

# The Bulletin

Saginaw County Medical Society

May 2026 | Volume 82 | No 4



Carla  
Newman

Liz  
Marshall  
Fam Med

Taylor  
Gardner

Erin  
Renee

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*The Bulletin can be viewed online at [www.SaginawCountyMS.com](http://www.SaginawCountyMS.com) under the Bulletin tab.*

COVER PHOTO: The next generation of leaders: (l-r) Drs. Cecilia Kraus-Horbal (with baby Elizabeth born nine days later), Liz Marshall, Taylor Gaudard and Jenny Romeu

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All statements or comments in the Bulletin are those of the writers, and not necessarily the opinion of the Saginaw County Medical Society. Contributions are welcome. We publish committee reports, letters to the editor, public health activities of the members, and some personal items (birthdays, weddings, graduations and like events). The Editor determines which are accepted. Advertisements are accepted as space is available at our going rates. Members may advertise office information, professional services, skills, and procedures, also at our going rates. We do not accept advertisements from non-members, or non-Saginaw hospitals.

The Bulletin is mailed free of charge to SCMS members as part of their membership. Complimentary copies are sent to various other parties. Others may subscribe at the rate of \$50 per year.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

# Reflections and Momentum

Furhut R. Janssen, DO FACN

**A**s I reflect on this past year serving as President of our medical society, I am struck by one overwhelming feeling, gratitude.

This year required SCMS to navigate a rapidly evolving situation as membership decoupling from MSMS moved from discussion to reality. Throughout that uncertainty and transition, one thing remained constant, the dedication and commitment of the Saginaw County Medical Society Board. These individuals took on the challenge of adapting to the unexpected realities and implications of decoupling while continuing to move our organization forward with professionalism, thoughtfulness and resolve.

That same spirit has been reflected throughout our local medical

community. Across our region, physicians and healthcare professionals have continued to show up for patients, colleagues, and communities during a time when healthcare itself continues to evolve at an incredible pace. The demands have been real and difficult, but so have the resilience, professionalism, and sense of purpose that continue to define this medical community.

I have always believed that one of the greatest strengths of our medical community is collaboration, and this year reinforced that belief time and time again. With every challenge that came our way, we came together to share perspectives, identify problems, and work toward meaningful solutions. In doing so, we accomplished far more than any one individual or group could

have alone. This year demonstrated that SCMS is at its strongest when it reflects the collective wisdom, engagement and energy of its members.

What gives me optimism is that we are also entering an exciting moment for our region and for our profession. There are now new opportunities ahead to strengthen healthcare delivery, strengthen advocacy, build partnerships, support the next generation of physicians, and elevate the voice of organized medicine in meaningful ways. We have momentum, and we have the people capable of turning ideas into action.

That brings me to what I believe is the most important message moving forward, we need your voice!

*continued on page 5*



That brings me to what I believe is the most important message moving forward, we need your voice!

## Thank You Key Providers!

*The SCMS would like to thank our dedicated Key Providers for continuing to provide support for SCMS Membership Meetings!*



# CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS FOR 2026\*

## REGISTER NOW!

**Tuesday, May 19, 2026**

Horizons Conference Center

**Board Meeting** - 5:30 p.m.

**Annual Membership Meeting** - Social (cash bar) 6:30 p.m.,  
Dinner, Meeting and Program at 7 p.m.

**Spouse/Significant Other Welcome (dinner fee applies)**

### PROGRAM:

#### SCMS Annual Membership Meeting

*Installation of Jennifer M. Romeu MD as President*

*Election of Officers and Directors for 2026-27*

#### SCMS Foundation

*Essay Contest Awards - Why I Want to Be a Physician in Saginaw County*

#### Presentation of Health Angel Award

*Amy Bartels Roe of the Mustard Seed Shelter*

#### Organizational Updates:

*Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at*

*Central Michigan University*

*CMU Medical Education Partners*

*SCMS Health Expo at Hearts and Paddles Pickleball Tournament*

*Barb Smith Suicide Resource & Response Network*

*Cathedral Free Clinic*

*BWell Saginaw*

### PLACE:

Horizons Conference Center, 6200 State Street, Saginaw



**Online reservations required**

**[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)**

**or scan the QR Code**

**Saturday, August 22, 2026**

Garber Courts Parking Lot, 1760 Fordney Street, Saginaw

#### SCMS Health Expo

See page 10 for details

**Tuesday, September 15, 2026**

Horizons Conference Center

**Board Meeting** - 5:30 p.m.

**Membership Meeting** - Social (cash bar) 6:30 p.m., Dinner,  
Meeting and Program at 7 p.m.

**Spouse/Significant Other Welcome (dinner fee applies)**

**DO's Welcome (dinner fee applies for non-members)**

**Speaker** – Lourdes Morales-Dopico MD

**Topic** – Pediatric Endocrinology (*tentative topic*)

**Online reservations required – invitations will be emailed in late August**

**Tuesday, October 20, 2026**

Horizons Conference Center

**Board Meeting** - 5:30 p.m.

**Membership Meeting** - Social (cash bar) 6:30 p.m., Dinner,  
Meeting and Program at 7 p.m.

**Spouse/Significant Other Welcome (dinner fee applies)**

**Program** – Candidates' Forum for the Mid-Term Election

**Online reservations required – invitations will be emailed in late September**

**Tuesday, November 17, 2026**

**Board Meeting/Annual Budget Meeting** – 6 p.m. via Zoom

*\*Subject to change*

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The future of this organization should not be shaped by a small group of people sitting around a table. It should be shaped by the ideas, experiences, and vision of physicians throughout our region. We are at a pivotal moment, one where we have the opportunity to reshape how we advocate for physicians, patients, and the future of healthcare in our region. Whether you are early in your career, nearing retirement, practicing in a hospital, clinic, private office, or community setting, your perspective matters.

Now is the time to tell us what you want this society to become. What challenges should we focus on? What opportunities should we pursue? How can we better support physicians and improve care in our communities?

I encourage you to reach out and share your ideas and perspectives. In the next few months, we will be forming an ad hoc committee to help shape the next chapter of our medical society, and we would welcome your involvement and input. Together, we can continue building a medical society that is effective, connected, relevant and forward looking.

It has been my great honor to serve alongside all of you. Thank you for the work you do every day and thank you for helping shape the future ahead.

Wishing you a summer filled with sunshine, time to recharge, and meaningful moments with family and friends.

## SCMS Membership Update and Future Outlook

As of April 18, 2026, the Michigan State Medical Society (MSMS) is no longer chartering county medical societies, a decision driven in part by a statewide decline in membership, as well as financial instability and governance challenges at the state level. As a result, members are no longer required to belong to both MSMS and the SCMS and may choose to join one or both organizations.

### What does this mean for our members?

- SCMS will continue to bill members for their county dues
  - o If you are unsure if you paid your 2026 SCMS dues, please contact Joan Cramer at [jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com](mailto:jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com) or call/text 989-284-8884
- MSMS will bill members separately for *optional* state dues starting this fall for 2027

Now more than ever, the SCMS needs your support as we take on responsibilities previously handled by MSMS. Maintaining a strong, unified local organization is essential to ensuring effective advocacy, protecting physician interests, and continuing to provide meaningful services to our members. With the continued support of our local physicians, we will move forward together and continue to thrive.

# Interoception

By Louis L. Constan, MD

**T**hat night, at supper, I relished my food with unusual gusto. “This is great honey!” Instead of the expected “Thank you,” she paused for a moment, looking puzzled. “Did you have anything to eat today?” Silly question, of course I had, but, assessing my memory, there was that image of me running out of the house at 6 a.m., after a call from the ER. Then, at lunchtime, that image of my morning schedule expanding to merge with my afternoon schedule.

It is a bit of a mystery how a person can actually, sometimes, forget to eat. Eating is so primal, so visceral, so absolutely essential to life. Yet it happened to me, and, truth be told, it happened more than once, possibly even with some regularity.

Recently, I discovered the answer to that mystery in, of all places, the Oxford English Dictionary. There is a perfectly good word explaining why I failed to eat all day. The word is **Interoception**. (Def) “The perception or awareness of the inner state of one’s body, sensing of signals from internal organs.”<sup>1</sup> Like **proprioception**, but about what’s going on in one’s vital organs, rather than in one’s arms and legs. Heartbeat, breathing, tension, headache, fatigue- that sort of thing. I was simply not paying sufficient attention to signals from my own internal organs.

Well duh! I’m a doctor, aren’t I? That’s what I’m supposed to do. It’s Medical School 101. Stop worrying about how

tired you are and focus on your patients’ issues! If you don’t take a good Review of Symptoms, you’ll never be a good doctor! Interoception, your own internal signals? Ignore those. Learn to understand the internal signals of your patient. The great physician himself, Hippocrates, 2,500 years ago, started the honored tradition of ignoring your own needs in favor of your patients. **Interoception** bad. **Allception**<sup>2</sup> good.

Yet, there is a growing body of research that, in patients, interoception deficits can lead to a multitude of ills. Anorexics cannot tell they are hungry; anxious people cannot tell when they are tense; depressives go overboard listening to bodily signals and develop symptoms galore. So here I was, a seasoned practitioner, with a diagnosable condition. Unable to be cognizant of what is going on inside my own body. Still, I was a pretty good physician, so where’s the problem? Unfortunately, there most certainly was a problem, and one that none of us should ignore. It is simply inevitable that sometime, somewhere, somehow, we will ourselves become a patient and will be forced to focus on that body we live in.

