

Sublime to Ridiculous

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Miracle Edition

San Francisco VA HCS

Department of Medicine

It's a Pod, It's a Cast...it's clinicalproblemsolving.com

By Sharmin Shekarchian, Rabih Geha, and Heather Nye

In today's generation, fame and impact come in strange new forms—bypassing auditions and editorial review processes. This Brave New World allows talent and novel ideas to flourish in tweets, IG posts, and podcasts. The 'modern' way of podcasts, nearly 15 years old, has yielded innumerable stars and quality programming for our phones and computers. And in our SFVA midst, we have co-founder (Dr. Rabih Geha) and co-hosts (Dr. Sharmin Shekarchian and Geha) of a crown jewel in medical podcasting, *The Clinical Problem Solvers* (CPSolvers).

We later started a *trainee-led reasoning series*, where students and residents from across the country help solve an unknown case, and a *spaced learning series* where a case is used to review content & schemas with a different lens.

Since the 4 of us started, we have grown to a team of 16, recruiting from programs across the country, and team members ranging from artists, students, residents, fellows, faculty and non-physicians.

As our team has grown, so has our multi-modal approach to teaching diagnostic reasoning, expanding well-beyond podcast episodes. A blog with bi-monthly posts, schema illustration videos, weekly e-mail summaries and short practice cases on twitter (*tweetorials*) have allowed us to expand on learning points and supplement podcast material. We are also working with institutions to introduce CPSolvers content into UME and GME curricula.

How do we access content?

[Here](#) is link to an episode

[Here](#) is an example of a schema

Where does your show fall in the range of medical podcasts? Though there are no publicly available metrics to compare internal medicine podcasts, the CPSolvers is considered in the top 5 internal medicine podcasts judging by social media viewership and podcast to podcast interactions. (*The "PodSquad" is the working name of the top 5 IM podcasts – The Curbsider, CoreIM, Bedside Rounds, Annals on Call, and CPSolvers*)

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More Metrics CPSolvers

- ◆ 61 total episodes
- ◆ 1 episode/week
- ◆ Episodes available on Apple, Google play, Spotify and all major podcast platforms
- ◆ 11,000 Twitter followers
- ◆ 1600 Instagram followers
- ◆ 16 IM/Med-Peds/Family Medicine programs on the show by June, 2020.
- ◆ 11 Visiting Professor invites



Fort Miley, circa 1905

"You are not your roots. You are a flower growing from them."

PAVANA REDDY

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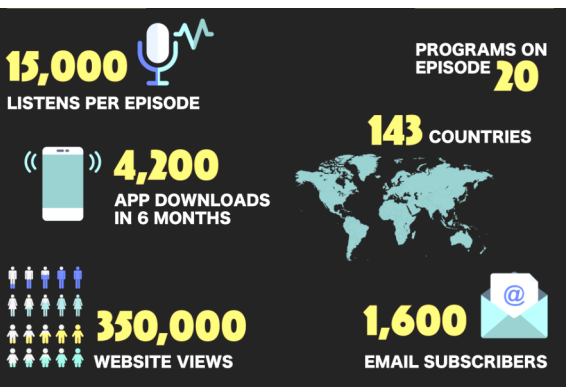
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KEN'S KORNER

IMPORTANT DATES

SFVA MAZE



How did your podcast start? We released our first episodes in December, 2018. Our collective interest in clinical reasoning had been developing for years. Co-founders, Reza Manesh and Rabih were classmates in residency at UCSF and were both mentored in clinical reasoning by Gurpreet Dhaliwal. Rabih was Sharmin's senior resident on her first intern rotation, initiating a peer-mentor relationship analogous to Rabih and Reza's.

Reza appeared on the most popular IM podcast, *The Curbsiders* where he saw the profound impact podcasts can have. Meanwhile, Rabih was developing a library of electronic resources in clinical reasoning, mostly [diagnostic schemas](#). (*think beautiful, simple, hand-drawn depictions of medical concepts*)

A fortuitous phone call between Reza and Rabih followed by joining forces with Sharmin and fourth co-host Arsalan, and the two ideas merged... CPSolvers was born.

How has CPSolvers evolved? With the support of many, viewership has expanded. Initially, there were two episode types: *schema episodes*, in which an approach to a common clinical problem was discussed – and *clinical unknowns* – where a blinded discussant shared an approach to a case. Our journey made clear the value of democratizing clinical reasoning.

MORALE COMPASS

Good Reads



ESSAY

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

by Riley Bois, 8th Grade Redeemer Lutheran School (granddaughter of Army Veteran & Cleveland VA Podiatrist Dr. Jack Bois)

Have you ever heard the word sonder? According to the Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, it is “*the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own...*” It means everyone around you has a life just as immersive. It means around you are thousands of people living out their own stories in which you might be the villain, the hero, or just a person who is there for a moment and then gone, never to be seen again...

This means those soldiers buried in the Tomb of the Unknowns had likes and dislikes, regrets, and memories. They had their own story to write, with blank pages stretching out ahead of them, waiting to be written. They had chapters they would rather not think about, and some they read again and again. They had an entire life to live, but they cut their story short for us...died for people who might have been just the extras in the book of their life...

