

# PCD NEWSLETTER

THIS ISSUE: WELCOME | NOTABLE EVENTS

## Director's Corner



Dear members of the Division of Precision and Computational Diagnostics (PCD),

Welcome to the seventeenth issue of our Divisional Newsletter. We are excited to welcome four new members to our division. Samantha DiPompeo joins us as an administrative assistant in the Center for Personalized Diagnostics and Cytogenetics, and Nicole Yap joins our Molecular Pathology team as a technologist. In addition, we are very lucky to have two new Molecular Genetic Pathology Fellows, Sofia Garces-Narvaez and Ju-Yoon Yoon.

We are always proud of the important research and work our faculty and staff conduct here on a daily basis and love it even more when they share their work with the scientific community at large. Many of our members have recently presented and/or published their research, attended conferences, and even taken steps to bring what we do to developing countries. Be sure to check out these impressive accomplishments!

Exciting life events are happening for members of our division. After 4.5 years of service, to the PCD and 25 years in the industry, we offer a bitter sweet goodbye to Arlene Carlton, one of our Cytogenetic technologists. She is retiring and although we'll miss her, we wish her happiness in this next chapter. In addition, Molecular Pathology held a baby shower for technologist, Jessica Sondermann, as she prepares for an exciting new chapter welcoming her second child. Read all about both on page 3.

Additional items highlighted in this issue include a look at this year's PCD Fantasy Football Battle Royale, news articles featuring division members, and a No Shave November challenge for everyone!

Fall is a time where many return to school and continue on their journey of education. Let us follow suit and use this time to reignite our pursuit of knowledge and continue to learn and grow in our endeavors.

### Kojo Elenitoba-Johnson, MD

## Welcome

### Samantha DiPompeo, BA

Samantha is the new Administrative Assistant for the Center for Personal Diagnostics and Cytogenetics.



Samantha is a Philadelphia native. She received her bachelor's degree in Education from Temple University in 2015 and has been a middle school teacher in a public charter school in Germantown for the past four years. She is excited for this new career opportunity with Penn Medicine as an administrative assistant with the Center for Personalized Diagnostics. She looks forward to pursuing her graduate degree part-time in organizational leadership and corporate communication in the coming years. In her spare time she enjoys teaching private music lessons to children and singing in various local groups as well as spending time with her friends tailgating Temple Football games!

### Nicole Alyson Yap, MLS(ASCP)CM

Nicole is a new medical technologist in the Molecular Pathology lab at HUP.



Nicole is from Manila, Philippines. She graduated with a BS in Life Sciences from Ateneo de Manila University and a BS in Medical Technology from East Stroudsburg University. Now working in the Molecular Pathology laboratory of HUP as a professional medical technologist, she loves baking, reading, and is crazy about dogs. She is looking forward to her upcoming wedding!

## Welcome New Fellows



We would like to welcome Sofia Garces-Narvaez and Ju-Yoon Yoon as our 2019-2020 MGP Fellows. They will be travelling the Molecular circuit from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Be sure to welcome them as they come to a department near you.

Getting to know Sofia and Ju-Yoon is really easy to do. They both love to talk, and are willing to offer up any information that you ask of them. To prove this, we asked them a few simple questions. Here is what they had to say:

**Name:** SOFIA GARCES

**Hometown:** I was born in Quito, Ecuador. Grew up in Guayaquil, Ecuador. In the USA since 2011; have lived in Miami and Houston. Currently Philadelphia. I am a nomad.

**Last Position Held and Where?**

Surgical Pathology Fellow in Mount Sinai Medical Center, Miami Florida. Before that, Hematopathology Fellow at MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas.

**If you could breed two animals together to defy the laws of nature what new animal would you create?**

A poodle with a Golden retriever. Oh wait, they already did that!

**What is something you get wrong almost every time you do it?**

Video games. Hate them.

**What weird food combinations do you really enjoy?**

I add green Tabasco sauce to virtually everything.

**What personality trait has gotten you in the most trouble?** Being too apologetic. Makes me look insecure.

**What is the best piece of advice you've received?**

Be kind to everyone- My mom

**Name:** JU-YOON YOON

**Hometown:** Toronto, Canada

**Last Position Held and Where?** AP resident, University of Toronto

**If you could breed two animals together to defy the laws of nature what new animal would you create?**

A Capybara and Lion... on steroids...

**What is something you get wrong almost every time you do it?**

Buying clothes (according to my wife)

**What weird food combinations do you really enjoy?**

Korean instant noodles & Indian curry (palak paneer)

**What personality trait has gotten you in the most trouble?**

That drive to get the job done quickly

**What is the best piece of advice you've received?**

That intentions are important, but more important is how something is perceived on the receiving end

# NOTABLE EVENTS

## Bringing Genomics to Developing Communities



The members of the CGP include an international team of individuals with broad expertise in clinical genomics, laboratory medicine, test development, pathological diagnostics, and medical oncology.