And a new disease; an emergent disease; a disease never before described in those 2,500 years, a disease that can increase the risk of heart disease, anxiety, depression, suicide, premature retirement; is forcing its way into the equation. I’m speaking, of course, about

Burnout, which affects almost half of all American physicians. Burnout raises some serious questions about that message of self-denial we received in Medicine 101.

Under modern conditions, must we always put the patient first? Under what conditions should we take a step back and put ourselves first? Should we abandon those 60-70 hour workweeks in favor of the societally-favored 40 hour workweek? Would doing so, by making us less available to patients, actually cause some harm to patients? Would taking more time away from the practice decrease our experience of patient care enough to make us less successful in an intellectually-challenging profession? If we’re tired, hungry, in pain and we ignore it; do we burnout and the patient thereby loses a trusted source of care?

When I skipped those meals, it was for the patients’ benefit. I, at the time, did not feel it was harmful to my own health. Of course, I now know that I was experiencing a deficit in interoception, which may have contributed to my eventual burnout. Such behavior was probably not good for me personally.

There is a myriad of different answers to the issue of burnout, and the questions it raises about medical practice. There are no clear answers. Meditation, burnout training, vacations, hobbies, exercise; all probably help some. The role of supportive spouses, friends, and staff has not been addressed. It should be. I’d love

*continued on page 7*



The great physician himself, Hippocrates, 2,500 years ago, started the honored tradition of ignoring your own needs in favor of your patients.

## SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR 2026-27

The SCMS Board of Directors approved the following Slate of Nominees for positions on the 2026-27 Board of Directors at its meeting on April 21, 2026. The Slate will be presented to the general membership for a vote at the Annual Membership Meeting on May 19, 2026. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Joan Cramer at [jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com](mailto:jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com) or call/text (989) 284-8884.

- President** – Jennifer M. Romeu MD
- President-Elect** – Taylor S. Gaudard MD (*President 27-28*)
- Past President** – Furhut R. Janssen DO
- Secretary** – Caroline G.M. Scott MD
- Treasurer** – Miriam T. Schteingart MD

- Board of Directors** (*Three year in line for presidency*)
- Kala K. Ramasamy MD (*President 28-29*)
  - Jisselly Sanchez Salcedo MD (*President 29-30*)
  - Brittany M. Garza DO (*President 30-31*)

- Board of Directors** (*One year*)
- Kai Anderson MD
  - Cecilia E. Kraus-Horbal DO
  - Iris A. Marteja Manlapit MD

- MSMS Delegates**
- Mildred J. Willy MD
  - Anthony M. Zacharek MD
  - Thomas J. Veverka MD
  - Mohammad Yahya Khan MD
  - Tiffany K. Kim MD
  - Christopher J. Allen MD
  - Claudia C. Zacharek MD

- Peer Review Ethics Committee** (*members are past presidents*)
- Danielle C. Duncan MD (term up 2026) (started May 2023)
  - Caroline G.M. Scott MD, Chair (term up 2028) (started May 2007)
  - Thomas J. Veverka MD (term up 2027) (started May 2024)

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to hear input from readers, in email to [louisconstan@hotmail.com](mailto:louisconstan@hotmail.com), or as a post on [louisconstan.substack.com](http://louisconstan.substack.com).

<sup>1</sup> Oxford English Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> By the way, I have been unable to find a word for the ability to sense another's bodily state. I suggest we call it Allaception, Alla being the Greek word for "other."

### ATTENTION: Office and Practice Managers



The SCMS is pleased to announce that we have been invited by the Genesee County Medical Society to participate in their monthly Office/Practice Manager Meetings beginning in **September**.

Meetings will be held on the second Thursday of each month from 9-10 a.m. via Zoom. Please note that meetings are not held in July, August, November or December.

At each meeting, participants suggest an insurer representative or guest speaker for a future session. In April, State Representative Matthew Bierlein joined the group and heard directly from office and practice managers regarding challenges with insurance companies—particularly BCBSM. Concerns discussed included the need to resubmit clean claims multiple times, delayed payments, and other administrative burdens.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us starting in September. Meeting invitations and the Zoom link will be emailed at the beginning of each month.

MEMBERS: Please email [jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com](mailto:jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com) with the name and email address of staff members from your office who would like to participate. Thank you!



### RETIREES MEET FOR LUNCH!

Retired physicians meet for lunch every Wednesday  
at 12 noon at **IHOP**,

2255 Tittabawassee Road in Saginaw.

Those attending are responsible for their own lunch,  
and the informal gathering lasts about an hour.

Join your retired colleagues whenever you like!

#### THE GROUP ALWAYS MEETS IN THE BACK ROOM.

If you are told no one from the group is there,  
please go directly to the back room and check for yourself!

If you have questions, please contact Joan Cramer at  
(989) 284-8884 or Dr. Caroline Scott at (989) 295-2721.

*Mission: To prevent suicide through education, advocacy, connection to resources, and support for those impacted by suicide.*

### What's on Barb's Mind? Mental Health Awareness Night at the Saginaw Spirit

The annual **Talk Today...Hope for Tomorrow Mental Health and Suicide Awareness Night** was held on Saturday, March 14 during the Saginaw Spirit v. Flint Firebirds hockey game at the Dow Event Center.

Wow! What an amazing night. Talk Today...Hope for Tomorrow was filled with energy, resources and some great music. Adaboy! did an excellent job singing the National Anthem and performing in the Jolt Celebration Club prior to the game. Seeing our impact video created by Max Dawson on the jumbotron was so special.

I am so proud of all our survivors who participated in the flag displays and Curt Baker who bravely spoke on behalf of our Survivors and his son, Matthew. Thank you to all of the resource tables who offered their care and services, our sponsors who support our mission, our volunteer raffle sellers, t-shirt throwers, and our Spirit hockey players who make us proud. Just like a winning team, we all have a role to play. When we show up for one another, we create a stronger, safer community for everyone. Together, we can remind those who are struggling that they are seen, valued and never alone. I am so honored to represent our Network and all the work we do. I am BLESSED!



Barb delivered a meaningful presentation on being present in our family, sharing insights on the importance of connection, mindfulness, and support within our closest relationships. Her message truly resonated with those in attendance.

We are also incredibly proud to share that Barb was recognized with an award for her outstanding service and dedication to promoting peace. This well-deserved honor reflects the impact she continues to make in our community and beyond.

### Sponsors Needed for 24th Annual Walk for Hope

The Network is preparing for our **24th Annual Walk for Hope: Depression and Suicide Awareness 5K Walk/Run**, taking place at **Saginaw Valley State University on Sunday, August 2, 2026**. This annual event raises funds and awareness for mental health and suicide prevention. The theme this year, **Superheroes**, celebrates the everyday heroes among us- those who support others, speak up about mental health and take steps to care for themselves. The event includes a 5K Run/Walk, family-friendly activities, music and resource tables. We anticipate over 2,000 participants joining us this year.

In 2025 the Network:

- Delivered 72 suicide prevention trainings to more than 3,660 participants
- Provided care and resources to over 1,600 individuals affected by suicide
- Reached 9,835 people through community events and vendor outreach
- *In 2024, there were over 1,500 suicide deaths in Michigan and 49,000 in U.S.*

The annual Walk for Hope funds our programs and services for the year. Without the help of our generous sponsors, we would not be able to achieve our mission to **prevent suicide through education, advocacy, connection to resources, and support for those impacted by suicide**. Please [CLICK HERE](#) for details on sponsorship levels and benefits. If your organization



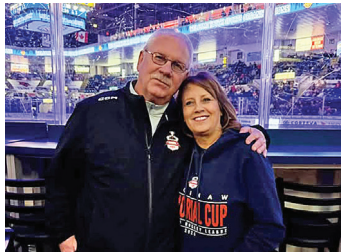
Resource tables in the Jolt Celebration Club prior to the game



Opening ceremonies



Puck drop



Frank and Barb Smith

### 4th Annual MIIPH Peace Symposium

On Friday, March 27, Barb and Lainey had the honor of attending the **Mridha International Institute of Peace and Happiness Symposium**, an inspiring gathering focused on building a more compassionate and peaceful world.

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chooses to sponsor and would like a resource table, please reach out to me for a discount code, as sponsors receive this benefit at no additional cost. We are a registered 501(c)(3) organization, making your contribution tax-deductible.

If you have any questions or would like to explore other ways to support this event, please feel free to contact us at (989) 781-5260 ext.1 or [info@srrn.net](mailto:info@srrn.net).

Thank you,

Barb Smith, President  
Barb Smith Suicide Resource & Response Network

*The Barb Smith Suicide Resource & Response Network is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. EIN Number: 38-3400293*

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE ON THE BOARD!

The SCMS would like to thank the following individuals for their service on the Board as they leave to pursue the next chapter in their careers. We sincerely appreciate their time, dedication, and commitment to the SCMS Board and its members.

