thanksgiving. Below: Fourth-year medical student and co-op co-president Spencer Burt in the kitchen, the co-op's center of community. Burt explains that the front door's slogan "High Yield Since 1925" (opposite page) is a student inside joke — a reference to the quality of study materials in graduate education.



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From Biostatistician to Oregon Book Award Finalist, Alumna Follows Her Spark

After seven years as a biostatistician, Carrie Tillotson, M.P.H. '07, began to explore a career writing children's books. Her first published submission, "Counting to Bananas" was named an Oregon Spirit Award Honor Book and a 2023 Oregon Book Award finalist for children's literature.

Tillotson didn't expect to be a published author. She wanted to be an illustrator and considered a career in graphic design before choosing to pursue the sciences.

Tillotson began her work as a biostatistician at OHSU as a graduate student, providing statistical support for an array of studies.

After graduation, she remained, frequently teaming up with Jennifer DeVoe, M.D. R '04 F '06, D.Phil., M.C.R. '10, on projects for the Department of Family Medicine.

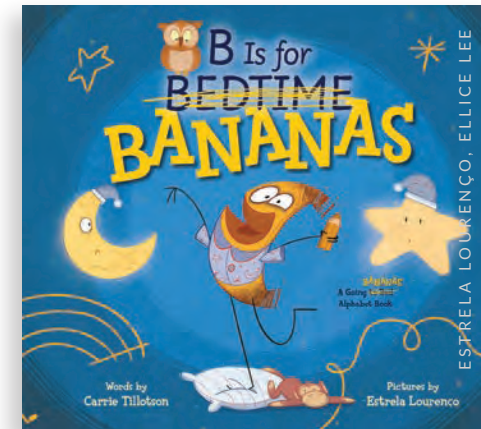
After eight years at OHSU, Tillotson joined the Oregon Community Health Information Network (OCHIN), a nonprofit focused on equitable health care innovation, to continue working in health services research.

"I did like my career in biostatistics and public health, but it didn't give me that spark," Tillotson says.

While continuing to work in data analysis, Tillotson's interest in art resurfaced, and she explored illustrating children's books. Mistakenly believing that she must also write the book she illustrated helped uncover her true passion: writing.

Tillotson admits the first stories she submitted were not yet polished. After eventually writing "Counting to Bananas," she sent query letters to agents and editors, but did not receive positive responses. At the same time, she was accepted to a writer's conference at Rutgers University where each attendee was matched with an editor or agent for one-on-one work sessions.

Following the conference, Tillotson was still without an agent, but two editors expressed interest in her book. Unfortunately, they wanted to work with her non-existent agent. The editor who eventually acquired the book gave Tillotson permission to name her as an interested editor, helping Tillotson secure both an agent and an editor.



In the first few months of 2020, Tillotson quit her job at OCHIN, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, and her first book was acquired for publication.

She says, "There was a lot happening in my world."

Last April, Tillotson added a second published book to her resume, "B is for Bananas." Why is her protagonist a banana? "There's a silly story, which has to do with my son," she says.

When her then five-year-old son was taking swimming lessons, he had to practice a "starfish float" on his back for 10 seconds with his arms and legs out wide. His swim teacher counted the seconds, but after nine, she'd call out, "bananas!"

One day, as Tillotson sat observing the lesson and working on her writing, her son asked his teacher why she never counted to 10. The teacher responded, "Well, don't you love me counting

to bananas?"

Tillotson says, "Something about that phrase just sparked within me. I thought, this is a great picture book title: 'Counting to Bananas!'"

In 2025, Tillotson's first nonfiction children's picture book will be available, "Alpacas Here, Alpacas There," a compare and contrast book about raising alpacas in South and North America.

Tillotson says she finds inspiration for her children's stories everywhere, including from her education at OHSU. She currently has a story on submission whose protagonist is an epidemiologist.

"I think when you find something that gives you that spark, you should follow it," Tillotson says. "I didn't even know I wanted to be a writer until I tried it, and I totally fell in love. I think it's good to follow those little sparks."
— Anna Lageson

Alumni Chapter Launches in Central Oregon

The Alumni Engagement team launched a regional chapter program this fall serving all alumni.

The first chapter is located in Central Oregon, and it officially launched with a gathering at 10 Barrel Brewing in Bend on Oct. 6. About 90 people, including 60 alumni from different schools, mixed and mingled over dinner, drinks and cornhole.

