

The PsychList

~A modern "spin" on UBMD Psychiatry news and events~



A Note from the Chair...



As I have taken time in the new year to reflect on what I am grateful for in my personal and professional life, I continually come back to the gratitude I have for all of you. Both your dedication and hard work have been the cornerstone of our 2023 achievements. Together, we have achieved incredible results in clinical care, research, and education.

Beth Smith, MD
Interim Department Chair

"Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of intelligent effort."

- John Ruskin

Care: I am increasingly impressed by your pursuit of excellent patient care while embracing opportunities to consistently improve access, quality, and patient experience. We have grown our current programs, most recently expanding forensic psychiatry under the leadership of Daniel Antonius, and are creating new programs, while integrating outcomes research into outpatient care and new programs. I am also impressed with your willingness to pitch in to cover services when you have plenty of other responsibilities.

Research: I am impressed with our current funded research and the number of large-scale grants being pursued in 2024!

Education: I am impressed with how you care for students and share your love for teaching and knowledge. This is evident in our new faculty teaching metric and as we continue to be a top department nationally for recruitment into psychiatry.

Creating an inclusive community: I am impressed with your service to our community and the expansion of our community-based initiatives. To continue this mission, we have named Elizabeth Sengupta the Director of Community Engagement and are establishing a diverse community board.

A special acknowledgement goes out to our dedicated administrative staff, whose invaluable contributions behind the scenes have streamlined operations, enhanced efficiency, and fostered a positive work environment. Your commitment ensures the smooth functioning of our department. We are thankful for the vital role you serve.

I am grateful to have the opportunity to learn from you and your work. As we begin 2024, I want to thank each of you for your continued commitment to the department and our community and give thanks for all that lies ahead.

Inside this issue

- Employee Spotlight2
- Cystic Fibrosis Conference3
- Medical Education.....7
- Coding Tips.....8
- Residency News.....9
- APIC.....11

Special points of interest

- Awards
- 2023 Psychiatry Conference
- Retirements

Employee Spotlight



Titles: Director of Psychiatric Genetics Research
Assistant Professor

Location: Center for Translational Research Center

Date of Hire: January 2023
Lab, March 2023

Dr. Jamal Williams, PhD

Dr. Jamal Williams, PhD, describes his role within the Practice Plan, alongside his work in the community, below:

Q: Please describe the collaboration amongst faculty members and the community regarding the importance of your research centered around the African genome and genetics.

A: My research focuses on the African genome in psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders. This is an important topic because most of what we know about psychiatric genetics comes from European populations, and the data doesn't transfer well across populations. Therefore, it is critical to investigate genetic susceptibility in psychiatry in non-European populations as well; African/African-American is just where we're starting, but not where we'll finish. A critical barrier is having these discussions about genetics and genomics in these populations, who have deep-rooted mistrust for the biomedical research establishment. Our community work through Community Health Speaks aims to circumvent that. Recently Dr. Jennifer Surtees, Professor of Biochemistry, and I concluded a 4-week workshop on this issue. Go to communityhealthspeaks.com to learn more.

Q: How do you balance research in addition to your involvement in mental health in the community?

A: Both my research and my community work are tightly aligned; you can't have one without the other. Therefore, I don't consider it as needing to be balanced, as I'm looking at the full picture and asking where we can do better.

Q: What do you feel is the most rewarding aspect of your job? The most challenging?

A: The answer to both of those questions is the same; the complexity of the work. I love that our lab is so diverse, both in its membership and in the skills that different staff members have. So on any given day, I will have to engage and troubleshoot in multiple different specializations. That means we're applying a multi-faceted approach to solve problems we think are important. The downside is that it is very consuming, so I have to watch myself and make sure I'm taking time to clear my head so that I can always be at my best.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time? Is there anything you would like us to know about you?

A: I spend most of my spare time reading. This is a hobby I've had for as long as I can remember. I like biographies, social justice books, and neuroscience books these days. I have never had social media before and have the same phone number since I was a freshman in high school. I still think calling people is the best form of communication aside from face-to-face. I also am a huge UFC fan.



Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

A: I am thrilled to be here in the Department of Psychiatry, as the people are great and very welcoming. I am also happy to be back in Buffalo, which is the best city in the world! I intend to do the best science that I can and believe that if done right, we can close existing disparities that exist in genetics and mental health disorders.



2023 North American Cystic Fibrosis Conference



Dr. Beth Smith presented a plenary at this year’s North American Cystic Fibrosis Conference (NACFC) in Phoenix, Arizona entitled: “There is no Health Without Mental Health: Progress, Challenges, and Hope for the Future.” The plenary focused on the integration of mental health into cystic fibrosis (CF) care and research. This included a presentation of a pipeline of CF specific psychological interventions for treating depression and anxiety, many of which were piloted and tested at the CF Center of Western New York, under Beth’s leadership.



Previously, Beth presented the first ever mental health plenary at NACFC in 2015, which announced the publication of the international guidelines that she co-authored for screening and treating depression and anxiety in routine CF care. This year, Beth highlighted the marked success of implementing these guidelines throughout US CF care centers and beyond. Additionally, she presented 4 posters, 3 of which were selected for oral presentations, and co-led an 8-hour pre-conference special course on CF mental health. Beth will be chairing the 2024 NACFC planning committee.

Congratulations, Beth, and thank you for all your contributions to CF research!



Congrats to the retiree!



It is with mixed emotions that we share the news of the retirement of our esteemed colleague, Margaret Uebler-Otoka, who has been the face of the Department of Psychiatry for the last seventeen years.

Throughout Margaret’s tenure, her contributions have been nothing short of outstanding. She is an individual that everyone has come to rely on, helping faculty navigate the UB faculty profile system to extract their reports for the annual review, scheduling meetings, and keeping everyone organized with email reminders. Computer issues, no problem. Having trouble with ZOOM, and Margaret can help! With precision, efficiency, and a touch of her unique charm, Margaret has played a pivotal role in the organizational success of our department.

As Margaret embarks on a well-deserved retirement, we would like to extend our gratitude for her unwavering commitment and excellent work ethic. While her daily presence will be missed, we wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

May this next chapter be filled with well-deserved relaxation, exciting new adventures, classic Broadway hits, and many fish.

Thank you, Margaret, for 17 years of dedicated service to our department.



The 18th Annual Comprehensive Review of Psychiatry



Submitted By: Amy Berek, Associate Chair of Operations
Pictures By: Kathy Benz, UB Psychiatry Department Administrator



The 18th Annual Comprehensive Review of Psychiatry was held September 14-15, 2023, at the historic venue, The Richardson Hotel, which is a National Historic Landmark located in Buffalo. The conference was attended by approximately 100 people including psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, psychologists, social workers, trainees, and other health care professionals. We also had 7 pharmaceutical companies attend and present. Our new CME Director, Dr. Stephanie Ficarro, along with Interim Chair, Dr. Beth Smith, did a phenomenal job with putting together this year's conference. Let's not forget our fantastic staff members, Angela Bella and Kathy Benz, who worked tirelessly to make sure the conference was a success! Please save the date – September 12-13, 2024, for next year's conference. The conference will be held at the same venue with innovative speakers and presentations. We hope to see you all there!



The Critics Choice Awards

Do you have a colleague that is always willing to go the extra mile, without being asked? Someone whose thoughtfulness has left an impression on you? Or, perhaps someone who never wants recognition, but is always the first one to offer their help or expertise? If so, please consider nominating them for a **"Critics Choice Award"**! While this recognition is only a small token of appreciation, it further represents gratitude for your efforts and kind-heartedness that do not go unnoticed!

Below are the first set of Award Winners—THANK YOU!



Got a hankering for some chocolate? Thanks to Dr. Yogesh Bakhai for having the sweetest tooth of us all, and bringing in treats to fulfill our candy cravings!



Thanks to Angela Bella, the office "Cinderella", for her role in Pizza Lunch on Fridays. Not only does she make sure everything is set up and ready to go for lunchtime, she tidies up afterwards and restores the area back to the Conference Room.



Have you noticed the new artwork adorning the walls at ECMC? Next time you're in the Conference Room or walking down the halls of the 11th floor, take a minute to experience the murals brought in by Dr. Michael DiGiacomo!