### Director and Delegate:

- **Abishek Bala MD** - Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), in Ottawa, Ontario

### Resident Representatives:

- **Justine Czajka MD** completed Internal Medicine residency and will be working at MyMichigan Health Park Bay
- **Elizabeth Fearey DO** completed Ob/Gyn residency and is moving to Sioux Falls, South Dakota

### Medical Student Representatives:

- **Ania (Maj) Iannello** matched to a residency in plastic surgery at Southern Illinois University
- **Alexia Lucas** matched to a residency in plastic surgery at The Medical University of South Carolina



Please mark your calendars for this special day to come together, walk with purpose, and support hope and healing in our community. Stay tuned for event details and join us as we take meaningful steps toward making a difference.

♥ Barb Smith

📞 989-781-5260 ext 1

✉ info@srrn.net

🌐 www.srrn.net



DEPRESSION & SUICIDE AWARENESS  
5K WALK/RUN EVENT

# AUGUST 2, 2026 SVSU



POWERING SPONSOR



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of Michigan

## HEALTH EXPO VENDOR REGISTRATION

Saturday, August 22, 2026 | Garber Courts Parking Lot | 1760 Fordney Street, Saginaw 48601

TIME: Setup 9:15 am | Expo 10 am-1 pm | Tear down 1 pm

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER-** Monday, August 3, 2026 *(Space is limited- register early!)*

**COST-** \$50 per booth payable to **Central Michigan University** due Monday, August 3, 2026 *(nonrefundable)*

Please join the SCMS as we host our third **outdoor** Health Expo **"The Doctor Is In"** in connection with the **Pulse<sup>3</sup> Endowment at CMU Hearts and Paddles Pickleball Tournament powered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.**

- Vendors will be provided one eight-foot table on an 18'x18' site in the Garber Courts parking lot. **Vendors are responsible for bringing a canopy, chairs, table covering, etc.** Please do not request electricity unless you need it.
- You are invited to bring promotional items. If you plan to offer snacks, please ensure they are heart-healthy.

Name of Organization		
Contact Person/Title		
Address, City, State, Zip		
Office Phone	Cell/Mobile	Email
What is planned for your space?		# people working your booth
Will you provide a health screening? If so, what type? <i>Please bring chairs for those being screened/waiting to be screened.</i>		
Do you require electricity? <input type="checkbox"/> YES - <b>You must bring an extension cord</b> <i>Please do not request electricity if you do not need it. Electrical outlets are very limited.</i>		

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed ( <b>payable to Central Michigan University</b> )		
<input type="checkbox"/> Charge my	<input type="checkbox"/> AmEx	<input type="checkbox"/> Discover
<input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	
<input type="checkbox"/> Card #	<input type="checkbox"/> Exp __/__/__	<input type="checkbox"/> Security Code
Cardholder name	Cardholder address	
Payment authorized signature	Date	
Name (printed)		
Will you donate an item to be raffled off at the Health Expo? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
Please label with your organization's name and drop off at the SCMS table by 9 am on August 22		

- Please email a completed form for each vendor table requested to [jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com](mailto:jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com) by August 3, 2026
- If paying by check, mail to **CMU College of Medicine**, 1632 Stone Street, Saginaw, MI 48602 [CMUPulse3@cmich.edu](mailto:CMUPulse3@cmich.edu)
- Questions? Call Joan Cramer, SCMS Executive Director at (989) 284-8884
- Registration form also available at [www.SaginawCountyMS.com](http://www.SaginawCountyMS.com) under the [Health Expo tab](#)

FOURTH ANNUAL

# Pickleball Tournament and Health Expo



**\$55 Registration**

**AUGUST 22<sup>ND</sup> and 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2026**

Powered by



**Blue Cross  
Blue Shield  
Blue Care Network**  
of Michigan

Please join us at Garber Courts of Saginaw on **August 22<sup>ND</sup> and 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2026** for the **4<sup>TH</sup> Annual Hearts and Paddles Pickleball Tournament** in support of the Pulse 3 Endowment for Cardiovascular Health at Central Michigan University.

*New this year! We have added an adaptive athlete bracket.*

Proceeds raised from this event will support cardiovascular wellness and research programs in our community. **HEARTS AND PADDLES** will bring together players of all skill levels to compete in the fastest growing sport in America.

New to the game? Instructional courts and demo equipment will be on site. The 2-day tournament will include women's, men's, and mixed doubles brackets.

In addition to the thrilling competition, we are joined again this year by the Saginaw County Medical Society who will be hosting the Hearts and Paddles Health Expo. Numerous educational and health-related activities will be available. We invite everyone in the Great Lakes Bay community to come out and join us for this exciting event!

**In partnership with**



# When the First Fit isn't Right: Changing EM Jobs in Year One

Brittany M. Garza, DO  
*Emergency Medicine*



Switching emergency medicine jobs within the first year after residency is more common than many new physicians expect, yet it often carries an unnecessary sense of stigma. The transition from training to independent practice is one of the most abrupt shifts in medicine- clinically, professionally and personally. It's not unusual for early assumptions about a job to clash with the day-to-day reality once you're fully in it.

New graduates often choose their first position based on limited exposure: a single site visit, a few conversations or the promise of strong compensation. But factors like department culture, staffing ratios, patient acuity, administrative expectations and work-life balance can feel very different once you're working full-time. For some, the pace may be unsustainable; for others, a lack of support or misalignment with leadership can quickly lead to dissatisfaction.

Importantly, changing jobs early is not inherently a red flag. In fact, it can reflect insight and professionalism- recognizing

that a position is not the right fit and taking steps to find one that better aligns with your long-term goals. Emergency medicine offers a wide range of practice environments, from academic centers to community hospitals to freestanding emergency departments. Finding the right match can take time and firsthand experience.

That said, early transitions should be handled thoughtfully. Maintaining professionalism, giving adequate notice and avoiding burning bridges are critical. The emergency medicine community can be smaller than it seems, and reputations matter. It's also wise to reflect on what specifically prompted the change- whether it was scheduling, compensation, support or culture- so the next decision is more informed.

Ultimately, the first job out of residency doesn't have to be permanent. It's a starting point, not a lifelong commitment. Prioritizing fit, sustainability and personal well-being early in your career can set the foundation for long-term success and satisfaction in emergency medicine.



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## NEW MEMBERS

*We welcome the following new members to the Saginaw County Medical Society!*

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Fax (989)-746-7752  
[www.cmuhealth.org](http://www.cmuhealth.org)  
*Pediatrics*

### **Jennifer K. Caruso DO**

*CMU Health - Women & Children's Center*

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Saginaw, MI 48602-5303  
Office (989)-755-4515  
Fax (989)-755-4516  
[www.cmuhealth.org](http://www.cmuhealth.org)  
*Ob/Gyn, Maternal/Fetal Medicine*

### **Olubukola I. Faturoti MD**

*CMU Health-Pediatrics*

1000 Houghton  
Saginaw, MI 48602-5303  
Office (989)-746-7500  
Fax (989)-746-7751  
[www.cmuhealth.org](http://www.cmuhealth.org)  
*Pediatrics*

### **Brenda L. Ma DO**

*Covenant Cancer Care Center-Breast Surgery*

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Fax (989)-583-5046  
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### **Michael R. Raphael DO**

*Covenant Digestive Care Center*

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Fax (989)-583-7432  
[www.covenanthealthcare.com](http://www.covenanthealthcare.com)  
*Internal Medicine, Gastroenterology*

### **Thomas D. Schomaker DO**

*CMU Health-Pediatrics*

3875 Bay, Suite 1-S  
Saginaw, MI 48603-2423  
Office (989)-746-7600  
[www.cmuhealth.org](http://www.cmuhealth.org)  
*Pediatrics*

### **Affiliate Member**

**Jacob A. Stricker DPM**

*Covenant Orthopaedics-Gratiot*

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# My Irish Heritage

Louis Byrne MD



It began when **Dr. Sean Hoban**, the first of a veritable avalanche of Irish physicians, came to Saginaw in 1959. He told his friends that he had looked at a map and followed I-75 up from Detroit- home of the world's richest company at the time, General Motors. He saw the name Saginaw, wrote a letter to St. Luke's Hospital, landed an internship, and eventually set up his own practice. His colleagues liked his style and the administrators of then-hospitals St. Luke's, St. Mary's and Saginaw General, asked him to recruit some more Irish physicians like himself. Saginaw, we should add, at that time had one of the first and one of the strongest Family Medicine Residency programs in the country, and the program was eager to get more physicians into their Residency program. He and **Dr. Bob Feeley** got to work.

Through 1973, their efforts resulted in 40 Irish interns and more than 100 medical students coming to Saginaw, affecting the lives and health of thousands of patients who lived in this then-underserved region. Fourteen stayed in the region, including **Drs. Jim McCourt, Louis Byrne** and **Dermot O'Brien**.

**Dr. Byrne** arrived here with his wife, **Elizabeth**, in January 1970 (I thought I landed in Siberia), but before he could unpack, he made an unexpected trip to Saginaw General's Labor Section, where Elizabeth delivered their first child.

**Dr. O'Brien** met his future wife, **Judy**, while interning, which impacted his decision to return to Saginaw in 1970 for a three-year family medicine residency. "Local physicians didn't treat you as though you were a medical student," he said, "I loved it- although I was surprised that it was 'so flat.'"

**Dr. McCourt** found the doctors here "so engaging and so excited to get you involved." He embraced his new home and, as an OB-Gyn, went on to deliver more than 5,000 babies- and was known for reciting poetry and singing to the newborns.