### Introducing the IFCC Working Group on Guidance for the Implementation of Custom-made Genomic Panels (WG-CGP)

By: Jennifer Morrisette & Robyn Sussman

The new working Group on Guidance for the Implementation of Custom-made Genomic Panels (CGP) is part of the new Emerging Technology Division (ETD). The ETD provides current awareness of emerging technologies likely to have important roles in clinical diagnostics in the near future. The WG-CGP will address the difficulties developing countries may have in the implementation and interpretation of genomic findings by providing educational materials, access to industry partners and a practical framework.

Next generation sequencing (NGS) and other genomic tools are increasingly being used as part of the diagnostic work-up in the academic medical oncology hospital setting. Implementation of NGS assays can be costly and complex, which can be prohibitive in a setting with limited genomic experience, such as a community hospital. Genomic testing can range from simple to extremely complex. For more complex cases, timely detection of targetable mutations is beneficial to patients, and therefore clinically validated testing of critical molecular targets in-house is desired.

The group of experts plans to first develop a current awareness website on genomics that will include educational material for genomic test development, a directory of companies active in the clinical diagnostic applications of oncology driven NGS panels, and links to educational webinars and seminal papers in genomics. Second, they'll compose a manuscript describing best practices for validation of custom-made genomic panels, after which they'll research a manuscript opinion on best practices for moving genomics into emerging economies. Lastly, they plan to aid in the identification of an appropriate hospital or clinic to perform genomic testing associated with targeted therapy in the oncology setting.

The greatest obstacles they'll face in implementing genomic testing in developing countries are the lack of trained personnel, costs associated with it, and finding the right hospital. The hope is that the website, with its plethora of educational resources, along with manuscripts written by experts in the field, will address many of the issues associated with lack of trained personnel and offer guidance where needed.

Genomic testing in the community hospital can be difficult due to lack of proficiency needed for validation and analysis, which is compounded in nations that have more limited local expertise. The clinical needs for mutation detection can differ considerably between countries due to different rates of cancers and available treatment options. The working group will survey clinicians to better understand the local needs in emerging nations, and write a manuscript detailing our findings.

Through this process we hope to identify hospitals or clinics where genomic testing will improve the health care of the local community, and help validate and implement routine clinical testing in these locations.

## Path and Lab Medicine Research Day



Earlier this month, three of our very own faculty presented at the Pathology and Lab Medicine Research Day.

Viviana Van DeerLin, MD, PhD, Professor of Pathology & Laboratory medicine, presented on the topic of "Translational Neurogenetics: How my research studies on variations in C9orf72 helped improve clinical genetic testing and patient care"



Robert Faryabi, PhD, an assistant professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and Cancer Biology, presented on "Notch-instructed 3D cancer genomes."



Malay Haldar, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, presented on Cancer Immunology.

The PCD is very proud of our faculty and the important work they do each day. Therefore we are always excited when they get to share their work with the world and educated others. Congratulations!

## Publications

Congratulations to members of the Center for Personalized Diagnostics on their recent publications:

### ***Development and Validation of Molecular Assays for Limited Tissue Samples.***

Sussman R, Rosenbaum JN. Acta Cytol.

### ***Validation of a Next-Generation Sequencing Assay Targeting RNA for the Multiplexed Detection of Fusion Transcripts and Oncogenic Isoforms***

Robyn T. Sussman, Amanda R. Oran, Carmela Paolillo, David Lieberman, Jennifer J. D. Morrisette, and Jason N. Rosenbaum. Archives of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine.

In addition to recent publications, Robyn Sussman, Molecular Development Assistant Director for the division, recently attended the NextGeneration Dx Summit in Washington D.C. where she sat on a panel and saw some interesting talks on the regulatory landscape for Next-Gen Sequencing. We love seeing our staff getting out of the lab and continuing to learn!

# NOTABLE EVENTS

## Thank You Arlene!



*After 25 years in the industry, and 4.5 with Penn, we say goodbye to one of our cytogenetic technologists, Arlene Carlton. We are so thankful for the time she's spent in Cytogenetics and the important work she has done over the years. As one of our senior techs, she has trained many of our current technologists. There is no doubt she will always have a lasting impact on our lab, even as she moves on. We will miss her, and wish her the happiest of retirements. We asked Arlene some questions about her time here, this next chapter of her life, and advice for others.*

### What did you like most about working at Penn?

I could not have asked for a better place to work during my final years of employment. As many have heard my stories, I have worked at many labs since I moved back to the Philly area (ten total cytogenetics jobs). I can especially appreciate this one- the key being "ownership" of my job. The cytogenetics lab here allows us the freedom to do our job working at our own pace, working on the areas that interest us the most, and working in areas that play to our strengths. I always felt like I mattered everyday here and felt like part of a team!