As Americans ... we honored them...carried them home... wrote their stories on our hearts, finishing what they could not.. honored them in the greatest way we could. We took a few of those who were never identified...we laid them down, and covered them in dirt from the French battlefields where they died. We quarried the purest of gold veined Yule marble and sculpted into it the symbols of peace and valor and victory. Inscribed ...“*Here rests in honored glory an American Soldier known but to God.*”

...We set up a guard to protect them...highly trained and immaculately dressed, to honor the messiness in which the unknown soldiers ascended from this Earth....They are no longer The Forgotten who died alone in chaos, without a warm touch or loving words. We have made them The Remembered! They have a view of the cemetery like none other, where they can see three hundred of their fallen brethren arrayed in neat rows of white crosses. They may be unknown, but we have crafted their sacrifice into an example of who we are...we are proud Americans and we do not forget our debts. ..So let us carry them in our hearts, ...carry to them a wreath, not just adorned with flowers, but with my gratefulness. I am here today because of them... I want to experience sonder there, in the presence of heroes who do not need to be known to be honored, respected, and loved... [Click HERE for full essay](#)

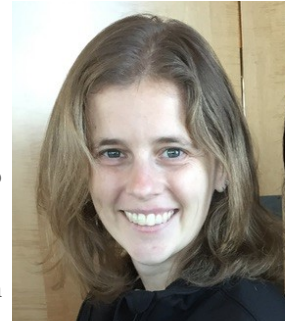
SINGING OUR HEROES



We'd like to recognize our SFVA Medical Service 'HERO AWARD' winners for November thru February while sharing with you some of the amazing other nominations... for innumerable good works performed within a given day. All were nominated via emails praising these folks' superhero qualities—and we simply can't say it any better than they did.

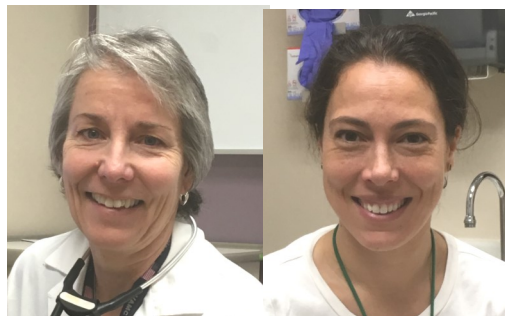
NOVEMBER Hero **Dr. Robin Goldman, Hospital Medicine**

I'd like to nominate Robin Goldman. She is always stepping in behind the scenes to help others. She's one of the most accommodating to try to help with clinical shift switches for the group, and I know she does that with her pediatrics group as well. She stepped in as a med student Coach for 3 months without financial compensation when someone went out on family leave. She is always present when possible for the group - group social events, weekly faculty meetings (*she even calls in when she's traveling in other countries for her global health work*), representing the SFVA hospital medicine group at resident/med student interest groups. She's a true team player and I am grateful to work with her.



DECEMBER Heroes **Jo Dana and Gina Szeft, Metab-Arthritis Clinic NPs**

They are tireless and I mean tireless advocates for our patients and bend over backwards helping coordinate clinical care from soup to nuts. Arranging travel for veterans coming from distance. Seeing pts during lunch hour and off-clinic time. VTEls, telephone consults (*which they don't get credit for*) etc.



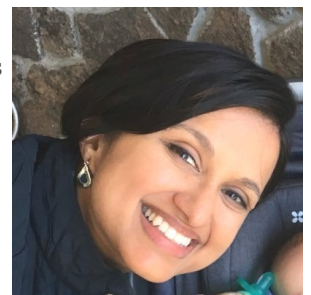
Jo

Gina

Not long ago – they were advised to immediately develop a travel and radioactive iodine protocol for thyroid cancer patients coming from all over VISN 21 – travel, diet, admission, safety, patient care etc – and coordinate with Bed Control, Admissions and Hoptel and Travel – and they did it in less than 2 weeks and presented it to the group.

JANUARY Hero **Dr. Megha Garg, Hospital Medicine**

Megha is a shining light of optimism with a sunny-side-of-the-street attitude, and nearly always gives others credit rather than ask for credit herself. She is organized, balanced, creative, and gifted at leading groups with diverse perspectives. She takes on new responsibility – including co-leading efforts for the SFVA Women's Group, assuming VISN Lead /Champion for Hospital Medicine within the new VACO service line structure, and handles unexpected crises (*moonlighter no-shows or illness, last second coverage needs*) and other challenges with grace. She performs her job as an educator with warmth and a welcoming attitude as well—never making the learner feel secondary to the clinical tasks at hand. She has been a stable force in the hospitalist group and sets a wonderful tone throughout each chaotic and stressful interview season.



...continued on the next page

KEEP THE NOMINATIONS COMING! Seen a hero lately? You'll know it when you do. Monthly Award, handsome pen. Email Heather Nye or Ken McQuaid

.....HEROES Continued

FEBRUARY HERO Dr. Henry Crevensten, PC/GIM

Henry has stood as an example of how to support the CBOCs and veteran care by dedicating himself to improving the consult system, creating more connections between SFVA and CBOC providers, voicing concerns about systems issues that limit PCPs ability to adequately care for vets in rural areas, and making multiple on-site visits over the years to provide much needed services in Eureka (such as MSK injections) and other clinic sites. He also recently agreed to help out in the short-handed perioperative clinic without hesitations when asked this month. He is a team player and always has the mission of 'best care for vets' at the heart of everything he does.



FACULTY FEATURE

MEET DRs RABIH GEHA AND SHARMIN SHEKARCHIAN



L to R, Dan Minter, Sharmin Shekarchian, Arsalan Derakhshan, Reza Manesh, and Rabih, Geha. 11/11/19 Diagnostic Error in Medicine Conference, Washington DC.



Proposed design for new SFVA campus building to house the burgeoning collection of superheroes emanating from DOM, hiding in plain site..



Sharmin was born and raised in Iran before moving to the Bay Area for college. She went to a community college and then transferred to UC Berkeley in her junior year. After graduating from UC Berkeley, she attended UCSF School of Medicine and is currently a chief resident at UCSF / SFVA. After residency, Sharmin plans to be an academic hospitalist and pursue a career in medical education. Her interests include clinical reasoning and curriculum design.