The difficult situation back in Ireland contributed to the export of medical talent. Top notch medical training and an oversupply of doctors enticed Irish graduates to emigrate to

Canada, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand and England. Being Catholic meant that some of those areas were not welcoming to Irish immigrants...but not so Michigan, which, as a state, met them with open arms.

The Family Medicine Residency program was led by **Drs. Roy Gerard, Walter Averill, and James O'Brien** (another Irish transplant). The program thrived and later extended its success to MSU, where Drs. Gerard and O'Brien pioneered one of the first university-based family practice departments.

Another Irish physician was **Dr. George Ellis** and his wife, **Betty**, whose home was nicknamed the "Irish Embassy." The couple hosted gatherings and even recruited physicians to stay. "Every physician was welcome there," and they greeted guests with an open refrigerator and open bed.

So beloved was George that, when he was dying, **Father Randy Kelly** of **St. Stephen's Parish** invited others to come and pray with him. The place was packed! It seemed the whole Irish population of the region was there.

Two other pillars of the Irish community (also now deceased) were spouses **Dr. Mary Herlihy** and **Dr. Michael Grant**. Their impact on the St. Charles community was so great that after Mary's death, the community celebrated their lives with a community-wide party, and erected a memorial clock in the town square.

In addition to serving the greater community, these Irish doctors were always "good Catholics," contributing generously to St. Stephens, and especially to that Parish's St. Patrick's day fundraiser. In addition, they were not shy about initiating discussions of spiritual matters with patients in the throes of serious illness, particularly with patients nearing death.

The days of a heavy Irish medical presence in Saginaw are long gone; replaced now with an influx from still much-needed physicians from Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, but all of those many Irish physicians have left an indelible mark on our medical community.



## Healthcare Marketing & Design

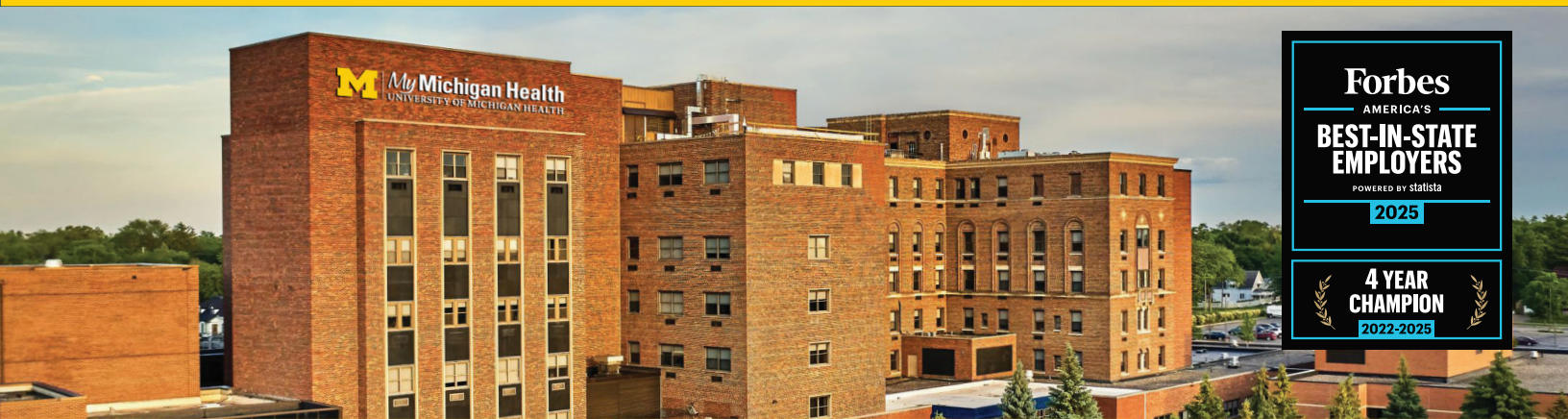
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*Designer for the Saginaw County and Macomb County Medical Societies*

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# MyMichigan Medical Center Saginaw



## Fast Facts

- Serving Saginaw and surrounding counties since 1874
- 268 reportable beds
- 1,900+ employees, volunteers, physicians and other personnel
- Introduced the region's first open-heart surgery, trauma and medical air programs
- Offers the first and only comprehensive stroke program in the region
- First hospital north of Flint to receive Comprehensive Stroke Center status in 2020; one of only 16 in Michigan and fewer than 300 nationwide
- Serves as a regional referral center for advanced specialty care
- Houses the Field Neurosciences Institute, supporting research and clinical trials
- Provides emergency air medical transportation through FlightCare, delivering advanced critical-care expertise since 1987
- Extends access to breast cancer screening through a state-of-the-art mobile mammography unit featuring advanced 3D tomosynthesis technology, serving Birch Run, Chesaning, Frankenmuth, Saginaw, and Vassar
- Holds national recognition for clinical excellence, including The Joint Commission Advanced Certification in Total Hip and Knee Replacement (2025), Comprehensive Stroke Center reaccreditation (2024), and U.S. News & World Report's High Performing Hospital in Heart Failure (2024-2025)

## Services

MyMichigan Medical Center Saginaw provides a full range of services in specialty areas, including:

- Bariatric Surgery
- Cancer Care
- Comprehensive Stroke Center
- Diabetes Services
- Emergency Care
- Gastro/Hematology
- Heart Care
- Imaging Services
- Infusion Services
- Laboratory Services
- Level II Trauma Center
- Musculoskeletal Care
- Neuroscience Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Pain Management
- Physical Therapy
- Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
- Primary and Specialty Care Providers
- Pulmonology
- Sleep Disorders
- Structural Heart
- Surgical Services
- Urology
- Wound Care

Learn more at [www.mymichigan.org/saginaw](http://www.mymichigan.org/saginaw)

## MyMichigan Medical Center Towne Centre



Located at 4599 Towne Centre Road in Saginaw, MyMichigan Medical Center Towne Centre opened in 1992. Recognized as the first major healthcare delivery site in Saginaw Township, the Medical Center underwent its first expansion in 1999. Today it offers a wide range of services, including a 24/7 Emergency Department, outpatient surgery, digestive care, infusion therapy and chemotherapy, wound care, imaging and laboratory services, a sleep center, and a short-stay unit.

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## Two Saginaw Locations

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# April Membership Meeting Minutes

The Saginaw County Medical Society Membership Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at Horizons Conference Center. **Furhut R. Janssen DO**, President, called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Dr. Janssen welcomed speaker **Tina L. Tanner MD, Natalie Shaheen**, members, residents, medical students and guests.

Dr. Janssen thanked the following Key Providers in attendance for their ongoing support of SCMS programs:

- **HealthSource Saginaw** – **Maryann Duchene RN, Daniel A. Duffy DO** and **Nathan Holt**
- **Quality Sleep & Neurology** – **Stacy Gage** and **Ti'Era Jones**
- **Renue Physical Therapy** – **Kimberly Barcalow PT DPT, Tom Hetzner** and **Diane Kirkbride PT DPT**

Dr. Janssen introduced **Natalie** and **Dr. Sam Shaheen**.

Natalie provided a presentation on **RxKids®**, and Dr. Shaheen spoke on funding for the program.

Dr. Janssen then conducted business of the SCMS:

- The Minutes of the October 21, 2025, Membership Meeting were attached to the agenda. **MOTION: Approve the Meeting Minutes as presented. MOTION APPROVED.**
- Introduced new members attending the meeting:
  - o **Syed Saad Ali MD**, PGY-1 Family Medicine
  - o **Daniel Evans MD**, PGY-1 Emergency Medicine
  - o **Sahar Galal MD**, PGY-2 Psychiatry
  - o **Manal Mukhtar MD**, PGY-2 Psychiatry
  - o **Hareem Muzaffar MD**, PGY-2 Psychiatry
  - o **Alexander Szabo MD**, PGY-1 Internal Medicine
- Updated members on the recent separation of the **Michigan State Medical Society** from the county medical societies and the effect that will have on the SCMS.
- Thanked **Dr. Sam Shaheen** for his service and support of the SCMS as President and CEO of **CMU Medical Education Partners** and wished him well in future endeavors.
  - o Welcomed and pledged support for **Delicia Pruitt MD** as Interim Executive Director of **CMU Medical Education Partners**.

- Notified members that **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan** has paused implementation of **Modifier 25** that was scheduled to take effect on May 1, 2026.
- Reminded members to stay up-to-date on SCMS issues by viewing the latest issue of *The Bulletin* which is available at [www.SaginawCountyMS.com](http://www.SaginawCountyMS.com).
- Notified members nominations for the **2026 Health Angel Award** are due April 30, 2026.
- Provided information on upcoming events (*flyers were attached to the agenda*):
  - o **MyMichigan 2026 Neuroscience Symposium** on Friday, May 1, 2026
  - o **BWell 2026 Public Health Summit** on Friday, May 1, 2026
  - o **Covenant 2026 Pediatric Symposium** on Friday, May 8, 2026

## PROGRAM

**Tina L. Tanner MD**, board certified family physician with Trinity Health Medical Group in Muskegon and graduate of the Family Medicine residency program at SCHI in Saginaw, presented a CME accredited program on *"Trauma Informed Care Using the R.E.S.C.U.E. Method."*

During her presentation, Dr. Tanner referenced an article written about her by the **American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)**, *"Survivor of Child Abuse Making a Difference for Others"* dated August 9, 2021, and authored by David Mitchell.