"Poetry is emotion put into measure."

- Thomas Hardy



Please join in reading a poem, inspired by a conversation for love of poetry with an elementary school student (in treatment for OCD), by Dr. Huma Baqir:

What I Do For a Living

Huma Baqir

As part of my job,
I get to meet
And greet
Some really cool kids.
The ones who are
Funny and brave,
Kind and sweet.
Mind you,
I am not the kind of doctor
Who checks your belly, mouth,
hands or feet.

But I am the type of doctor
Who hands you over
A treat
For all the hard work you do.
Talking about worries
On repeat
Is neither easy nor sweet.
Many times,
You may be tempted to cheat and
Put it on a backseat.

In those times, my dear
I'll help you
Beat
And defeat
The worry monster.
(Ooh - is he in trouble!)
This way, you can feel free -
And at ease.
Just like the prince
That you are.
Warm and funny,
Kind and sweet.

2023 Faculty/Staff Appreciation Awards

The Department of Psychiatry, along with the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York, proudly honored the recipients of Faculty and Staff Appreciation Awards for their Outstanding Contributions in the following:

Matthew Ruggieri, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Clinical Mission of the Department

Beatrice Wood, PhD
Professor
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Russell Pizzo, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Medical Student Education

Elizabeth Lucaj, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Resident Education
Dr. Stephen Scheiber Award

Kurt Dermen, PhD
Research Scientist
Research in the Department
Dr. Kenneth Altshuler Award

Cynthia Pristach, MD
Clinical Professor
Overall Contribution
Dr. Josie Olympia Award

Abdul Ali, NP
Outstanding Contributions
Forensic Psychiatry

Huma Baqir, MBBS
Fellow
Dr. Steven L. Dubovsky Award



Jaskiran Nagra, NP
Clinical Mission of the Department

Chelsey McCabe, PhD
Volunteer Clinical Assistant Professor
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

George Burnett, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Medical Student Education

Melissa Heffler, MD
Volunteer Clinical Assistant Professor
Resident Education
Dr. Stephen Scheiber Award

Ralph Benedict, PhD
Volunteer Professor
Forensic Psychiatry
Dr. Kenneth Altshuler Award



Margaret Uebler-Otoka
Administrative Assistant to Chair
Outstanding Staff Contributions
Department of Psychiatry

Candace Moppins
Executive Director
Delavan Grider Community Center
Excellence in the Community



Odeyuwa Izekor, MD
Resident
Dr. Cynthia Pristach Award

The 100+ award recognizes outstanding contributions from our volunteer faculty whom have contributed over 100 hours of teaching, mentoring, and service annually within the Department of Psychiatry. This year's honorees include:

Kristen Cercone

Jill Frodey

Chelsey McCabe

Alison McGuerty

Sadiq Rahman

Medical Education

Submitted By:

Charles Camp, MD,
Director of Medical Education

Michael DiGiacomo, MD,
Assistant Director of Medical Education

Leanne Hatswell,
Medical Education Coordinator

In anticipation of the debut of the new medical school curriculum in the Fall of 2024, Drs. Camp and DiGiacomo have been attending an increasing number of preparatory meetings collaborating with other course directors to redesign our courses. One major change is that Anatomy will no longer be taught as a condensed, independent course during the first semester of school, but rather will be spread out among the different organ systems across both pre-clinical years.

We recently met with the Anatomy course directors to begin a discussion as to what material will be incorporated into our integrated Neuroscience and Behavior course. Though the psychiatry portion of the module does not emphasize a large amount of anatomy, Dr. Camp and Dr. DiGiacomo will be working with the neuroscience course director, Dr. Chris Cohan, to identify areas of overlap and increase collaboration to reinforce neuroanatomical structures that are important in psychiatric illnesses.

A series of meetings has also begun with a new cohort of educators that are deemed “Thread Leaders.” The new curriculum will have longitudinal topics called “Threads” which will be woven into all the classes and clerkships wherever possible. These “Threads” include ethics, pharmacology, microbiology, humanism, biomedical informatics, chronic pain and addiction, wellness, genetics, and social/structural determinisms of health/anti-racism. Discussions are underway about which of these topics might fit within our Neuroscience and Behavior Course, and how they could be integrated into our cases and didactics.