Sharmin is an avid tennis and soccer fan and loves traveling and spending time with family and friends. She knows every episode of *Friends* by heart, thinks there is never a bad time to drink coffee, and is a big fan of a good laugh.

Rabih was born in Lebanon, and grew up mostly in Pakistan before coming to the US to attend Boston College and then Brown for medical school. He completed residency and chief residency at UCSF. An avid soccer fan, he plans his weekends around watching soccer. He also enjoys relaxing getaways with his wife, and high school sweetheart, Zari.



Rabih splits his time between the SFVA Emergency Room and the inpatient teaching wards. His primary interests are in medical education and clinical reasoning. Within diagnosis, Rabih enjoys creating diagnostic schemas; this interest in crafting logical solutions dates back to the good old days of high school math, most of which he learned from his dad.

Notable Nominations for HERO

Josue Zapata I'd like to nominate Josue for his work with helping staff understand and maximize their VA benefits. This kind act has huge impact in our lives and is much appreciated.

Harry Lampiris for being our hero in leadership against established infectious disease challenges such as influenza and TB and reemergent hazards such as measles... and now novel coronavirus threat .



Sharon Clayton -- she has a wonderful positive, can-do attitude, and is independent and extremely reliable in her work, as well as a creative problem solver.

Mike Nejad. A few months ago I was waiting in line at the coffee cart in the lobby and he very graciously paid for the coffee of a veteran adjacent to him in line with a friendly smile and acknowledgement – a small act of kindness which made my day to observe.



Jack, the 1A custodian. I'm not sure what his last name is but he is great! Garbage is taken out, bathrooms are stocked and cleaned, etc. He's always so helpful and nice.

MAKING THE VA PROUD

- ◆ **Dr. James Brown** of Pulm/CC has been appointed Chair of the Research Advocacy Committee by the American Thoracic Society Committee effective 5/2020.
- ◆ **Dr. Cynthia Delgado** of Nephrology explains how patients with disabilities experience kidney care on [video segment for the American Journal of Managed Care](#).
- ◆ **Dr. Sanket Dhruva** of Cardiology successfully completed LEAN training, and is now officially recognized as a **UCSF Health Lean Champion!** He joins a growing group of K12 scholars and physician leaders who have earned this distinction.
- ◆ **Dr. Sam Goldman** of OEM was promoted for full Clinical Professor, Step 1.
- ◆ **Dr. Meshell Johnson** of Pulm/CC named SFVAHCS Chief of Pulmonary Medicine.
- ◆ **Dr. Chris Lau** of Cardiology has been appointed as the Editor-in-Chief of journal Cell & Bioscience, with recent impact factor about 3.4. <https://cellandbioscience.biomedcentral.com>
- ◆ **Dr. Jay Ryan** of GI was promoted for full Clinical Professor, Step 1.
- ◆ **Dr. Mike Steinman** of Geriatrics was [interviewed on KQED Forum](#) on deprescribing medications for older adults and the US Deprescribing Research Network, which he co-leads. <https://deprescribingresearch.org/>
- ◆ **Dr. Leslie Sarna** of PC was [interviewed on KPVM news story 1/30/2020](#) It features the work Clinical Resource Hub is doing to manage a panel of veterans in Pahrump Nevada through Telehealth, including veteran accounts of how much they appreciate her care!
- ◆ **Everything's coming up new humans!** UCSF/VA admin staff **Crisna Castro** [welcomed a baby girl 10/3/19](#), followed by **Dr. Tiffany Kim** of Met/Endo who [introduced a baby boy on 1/17/2020](#), then **Dr. Lauren Lederle** of Hosp Med who thought [1/22/2020 would be a lovely day to become mommy of a daughter](#). CONGRATULATIONS! Photos of bundles below...



Arielle Kailani Castro (Crisna)



Tristan Wonyoung Jones (Tiffany)



Winona Joyce Kelley (Lauren)



SHOW ME THE MONEY

- ◆ **Dr. Danny Calabrese** of Pulmonary was awarded a Co-project pilot grant from UCSF ImmunoX "Immune Phenotypes in Acute Lung Allograft Dysfunction"
- ◆ **Dr. Sam Goldman** of OEM awarded a DoD IIA grant! 1.9 million direct! "Parkinson's Disease and Exposure to Chlorinated Solvents at Marine Base Camp Lejeune"
- ◆ **Dr. John Greenland** of Pulm/CC was awarded VA Merit Award funding for his project "Accelerated Aging as a Cause of Chronic Lung Allograft Dysfunction and Cystic Fibrosis Foundation approved our application to join their consortium of research into lung transplant for patients with CF. I am a Co-PI on this application (10% effort).
- ◆ **Dr. Christine Hsieh** of Rheumatology had her VA Merit Award renewed, "Analysis of a Type I Interferon Responsive Microglia Subset in Traumatic Brain Injury"
- ◆ **Dr. Tonya Kaltenbach** of GI has her multi-pi HSR&D service directed grant funded to implement the National Colonic Quality Dashboard!! (\$1.2 mil over 3 years)
- ◆ **Dr. Chris Lau** of Cardiology received his BLR&D Research Career Scientist Award (\$1,1M) and a Sheep Request for a Single-Cell Next Gen Sequencing Library Prep system (\$100k)
- ◆ **Dr. Heather Nye** of Hosp Med had her ORH grant renewed for a third year, Transitions Nurse Program, \$267k/1 year.
- ◆ **Kathleen Sarmiento** of Pulm/Sleep Med has had multiple awards: 1) The National ORH TeleSleep Program received renewed funding for 3 more years (FY20/21/22), (\$5m/year) and another \$1m for this FY awarded late January. 2) VISN TeleSleep Clinical Resource Hub Funded (\$9.7m)- 1/1/20 3) Merit Award (HSR&D) for multisite study-begins 4/1/20, and 4) Investigator Initiated Research Award, multisite study (ResMed)- begins 4/1/20. Katie is taking everyone to dinner who walks down the hall in 1A to celebrate the amazing bounty of grants! (kidding)
- ◆ **Dr. Karen Seal** of Integrative Health and GIM Integrative Health Service 1) received nearly \$1.5 million from the VISN to expand Integrative Whole Health programming, with an initial focus on veterans with chronic pain, and 2) received notice of award for trial phase of NIH UG3/UH3 multi-site pragmatic trial, the wHOPE study. (\$ 5.5 million for the UH3 component) They will be comparing a Whole Health Team approach vs. a more traditional CBT approach for chronic pain in veterans at 5 VA facilities around the country.
- ◆ **Dr. Brië Williams** of Geriatrics was awarded an R24 with her team on "Health Disparities Research in Aging: The Aging Research in Criminal Justice & Health (ARCH) Network" from the NIH National Institute on Aging, as well as a Gift from the Vital Projects Fund.