Dr. Janssen thanked the **Anna Dorr Cresswell Memorial Fund** for sponsoring Dr. Tanner.

The next meeting of the SCMS will be held on **Tuesday, May 19, 2026**, at Horizons.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joan M. Cramer  
Executive Director

*"As a therapist working with abuse survivors for 40 years, I found her presentation to be very thorough, profound, and hopeful, with specific suggestions on encouraging and appreciating step-by-step progress as clients recover. I particularly admired her humility as she shared how her own experience as a survivor enabled her to learn the R.E.S.C.U.E Method of treatment."*

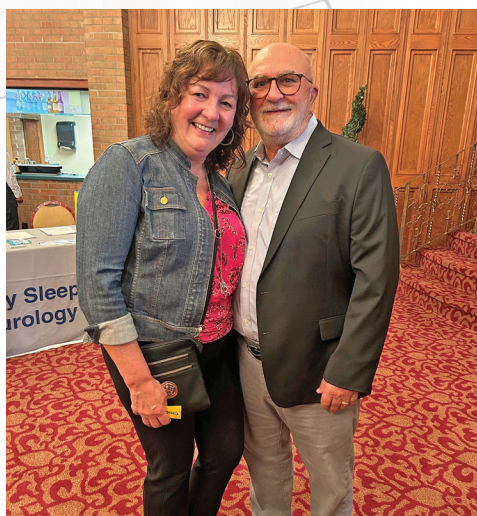
Jerry Willing, Psychotherapist & Marriage Counselor



*Dr. Sam and Natalie Shaheen*



*Dr. Tom Veverka with Tom Hetzner, Diane Kirkbride and Kim Barcalow of Renue Physical Therapy*



*Anne and Dr. Tony deBari*



*Drs. Sahar Galal, Amaresh Gogikar, Hareem Muzaffar, Justine Czajka, Manal Mukhtar, Alexander Szabo, Jisselly Sanchez Salcedo, Anushree Jagtap, Abishek Bala, Kai Anderson and Syed Saad Ali*



*Karen Constan, Dr. Tina Tanner and Dr. Lou Constan*



*Ti'Era Jones and Stacy Gage of Quality Sleep & Neurology*



*Dr. Dan Duffy and Nathan Holt of HealthSource Saginaw*



*Melissa Morse and Keri Benkert*

## WHY YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among children and adolescents ages 12-18. This training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care. Completion of this course will certify you as a Youth Mental Health First Aider.

## LEARNING FORMAT

- After completing a 2-hour, self-paced online course, First Aiders will participate in 4-5 hours of in-person, instructor-led training at the Delta College Downtown Midland Campus located at 419 E. Ellsworth Street in Midland.
  - May 27, 2026 from 9:00am to 2:30pm | [Register Here for 5/27/26](#)

## WHAT IT COVERS

- Common signs and symptoms of illness
- Common signs and symptoms of substance use
- How to interact with youth in crisis
- How to connect the youth with help
- Expanded content on trauma, addiction and self-care

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased mental health literacy
- Increased confidence/self-efficacy and likelihood to help a young person in distress
- Reduced stigma and increased empathy/acceptance toward youth with mental health challenges
- Use of YMHFA skills after the training

## AGENDA

- Welcome to Youth Mental Health First Aid
- YMHFA Self-Paced Introduction Recap
- ALGEE: Mental Health First Aid Action Plan
- YMHFA in Non-Crisis Situations
- YMHFA in Crisis Situations
- Self-Care for the Youth Mental Health First Aider

## COST

- This training is free to attend due to the generous sponsorship from the Midland County Youth Action Council, though registration is required. Lunch will be provided.

### Learn how to apply the **ALGEE** action plan:

- **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- **L**isten non-judgmentally
- **G**ive reassurance and information
- **E**ncourage professional help
- **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies

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5/27/26 Class



For more information, please contact Dallas Rau: [rau1d@cmich.edu](mailto:rau1d@cmich.edu) or call 989-746-7610

# Preventing Suicide in Michigan Men (PRiSMM)

## Suicide Prevention Webinar Series Special topics for Clinicians and Health Care Providers

Donna L. Schuurman, EdD, FT

JUNE  
\*TWENTYFOUR 2026

### Topic: Is Grief a Mental Disorder? The Pros and Cons of Labeling Suicide Bereaved Individuals

This 90-minute webinar examines the ongoing clinical debate around “prolonged grief disorder” as defined in the DSM 5 TR. While the manual categorizes prolonged grief as a mental disorder that may require psychiatric intervention, emerging perspectives caution that pathologizing grief, especially after stigmatized deaths like suicide, may create psychological injury rather than relief. Drawing from a humanistic and grief informed framework, Dr. Donna Schuurman will explore the practical and psychological implications of prolonged grief disorder, outline concerns raised by suicide bereaved individuals, and offer an alternative approach grounded in social context, meaning making, and best practice support for people who are grieving.

#### In this webinar, you will learn to:

- Identify grief informed best practices for individuals who are grieving
- Evaluate the effects of labeling grief as a mental disorder
- Challenge the dominating paradigm to treat grief by using a social and contextual humanistic framework

The intended audience for this webinar includes behavioral health clinicians, primary care providers, emergency medicine professionals, and health professions students who work with grief, suicide bereavement, or loss related concerns in clinical or training settings.

Date: 6/24/2026  
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm  
Location: Virtual

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#### CME Accreditation Information:

**DISCLOSURE:** The planners and speaker for this session have no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies to disclose.

**Accreditation:** Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at Central Michigan University is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

**Designation:** Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at Central Michigan University designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.5 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

The Central Michigan University Social Work Program, an accredited social work education program, is authorized by the Michigan Licensure Law Administrative Rule 338.2965 to award Michigan social work continuing education contact hours.

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## New modifier 25 policy implementation paused

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are pausing the implementation of a new reimbursement policy that would have reduced payment by 50% for E/M codes billed with a modifier 25 on the same date as a minor procedure by the same provider for the same patient. This was initially announced as being effective for all lines of business for claims with dates of service on or after May 1, 2026.

We originally announced the implementation of the new reimbursement policy in these communications:

- An article in the Feb. 2026 issue of *The Record*, [Policy update: E/M codes appended with modifier 25](#).
- A provider alert posted Feb. 26, [Clarification to policy update on E/M codes appended with modifier 25](#).

[Subscribe](#) to Provider Alerts Weekly, a weekly email with a list of links to the previous week's provider alerts.



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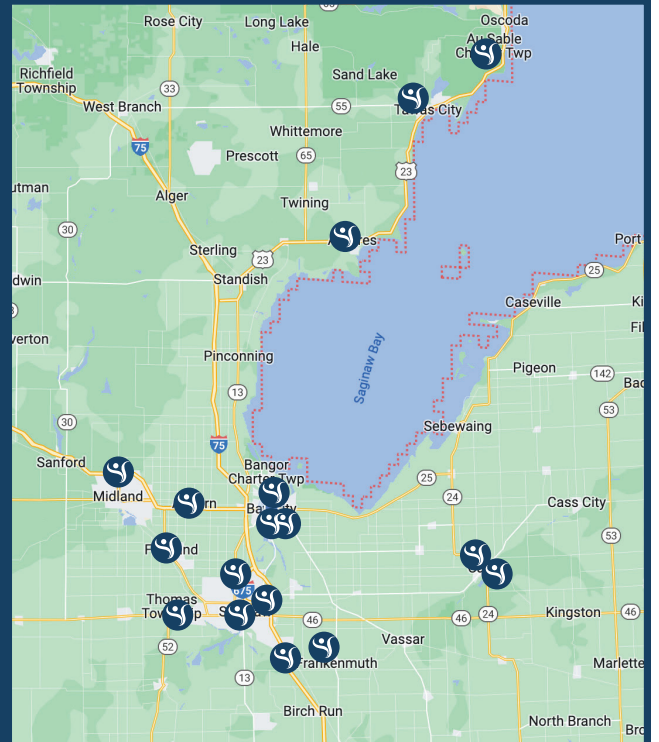


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(Noreen, Bridgeport)

*"From the first time walking in the doors I was treated with nothing but respect. I felt very comfortable here and even told my friends and family how much I liked Renue and how well I have been treated. Very friendly place and cares how the patients feels and really listens."*

(Chanda, Tawas)

*"I found hope at Renue! The support is outstanding, therapy is effective with their positive and motivated, professional interventions. It has been many years of dealing with nagging pain and missing out on life. After Renue, I am where I need to be in my process and have the confidence it takes to continue living my life with less pain."*

(Madeline, Bay City)



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## CMU Medical Education Partners Appoints New Interim Executive Director

by Alexandria Rene

**CMU Medical Education Partners (CMEP)** has appointed **Delicia Pruitt, MD**, as Interim Executive Director of the medical consortium, effective March 26, 2026.



In this role, Pruitt will work closely with the Executive Committee, CMEP leadership, and clinical and community partners to advance the organization's mission. Her priorities include developing and implementing a focused action plan to strengthen operational alignment, enhance organizational structure, and refine strategic priorities across the CMEP enterprise.

