Welcome Class of 2021

Stephen Chang, MD
Asma Husain, MD
Audreyandra Imansjah, DO
Vincente Lam, MD
Danny Ngo, MD
Ekta Patel, MD
Raina Shah, DO
Jenny Truong, MD
Laura Zavala, MD

Happenings

Congratulations, Drs. Tammy Chew and David Adler, for your recent weddings. We wish you the very best!

Welcome, Drs. Shea Suskin, Christopher Kroner, Anjani Kolahi, José Mayorga, Edna Biddy, and Jeffrey Arroyo!

Congratulations, Drs. Elana Craemer and Betzy Salcedo, for being appointed as Medical Director of the Family Medicine Clinic at FHC SA and Anaheim, respectively, and Dr. Jose Mayorga as Chief Medical Officer of the FHCs!

Congratulations, Dr. John Billimek, for being appointed Director of Research for the DFM!

Thank you, Salvador Ureno, MA, for your 22 years of service with unfailing kindness and courtesy. You will be missed!

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Our PD Extraordinaire, Dr. Esther Ho, continues to be in our thoughts and prayers as she battles breast cancer.

Please visit her blog: caringbridge.org/visit/estherhowang
A Word from our Program Director

Emily Dow, MD

There is never a status quo with the residency, but change is good since the residency is constantly reinventing itself and moving forward. The interview season is an exciting time, and we have a strong start, with a revamping of our mission statement and a renewed focus on recruiting excellent applicants who are committed to working with underserved populations such as those we serve at the Family Health Center (FHC) – Santa Ana. We continue to have high-caliber students knocking on our door to get in on the mission and the culture we have fostered and strengthened over the years: high quality service to the underserved, advocacy for the most vulnerable and marginalized, and camaraderie that cements the relationship among the residents as family. Needless to say, the residency is the residents themselves who have a strong hand in shaping the culture and trajectory of the program. I am proud to lead this group of talented and dedicated individuals toward their future careers as excellent socially responsible family physicians who advocate for their community.

With the addition of Dr. Anjani Kolahi, a previous Reproductive Health Education in Family Medicine grant recipient, we are boosting our obstetrics and gynecology curriculum. Along with Dr. John Hann, she is representing FM in the Hospitalist Group to continue the excellent ward service for our continuity patients who are admitted to UCIMC. Dr. Elana Craemer plans to strengthen reproductive health skills for our residents at Planned Parenthood in the new year and launch our women’s health track. The PRIME-LC and the Integrative Medicine for the Underserved tracks are bolstered by the welcome addition of Drs. Jeffrey Arroyo and Shea Suskin, respectively. We were thrilled to welcome back Dr. Chris Kroner to resume his Sports Medicine activities. Dr. Prajakta Deshpande is a wonderful asset to her colleagues at FHC Anaheim and lends her expertise in sleep studies to both faculty and residents. Dr. Edna Biddy, FM geriatrician, has taken the place of Dr. Herbert Sier at Geriatrics Clinic. Dr. Jose Mayorga has taken the helm as Chief Medical Officer of the FHCs Santa Ana and Anaheim. We are extremely fortunate that each of these new faculty bring unique talents and skills to strengthen and support the residency program and the DFM.

Wellness during Residency

Monisha Vasa, MD

Resident physicians are an incredibly hard working, intelligent, and resilient group of individuals. It is these very characteristics that allowed all of us to get through medical school after all. Residents care deeply about the welfare of their patients and families. Paradoxically, it can be the residents who care the most, and work the hardest, who are especially vulnerable to burn-out, as well as mood and anxiety symptoms during training.

There is no one magic solution to maintaining well being during residency. Yoga and mindfulness? Check. Retreat? Check. Bowling and dinner with your co-residents? Check. Supportive faculty and co-residents? Check, check and check. So now what?

Perhaps we can consider resident well-being as a sort of hierarchy of needs. It is difficult to be well if you are beyond sleep deprived, hungry, dehydrated, or need to go to the bathroom. These fundamentals need to be addressed before we can understand a higher level of physician well-being.