### What are your plans for retirement?

Retirement means a brand new home in Florida with a 2 car garage (one car and one golf cart to get around). Sid and I plan to bike, kayak, hike, and generally enjoy Florida and everything it has to offer. Our community has 4 pool areas and tons of other buildings/facilities available including tennis, pickle ball, wood shops, miniature golf, hobby and game rooms galore, plus a ton of planned activities and trips. We will not be bored!! Along with the old and new interests, I hope to find some volunteer work to use up my energy! Frankly it will be an adjustment for me but Sid has been happily retired for almost a year so he will be my role model.

### Do you have any advice for those who are early on in their careers?

For those of you still working, no job is perfect, but hopefully even on those bad days when you find it difficult to get out of bed and go to work, you will find something in your job to feel good about and that makes you feel that you somehow make a difference (sounds corny but it is true). Also keep in mind that you are never too old to reinvent yourself within your job or when looking for another opportunity. I have had bumps in the road late in my career and have always tried to adapt to each new situation that I find myself in.

## Congratulations Jessica!

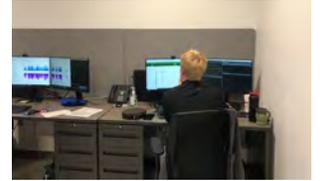


Jessica Sonderrmann, a medical technologist in the Molecular Pathology Department, is welcoming her second child in October, and this time its a girl! To help her celebrate, members of her department threw her a baby shower. As an added surprise, Sarah Herlihy, who is out on maternity leave, came with her son to help shower the mother to be with well wishes. To top it all off a beautiful pink cake was shared. In the words of Jessica, "The whole thing really was a wonderful surprise!"

## Fantasy Football PCD Battle Royale



Football season has officially kicked-off and so has PCD's annual Fantasy Football competition. Faculty and staff from across the division recently came together to draft their carefully chosen teams. It may look like work on their screens, but those pictured were actually checking out stats to figure out which players will bring home the win! Last year, Amanda Rosen of the CPD prevailed, but who will it be this year?



*The current team standings are pictured below. Check out some of these hilarious team names!*

CPD Fancy Pants	
RK	TEAM
1	Team Priore
2	Team Sussman
3	Julu Wanna Build A Snowm...
4	The Underdog
5	Team Limbo
6	Team Huge Deal

Maloney Madmen	
RK	TEAM
1	Team orr
2	Super Cam
3	Caerbannog Rabbits
4	84 Pandas
5	PA HERZOG
6	RUN CMC

## Tailgate Lunch



To celebrate the fact that football season is finally in full swing, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine invited members of PCD to a tailgate lunch! They provided tailgate favorites like hot dogs and soft pretzels, and were generous with the desserts they provided as well!! The conference room was decked out in football themed decor and those who wanted to, represented their favorite football teams! Team spirit was in full swing!!



# NOTABLE EVENTS



## What is No-Shave November?

No-Shave November is a month-long journey (November 1 through November 30) during which participants forgo shaving and grooming in order to evoke conversation and raise cancer awareness. Learn more about how you can get involved and start getting hairy!

## The Concept

The goal of No-Shave November is to grow awareness by embracing our hair, which many cancer patients lose, and letting it grow wild and free. Donate the money you typically spend on shaving and grooming to educate about cancer prevention, save lives, and aid those fighting the battle.

## Get involved

Participate by growing a beard, cultivating a mustache, letting those legs go natural, and skipping that waxing appointment. Put down your razor and set up your own personal No-Shave November fundraising page.

<https://no-shave.org/register>

If you're not ready to get hairy, sit back and support someone who is. <https://no-shave.org/donate>

## The Rules

The rules of No-Shave November are simple: put down your razor for 30 days and donate your monthly hair-maintenance expenses to the cause. Strict dress-code at work? Don't worry about it! We encourage participation of any kind; grooming and trimming are perfectly acceptable.

Your Mission should you choose to accept it... send us your before and after pictures and we will post them in the December issue of the newsletter.

# IN THE NEWS



## WAWA PLANS TO DOUBLE NUMBER OF ITS TESLA SUPER-CHARGING STATIONS

BY FRANK KUMMER

Vivianna and Peter Van Deerlin both own Teslas, recently taking a cross-country trip in one of them from their Moorestown home to San Francisco.

Finding a charge was easy because the electric vehicle's onboard computer plotted all the charging stations on their route, including those at hotels.

"We have become a full electric car family and we don't have any conventional gas cars," said Vivianna, a pathology and laboratory medicine professor at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

As president of the Delaware Valley Tesla Owners Club, she is pleased at the budding partnership between Tesla and Wawa to offer charging stations — though she still charges her car most nights at home.

Read the full article at:

<https://www.inquirer.com/science/climate/wawa-electric-vehicle-charging-stations-tesla-20190807.html>

## WANTED: NEWSLETTER VOLUNTEERS

We are in search of some volunteers to help out with the Divisional Newsletter. If you have any interest in writing or design and want to an outlet to express your talents please email Samantha DiPompeo:

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