Pruitt expressed enthusiasm for her new role. "I am grateful for the opportunity to lead CMEP and excited to partner with our teams to drive meaningful impact in education, care and community health," she said.

Pruitt has been with **CMU Health** since 2016, serving as a family medicine physician. In addition to her leadership responsibilities, she will continue her clinical work with the **Saginaw County Health Department**.

Pruitt succeeds **Samuel Shaheen, MD**, who led the organization since 2013. During his tenure, Shaheen significantly expanded CMEP's residency and fellowship programs and was instrumental in the development of **Saginaw's Riverfront Medical Diamond**.

"Dr. Pruitt brings a strong commitment to public health, clinical education and community partnership," said **Tina Thompson, PhD**, Interim Dean of the **Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at Central Michigan University**. "Her experience and perspective will be invaluable as we continue to advance CMEP's clinical training mission and improve the health of the communities we serve."

For nearly 60 years, CMEP has played a vital role in delivering patient care in the Great Lakes Bay Region and in educating the next generation of physicians.

**Congratulations, Dr. Pruitt!**

## Match Day 2026 at Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine

March 20, 2026 | Author: Kelly Belcher | Media Contact: Kelly Belcher

On Friday, March 20, the **Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at Central Michigan University** celebrated **Match Day** with the graduating class of 2026.

All 105 graduating students have been selected to begin residency training in July. From this year's class, 53% of graduates are remaining in Michigan to continue their medical training. Our students have matched into a wide range of residency programs, 68% are pursuing primary practice roles and general specialties of need such as family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, general surgery and psychiatry.

These students have successfully navigated a rigorous medical education and training program with hard work, perseverance and dedication. Throughout their journey, they have balanced long hours of study, challenging clinical rotations and their own personal growth with resilience and professionalism. Now, they are prepared to take the next step into residency as highly competent and caring physicians.



The Match Day event marks the transition from medical student to resident physician and it is one of the most memorable moments in a graduating physician's medical career. They did not reach this milestone alone. College faculty and staff and numerous volunteer community educators devote their time, energy, and mentorship to our students, and that guidance feeds their curiosity, informs their decisions and helps set them on the path to becoming outstanding medical providers. Their success is a reflection of the unwavering support and dedication they have received from the Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine community.

Congratulations to Medical Student Reps to the SCMS Board of Directors, **Maj Iannello** and **Alexia Lucas**, each matching to Plastic Surgery at **Southern Illinois University** and **The Medical University of South Carolina**, respectively.

*continued on page 23*

## Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine Continues to Earn High National Rankings Related to Mission-Driven Outcomes

April 7, 2026 | Author: Kelly Belcher | Media Contact: Kelly Belcher

The **Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at Central Michigan University** has once again earned national recognition for delivering on its mission to train physicians who serve where they are needed most. The newly released **2026 U.S. News and World Report for Graduate Medical Schools** has ranked the college among the top institutions in the country for making an impact in rural and underserved regions.

Out of the 172 schools surveyed nationally, the college ranked in the top 10 (#9, up from #13) for placing graduates in underserved areas and in the top fifteen (#13, up from #20) for placing graduates in rural communities. This noteworthy achievement is a testament to the fact that our graduates are living our mission and making a commitment to serving vulnerable populations in designated health professional shortage areas. In addition, the college ranks in the top half of all U.S. medical schools in placing graduates into primary care specialties, reflecting a continued dedication to improving access to essential health care for all.

These outstanding rankings directly align with the college's mission to educate and train physicians who desire to serve rural and underserved populations across Michigan and beyond. Through a curriculum strengthened by community-

based learning and longitudinal clinical experiences, students gain firsthand exposure to the unique challenges and great rewards of practicing in these settings.

"Our college was founded on the belief that a mission-focused medical education program will make a significant difference in the health of our communities," said Interim Dean **Tina Thompson**. "Our students are advancing our legacy by choosing paths that align with our mission to provide exceptional service and increase health care access in areas of need. Our faculty, staff and leadership are so proud to support them in that journey."

## SCMS Foundation Sponsors Awards for 2026 Research Symposium

Since its inception 11 years ago, the **SCMS Foundation** has sponsored monetary awards for the annual **Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at Central Michigan University and CMU Medical Education Partners Research Symposium**. This year's event was held at the **Dow Event Center** in Saginaw on Friday, April 24, 2026.

The SCMS would like to congratulate PGY-2 Internal Medicine resident award recipients: **Drs. Robert Alhaddadin, Cleris Christian** and **Lyluma Ishfaq**. We would also like to congratulate the Summer Scholar award recipients, as well as the poster and oral presentation winners.



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## GUEST WRITERS WELCOME!

If you would like to write an article of interest to your colleagues for publication in a future issue of *The Bulletin*, please contact Joan Cramer at [jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com](mailto:jmcramer@saginawcountymys.com) for further information.

Articles are not designed for self-promotion, but rather as information for members.



## Covenant HealthCare Breaking Ground on New State-of-the-Art Orthopedics Facility in Saginaw

Covenant HealthCare is breaking ground on a new orthopedic facility that will expand access to advanced musculoskeletal care in the



Great Lakes Bay Region. Slated to be located on the Mackinaw Campus in Saginaw Township, the 25,700-square-foot outpatient center is designed to enhance access, coordination, and patient experience by consolidating comprehensive orthopedic services in one location.

A key feature of the new facility is **Covenant HealthCare OrthoExpress**, an orthopedic-focused urgent care offering walk-in treatment for acute bone, joint, and muscle injuries



as an alternative to the emergency department- one of the only urgent care locations of its kind in the area.

The facility will house a multidisciplinary team including

10 orthopedic surgeons across multiple subspecialties, podiatrists, a sports medicine physician, and advanced practice providers, along with integrated orthotics and prosthetics services. This initiative reflects continued growth in orthopedic and sports medicine services across the region and is designed to support coordinated, team-based care.

Construction is expected to be completed with an anticipated opening in summer 2027. The new facility will improve convenience and access for patients seeking high-quality orthopedic care close to home.

Learn more: [covenanthealthcare.com/ortho](https://covenanthealthcare.com/ortho)

## Covenant HealthCare and Henry Ford Health Announce New Clinical Affiliation, Comprehensive Neurosciences Partnership Based in Saginaw

A new neurosciences partnership between Covenant HealthCare and **Henry Ford Health** will expand access to advanced neurological care across the Saginaw region. At the center of the collaboration is **Covenant HealthCare in partnership with Henry Ford Health Neurosciences**,

which integrates Henry Ford specialists with Covenant providers through on-site



In partnership with  
**HENRY FORD HEALTH**  
Neurosciences

and virtual care. The program will focus on neurosurgery and spine, stroke, neurology, and neuro-oncology, strengthening local capabilities and care coordination for complex cases.

Covenant HealthCare manages approximately 15,500 neuroscience visits annually and has historically referred many of its higher-acuity cases to Henry Ford Health in Detroit. This partnership is expected to reduce patient travel while

expanding access to subspecialty expertise and clinical trials within the Great Lakes Bay Region. Plans also include development of a new joint neurosciences



outpatient facility on the Covenant Mackinaw Campus in Saginaw Township in the near future.

The neurosciences collaboration is part of a broader clinical affiliation agreement between the two organizations, creating a more seamless pathway for advanced care while preserving provider and patient choice. The affiliation took effect April 1, 2026, with phased integration of Henry Ford clinicians continuing throughout the year.

## Covenant Medical Group Welcomes



### Arturas Klugas, MD

*Covenant HealthCare Primary Care*  
829 N. Pine Road, Essexville, MI 48732  
989.671.5790



### Erika Roberts, MD

*Emergency Medicine*  
Covenant HealthCare Emergency Care Center  
900 Cooper Avenue, Saginaw, MI 48602



### Ali Ahmed, MD

*Hospital Medicine*  
1447 N. Harrison Street, Saginaw, MI 48602  
989.583.4220



### Zeeshan Arshad, MD

*Hospital Medicine*  
1447 N. Harrison Street, Saginaw, MI 48602  
989.583.4220

continued from page 24



**Yousef Barakat, MD**  
*Hospital Medicine*  
1447 N. Harrison Street, Saginaw, MI 48602  
989.583.4220



**Farah Fram, MD**  
*Hospital Medicine*  
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**Jagpal Gill, MD**  
*Hospital Medicine*  
1447 N. Harrison Street, Saginaw, MI 48602  
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**Aaron Kurian, MD**  
*Hospital Medicine*  
1447 N. Harrison Street, Saginaw, MI 48602  
989.583.4220



**Ifrah Majeed, DO**  
*Hospital Medicine*  
1447 N. Harrison Street, Saginaw, MI 48602  
989.583.4220



**Jarmin Mikhael, MD**  
*Hospital Medicine*  
1447 N. Harrison Street, Saginaw, MI 48602  
989.583.4220

**Save the Date!**

- **Covenant HealthCare Foundation: Red Carpet Events**  
**Wednesday, August 5 – Thursday, August 6**  
Apple Mountain Resort, Freeland  
Watch for additional details to come:  
[covenanthealthcarefoundation.com](http://covenanthealthcarefoundation.com)

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

**FIRST READING:**

Application for First Reading at May 19, 2026, Board Meeting:

**Veni J. Peram, MD** (*Ace Kidney Care*)

**Specialty:** Internal Medicine, Board Certified 2019 and Nephrology, Board Certified 2024

**Medical School:** Andhra Medical College, India, 1998-2003

**Residency:** SUNY Buffalo, NY, Internal Medicine 2006-09

**Fellowship:** Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, MI, Nephrology, 2012-14

**Prior Practice:**

Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, MI, Hospitalist, 2009-12 and 2014-17

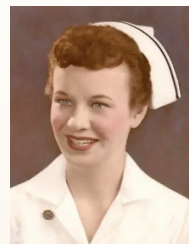
Providence Hospital, Novi/Southfield, MI, Hospitalist, 7/14-12/19

Covenant HealthCare, Hospitalist, 01/20-present

**Sponsor:** Dr. Claudia C. Zacharek

## IN MEMORY

**Marie Ann Masud, wife of the late Khan Z. Masud MD**  
**December 9, 1932 - March 23, 2026**



**Marie A. Masud**, of Frankenmuth, passed away peacefully surrounded by family and loved ones on March 23, 2026, at the age of 93. Marie was born on December 9, 1932, in Jacksonville, Ohio, to Fern Nora Buza (née Michels) and Edward John Buza. She was the eldest of her siblings, John (“Jack”) Buza, Joan Voight, Eva Bonanno and Michael Buza.