Once our basic physiological needs are met, we can then ask ourselves how we are coping with day to day stress. In residency, this might include managing our energy during long work hours, keeping up with the flow of information that we need to master, learning new EMRs, and navigating challenging patient, family, and colleague scenarios. All of these situations require a sense of self awareness, coping skills, and also the ability to reach out to our support system when we need help (and we all need help at one point or another).

The top of the pyramid is how we make meaning of what we are doing here as physicians. One of the core symptoms of burnout is feeling disconnected from one’s meaning or purpose. What are we here for? What did we do today that made a difference in someone’s health or life?

Reflecting on our impact is not just an opportunity for gratitude, but also a key part of how we form our identities as physicians. We all have the capacity, when the lower parts of the pyramid have been addressed, to take a minute to reflect on a meaningful encounter. Maybe we write a few sentences down in a journal, share a heartwarming moment, or just simply pause and notice when something goes right.

There is a good chance that all of us may get stuck at some point while building our own pyramid of wellness. That is okay. Check in with yourself. Ask for support. Seek professional help if needed. Take a break. Practice radical self care and compassion.

Your wellness is not a trend or a hashtag--it is a critical part of being sustainable in doing some of the most important and rewarding work imaginable.
The Never-ending Journey to Promote Health for All

Cynthia Haq, MD

“The attainment of the highest possible level of health is a most important world-wide social goal.....

Primary health care is the key to attaining this target.” - Declaration of Alma Ata, 1978

Commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Declaration of Alma Ata, the US and 193 additional members of the United Nations (UN) recently gathered in Astana, Kazakhstan to renew their commitments to provide primary health care (PHC) for 7.3 billion people. Why does this matter to family physicians and to the patients and the communities we serve?

The historic meeting was held in the former Alma Ata, Soviet Union, and signed by 134 member nations. World governments affirmed access to PHC as a fundamental human right. PHC was defined as both a level of service and a philosophy of care and included first-contact, personal, continuous, comprehensive, coordinated, acute, chronic, preventive, and community-oriented health care services. Sound familiar? These are key principles of family medicine!

My Journey
The Declaration and concept of “Health for All” inspired me to pursue medical school, family medicine residency, and to work where I thought the needs were greatest. My husband, three children and I moved to rural Uganda in 1986. My job was to train village health workers to improve child survival when one out of three children died before the age of 5. This initiation fueled my desire to develop family medicine training programs in medically underserved areas. Saving lives is immensely rewarding!

Progress and Challenges
Within California and the US, many people still lack access to affordable PHC. More than half of all US counties and large populations within urban communities face shortages of primary care professionals. Life expectancy and years of healthy life differ drastically between neighborhoods, by up to 20 years, and in some places, is worse than some low-income nations.

Family Physicians as Champions of PHC
Family physicians are the only physicians who provide whole-person, first-contact, comprehensive, continuity of care across the entire life span. Family physicians improve the quality and lower the costs of health care. We are the “quarterbacks” who prevent crises, and manage complexity. Quarterbacks cannot work alone and need others with different skills to round out the team.

Astana Declaration
Forty years after Alma Ata, the nations of the world gathered in Astana to renew their commitment to PHC. What has changed? People are more engaged, have more information and higher expectations for health. We have more evidence, more stakeholders, more resources and opportunities to achieve health for all. UCI Family Medicine and the Family Health Centers in Santa Ana and Anaheim are on the front lines of promoting access to essential PHC services. Thank you for being part of this remarkable progress. What will we accomplish in the next 40 years?

Spotlight on Stacey Rivera, LVN

Where did you grow up? I grew up in Buena Park, California (where Knott’s Berry Farm is)

Fun fact: I knew I wanted to be a nurse since preschool. I did my first wound dressing in the preschool bathroom to a classmate who had cut her knee open on the black top. I cleaned it with cold water and soap, then I dried the wound and slapped a Band-Aide on it. I got an award from the principle for my act of kindness.

