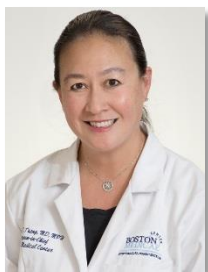


Chair's Message



Dear Colleagues,

I hear that vivid dreams have been on the rise, everything from dreams about stealing paper products to anxiety-driven nightmares about loved ones. While the last few months have undoubtedly led to sleepless nights for many, they have also brought us together, united to do battle to defeat this terrible virus.

For several members of our Department the battle has been personal, as they have contracted COVID-19. I cannot express how worried I have been to learn about each one. Most of our colleagues have now recovered and have returned to work, so the trend is good. But for those still in the throes of this illness—and those with family members who have been afflicted—I hope that all can beat it and return to good health soon.

As part of Team BMC, the Department of Surgery has responded to this crisis with amazing resolve and ingenuity to ensure that COVID-19 patients, as well as those whose surgeries could not be postponed, have received the care they need. This includes caring for critically ill COVID-19 patients in the surgical intensive care unit (SICU) and quickly stepping up to form a “SWAT” team that has taken some of the burden off of our fellow BMC colleagues. All of this has been done while continuing to fulfill our educational mission and making the switch to a virtual platform for didactic and surgical quality education of our BMC residents and Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) students.

Based on the numbers we are currently seeing, we believe BMC is now just passing the surge phase, having reached the peak number of COVID-positive admissions. As I have referenced in other communications, in anticipation of getting to the other side of this peak, we have been engaged in detailed planning for a phased restart of delayed and new non-emergent surgeries, tentatively slated for late May or early June. To say we all eagerly await this event is truly an understatement. As our surgical services ramp up and clinics reopen, we look forward to the hospital giving us the green light to begin welcoming back some of the employees who were furloughed at the beginning of April.

Necessity is the mother of invention. In our case, it means that the Department has made the jump to implement telehealth. There have been a few hiccups, but fewer of those every day. While it will never replace face-to-face visits, going forward, this new tool will help us to limit unnecessary exposures while connecting with and caring for our patients. As a plus, our no-show rate has plummeted!

I know that many of you have quietly been doing whatever you can to help behind the scenes. Thank you to all for your professionalism, patience, dedication, and flexibility. And thank you for the compassion and empathy you have shown toward our patients, their families, and toward each other

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jennifer Tseng'.

Jennifer Tseng, MD, MPH
Surgeon-in-Chief, Boston Medical Center



COVID Warriors

It's been more than a month now since enormous changes were instituted on the surgical intensive care unit (SICU) service. The Departments of Surgery and Anesthesiology have come together, rising to meet the truly urgent and unprecedented need during this trying time. Protocols and guidelines have been adapted, workflows have been rearranged, and resolve has never been stronger.

Department of Surgery critical care faculty have been sequestered to provide 24/7 coverage for the primary SICU service, as well as coverage for two teams in the medical intensive care unit (MICU) treating critically ill COVID-19 patients.

"Unfortunately in life, there are pandemics and mass casualty events," said **Tracey Dechert, MD**, Chief of Surgical Critical Care and Director of the SICU. "Whether our community is suffering because of a virus or a bomb, there is no team I would rather be working with than our SICU team. During these difficult times, teamwork helps our patients get better while also helping us to support each other. This commitment to caring for our patients and each other is inspiring."

From interns to Chiefs, surgery residents have rearranged their schedules (while staying within duty-hour limits), to provide tremendous support alongside the Department's dedicated and skilled advanced practice providers. And closing in on the end of a fellowship year they never could have anticipated, our surgical critical care (SCC) fellows have risen to SCC team leadership roles.

Reflecting on the new normal in the SICU, attending surgeon **Tejal Brahmbhatt, MD**, said, "Our teams don't watch the clock. We do what it does: We never stop. Our team works tirelessly and with conviction day in and day out to support our patients."

Through it all and with the support of the great critical care nursing staff, the SICU has been able to pivot to create a well-oiled service that meets the continued needs of surgical and trauma patients but also cares for the victims of the coronavirus.