The curriculum revision has been challenging but exciting work, as we look ahead to the future of the psychiatry course, which we will run for the first time in the Fall of 2025! We hope to keep you all updated as the process evolves.

Acknowledgements

The Department of Psychiatry would like to gratefully acknowledge and thank the following individuals on each of their accomplishments:

Dr. Giovanni Fava has recently been included in the Web of Science rankings of highly cited scientists. This honor is in part based on authorship of Highly Cited Papers™ which rank in the top 1% by citations for their field and publication year in the Web of Science. Qualitative analysis and expert judgment are also used to identify scientists who have demonstrated significant and broad influence in their field of research.

As of November 2023, Dr. Sara Lowmaster has been named the Associate CME Director.

Elizabeth Sengupta has been named the Director of Community Engagement.

Dr. Sourav Sengupta has been honored as an American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Distinguished Fellow. This is the highest membership honor bestowed by AACAP, and recognizes outstanding child psychiatrists who’ve made significant contributions in child and adolescent psychiatry.

Well Done and Congratulations!



Quarterly Coding Tip

Submitted By: Agnes Macakanja, BA, CPC

Over the past few years, there have been extensive changes to the evaluation and management codes and guidelines. You will be relieved to know that 2024 changes are minimal, but not insignificant.

CPT® 2024 has decided to remove the time ranges from both the new and established office/outpatient E/M codes and replace them with a single total time amount, which is the lowest number of minutes in the current range for each code. This time “must be met or exceeded” according to the wording that now appears in each code descriptor. For example, 99202 *Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires a medically appropriate history and/or examination and straightforward medical decision making...* has a current time range of 15-29 minutes.



Beginning January 1, 2024, the provider must meet or exceed 15 minutes of total service time before this code can be billed by time.

Here are the changes in table form:

Code	2023 "total time—spent on the encounter"	2024 "total time on the date of the encounter" that must be met or exceeded
99202	15 to 29	15
99203	30 to 44	30
99204	45 to 59	45
99205	60 to 74	60
99212	10 to 19	10
99213	20 to 29	20
99214	30 to 39	30
99215	40 to 54	40

What’s not changing:

CPT® is not changing the descriptor to code 99211—*Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient that may not require the presence of a physician or other qualified health care professional*. This code remains the same as in 2023.

Sources: CPT®, AAPC, Decision Health.

99204...99205...99202...99212...99214...99211...

Residency News

Submitted By: Paula DeRegno, MD

This is an exciting time in the General Psychiatry Residency program! We are finishing another strong interview cycle.



We received over 930 applications and completed nearly 50 interviews, almost half of which were for the combined general and child track. Thank you to all the faculty who have generously given their time to interview applicants. To all the faculty who supervise, teach, and mentor our residents—your contribution is invaluable and much appreciated. Your commitment to the educational mission is our best recruitment tool! When the residents meet with the applicants, they always share how invested the faculty are in their professional development.



Our PGY-1 class has just completed their training in primary care and neurology. Three of the interns were awarded resident of the month from the Internal Medicine Department. All of our PGY-1 residents impressed the Internal Medicine attendings with their dedication to patient care, professionalism, and work ethic. In December, the PGY-1 residents began with an orientation to the inpatient units and CPEP, as well as TRUST training. They participated in a standardized patient exercise at the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation Clinical Competency Center at the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. January is their first full month of Psychiatry training. This marks an important step for them as they begin learning from all of you the skills they will need to care for patients seeking compassion and healing. I am confident the faculty in the Psychiatry Department will soon be impressed with them also.



The PGY-1s help round out an outstanding group of residents. Our PGY-2 class has shown exceptional growth as they embark on their QI projects, and have been further developing their skills in rotations such as Addiction Psychiatry, C-L, ECT, Emergency Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry, as well as various electives. Our PGY-3 class is more than halfway through their 12-month continuous outpatient rotation and they have really grown in both confidence and skill. Our PGY-4 class are working on completing their scholarly projects. They are continuing to grow as leaders, as well as honing their clinical and psychotherapy skills. Heartfelt gratitude to the outstanding faculty who make this all possible!