The chapter is led by allergist Adam Williams, M.D. '99, who, as president, hopes to enhance connections to OHSU and explore ways the Central Oregon alumni community can serve the health needs of Oregonians in the area.

He adds, "I'm most excited about getting to know my fellow OHSU alumni and forming new friendships."

Chapters are led by volunteer alumni leaders from each school. The goal is to provide consistent and personal

engagement opportunities for alumni outside the Portland metro area.

To learn more about Central Oregon Alumni Chapter or the regional chapter program, reach out to Anna Horlacher, managing director of alumni engagement, at horlache@ohsu.edu.

CENTRAL OREGON REPRESENTS

Chapter President Adam Williams, M.D. '99 (at left, with microphone), speaks to the gathering. Below, from left, James Dayton, M.D. '09,

Matt Snodgrass, M.D. '12, Mark

Goodman, M.D. '09, and his wife Lisa Goodman, enjoy the festivities.



Class Notes

WE WELCOME YOUR NEWS AND PHOTOS

Email alumni@ohsu.edu or write a note to *Bridges* Class Notes c/o Rachel Shafer OHSU School of Medicine, 3266 S.W. Research Drive, MC L102, Portland, OR 97239. Please write a maximum of 250 words and include your name, degree/training information and graduation/completion year. We may not be able to publish all items and may edit for length and clarity.

1960s

► **James Chan, M.D. R ’68, D.Sc.**, writes, “The Children’s Hospital of Richmond at Virginia Commonwealth University bestowed me with its Distinguished Career Award on July 15.” Chan held a faculty appointment there prior to his current position as a professor of pediatrics at Tufts University. “My research focuses on vitamin D in childhood kidney disease,” he adds. “Many of my postdocs have become academic leaders in the U.S. and other parts of the world. Quite a few have remained lifelong friends.”



1970s

David Grube, M.D. ’73, writes, “I retired in 2012 from clinical practice after 35 years as a family physician in Philomath, Ore. I was national medical director for Compassion & Choices for six years thereafter, resigning in 2022. My wife, Lynn Grube, B.S. ’72, and I now live in Corvallis where we sing

in two choirs and where I volunteer a couple times a week for Dial-A-Bus,” a transportation nonprofit serving seniors and people with disabilities.

2000s

After residency, **Matthew Hunt, M.D. R ’07**, spent a year as a specialist registrar at the Victor Horsley Department of Neurosurgery, National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, in London. In 2009, he accepted a neurosurgical faculty position at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. He now serves as residency program director for the Department of Neurosurgery. He was named a “Minnesota Monthly Top Doctor” in 2019.

► In August, **Steven Mansoor, M.D. ’09, Ph.D. ’09**, was awarded the American Society for Clinical Investigation’s Donald Seldin-Holly Smith Award for Pioneering Research. A cardiologist-scientist at OHSU, Mansoor’s research uses structural biology to address cardiovascular health. Mansoor is a member of the OHSU School of Medicine Alumni Council.



Joyce Wondolowski, Ph.D. ’09, PT, DPT, is a physical therapist at the Balance Lab in Los Angeles, Calif. She completed her doctorate of physical therapy from University of Southern California in 2017.

2010s

► **Gina Miller, M.D. ’11**, has been appointed assistant professor of family medicine at Western University College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific where she teaches a second-year class in Clinical Medicine and



Reasoning. Miller will continue to work at Samaritan Health Services in its urgent care office. Miller sits on the board of the Oregon Academy of Family Physicians (OAFP) as the Western Liaison, and serves as the OAFP Foundation president. “I’m excited to take on pre-clinical teaching and working towards expanding the number of physicians working in Oregon,” she says.

QiLiang “Q” Chen, M.D. ’18, Ph.D. ’16, is a clinical instructor, pain medicine fellow and a postdoctoral researcher at Stanford University. He is also part of the Stanford Fellowship in Anesthesia Research program. His research focuses on delineating the basic mechanism of chronic pain and characterizing the physiological changes in the descending pain-modulating circuits after head injury and other forms of trauma. Clinically, his interests include integrating advanced image guidance in pain procedures and exploring novel pharmacological and minimally invasive interventions for complex headaches and craniofacial pain conditions.