SICU team huddle on Saturday, April 25, 10:30 pm. Led by attending surgeon Tejal Brahmbhatt, MD, (who took this photo) a team of Surgery and Anesthesiology residents and critical care nurses reviewed the status of, and care plans for, COVID-19 patients. Department of Surgery members pictured are surgical interns Drs. Joanna Wang (far right) and Brendin Beaulieu-Jones (fifth from left).

“SWAT” Team Extends Reach of Care



Procedure Team leader Dr. Thurston Drake (left) and Administrative Chief Resident Dr. Matthew Egyud.

At the end of March, as the number of COVID-positive patients being admitted to BMC’s surgical and medical intensive care units (ICUs) steadily increased, it became clear that with elective surgeries cancelled, the Department of Surgery could relieve some of the workload in the ICUs by forming a “COVID Procedure Team.” Led by **Thurston Drake, MD, MPH**, the team was quickly formed, giving themselves the unofficial moniker of “COVID SWAT Team.”

“The procedure team has been a godsend for the COVID teams,” said **Jaime Murphy, MD**, BMC’s Medical Director for Respiratory Therapy. “It has freed up medical providers to focus on caring for patients day

and night, while providing the best possible procedural support to our patients. It also allowed the MICU [Medical Intensive Care Unit] team to create an additional COVID team by freeing up our resources.”

The team has performed more than 300 procedures since April 1. Procedures include placement of central lines (central venous catheters), arterial lines, and chest tubes. Central lines are needed by nearly all ICU patients to provide fluids and medications, as well as to draw blood. Arterial lines are thin catheters used for real-time blood pressure monitoring, while chest tubes, another type of catheter, remove fluid and air from the chest cavity.

It’s a collaborative effort. Each team of two consists of an attending surgeon or senior resident surgeon assisted by another resident. “In times of a crisis such as this, we think of BMC—and especially our

commitment to its mission—as something like a home,” said Dr. Drake. “So for us, being asked to contribute in this way was akin to being asked for help by a family member, in this case our colleagues caring for these very sick patients. As they always do, our surgery residents stepped up and answered the call. Their hard work and *esprit de corps* are really something inspiring.”

“The procedure team has demonstrated what we already knew—that our residents are hard-working, dedicated to our patients, and always willing to do whatever it takes to help,” said **Tracey Dechert, MD**, Chief of Surgical Critical Care and Director of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit. “Our residents always find new ways to make us proud!”



Surgery residents Dr. Megan Janeway (left) and Andrea Madeido after a late night on the Procedure Team.



Chief Resident Dr. Josh Davies (right) and Senior Surgery Resident Dr. Sherif Aly perform a procedure under the supervision of attending surgeon Dr. Pei-Wen Lim (who took photo).

Honors, Awards & Highlights



Dr. Tejal Brahmbhatt

Dr. Brahmbhatt Is May's Distinguished Faculty of the Month

Tejal Brahmbhatt, MD, an Assistant Professor of Surgery at BUSM, and a surgeon in the Section of Acute and Trauma Surgery has been honored as BUSM Distinguished Faculty of the Month for May. Among other attributes, Dr. Brahmbhatt was nominated for this award because "He is always willing to offer guidance and wisdom to both medical students and residents."



Ashley Robinson

Amby Cup Goes to Ashley Robinson

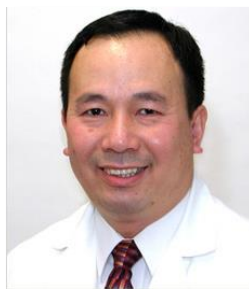
The BMC Ambulatory Organization chose Department of Surgery Operations Manager Ashley Robinson as the winner of the March 2020 Amby Cup. Awarded monthly, the Amby Cup recognizes a person or team that best exemplifies the values and goals of this organization. Ashley joined BMC last fall as the Operations Manager for the Division of Podiatry, and she had to hit the ground running when her ambulatory services team and two providers quit on her first day. Undaunted, she quickly hired new staff and took steps to improve efficiency. For this and for being an "overall great person to work with," she was recognized with the Amby Cup Survivor Award.



