VUH Earns “A” Safety Score from Leapfrog

From article by Doug Campbell originally published in the VUMC Reporter on Nov. 10, 2021

Vanderbilt University Hospital (VUH) has again been recognized among the safest hospitals in the nation after receiving a fall 2021 safety grade of “A” from the Leapfrog Group.

Leapfrog is a coalition of public and private purchasers of employee health coverage that works to encourage health care safety, quality and affordability.

Leapfrog’s Hospital Safety Score uses numerous measures of publicly available hospital data to produce a single score representing a hospital’s overall capacity to keep patients safe from infections, injuries and medical errors.

These measures come from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Leapfrog Hospital Survey and secondary data sources such as the American Hospital Association’s Annual Survey and Information Technology Supplement. The measures are weighted and then combined to produce a single composite score that is published as an A, B, C, D or F letter grade.

“Continual emphasis on the safety of our patients and employees is our foremost priority. This ‘A’ score is perhaps
Before we fully settle into 2022, let’s recap 2021. The year had plenty of accomplishments, not just for Vanderbilt University Medical Center but for the department as well. All of these achievements happened while we continued to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

For starters, Vanderbilt University Hospital was awarded an “A” safety grade from the Leapfrog Group. This means that VUH is among the safest hospitals in the nation. This recognition showcases our commitment to quality patient care.

Our department continues to grow and expand. You can see evidence of this on the pages dedicated to our new hires. I recommend taking the time to see how many new clinicians, research staff, and administrative staff we have hired to keep up with our growth.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the dedication of our existing staff. Check out our spread dedicated to the service awards and you’ll see a long list of department employees who have served here at VUMC from five all the way up to 35 years.

Our department also participated in the 2021 American Society of Anesthesiologists Annual Meeting, which was a hybrid event this year. Attendees had a choice between virtual or in-person sessions. The in-person events were held in San Diego, California. Anesthesiologists from our department contributed over 70 activities at the event, focusing on a variety of topics, from clinician burnout to patient safety.

I look forward to seeing what the department and VUMC continue to accomplish in 2022.

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more meaningful than others in the past, given the challenges of the pandemic. I want to congratulate and express my gratitude to everyone for the outcomes attributing to this score,” said C. Wright Pinson, MBA, MD, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Health System Officer for Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

To determine a safety grade, Leapfrog not only looks at outcome measures, but also processes measures such as staff responsiveness and structural measures like the overall hospital environment and how thoroughly technology is embedded into the delivery of care.

“The Leapfrog Recognition is truly a reflection of our team’s commitment to patient safety through unprecedented times and making care patient safety personal,” said Jenny Slayton, DNP, RN, Senior Vice President for Quality, Safety and Risk Prevention at VUMC.

In the recent survey, 2,900 hospitals across the nation were assigned grades of A, B, C, D or F for safety, and only 30 percent received an “A.”

Shon Dwyer, MBA, RN, President of VUH, said the recognition is well deserved.

“We are tremendously proud of the never-ending quality and safety focus that our faculty and staff provide every day, to every patient. This recognition by Leapfrog is a great acknowledgement and reflects the dedication of all. The adult hospital has and will continue to build quality and safety systems with input from our caregivers, patients and families,” Dwyer said.
Department Participates in Over 70 Activities at the 2021 American Society of Anesthesiologists Annual Meeting

With plenty of safety precautions in place, clinicians from across the country attended the 2021 Annual Meeting for the American Society of Anesthesiologists in San Diego, California, ready to explore the many sessions presented by their colleagues.

Including virtual and in-person sessions, the Department of Anesthesiology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center contributed over 70 activities during this year’s meeting. Members of the department presented on diverse topics, from clinician burnout to billing for anesthesia services.

Clinician burnout and how it affects patient safety has been a hot topic at previous ASA Annual Meetings, and this year was no different. Jane Easdown, MD, moderated a SNAP-Talk, titled “Tackling the Top Patient Safety Problems in Your Practice: Recommendations From the ASA Patient Safety Editorial Board,” in which clinician burnout was discussed. Matt Weinger, MD, was lead speaker of the special meeting titled “Perioperative Clinician Wellbeing: Why Is This a Patient Safety Issue?” He described clinician burnout as systemic and explained that work systems that do not support workers’ needs are unsafe for everyone. He said focusing on fixing the “defective” clinicians will make the problem worse and not better.

Another non-clinical topic discussed was mentorship. Pratik Pandharipande, MD, MSCI, presented a talk titled “How to Get the Best Out of a Busy Mentor.” He suggested those seeking a mentor get more than one for different aspects of their career. The mentorship talk also looped back into the clinician burnout issue because he said a good mentor helps identify burnout in mentees.

The meeting also focused on the clinical and research aspects of anesthesiology. Not only did our physicians present topics ranging from same-day joint surgery to standardizing kidney injury outcomes, but our trainees presented 25 medically challenging cases.

ASA’s 2022 annual meeting is scheduled to take place from Oct. 22 to Oct. 25 in New Orleans, LA.◆
Alyssa Thompson’s route to specialty care for chronic pain, and to a small device being permanently implanted in her midback to manage pain by delivering imperceptible electrical pulses to her spinal cord, began with a gymnastics session in her backyard in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in 2012 at age 14.