How long have you been working at UCI? Two years on 11/21/18.

What is your favorite part of working with the residents? My Favorite part of working with the residents is that they’re only with us for three years...just kidding. All jokes aside my favorite part is that they come fresh from school and they don’t assume they know everything. It’s amazing to see their willingness to learn to give the best possible care to each patient. It is rewarding to be a part of their journey and growth throughout residency.

What is your funniest FHC-SA moment? When the residents gave Dr. Giron Jordans for his birthday. He was glowing and smiling from ear to ear. He ran down the hall after all the patients had left and was showing us how fast and high he could jump with his brand new Jordans. It was priceless.

Any words of advice for our new residents? To really take it all in because the next three years go fast. You will acquire many experiences with your fellow residents, attendings, and support staff that you will take along wherever you go.
José Mayorga, MD
Chief Medical Officer of the UCI Family Health Center

Describe your role as CMO of the Family Health Center
a) Fixer of Stuff – I enjoy observing and hearing what our care teams do daily. I want to make sure they have a positive workday experience. Improving clinical operations is critical to delivering high quality and efficient care. It should result in a positive experience for both patients and providers.
b) Collaborator – Delivering patient care is a team sport. Working with the entire care team to improve care is critical to the success of the FQHC. I love when people identify a problem and provide suggestions to improve it.
c) Servant Leader – I work for you. I want to know what is going well, what is not, and how I can help. I oversee the quality of care, patient and provider experience, and contribute to clinical operations. My other main function is providing a clinical perspective as we develop a strategic plan for the FQHC.

Where did you attend medical school and residency? UCI School of Medicine for medical school and Harbor UCLA for residency.

What do you enjoy most about the Family Medicine specialty? Where do I begin? It is the one specialty that cares for the entire family. We are able to foster long standing relationships with our patients. A significant advantage is that it allows us to relate to every specialty in medicine.

What do you enjoy about teaching residents? I owe my professional success to my mentors. I want to honor them by giving back. It is one of the main reasons why I came back. I want to share my experience with the future workforce and provide residents a glimpse of what medicine is in “the real world”.

How do you de-stress? I like to watch comedies and shows on HGTV. I also enjoy exercising and spending time in my backyard with family and friends. If I have time, I enjoy exercising, golfing, scuba, and watching the Lakers.

What is your favorite restaurant? It depends…I love Red Robin’s burgers and french fries (free refills)! My ultimate favorite upscale restaurant is Mastro’s Steakhouse (I enjoy the rib eye steak, lobster mash potatoes, and buttercake).

Do you have any words of wisdom for our residents? When life gives you lemons, make lemonade, and if it’s too sour…suck it up because in the end you will be better for it. I have learned the most from my mistakes. Residents must acknowledge that it happened, take responsibility for it, and ask how you can be better.
Meet our New Faculty

Jeffrey Arroyo, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor and PRIME-LC Track Faculty Advisor

Hi everyone! I am so excited to have the opportunity to continue working with all of you. I owe so much to this program and cannot imagine being anywhere else. One of the main strengths of our residency program is the commitment to providing compassionate care to all of our patients. I find inspiration working with residents as they develop innovative ways to assist their patients live healthier lives. This is an exciting time for the residency program and I look forward to great things ahead. To all the residents, please feel free to reach out to me if you have any issues or concerns. I know that it can be a challenging time but our job as faculty is to help you succeed and achieve your dreams.

Edna Biddy, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor, Division of Geriatric Medicine & Gerontology

I am honored to be part of the UCI family. My medical interest is Geriatric Medicine. I did my FM residency at the University of California, Riverside, then completed my fellowship in Geriatrics at UCLA. I enjoy working with older adults and find it highly rewarding to be able to participate in their well-being. I grew up in a tightly-knit family and we are always in touch despite our busy schedules. My hobbies include running, photography, and spending time with my fiancé, family, and dogs. You can find me at the Senior Health Center or at UCI nursing home facilities.