SFVA FACULTY IN PICTURES....



In what may have been an unprecedented collective violation of VA leave policy, the troops came out in droves from the SFVA to listen to Former VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin at UCSF last month. He spoke with Dr. Bob Wachter (*is there anyone Bob doesn't know?*) during a noon Fireside Chat, Monday January 13th.

Erika Price develops new Quality Safety Value interactive team-building game for VADOM. Making SAIL DATA fun again.

Attendees were astonished at Shulkin's account of general operations & chaos on capitol hill, and *set ablaze* hearing verification of insider plans to slowly dismantle the VA ('starve the beast')...Few skipped their evening wine and long shower that night.



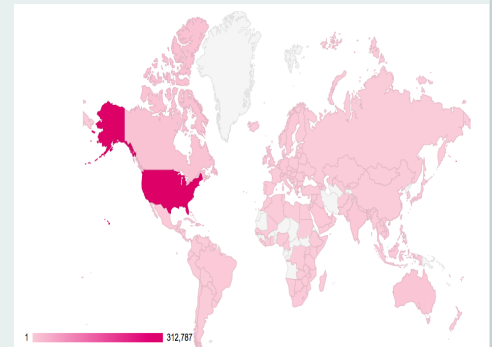
PODCAST *Continued from page 1....*

What are your plans in the future? That's a secret!! We'll keep listening to our audience and the lessons we learn along the way. Major goals include:

- Continue democratizing clinical reasoning
- Promote female and UIM in clinical reasoning
- Promote a safe reasoning climate
- Shift focus from US-based medicine to incorporate people & practice outside our borders.

unter their time, are receiving the mentorship, growth and development they deserve.

Surprises? Hopes for future? It's surreal to see that the podcast has been accessed in 143 countries and schemas pop up in morning reports and noon



Favorite / Most challenging aspects of doing the show

Favorite Getting to work and collaborate with incredible people locally and across the country! We are all passionate about medical education and how to best teach, analyze and model diagnostic reasoning. Using this medium and social media to promote diagnostic reasoning keeps us creative.

conferences across the country.

CPSolvers website stats

Above all, our favorite aspect is creating a positive learning environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thought process and saying "I don't know" is not only accepted but encouraged. Identifying gaps in knowledge is paramount to improving.

We hope to keep having fun and reach our goals mentioned above. (Also, would love to hang out with everyone in the same room!)

If folks want to get involved, how might they do that? Best way is to email us at theclinicalproblemsolvers@gmail.com

See **Faculty Feature** for more on Drs Geha & Shekarchian



Fort Miley Running Squad took to the big Kaiser Half-Marathon race on Sunday 2/3/2020. While the team was down in number from 2019, it was certainly no less fast or fierce. Way to represent the SFVA, folks! This turned out to be the better sporting event of the day following the Niners Superbowl loss later that afternoon....

Challenges This year we will approach controversial topics in diagnostic reasoning – e.g., how does race influence the diagnostic process? Internally, we work hard to ensure team members, who vol-

IN BRIEF.....



VA Hospital Star Ratings discontinued. During an emotional announcement, the VACO Quality Leadership Coalition shared that STAR RATINGS, previously used to pit its own hospitals against each other, would be sun-setting in 2020. “We have heard you.” stated a tearful spokesperson, referring to longstanding concern that numbers of stars and SAIL Data **did not** reflect the quality of an institution. In a quick briefing that followed, proposed new rating systems for hospital comparison were announced: Popcorn Buckets, Rotten Tomatoes, and Thumbs Up / Thumbs Down were under consideration.



VA employee files ‘Naked Chicken’ hostile workplace lawsuit After the 32nd email communication to Medical Center staff on ‘Naked Chicken’ food truck whereabouts, one employee simply had enough.



In a statement reflecting on the legal action, he stated

“I don’t know—maybe I overreacted. I just kept seeing it pop up in my inbox...first Naked Chicken was here, and then it was there. Naked Chicken was leaving early, and then it was back... really disturbing. It made me uncomfortable.”

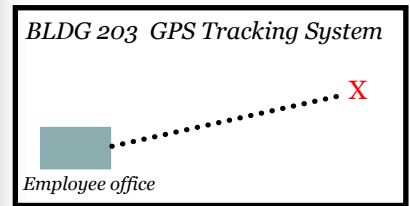
Others expressed concern about crooked deals with the food truck company, given it was the first in 20 years to be granted campus access. We can rest assured that nothing so good will ever happen again.