Marie was a devoted nurse and businessperson whose lifelong passion was caring for others. Her journey in healthcare began at St. Mary’s Nursing Program (class of 1954) in Saginaw. She then worked for Dr. Brender in Frankenmuth, providing in-home care and home deliveries. Over the next 20 years, she practiced nursing in Michigan and Illinois, going on to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Michigan State University (class of 1976) and Master of Science in Medical-Surgical Nursing from the University of Michigan (class of 1979). Dedication and hard work brought her many professional successes, including serving as Nursing Director in Chicago’s Oak Park Hospital and helping establish the first coronary care, intensive care, and progressive care units in Saginaw, a testament to her vision for specialized, compassionate medical care.

Later in her career, Marie founded Medical Specialists Billing, offering medical billing services to local physicians. MSB grew to include a dedicated staff of eighteen, many of whom she championed in developing their career paths to become nurses and physician assistants themselves. Her colleagues remember her not just as a business owner, but as a supportive mentor.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Marie was defined by her devotion to family and her quiet pursuit of knowledge and appreciation of nature. She found joy in her gardening, nurturing flowers with the same care she gave her patients. She was an avid reader who collected a small, personal library in her home. Surrounded by her beloved books, she would often share stories and wisdom gathered over a lifetime, with family and friends.

Preceded in death by her husband, Khan Z. Masud MD in 1991, she is survived by their three children: David Masud (spouse Amy Masud), Timothy Masud (spouse Michelle Masud), and Alexandria Masud; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Following Marie’s wishes, her family will hold a private celebration of life this summer. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to [MyMichigan Healthcare Foundation](http://MyMichiganHealthcareFoundation) in recognition of Marie’s lifelong commitment to nursing and education. Please leave condolences for the family at [www.snowfuneralhome.net](http://www.snowfuneralhome.net).



### **MyMichigan Opens New Lab in Saginaw**

*Patients now have more convenient options for laboratory services in Saginaw*

A new lab draw station is now open inside the **MyMichigan Family Medicine** office at 3570 Shattuck Road, offering a full range of clinical testing. Appointments can be scheduled in advance at [www.mymichigan.org/labs-saginaw](http://www.mymichigan.org/labs-saginaw) to reduce wait times, though walk-ins are also welcome. Hours are 7:30 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m., Monday-Thursday, and 8-11:30 a.m. on Fridays.

MyMichigan is also relocating the **Laboratory Services Department at MyMichigan Medical Center Saginaw** to the first floor near the front entrance and registration area, offering faster, more convenient access to lab services at this location. The new first-floor location is expected to begin seeing patients in early May 2026.

With these additions, MyMichigan now operates seven lab locations in Saginaw County- all offering online scheduling for added convenience. Patients do not need to be established with MyMichigan to access services, as signed orders from any provider are accepted. Lab results are delivered directly to the patient's **MyChart** portal and the ordering provider as soon as they are available, helping support timely follow-up care.

View all lab locations at [www.mymichigan.org/labs](http://www.mymichigan.org/labs)

### **Great Lakes Rheumatology Joins MyMichigan Medical Group**



**Albert Manlapit MD, of Great Lakes Rheumatology** has joined **MyMichigan Medical Group of MyMichigan Health**. While the practice name has changed to **MyMichigan Rheumatology**, patients can expect a seamless transition with no disruption to care. The office

will remain at its current location, 5453 Hampton Place in Saginaw.

Dr. Manlapit, a board-certified rheumatologist with over 30 years of experience in outpatient care, specializes in the diagnosis and management of rheumatologic conditions, including complex inflammatory and autoimmune disorders.

With a focus on preservation of function, prevention of joint damage and control of the inflammatory process, Dr. Manlapit

balances his clinical experience with current evidence-based advances in therapeutics.

For many patients, the uncertainty can feel heavier than anything else they're facing," Dr. Manlapit said. "The first step is to determine how the patient's symptoms affect self-care, mobility, family life, work and emotional well-being." He understands that no two patients' story is the same. Therefore, he partners with the patient to construct an individualized treatment plan, helping them navigate flares, adjusting treatment along the way and staying vigilant for any disease evolution. He understands that rheumatologic diseases are chronic, making continuity of care, access and trust essential for every patient.

Practice management and day-to-day operations, including installing MyMichigan's electronic medical record, which is powered by Epic, will be overseen by MyMichigan Medical Group, a multi-specialty, multi-location practice and wholly owned subsidiary of MyMichigan Health. To learn more call (989) 797-2663.

### **Hunt Named VP and Chief Administrative Officer for Clinical Care in Saginaw**

As MyMichigan Health continues to refine its leadership model to streamline operations across the health system, **Shane Hunt, RN, BBA, MSA**, has been named Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for Clinical Care at **MyMichigan Medical Center Saginaw** and **MyMichigan Medical Center Towne Centre**.



As VP and CAO for the Saginaw Medical Centers, Hunt is responsible for the clinical practice of nursing and daily oversight of all other clinical departments in collaboration with system vice presidents and directors. He will participate with the governing body, administration and medical staff in decision-making and processes, and share responsibility for advancing the organization's strategic plan and purpose. He may also perform the duties of the president in his absence.

Hunt has been involved in health care for 39 years. "The thing that I am looking forward to the most by being part of an expanded role is to drive operational and clinical excellence," he said. "I am excited to collaborate with our teams to strengthen our processes and align strategic goals with operational execution. My goal is to play a role in fostering our culture of accountability and safety for our patients and staff."

### **Wound Treatment Centers Receive Excellence Awards**

The **Wound Treatment Center at MyMichigan Medical Center Towne Centre** in Saginaw has received **RestorixHealth's®** highest honor – the **Wound Center of Excellence Award**- for both award periods in 2025, earning the special designation of **2025 Distinguished Wound Center of Excellence**.

*continued on page 27*

## 2026 Medical Records Access Act Fees

*In Accordance with Consumer Price Index*

The Medical Records Access Act, Public Act 47 of 2004, MCL section 333.26269 (the Act) states that if a patient or a patient's authorized representative requests a copy of all or part of the patient's medical record, the health care provider, health facility, or medical records company to which the request is directed may charge the patient or the patient's authorized representative a fee. The Act requires the Department of Health and Human Services to adjust on an annual basis the fees prescribed by the Act by an amount determined by the state treasurer to reflect the cumulative annual percentage change in the Detroit consumer price index.

PLEASE NOTE: The Department's only involvement with the Act is to set the rate health care providers may charge for copies of records under the Act. The Department does not have the authority to make a health care provider give you copies of your health records. Additionally, the Department is not able to provide advice regarding the law.

In compliance with the Medical Records Access Act, I, Elizabeth Hertel, Director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, recognize the State Treasurer's certification of the annual percentage increase in the Detroit Consumer Price Index for the 2026 calendar year. Accordingly, I have adjusted the fees by the cumulative annual percentage change as follows:

Year	Initial Fee	Per page for first 20 pages	Per page from pages 21-50	Per page for pages 51+
CY 2026	\$32.08	\$1.60	\$0.80	\$0.32

*NOTE: A 'patient', as defined by this rule, shall not be charged the initial fee for the patient's own medical record. However, a patient can be charged the other permitted fees (e.g., the per page fees). Elizabeth Hertel, Director*

[Click HERE to see the complete Medical Records Access Act](#)

*continued from page 26*

The Wound Center of Excellence Award recognizes centers that demonstrate exceptional success in meeting or exceeding clinical, operational and patient satisfaction benchmarks.

Because the Towne Centre location achieved this recognition during two consecutive



award periods within a single calendar year, it also received the 2025 Distinguished Wound Center of Excellence designation.

"This outstanding achievement reflects the dedication of our Wound Treatment Center team to restoring health and improving quality of life- and access to care- for those with wounds in the communities we serve," said **Mike Erickson**, President, MyMichigan Medical Centers Saginaw, Standish, Tawas and Towne Centre. "We are proud to be recognized not only for clinical excellence and healing, but also for our commitment to patient satisfaction and putting patients first every day."