Dr. Maunil Bhatt

Dr. Bhatt Takes Silver at Boston Surgical Society

Chief Resident Maunil Bhatt, MD, received the silver award for his case presentation during the Boston Surgical Society's Annual Resident Case Competition in early March. Dr. Bhatt presentation was entitled "Resection of an Internal Carotid Artery Aneurysm with Extreme Cranial Exposure Maneuvers."



Dr. Hau Pham

Dr. Pham Shares Experience with Research in Residency

Hau Pham, DPM, Chief of the Division of Podiatry Surgery, was an invited presenter at a Council of Teaching Hospitals (COTH) workshop held in Dallas in January. Part of the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine, COTH is made up of over 200 of the nation's leading teaching hospitals and health systems dedicated to excellence in graduate podiatric medical education. Dr. Pham's presentation was entitled "Show Me the Way – Incorporating Research in Residency."

Honors, Awards & Highlights (continued)



Lisa Allee

Lisa Allee Receives MOVA Grant

Lisa Allee, MSW, LICSW, Director of the Community Violence Response Team (CVRT) received a two-year \$1,494,880 award from the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) to support the CVRT. This 10-year-old program provides free mental health services to patients and their family members impacted by life-threatening interpersonal violence injuries as well as families impacted by homicide. In 2019, CVRT served nearly 1,000 individuals.



Dr. David McAneny presenting grand rounds from his office at BMC.

Dr. McAneny Gives University of Alabama Grand Rounds

David McAneny, MD, Vice Chair of Surgery and Chief Surgical Officer, presented virtual grand rounds at the University of Alabama Birmingham (UAB) via the now very familiar Zoom platform. On Tuesday, April 21, Dr. McAneny presented grand rounds for the UAB Department of Surgery on "COVID-19 and the Commonwealth—How We Built This in Boston."

(Commonwealth is defined as: Noun [Archaic]: The welfare of the public.)

Dr. Tseng Receives Pinnacle Award

At a ceremony in late January, Surgeon-in-Chief Jennifer Tseng, MD, MPH, received a 2020 Pinnacle Award from the Boston Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Tseng was one of eight inspiring local women selected for this annual award, which recognizes outstanding achievement in the workplace, demonstrated leadership that has made a difference, and a commitment to enhance the quality of life in the region.



Dr. Tseng (second from right, wearing the newly designed BMC surgery scarf) shared the stage with Attorney General Maura Healey (third from right) and other honorees and event moderators.

Our Sincere Thanks for PPE Donations



(Left to right) Surgery residents Drs. Aldana Blanco, Maha Haqqani, Jian Zheng, and Breyen Coffin with some of the PPE that has been donated.

As the coronavirus pandemic took hold, the demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) skyrocketed. BMC, like other institutions, was left scrambling to meet the demand. We would like to thank everyone who has reached out to us with donations.

Gissell Medina, Team Coordinator in Plastic Surgery, donated 200 recently expired N95 masks that she had rescued from disposal at BMC. Frequently used when doing home projects, it seemed a shame to throw them away, so Gissell took them home. When the CDC announced that recently expired masks could be safely used by healthcare workers, she brought them back to BMC. Thank you, Gissell!



Gissell Medina

Hau Le, MD, a pediatric surgeon at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and a graduate of Boston University School of Medicine, contacted the Department and then very kindly donated 1,000 masks for personal protective use for surgical trainees and advanced practice providers.

A special thank you goes out to an anonymous donor and friend of the Department, introduced through the Morningside Foundation, who exhibited tremendous generosity by donating 10,000 surgical masks to BMC.

BMC surgery residents **Nicole Cimbak, MD**, and **Mark Zapata, MD**, delivered more than 100 handmade masks to the Pine Street Inn. Sewn by the thoughtful residents of Lexington, they were made available for donation by **James McPhee, MD**, Assistant Professor of Surgery at BUSM and vascular surgeon at the VA Boston Healthcare System, a resident of Lexington.