John Billimek, PhD
Assistant Professor & Director for Community Engagement and Administration, PRIME-LC

I’m a psychologist and full time research faculty member who studies health disparities and the ways our health care system can be more responsive to people dealing with challenging circumstances. In July, I was appointed Director of Research and I am already having a blast getting to know the creative interests of our faculty and residents. My favorite part of my job is hearing great ideas, and helping “unlock” them by bringing people together to collaborate. I also lead our Community Engagement efforts and work with our medical students in PRIME-LC. I hold appointments in General Internal Medicine and our Health Policy Research Institute. I collaborate with many different community partners including LiveHealthyOC, Latino Health Access and the Health Scholars Program. Finally, I lead an undergraduate mentorship program called the HELIOS lab (theHELIOSlab.org) providing professional development mentorship and research opportunities in clinical and community settings for undergraduates with a heart for working in medically underserved communities. HELIOS students would love to work with you, too! I couldn’t have found a better home than UCI Family Medicine.

Anjani Kolahi, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor, Hospitalist Program

I’m originally from Southern California and after 10 years away, I’m happy to be back in Orange County. I was a Bruin as an undergrad (UCLA), then went out to the east coast for medical school at SUNY Buffalo and then trained and stayed as an attending at UCSF Fresno. Most recently, my family and I moved from Albuquerque where I was faculty at University of New Mexico. As we searched for work closer to our families, I was most excited about the opportunity to join UCI. My position here allows me to provide full-scope care in the clinical areas I’m most interested in- women’s health and inpatient medicine. I’m really thrilled that I will get to be part of resident and medical student learning in all of my clinical roles. I’m also interested in physician advocacy and supporting women in academic medicine. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family- we have an almost 3 year old and a newborn on the way as well as two dogs. I enjoy eating quite a bit, and love traveling to discover new foods. You may see me on inpatient for OB continuity deliveries, women’s health clinics, and as a preceptor for your continuity clinic. I look forward to getting to know you all!

Shea Suskin, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor and Assistant Director, Integrative Medicine Residency Track

Hi everyone! I am thrilled to finally be an official member of the UCI FM family, after having been “married in” via Dr. Kroner for the last few years. I finally found my own path toward all of you after a serendipitous meeting with Dr Kilgore at the Integrative Medicine for the Underserved conference last summer. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to share all of the wonderful tools of integrative medicine with our entire department, to help us take better care of our very special patients at the FQHCs, and hopefully of ourselves along the way. I am loving being back in the academic environment after working at an FQHC in Long Beach for the last 5 years, and feel I am already learning more from all of you than I could possibly ever teach. Thanks to all for the warm welcome I’ve received in the last couple months. I look forward to getting to know you all better as we work together over the years.
Family Medicine Residency Class of 2021

Stephen Chang, MD
Rush Medical College of Rush University Medical

Asma Husain, MD
Ohio State University COM

Audreyandra Imansjah, DO
Touro University California

Vincente Lam, MD
UC Riverside SOM

Danny Ngo, MD
East Virginia Medical School

Ekta Patel, MD
Boston University SOM

Raina Shah, DO
Touro University Nevada

Jenny Truong, MD
Oakland University William Beaumont SOM

Laura Zavala, MD
University of Minnesota Medical School
Dr. Stephen Chang

**Hometown:** Cypress, CA  
**Undergraduate:** UCLA  
**Medical School:** Rush Medical College

**Hobbies:** Basketball, cooking, traveling, and finding the best places to eat around the area.

**Why UCI:** I was born and raised in Orange County so having the opportunity to train in the same area that made me realize my passion for medicine was important to me. What set UC Irvine apart from other programs is the supportive culture of the residents and faculty alongside a unique training program working at both an academic institution and a federally qualified health center.

**Interesting Fact:** I like to make ice cream in my free time.

**Medical Interests:** I am interested in broad-spectrum family medicine with a particular interest in preventative medicine.