The Wound Treatment Center at MyMichigan Medical Center Towne Centre is staffed by clinicians with advanced training in wound care and hyperbaric medicine, which is available at this location. An integrated team of wound care professionals works collaboratively to optimize patient care and outcomes, helping prevent lower limb loss while offering the most advanced healing options. Their comprehensive approach coordinates traditional and advanced therapies to support and accelerate the healing process. In addition, Wound Care Centers in Tawas and Standish also received recognition.

Those interested in more information on services provided at Wound Care Centers may visit [www.mymichigan.org/wound](http://www.mymichigan.org/wound).

## PEER REVIEW ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Saginaw County Medical Society has a **Peer Review Ethics Committee ("Committee")** which is comprised of Caroline G.M. Scott, MD-Chair, Danielle C. Duncan, MD and Thomas J. Veverka, MD. Members of the Committee are elected by the membership.

The following is the definition of the Committee pursuant to Chapter IX Conduct and Discipline of Members of the SCMS Bylaws:

Section 5. **PEER REVIEW ETHICS COMMITTEE.** This Society shall have a standing committee designated the Peer Review Ethics Committee, charged with duties and powers concerning the maintenance of standards of

conduct and discipline of members including the duties and powers specifically set forth in this chapter. Whenever any matter of alleged misconduct is referred to the Peer Review Ethics Committee, such Committee shall have the right to conduct investigations and hearings thereon, both informal and formal, and to make findings of fact and recommendations for discipline.

***If you need to refer a matter to the Committee, please contact Drs. Scott, Duncan or Veverka, or Joan Cramer at the Saginaw County Medical Society office. All matters are confidential and are not to be disclosed to the Board or membership.***

## **Exempting Physicians From H-1B Visa Fee Protects Patients**

*The \$100,000 fee for H-1B visa applications threatens access to physician-led care, particularly for patients in rural and underserved communities.*

By **Bobby Mukkamala, MD** President  
March 24, 2026



Passing bipartisan legislation to exempt physicians and other health care professionals from the \$100,000 filing fee for new H-1B visa petitions is a crucial step Congress must take to ensure patients can see a physician when needed.

The AMA strongly supports the newly introduced **H-1Bs for Physicians and the Healthcare Workforce Act**, in keeping with our longstanding position that a robust, accessible physician workforce is central to improving health outcomes everywhere.

The current \$100,000 fee for H-1B visa applications threatens access to physician-led care for patients nationwide, but particularly those in rural and underserved communities such as Flint, Michigan, where I practice. The AMA and our partners in the Federation of Medicine continue to push policymakers to exempt physicians from this new fee, which is only compounding the projected shortage of up to 86,000 physicians by 2036.

### **IMGs Meet Vital Need**

Today, roughly one-fourth of America's physician workforce are international medical graduates (IMGs), most of whom are foreign-born and trained within U.S. residency programs. These physicians are a critical component of our health care system who fill gaps in care and provide services in communities with scarce health care resources. For example, nearly 40% of internal medicine resident interns are IMGs, many of whom possess an extraordinary commitment to treating patients where the need is greatest.

My own parents emigrated from India to Flint in the early 1970s to practice medicine, my father in radiology and my mother in pediatrics. As they ran a successful (and desperately needed) medical practice in Flint, they became fixtures in the city and raised a family, which included a son who would not only follow them into medicine in Flint but would go on to become AMA president.

There is simply no way that hospitals or health systems in underserved communities, many of which already operate under considerable financial strain, can afford such a steep and unnecessary new fee to bolster their physician workforce. Had it been in place at the time, this fee would have been an

insurmountable barrier for my parents, and the people of Flint would have been denied the benefit of their service and clinical expertise throughout their long careers—and mine as well.

### **Impact on Patient Access**

Since the fee was enacted, talented physicians have had their path to practicing medicine in America blocked, and communities like mine continue to lose the benefit of their skills, knowledge and clinical expertise. The result is longer wait times for patients, greater distances to travel for care, and a heavier burden on existing providers. The impact of the fee on health care threatens to worsen the very physician shortages that policymakers should aim to resolve. The AMA remains committed to working constructively with policymakers and our partners in medicine so that this policy does not stand in the way of caring for our patients and communities.

American Medical Association. *Exempting physicians from H-1B visa fee protects patients: The \$100,000 fee for H-1B visa applications threatens access to physician-led care, particularly for patients in rural and underserved communities.* By Bobby Mukkamala, MD, President. March 24, 2026.

### **More Than 80% of Physicians Use AI Professionally: AMA survey**

*The top use is to summarize medical research and standards of care. Catch up with the latest trends on physicians' use of health AI.*

By **Kevin B. O'Reilly** Senior News Editor  
March 12, 2026

The vast majority of physicians surveyed by the AMA say they are using **augmented intelligence (AI)** tools to stay on top of medical research, create discharge instructions, document medical visits and more. The 81% use rate is more than double what it was when the AMA first polled doctors on health AI in 2023, showing how physicians' comfort with this technology has grown rapidly as the tools have become more sophisticated.

"AI has quickly become part of everyday medical practice," said AMA CEO and Executive Vice President **John Whyte, MD, MPH**. "Physicians see real promise in its ability to support clinical decisions and cut down on administrative burden. But as this technology advances, it is critical that augmented intelligence be designed to enhance- not replace- physicians. "For doctors to trust and use these tools, they must be safe, effective and used responsibly so they truly improve patient care. The AMA will continue leading this work so physicians help shape how AI is integrated into medicine," added Dr. Whyte.

Nearly 1,700 doctors from across a diverse range of physician specialties, practice settings and career stages responded to the **"2026 Physician Survey on Augmented Intelligence"**, which was issued by the new **AMA Center for Digital Health and AI**. The AMA launched the Center for Digital Health and AI last fall to support physician leadership in shaping, guiding and implementing technologies transforming medicine. The AMA



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advocates the development of high-quality, clinically validated AI that is deployed in a responsible, ethical, and transparent manner with patient safety being the first and foremost concern.

**Physicians’ Top Uses for Health AI**

Physician confidence in AI- often called artificial intelligence- continues to grow, the AMA survey shows. In 2026, more than three-quarters of physicians believe AI improves their ability to care for patients, up from 65% in 2023. The greatest expected advantages are in diagnostic accuracy and work efficiency.

The use of health AI to summarize medical research and get updated on standards of care was most frequently cited by the doctors polled, rising by 33 percentage points from the 2023 survey. According to the 2026 AMA survey, these shares of physicians said they are using health AI for:

- Summaries of medical research and standards of care- 39%
- Creation of discharge instructions, care plans or progress notes- 30%
- Documentation of billing codes, medical charts or visit notes- 28%
- Generation of chart summaries- 28%
- Generation of draft responses to patient portal messages- 19%
- Translation services- 18%
- Assistive diagnosis- 17%

Seven in 10 physicians see AI as a tool to automate tasks that contribute to work-related burnout, and 76% say the technology can help with patient care. About 40% of physicians said they are equally excited and concerned about AI, citing patient privacy and the integrity of the patient-physician relationship as top concerns. Physicians told the AMA that health AI is likely to help with:

- Work efficiency
- Diagnostic ability
- Cognitive overload
- Clinical outcomes
- Patient convenience
- Stress and burnout
- Value-based care
- Revenue

Last year, the **JAMA Network®** signed a **strategic content agreement** with the **OpenEvidence** platform, which estimates that 40% of U.S. doctors use the health AI tool daily.

The agreement allows all published content from **JAMA®**, **JAMA Network Open™** and the 11 JAMA specialty journals- including full text and multimedia- to inform answers delivered on the OpenEvidence platform.

**Where Caution is Warranted on Health AI**

The physicians surveyed were generally supportive of patient use of AI for general health and medication questions, but most were wary of patient use for tasks requiring clinical judgment. Nearly half strongly opposed patients using AI to interpret radiology or pathology results. Meanwhile, 88% of doctors reported having at least some concern about health AI-related skill loss, with 70% saying they are “very” or “somewhat” concerned about the loss of physician skills among the medical students and residents being trained today.

Doctors also emphasized the importance of data privacy (86%) and robust safety and efficacy validation (88%) as critical for broader AI adoption. Clear liability frameworks rank highest among regulatory actions essential to build physician trust and increase adoption of AI tools. Another physician priority is shared ownership of health AI-adoption decisions, with 85% of doctors wanting to be consulted or directly involved in decisions about AI adoption.

American Medical Association. *More than 80% of physicians use AI professionally: AMA survey.* Published March 12, 2026

**AMA Urges Congress to Strengthen Safeguards for AI Chatbots**

April 22, 2026

The AMA recently urged federal lawmakers to put stronger safeguards in place as the use of augmented intelligence (AI) chatbots in mental health care continues to grow. The AMA emphasized both the promise and risks of these rapidly expanding technologies. In letters to the **Congressional Digital Health Caucus** to the co-chairs of the **Congressional Artificial Intelligence Caucus**, and the **Senate Artificial Intelligence Caucus**, the AMA recognized Congress for advancing conversations about AI’s role in society and mental health. At the same time, the AMA warned that the rapid rise of mental health chatbots- along with reports of risks such as encouraging self-harm and privacy breaches- highlights the urgent need for clear guardrails to protect patients and maintain public trust.

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Learn more about MyMichigan's comprehensive neuroscience services at [www.mymichigan.org/neuro](http://www.mymichigan.org/neuro).