BRAVE NEW WORLD OF VA CYBER-SECURITY: TRIPLE ID & NIHILISTIC SECURITY QUESTIONS

Fed up with multiple security breaches over the past several years, despite requiring 22 character passwords changed weekly, the VA has opted to initiate triple factor authentication and nihilistic password security questions. Faculty, upon logging in to any account on a desktop computer, will be required to click a link pushed to their phone, then jog down the hallway within 30 seconds to a roving verification station for finger printing—all at once ensuring valid ID, presidential physical fitness, sense of direction, and proximity to assigned office space. Additionally, in attempt to battle the high spirit and good will of the new year, password recovery will now involve reaching deep in to the most disturbing places of our psyches. “Workflow can be hampered by overzealous happiness, so we are introducing ways to keep the mood somber, and focus on VA tasks at hand.” Federal employees, allow us to introduce **“Nihilistic Security Password Questions”**

- What is the name of your least favorite child?
- In what year did you abandon your dreams?
- What is the maiden name of your father’s mistress?
- At what age did your childhood pet run away?
- What was the name of your favorite unpaid internship?
- In what city did you first experience ennui?
- What is your ex-wife’s newest last name?
- What sports team do you fetishize to avoid meaningful discussion with others?
- What is the name of your favorite canceled TV show?
- What was the middle name of your first rebound?
- On what street did you lose your childlike sense of wonder?
- When did you stop trying? *Soheil Rezayazdi*



“...first Naked Chicken was here, and then it was there...disturbing”
ANONYMOUS EMPLOYEE

CHURCH-STATE SEPARATION BE DAMNED

Taking Med Service Chief Ken McQuaid’s off-handed comment ‘**We’re going to need a miracle**’ at the last Staff Meeting literally, Dr. Bob Owens of Occ Health showed up in his Pontiff Reds and began to deliver much needed prayer and blessings to VA DOM last Fall. Covering community care administrative burden to inadequate consult closures, he beseeched the heavens for some divine intervention from A God, Any God, or something with Godlike characteristics. Without God-complex or sacrilege, Bob earnestly gave the VA invocation his best shot. Results of the intervention are pending. Meanwhile...not to be outdone, Dr. Lenny López, MD, **MDiv**, MPH, bonafide ordained minister, discussed holding a convocation, ‘**VA Pray-Away**,’ addressing delinquent FPPEs, OPPEs, recent suspenses, travel and furniture requests. In short, there’s a whole lotta praying going on. McQuaid plans to monitor his language more closely in the future, but appreciates faculty gestures.



Bob Owens of Occ Health delivers prayer & blessings to VA DOM

PEER REVIEW EXPANSION ...PHYSICIAN PERSONAL CONDUCT / APPEARANCE

The Peer Review Process is slated to expand to an entirely new domain in the coming year, covering physician personal conduct and appearance. As pressures from VACO and VISN leadership increase to meet quarterly Peer Review quotas, an expanded list of criteria on which providers will be scrutinized (*beyond clinical decisions & practice*) is being considered.

Let's face it! We could all be A LOT better at A LOT of things—and peer feedback is a handy way to extinguish bad behaviors & poor fashion sense. Said a champion of the new Peer Review process,

"While not directly related to patient care, these decisions can certainly impact patient satisfaction—how physicians carry & conduct themselves—including clothing and shoe choices, hairstyles, choice of words, and other highly subjective areas."

Any fashion offense or hurt feeling can be reported anonymously through **CWEPERS** (pronounced 'cweepers': **C**linician **W**ardrobe, **E**tiquette & **P**ractice **R**eporting System).



Faculty were scrambling to find any sections within the VHA Employee Handbook to guide behavior and dress. Workload is expected to double for Peer Review Committee in the early stages until collective physician behavior is satis-

factory.

It's no coincidence that the system is being rolled out during Catholic celebration of Lent, a 40 day period of reflection and self-improvement. VA Standards have yet to be developed for new areas of scrutiny, but internal sources suggest that in the new system '*Overalls are OUT*' and '*Kindness is encouraged.*'

New Rating System:

Level 1: Most people would have worn or said similarly

Level 2: Many people would have considered wearing /saying something different

Level 3: Everyone would have chosen a different outfit / Anyone in their right mind would NOT have said that



NON DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING
By Erika Price
Hospital-Themed Party Games
for your Next Celebration...

ISOLATION PRECAUTIONS
A team building relay race!
Each player in turn must put on a mask, gloves, and gown, and then wait 10 seconds before removing all items and cramming them into a completely full trash can.



ICD-10 CODE CHARADES
You know the rules.

"Burn due to water skis on fire!"
"Walked into lamppost!"
"Umm... fall from spacecraft?"

DISPO, DISPO, DISPO!

- Tell everyone they must leave the party by 11, but first they must write a detailed record of everything they did.
- Provide 2 very full but slightly different bags of party favors to each player. Demand a reconciled list.
- Interrupt each player every 30 seconds to ask if they are done yet.

E. Price 1. 2020

WAIT... LET ME EXPLAIN

***As Peer Review Committee Co-Chair, I would be remiss to not point out that we take the Peer Review process very seriously at the SFVA. We are grateful for all members of the committee and the time they dedicate to ensuring VA patient care remains excellent. This article is merely poking fun at the potential unintended consequences of placing an undue focus or priority on numbers and not quality. ***

AND NOW BACK TO OUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

We'd like to introduce a NEW COLUMN that will feature core financial concepts and (we hope) empower VA staff to plan for the future and take advantage of the many benefits of being a federal employee.