Drs. Cimbak (left) and Zapata

Match Day 2020

On Friday, March 20, medical students across the country learned where they will begin their residency training. We look forward to welcoming the 2020-2021 class of categorical and preliminary interns to Boston Medical Center this summer. Current Department of Surgery residents offered a warm virtual welcome in a fantastic video, with wide BMC Surgery participation, which was masterminded by current resident **Priyanka Chugh, MD**.

Categorical Surgery Interns



Andrea Alonso
Boston University
School of Medicine



Louis Kester
Drexel University
College of Medicine



Anna Kobzeva-Herzog
Boston University
School of Medicine

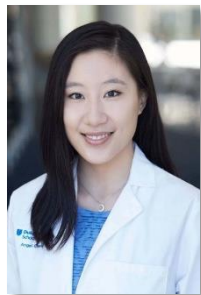


Maia Nofal
Boston University
School of Medicine



Olivia Sacks
Geisel School of
Medicine at
Dartmouth

Preliminary Surgery Interns



Fangyu Chen
Duke University
School of Medicine



Ansh Johri
Pennsylvania State
University College
of Medicine



Liz Lin
Tufts University
School of Medicine



Isabel Sausjord
Boston University
School of Medicine



**Keerthivasan
Vengatesan**
Boston University
School of Medicine

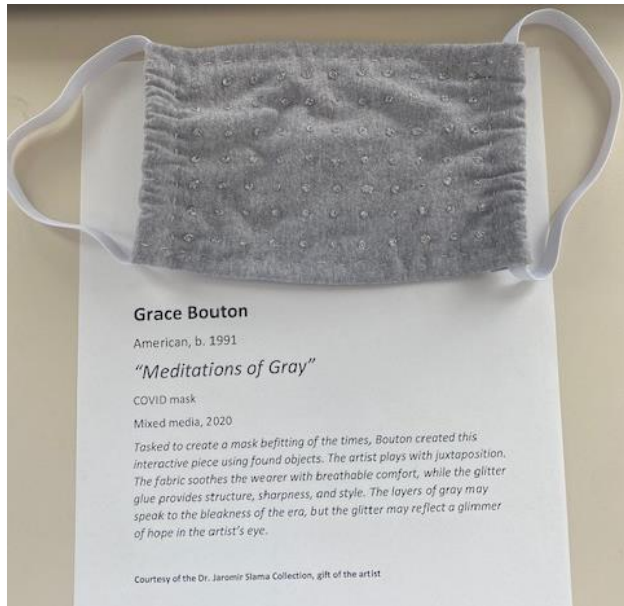
Creativity Unmasked

With the increasing need for masks in our everyday lives, **Jaromir Slama, MD**, Chief of the Division of Reconstructive and Plastic Surgery, decided to see just how creative members of his team could be in making their own masks. Intended to be a fun exercise, the COVID Mask Challenge was on!

Participants had to follow a few simple rules—no sewing machine and no perishable materials. Beyond that, it was time to tap into the imaginations of department members, and they did not disappoint. The judging was recently completed. A few of the winning entries (and one created by the contest originator, Dr. Slama) are shown here.



Jillian Strassner repurposed a few household items, overlaid with a previously painted canvas (original painting she did in college) and part of an old gray sweater, to create a stylish mask.



Grace Bouton's mask came with a description befitting a piece of artwork in a gallery.



The mask Caroline Luce crafted features the likeness of a certain surgeon in the division.



Dr. Slama models a mask that ticks all the boxes: protective, functional, and a conversation starter.

Promotions



Alexis Higgins was promoted to Operations Manager, with responsibility for the Belkin Breast Center and the Sections of Acute and Trauma Surgery and Pediatrics. Alexis was previously Team Coordinator for General Surgery.



Humu Marah was promoted to Team Lead for the Section of Colorectal Surgery. Humu was previously an Administrative Services Representative (ASR) III.

New Staff

We are happy to welcome the following staff, who have joined the Department since January.