Happy Retirement!

Submitted By:
Ken Leonard, PhD

After a distinguished career spanning nearly 50 years in UB's Department of Psychiatry, Dr. Barry S. Willer retired in November of this year. Dr. Willer received his BA and PhD in Psychology at York University in Toronto. He was appointed as an assistant professor in Psychiatry at UB in 1976 and promoted to professor in 1995. He also holds appointments in Rehabilitation Medicine and Neuroscience at UB and has been a visiting scholar at Massey University in New Zealand. He has published nearly 200 articles and 11 book chapters and books. Since starting at UB, he has been the Principal or Co-Principal Investigator on ten federal or state grants and four foundation grants.

Although he began his research with a focus on mental illness and intellectual disabilities, he turned to the issue of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in 1988, focusing on community integration for individuals with TBI. Subsequently, he initiated research focused on treating individuals with brain injury by addressing problems with affect recognition, research for which he received the North American Brain Injury Society (NABIS) research award. Subsequently, he and Dr. John Leddy, Professor of Orthopaedics at UB, began work on the most impactful aspect of his academic career, using progressive exercise to aid in the recovery from TBI and concussion. Together they established the UB Concussion Management and Research Center in 2006, the work of which advanced the science and clinical management of concussion worldwide, and which has heavily informed the latest international guidelines on sport-related concussion.

"Stay young at heart, kind in spirit, and enjoy retirement living."

- Danielle Duckery

This work has been funded by the Department of Defense, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. The development of a prescribed regimen of exercise and a standard exercise-based assessment has been shown in clinical trials to speed recovery from concussion and to minimize the development of prolonged symptoms of TBI. This approach has revolutionized treatment of TBI and is being implemented at clinics across the US, Canada, New Zealand, Europe, and Australia. This treatment has the potential to address a wide range of concussive injuries both among athletes and military personnel.



The Psychiatry Department is very grateful for Dr. Willer's service and dedication to the department. We wish him the best in his retirement!

"The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender."

- Vince Lombardi

Farewell...

Seventeen years have gone by so fast! Thank you all for adding to the joy of my retirement with the wonderful party and well wishes. Most of all, thank you for all the support over the years, the goodwill, the friendship, the laughter, and the memories that I will take with me. UPP has been a Godsend in my life that I will always be grateful for. I wish you all the best.

- Margaret



APIC in Jamaica



Submitted By: Janell VanCleve, MEd, CAS, APIC Program Director

Dr. Michael Cummings, MD, and Janell Van Cleve, MEd, CAS (APIC Program Directors) attended the SUNY-UWI Health Research Consortium at the University of the West Indies in Kingston Jamaica from 12/7-12/9. On this particular day they met with autistic patients and their families at the UWI Hospital Clinic, overseen by Dr. Andrea Garbutt.

APIC will continue their collaboration with UWI by coordinating quarterly grand rounds with the UWI med students, quarterly educational/support groups for parents, as well as help support service expansion to achieve health equity for all individuals and families living with autism in Jamaica.



Happy Anniversary!

Congratulations to the following for their years of service within the Department of Psychiatry:

10 years:

Amy Berek
 Dr. Jane Elberg
 Dr. Peter Martin
 Dr. Matt Ruggieri
 Dr. Sourav Sengupta



20 years:

Dr. Kurt Dermen
 Aggie Macakanja

Quotable Quotes

"There are no traffic jams along the extra mile."

- Roger Staubach

"If you let your head get too big, it'll break your neck."

- Elvis Presley

"Always borrow money from a pessimist. He won't expect it back."

-Oscar Wilde



Comic Corner



Candid



Calling All Writers...

If you would like to contribute to future editions of the quarterly UBMD Psychiatry Newsletter, please contact Julie Mikula at juliemik@buffalo.edu or at (716) 898-3597. All submissions must be received on or before March 15, 2024 to be included in the next edition, published in April 2024. Thanks, in advance, for your input!