Disclosures:

We are not giving specific financial advice, everyone's situation is different and you should use judgement as to how this applies
 Josué has no formal training in personal finance, he just reads and thinks a lot about it

Tips are, **simple by design** to make it easy but Josué is happy to get into the nitty gritty with you in a 1:1 conversation



Getting the most out of your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

The Thrift Savings Plan or TSP is the equivalent of a 401(k); a tax-advantaged retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees. Each pay period, you can send money directly into this account for a number of reasons:

- For every \$\$ you put into your TSP, the government will match up to 5% of your entire salary. Think **FREE MONEY**.
- It is a tax-advantaged account (regardless of whether you do traditional or Roth contributions), so you **pay less in taxes**
- Fees associated with TSP investments (0.038%) are the **lowest in the world** and reducing fees is a critical component of investing wisely

*****simple talk***** If you make \$200k and contribute the maximum to your TSP, the Feds give **\$10,000 more** directly into your TSP account pretax. Your salary is now effectively \$210k. UCSF does not match contributions.

Each year the IRS sets a limit to how much money you can stash away in your 401(k)/TSP plan. For 2020, that limit is \$19,500. If you are over 50 you can contribute an additional \$6,500 in "catch up". Given the benefits listed above, **you should max out this account every year** if at all possible for you.

*****simple talk***** If you haven't gotten around to contributing to TSP for five years with a salary of \$200k, you will have left \$50k on the table

The best way to do this is to log into your myPay account and set your contribution to a fixed dollar amount each pay period as opposed to a percentage. This ensures that you do not max out too soon and that you continue to get your full matching. This is best done at the beginning of the year when the math is



the easiest, but can be done at any point including right now.

Step by step:

-Log into myPay <https://mypay.dfas.mil/#/>

-Click on "Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)" at the bottom left

-Change the amount to a fixed dollar amount to be contributed over each pay period. EXAMPLES BELOW

- Beginning of the year $\$19,500/26 \text{ pay periods} = \$750 \text{ TSP contribution each pay period}$
- If you have not made any contributions yet and there are 20 pay periods left, $\$19,500 / 20 = \$975 \text{ TSP contribution each pay period}$
- If you have already contributed \$3,000 and there are 20 pay periods left, $(\$19.5k-3k) \rightarrow \$16,500 / 20 = \$825 \text{ TSP contribution each pay period}$

-If > 50 yrs old, you can make "catch up" contributions. Do the above, then **ALSO** click on "Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Catch-up" at the bottom left

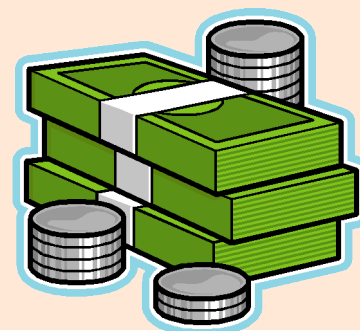
-Change the amount to a fixed dollar amount of \$250 dollars per pay period ($250 * 26 \text{ pay periods} = \$6,500$, the new limit for 2020)

Here's a helpful calculator : <https://www.tsp.gov/PlanningTools/Calculators/electiveContributions.html>

*****simple talk***** To get maximal matching from Feds, **IT IS BEST** to contribute every pay period and not max out contributions early!

-Choosing either traditional or Roth are fine- this decision is fairly nuanced, but either one is far, far better than doing nothing. I personally do the traditional.

Josué will also be holding another session on maximizing VA benefits on Thurs Feb 13th 2:30-3:30p (Bldg 203, 1A-34)



I READ IT SOMEWHERE....NEW PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Theresa Allison of Geriatrics. Oh A, Smith AK, Allison TA. **Key Ingredients of an Ideal System for High-Quality Community Care for Persons With Dementia.** *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2019 Dec

Dr. Mehrdad Arjomandi of Pulm/CC. Arjomandi M, Siyang Z, Barjaktarevic I et al. **Radiographic Lung Volumes Predict Progression to COPD in Smokers with Preserved Spirometry in SPIROMICS.** *Eur Respir J* 2019; in press

Dr. Daniel Bikle of Endo/Metab. Munson S, Wang Y, Chang W, Bikle DD. **Myosin 1a Regulates Osteoblast Differentiation Independent of Intestinal Calcium Transport.** *J Endocr Soc.* 2019 Aug 12;3(11)

Dr. Paul Blanc of OEM. 1) Blanc PD. **What has been done will be done again.** *Respirology.* 2019 Dec;24(12):1125-1126.
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Dr. Danny Calabrese and Dr. John Greenland of Pulmonary. Calabrese DR, Wang P, Chong T, Hoover J, Singer JP, Torgerson D, Hays SR, Golden JA, Kukreja J, Dugger D, Christie JD; LTOG investigators, Greenland JR. **Dectin-1 genetic deficiency predicts chronic lung allograft dysfunction and death.** *JCI Insight.* 2019 Nov 14;4(22)

Dr. Dr. Calvin Chou of GIM Chou CL, Kalet A, Costa MJ, Cleland J, Winston K. **Guidelines: The dos, don'ts and don't knows of remediation in medical education.** *Perspect Med Educ.* 2019 Dec;8(6)

Dr. Elizabeth Cohen of GIM. Arenson MB, McCaslin SE, Cohen BE. **Predictors of multiple domains of functioning in Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder: Results from the Mind Your Heart Study.** *Depress Anxiety.* 2019 Nov;36(11)

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Dr. Sanket Dhruva of Cardiology. Solotke MT, Ross JS, Shah ND, Karaca-Mandic P, Dhruva SS. **Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Formulary Restrictions After Postmarket FDA Black Box Warnings.** *J Manag Care Spec Pharm.* 2019 Nov;25(11)

Dr. Ruth Dubin of Nephrology. Patel RB, Mehta R, Redfield MM, Borlaug BA, Hernandez AF, Shah SJ, Dubin RF. **Renal Dysfunction in Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction: Insights from the RELAX Trial.** *J Card Fail.* 2020 Jan 10. pii: S1071-9164(19)31595-7.