Acute Care and Trauma Surgery

- ❖ **Jami Pollard, PA-C**, Physician Assistant, Inpatient Team

General Surgery

- ❖ **Mohamed Jama**, Team Coordinator

Podiatry

- ❖ **Michael Aguiar**, Medical Assistant
- ❖ **Jessica Greaves**, Ambulatory Services Representative II
- ❖ **Kathryn Koestner, NP**, Nurse Practitioner
- ❖ **Remercile Polynice-Pierre, NP**, Nurse Practitioner

Surgical Oncology & Belkin Breast Center

- ❖ **Nora Carr, NP**, Nurse Practitioner

Surgical Quality & Safety

- ❖ **Allison Marshall, RN MPH**, Surgical Clinical Nurse Reviewer

Research Notes

Dr. Alaina Geary (second from right) with members of AAS leadership.

Dr. Geary Receives Fellowship and Wins for Best Paper

Surgery resident Alaina Geary, MD, is the recipient of the AAS/AASF Trainee Research Fellowship Award in Education. This is the first year that the Association for Academic Surgery (AAS) and its foundation (AASF) have offered an “education” category for residents and fellows engaged in educational research. During this one-year fellowship, Dr. Geary will be mentored by attending surgeon **Luise Pernar, MD**, Surgery Residency Associate Program Director, and co-mentored by Chief of Surgery **Jennifer Tseng, MD, MPH**. In addition, her paper,

“Analysis of Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) Data Can Improve House Staff Diversity,” was selected by the AAS Publications Committee as the Best AAS Overall Manuscript Submission by an AAS resident or fellow member.



Dr. Scott Levin

Dr. Levin Wins Essay Contest and Scholarship

Surgery resident Scott Levin, MD, won the 9th Annual MCACS (Massachusetts Chapter of the American College of Surgeons) Resident Essay Competition and a scholarship to attend and participate in the ACS Leadership & Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC. Dr. Levin’s essay addressed the role of surgeons in advocating for value-based payment models more favorable to safety-net hospitals. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the ACS Leadership Conference, slated for March, was postponed, as was the MCACS spring council meeting, in which Dr. Levin was slated to participate.

In addition, Dr. Levin has just received an MS in Health Services Research from the BU School of Public Health. His thesis was an evaluation of the impact of state tobacco policies on smoking prevalence among vascular surgery patients.



Dr. Marina Malikova

Dr. Malikova to Chair NIH Panel

Marina Malikova, PhD, MSci, MA, executive director of surgical translational research, has been selected to chair an NIH panel formed to assess proposals submitted under an RFP, issued by the Clinical Research Coordinating Center for the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s Clinical Trials Network. As chair, she will oversee the review process, coordinating discussion of proposals among panel members and providing expert scientific feedback that will be used to choose the awardee. Dr. Malikova is also an expert reviewer for the NIH’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Research Notes (continued)



Dr. Hillary Mull

Dr. Mull Receives VA Grant

Hillary Mull, PhD, MPP, Research Assistant Professor at BUSM and an Investigator in the Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research (CHOIR) at the VA Boston Healthcare System, has received a VA Health Services Research & Development grant, the equivalent of an NIH RO1 award. Dr. Mull's study, "How Can We Make Invasive Non-Surgical Procedures Safer? Using Big Data to Identify Adverse Events and Opportunities to Mitigate Harm," has been funded at \$1,145,670 for three years and will build on her previous work incorporating the application of medical informatics and precision methodology.



ICOUGH can reduce post-operative pulmonary complications.

Paper Presents 10 Years of Experience with ICOUGH

A paper published in the May issue of *The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety* details a decade of experience at BMC with the ICOUGH program, designed to help patients reduce pulmonary complications after surgery. ICOUGH was developed by **David McAneny, MD**, Vice Chair of Surgery and Chief Surgical Officer, in conjunction with **Pamela Rosenkranz, RN, BSN, MEd**, Director of Clinical Quality and Patient Safety in Surgery, both of whom are authors on the new paper. In an accompanying news release from the Joint Commission, lead author **Michael Cassidy, MD**, said "Over the course of the 10-year period, we saw improvement from the last decade to the first for pneumonia among hospitals enrolled in the

American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program. . . . We continue to look at ways to improve the program and have recently developed an application for mobile devices to help our patients comply with the ICOUGH protocol." Co-authors are resident **Stephanie Talutis, MD**, and former BMC resident **Ryan Macht, MD**.