**Future Plans:** I hope to continue to practice family medicine in Orange County working in both the inpatient and outpatient setting.

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Dr. Asma Husain

**Hometown:** Corona, CA  
**Undergraduate:** University of California, Irvine  
**Medical School:** Ohio State University

**Hobbies:** I promise I used to be cool before I had kids! I do love eating yummy food, bicycling, foreign languages and travel.

**Why UCI:** I wanted a program to support my ideas and passions. Also, ideal location near family support.

**Interesting fact:** I have two daughters, a four and one year old. I'd like to believe they make me a better doctor, and human.

**Medical interests:** Women's health, OB, healthcare disparities

**Future plans:** Open book for now :) but somewhere where the need is greatest and I am continuously learning, teaching and developing myself.
Dr. Audreyandra Imansjah

**Hometown:** Jakarta, Indonesia / Hayward, CA  
**Undergraduate:** University of California San Diego  
**Medical School:** Touro University College of Osteopathic Medicine - CA

**Hobbies:** Hiking, traveling, discovering and eating delicious food  
**Why UCI:** Commitment to underserved medicine, opportunities for global health, and dedication to bring integrative medicine to all communities  
**Interesting fact:** I love accessories involving pigs (dolls, keychains, etc)! My family and friends know of this fact that all of the accessories that I have are all presents  
**Medical interests:** Underserved/community medicine, global health, integrative medicine, and women's health  
**Future plans:**  
- Have a family of my own  
- Work in an underserved community in CA while being actively involved in global health  
- My dream: build a sustainable clinic in an underserved, rural third world country where medicine is currently non-existent and provide medical assistance to that community

Dr. Vincente Lam

**Hometown:** San Diego, CA  
**Undergraduate:** UC Riverside  
**Medical School:** UC Riverside School of Medicine

**Hobbies:** When I have time for myself, I enjoy spending it outdoors! I love hiking, camping, surfing, snowboarding, photography and videography. I'm also passionate about music, playing piano and singing. Occasionally, you may see me breakdancing on the dance floor.  
**Why UCI:** Diversity! Diversity of the community. Diversity of the patient population. Diversity of the rotational experience. I believe that this diversity allows for a strong foundation we can build on to provide culturally appropriate care to our patients. I also loved the balance this program has between community and academic medicine which I find very unique. I also really enjoyed the people I talked to while here and thought I'd fit right in. Lastly, I am in southern California and close to family and friends, which is a huge plus for my overall wellbeing.  
**Interesting Fact:** I got 4th place in a chess tournament in 5th grade.  
**Medical interests:** Growing up in an impoverished, immigrant neighborhood in San Diego, I developed a passion early on for working with underserved communities. I took those interests with me throughout my time in medical school, managing free clinics and educational projects for the communities of the Inland Empire. Recently, I found interests in global health from my time working in remote regions of Vietnam. I hope to continue these passions as a resident at UC Irvine.  
**Future Plans:** I hope to stay in the local area to continue serving our diverse population. Additionally, I hope to practice a hybrid of both inpatient and outpatient medicine.
Dr. Danny Ngo

**Hometown:** Placentia, CA  
**Undergraduate:** UC Irvine  
**Medical School:** Eastern Virginia Medical School

**Hobbies:** Basketball, Lakers, watching Netflix, trying new food places, and hanging out with friends and family.

**Why UCI:** Home! I knew I wanted to return to Southern California to be near friends and family for my residency training. Also, UCI offers a unique opportunity to train at both an academic center and community hospital. All the faculty and residents I met were extremely friendly and welcoming so I knew this was the atmosphere I wanted to train in.

**Interesting Fact:** I realized how much I love biscuits n gravy and fried chicken while going to school in Virginia.

**Medical Interests:** Adolescent medicine and integrative medicine.

**Future Plans:** Outpatient Medicine.

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Dr. Ekta Patel

**Hometown:** Orange County, CA  
**Undergraduate:** Boston University  
**Medical School:** Boston University School of Medicine

**Hobbies:** I love hanging out with friends, spending time with family, going to the beach, visiting National Parks, dancing, listening to music, and cooking (when I have the time).