Dr. Michelle Estrella of Nephrology. Tummalapalli SL, Estrella MM. **Predicting Risk of Kidney Disease: Is Risk-Based Kidney Care on the Horizon?** *JAMA.* 2019 Nov 8.

Dr. Ken Feingold and Dr. Carl Grunfeld of Endo/Metab. Feingold KR, Grunfeld C. **Lipoprotein Apheresis.** 2020 Jan 18. In: Feingold et al editors. Endotext [Internet]. South Dartmouth (MA): MDText.com, Inc.; 2000-. Available from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK425700/>

2) Feingold KR, Grunfeld C. **Utility of Advanced Lipoprotein Testing in Clinical Practice.** 2019 Nov 5. In: Feingold KR, et al editors. Endotext [Internet]. South Dartmouth (MA): MDText.com, Inc.; 2000-. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK355893/>
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Dr. Liane Gensler of Rheumatology. Dougados M, Wei JC, Landewé R, Sieper J, Baraliakos X, Van den Bosch F, Maksymowych WP, Ermann J, Walsh JA, Tomita T, Deodhar A, van der Heijde D, Li X, Zhao F, Bertram CC, Gallo G, Carlier H, Gensler LS; **COAST-V and COAST-W Study Groups.** **Efficacy and safety of ixekizumab through 52 weeks in two phase 3, randomised, controlled clinical trials in patients with active radiographic axial spondyloarthritis** *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2020 Feb;79(2):

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Dr. Vasantha Jotwani of Nephrology. Ascher SB, Scherzer R, Estrella MM, Shigenaga J, Spaulding KA, Glidden DV, Mehrotra ML, Defechereux P, Gandhi M, Grant RM, Shlipak MG, Jotwani V. **HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis with tenofovir disoproxil fumarate/emtricitabine and changes in kidney function and tubular health.** *AIDS.* 2019 Dec 2.

Dr. Tonya Kaltenbach of GI. Yu JX, Russell WA, Ching JH, Kim N, Bendavid E, Owens DK, Kaltenbach T. **Cost Effectiveness of Endoscopic Resection vs Transanal Resection of Complex Benign Rectal Polyps.** *Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol.* 2019 Dec

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Dr. Chris Lau of Cardiology. Lau CI, Liu MN, Chang KC, Chang A, Bai CH, Tseng CS, Walsh V, Wang HC. **Effect of single-session transcranial direct current stimulation on cognition in Parkinson's disease.** *CNS Neurosci Ther*. 2019 Nov;25(11)

Dr. Sei Lee of Geriatrics and **Dr. Lauren Lederle** of Hosp Med. Lederle L, Jing B, Rodriguez A, Hunt LJ, Lee SJ. **Glycemic Over- and Undertreatment in VA Nursing Home Residents with Type 2 Diabetes: a Retrospective Cohort Study.** *J Gen Intern Med*. 2019 Nov 8.

Dr. Lenny López of Hosp Med. López L, Swett K, Rodriguez F, Kizer JR, Penedo F, Gallo L, Allison M, Arguelles W, Gonzalez F, Kaplan RC, Rodriguez CJ. **Association of acculturation with cardiac structure and function among Hispanics/Latinos: a cross-sectional analysis of the echocardiographic study of Latinos.** *BMJ Open*. 2019 Nov 28;9(11):e028729.

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Dr. Roy Soetikno and Dr. Tanya Kaltenbach of GI. 1) Soetikno R, Kaltenbach T. Endoscopic Closure Techniques: Endoscopic Clipping Over the Scope (C-OTS) and Endoscopic Suturing. *Gastrointest Endosc Clin N Am.* 2020 Jan;30(1):xv-xvi. 2) Soetikno R, Asokkumar R, Chin YK, Salazar E, Nguyen-Vu T, Sanduleanu S, Chang Pik Eu J, Kaltenbach T. Rapid and Safe Crossing of the Chasm: Application of a Flipped Learning Framework for the Clipping Over the Scope Technique. *Gastrointest Endosc Clin N Am.* 2020 Jan;30(1):99-106. 3) Yu JX, Russell WA, Asokkumar R, Kaltenbach T, Soetikno R. Clipping Over the Scope for Recurrent Peptic Ulcer Bleeding is Cost-Effective as Compared to Standard Therapy: An Initial Assessment. *Gastrointest Endosc Clin N Am.* 2020 Jan;30(1) 4) Kaltenbach T, Asokkumar R, Kolb JM, Malvar C, Soetikno R. Use of the Endoscopic Clipping Over the Scope Technique to Treat Acute Severe Lower Gastrointestinal Bleeding in the Colon and Anal Transition Zone. *Gastrointest Endosc Clin N Am.* 2020 Jan;30(1):13-23.

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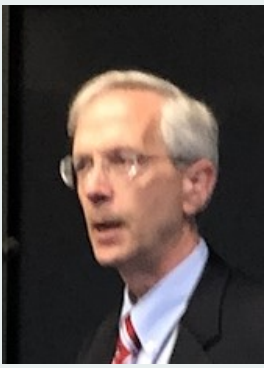
Dr. Charlie Wray of Hosp Med & **Dr. Salomeh Keyhani** of GIM. Wray CM, Vali M, Byers A, Keyhani S. Examining the Association of Social Determinants of Health with Missed Clinic Visits in Patients with Heart Failure in the Veterans Health Administration. *J Gen Intern Med.* 2019 Nov 11.

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****We regret any inadvertent omissions of your work. We have limited this list to first and last author publications. If publication listed in a prior issue, it was not reprinted here. Congratulations to everyone for tremendous efforts! ****

KEN'S KORNER



Ken's *Don't-Lose-Focus Face*

"I think a hero is any person really intent on making this world a better place for all people." Maya Angelou

The extraordinary witticisms, equivoques, ironies, and satire of this issue of the newsletter belie the immense pride and humility with which I was imbued after reading it. It is replete with vignettes of some amazing people – veritable heroes who work to make this a better health care organization and a supportive community.