► **Natoya Carruthers, M.P.A.S. ’19, PA-C**, was appointed regional associate dean, Klamath Falls, serving the OHSU Campus for Rural Health. In her role, Carruthers is responsible for the education, research and outreach activities associated with the Klamath Falls clinical and educational Campus for Rural Health. Carruthers has served as a faculty instructor and physician assistant in the Family Medicine – Cascades East Family Medicine Clinic in Klamath Falls since 2020.



2020s

► **Grant Sun, M.D. R ’20**, writes, “I’m excited to have been able to return to

my home state of Utah after orthopedic training. I’m now in a private practice group, primarily based out of the orthopedic specialty clinic at TOSH (the orthopedic specialty hospital) but also operating in some other area hospitals in Salt Lake City, Utah. Since graduation, my wife and I have also welcomed two children Gloria and Kenji. Everyone is healthy and doing well!”



Last year, **Jeanne-Marie Guise, M.D., M.P.H., MBA ’22**, was named chair of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive biology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Mass.

Richard Williams, M.D., MBA ’22, published “Wildfire Response and Recovery: The Importance of Coordinated Care and Social Support” in the *New England Journal of Medicine Catalyst*. The article details the role the Southern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization AllCare Health played in helping affected members recover from the Alameda Fire in the Rogue Valley. Williams presented a School of Medicine Alumni Association Timely Topics webinar about this work on Sept. 12.

► **Carly Ritchie, M.D. R ’23**, completed the Cascades East/Sky Lakes Family Medicine Residency in June and moved to Cloquet, Minn., where she was born and raised, together with her partner, Robert, and Australian Shepherd, Sadie, to practice at the Community Memorial Hospital and Raiter Family Clinic.



Calendar

Events

School of Medicine Alumni Association Holiday Reception For more information, please email alumni@ohsu.edu .		
DEC. 3	2-4 p.m.	THE TOWN CLUB, PORTLAND, ORE.
Rehumanizing the Workplace: The OHSU Well-Being Team View registration details by scanning the QR code.		
DEC. 12	12 p.m. PST	TIMELY TOPICS: WEBINAR



For the latest information and more events, go to www.ohsu.edu/som/alumni.

Continuing Medical Education

55th Annual Primary Care Review	
FEB. 12-16	SENTINEL HOTEL, PORTLAND, ORE.
7th Annual Pediatric Mental Health Update	
MARCH 8	CROWNE PLAZA, LAKE OSWEGO, ORE.
8th Annual Adult Mental Health Update	
APRIL 19	PORTLAND MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT
31st Annual Internal Medicine Review	
APRIL 12-16	SENTINEL HOTEL, PORTLAND, ORE.
Sommer Memorial Lectures/OHSU SoM Scientific Session	
MAY 2-3	MULTNOMAH ATHLETIC CLUB, PORTLAND, ORE.

Schedules are subject to change. Please contact cme@ohsu.edu for brochures and program updates. For the latest information on these and other CME events, visit ohsu.edu/som/cme.

Learn online!
In addition to traditional conference-based CME activities, the Division of Continuing Professional Development administers and accredits learning activities specifically designed to be taken online or remotely. View the latest offerings at ohsu.edu/school-of-medicine/cpd/learn-online.



Alumni Engagement Program
2020 SW 4th Ave. Suite 900
Portland, OR 97201

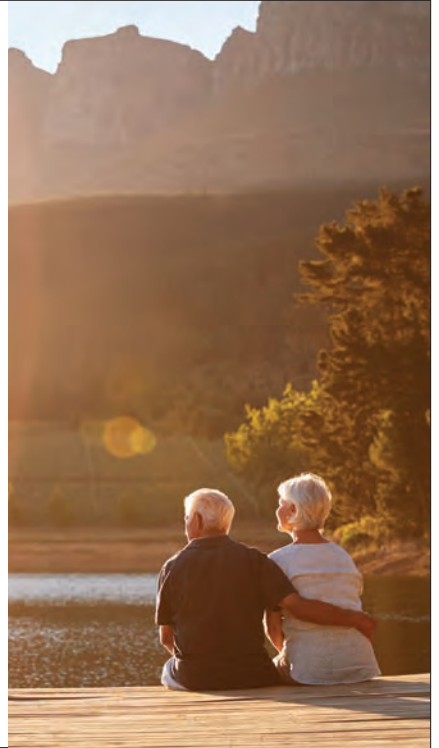
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