**Why UCI:** Having grown up in the area, I wanted the opportunity to work with and give back to my community. I was looking for a program that had a good balance between academic medicine and a strong connection with the community. I was blown away by the learning opportunities at UCI, which would make me a truly well-rounded Family Physician. I also appreciate the great effort the clinics make to help improve patient access to medical care, regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. I am honored to be a part of such a great program and to be welcomed by such a wonderful Family of providers.

**Interesting Fact:** I am a lifetime Girl Scout – I completed my Gold Award Project (which is equal to the Boy Scout Eagle Project) and hope to use my mentoring experiences from Scouts as a physician!

**Medical Interests:** I am interested in women’s health and adolescent medicine. I am especially passionate about patient education to help improve health literacy.

**Future Plans:** I hope to continue working in the community here, in Orange County. I want to work in a setting where I can have opportunities to help educate patients and their families while also getting to know the people and their culture better on a personal level.
Dr. Raina Shah

Hometown: Cerritos, CA
Undergraduate: UC Irvine
Medical School: Touro University- Nevada

Hobbies: When I’m not eating, sleeping, or studying I love painting, swimming, hiking, and spending as much time as I can with my family and friends. Did I mention I like eating?!

Why UCI: Orange County is a very family oriented community. You can see that value reflected in the training and ideals within the Family Medicine Residency Program. The school allows its residents to explore various interests and encourages and supports out-of-the-box ideas to help patients reach healthy goals and better lifestyles.

Medical Interests: I have a big interest in the arts and humanities of Medicine and medical training. I believe bridging art and science leads to a greater understanding of illness, prevention, and the importance of mental health. I am also interested in global medicine and finding ways to adopt underserved communities and provide help until communities can stand on their own.

Future Plans: My goals in residency include finding the best and most creative ways to individualize care for my patients. Eventually I would like to travel to other countries to compare cultures and international healthcare practices that can be implemented back here, in OC.

Dr. Jenny Truong

Hometown: Westminster, CA
Undergraduate: UC Irvine
Medical School: Oakland University William Beaumont

Hobbies: Tennis, wrestling, ukulele, hiking, working out, and eating food.

Why UCI: Close proximity to home and a diverse community was very important to me. UC Irvine cares for marginalized patients which make my work feel much more fulfilling. It is such a privilege to practice medicine where I am both wanted and needed.

Interesting Fact: Placed 4th in the state of California for women’s high school wrestling at 108 pounds.

Medical Interests: Underserved medicine, healthcare systems, and advocacy.

Future Plans: Pay off all my loans…but seriously, run my own free clinic and develop a better solution to providing quality long-term healthcare to an area in high need.
Dr. Laura Zavala

**Hometown:** Long Beach, CA  
**Undergraduate:** UCLA  
**Medical School:** University of Minnesota Medical School

**Hobbies:** I enjoy spending time with my family as well as trying to be a good auntie. I love to cook, bake, and love to try new recipes. I like to exercise and read. I enjoy watching Netflix with my significant other.

**Why UCI:** UCI was the perfect match for me. Their mission to provide quality healthcare that is culturally competent and serving those with the greatest needs & less access to care is something I want to be a part of. Ultimately, the academic-community hybrid program, reputation, and patient population easily made UCI my number 1 choice. The PRIME-LC Program was also a huge plus.

**Interesting Fact:** I used to live in Mexico when I was a kid. My grandpa had cows, goats, and chickens. I once tried to sneak in to milk a cow by myself.

**Medical Interests:** I am interested in working with the underserved, particularly the Latino community. I also enjoy geriatrics and community medicine.

**Future Plans:** I am still not sure what I would like to do. I have thought of pursuing a fellowship in geriatrics or community medicine. However, I have also thought of seeking a faculty position so that I can continue to work with students and residents.