I like to think that I have my finger on the pulse of the service and therefore am embarrassed (truly!) to read about the many wonderful things our colleagues and staff have been doing of which I have been unaware – some that are making a national impact (podcasts!) and many more random, small acts of kindness (thanks, Mike Nejad!) that reflect your generous spirit. You all are my heroes!

The winter holidays are well behind us, and summer vacations a long way off – the “dead of winter”! With the Warriors tanking and opening day of baseball just a mirage, what is to distract us from the growing tensions surrounding our upcoming election? If we were on the East Coast, we’d have the shared communal misery of scraping ice from our windshields, shoveling yet another snowfall, and bundling kids into jackets that no longer fit. But here in Paradise, what shall uplift us from the drudgery of open EARRs, consultants approaching their 28-day limit, and endless TMS modules that can depress even the most optimistic among us?

Here’s my suggestion. I challenge all of us – collectively – to take a few moments at the end of each work day to reflect

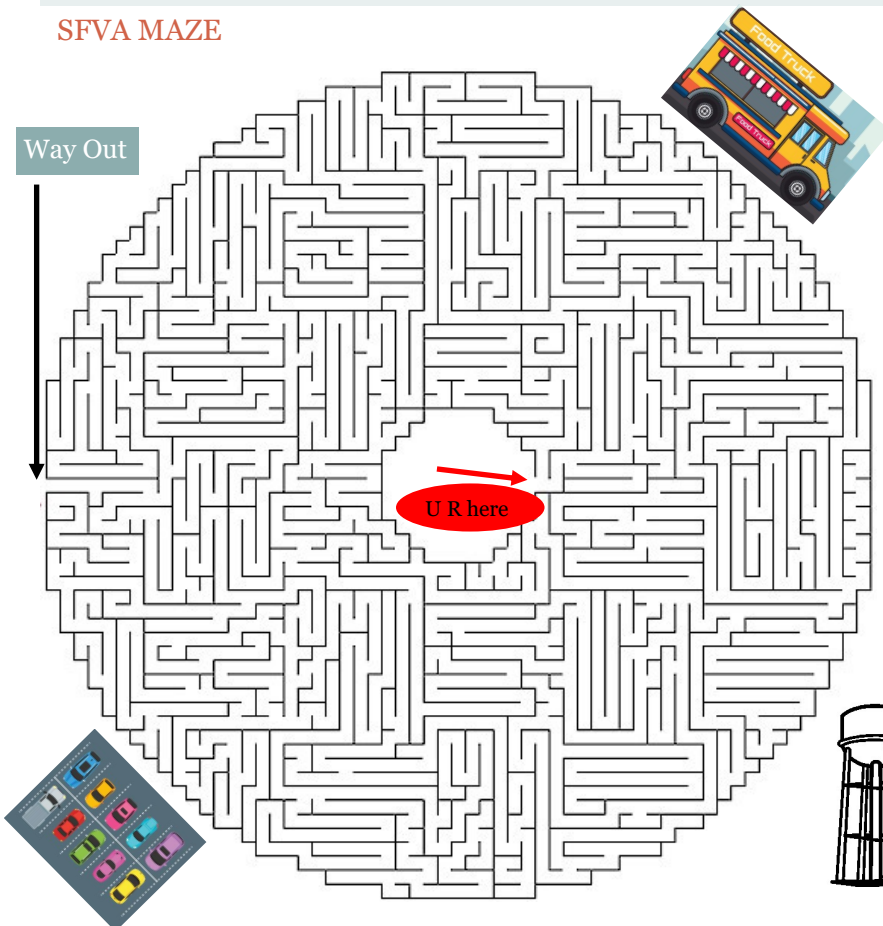
on this gift we have been given – a crazy, eclectic, creative, and beautiful VA community. And, the next day, take a moment to acknowledge one of them. It will brighten their day...and yours.

To jump start your reflection, I encourage all of you to read this month’s newsletter essay, “*The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*” – a beautiful work of prose written by...and I still can hardly believe it...an eighth grader. I must confess, ‘sonder’ was not in my vernacular...nor my Random House Dictionary...but I love its imagery. Thank you, Riley Bois, for reminding me to find my sonder moments! Your beautiful essay has helped me look at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in an entirely different light! KEN



"Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have ever asked in return is enough to bury those who did not return." – Gen. Colin Powell

SFVA MAZE



SUBLIME TO RIDICULOUS NOTES

Editor-in-Chief: Heather Nye (*if no byline, I wrote it*)
Please send us your news, ideas, and photos. And remember, we are only trying to make you chuckle a bit...
DOM Leadership Team Heather.nye@va.gov

Why ‘MIRACLE’ Edition? Well, amidst hundreds of other deadlines this month, I thought we might have to forego the Winter Sublime to Ridiculous this year. But in a rush of energy and intense need to avoid other pending responsibilities, suddenly there was sufficient content (no guarantee on quality). Then there was the Pope outfit, and story—and the absolute need to laugh at how desperate times can seem, and somehow end up being okay. That’s kind of miraculous.

IMPORTANT DATES

Presidents Day HOLIDAY	Mon Feb 17
Super Tuesday—VOTE!!.....	Tues Mar 3
Daylight Savings Begins.....	Sun Mar 8
Easter.....	Sun Apr 12
Tax Day.....	Wed Apr 15
Mother’s Day.....	Sun May 10
Holly Smith Dinner.....	Thurs May 21
Memorial Day HOLIDAY	Mon May 25