Tumbling resulted in an ankle sprain that would launch years of medical interventions for complex regional pain syndrome.

Brannon Lockhart’s route to receiving a spinal cord stimulator implant for chronic pain was by way of a genetic condition that disposes him and other family members to form blood clots in their circulatory system. In Lockhart’s case, the condition led to painful loss of circulation in his lower legs, and to amputation below the knee — his right leg in January 2019, his left in July 2020. (Between these two surgical treatments, Lockhart’s 21-year-old daughter, Lindsay, died after undetected blood clots caused a blood vessel in her brain to rupture.)

First reported in the 1960s, the application of electrical pulses to treat pain has grown dramatically over the past decade, with some 34,000 spinal cord stimulators per year now implanted worldwide, half of them in North America. According to Fortune Business Insights, the global spinal cord stimulation devices market, which in 2020 dipped sharply to $2.4 billion due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is expected to grow 8% per year and reach $4.1 billion by 2027.

Typical indications include post-laminectomy syndrome (also known as failed back surgery syndrome), complex regional pain syndrome, and peripheral neuropathy, that is, diseases of or damage to nerves beyond the brain and spinal cord.

“We’re not turning off any neurons, or any ability for the spine and brain to communicate with a painful part of the body,” said interventional pain specialist Chris Sobey, MD, associate professor of Clinical Anesthesiology, who placed Thompson’s implant in 2018.

Pain specialists at Vanderbilt University Medical Center implanted 130 spinal cord stimulators last year. In a typical case, a device about the size of an Oreo cookie is surgically implanted in the midback, with electrodes being run out to targets in the epidural space of the spine, adjacent to the spinal cord. A form of neuromodulation, spinal cord stimulation can help patients for whom pain medication is inadequate or poses debilitating side effects.

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“We spent six and a half years trying every single thing we could think of, just to make it through each day,” said Thompson, director of operations at a financial services firm. She says chronic pain affected all aspects of her life. She was homebound for a time, receiving high school instruction via teachers’ home visits. She periodically received epidural injections to numb her legs, followed by stints of physical therapy at Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt.

With the implant, “I had relief almost immediately,” she said. “I was suddenly able to do everything that I wanted to, and I’d never really had that since before I was 14. It changed everything in my life.”

Lockhart’s implant was placed last November by interventional pain specialist Jeremy Walker, MD, assistant professor of Clinical Anesthesiology.

“It’s been totally life changing for me,” said Lockhart, a business consultant and an avid hunter. During a Zoom interview, to demonstrate the agility afforded by his artificial lower legs, the U.S. Army veteran rose and moved jauntily about his home office.

Before the implant, Lockhart had been taking opioids on a daily basis.

“I went from six or seven hydrocodones a day to, now, maybe one or half of one every couple days.

And I’m probably 80 percent to 85 percent more active now.”

Implantation at VUMC is preceded by a psychological evaluation and a weeklong trial involving an external generator. Permanent placement involves an outpatient procedure and twilight sedation, similar to that used for a colonoscopy. The implants last about 10 years, Walker said. Patients use a small remote control to select device settings.

With the advances achieved in neuromodulation, “We now use waveforms and programming that doesn’t give any vibratory or tingling sensation or pose any sensation at all for the patient,” Walker said.

A majority of people historically treated with spinal cord stimulators at VUMC have refractory low-back and leg pain, Walker said, often after spine surgeries. He added that the use of neuromodulation to treat complex regional pain syndrome is growing. Walker describes this syndrome, which is estimated to affect some 200,000 people in the U.S. annually, as “a remodeling of the nervous system that leads to haywire pain signals, usually in a foot or an arm.”

A majority of VUMC spinal cord stimulation implants are performed by the team at the Center for Neuromodulation Clinic, with two locations in Franklin, Tennessee. The clinic, which sees patients by clinician referral, also offers other minimally invasive pain interventions.
2021 VUMC Service Awards

35 Years
Gail Mayo | Research Project Manager, PCRI | Research

25 Years
Arna Banerjee | Professor | Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine
Brian Donahue | Professor | Pediatric Anesthesiology
Jane Easdown | Professor | Neuroanesthesiology
Tammy Freehling | Service Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Kristie Lee | Manager | Research
Edith Newberry | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Mias Pretorious | Professor | Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology
Charles Sharbel | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Bridget Sharp | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Paul St Jacques | Professor | Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology

20 Years
Stephen Bruehl | Professor | Research
John Butorac | Manager, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

15 Years
Ghali Abdelmessih | Research Assistant II | Research
Denise Brown | Associate Program Manager | Ambulatory Anesthesiology
Daniel Deffendall | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Rajnish Gupta | Professor | Ambulatory Anesthesiology
Patrick Henson | Associate Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology | Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine
Elisabeth Hughes | Associate Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology | Pediatric Anesthesiology
Veronica Nylander | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Gwendolyn Sanders | Service Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Sharon Seats | Senior Administrative Assistant | Multispeciality Adult Anesthesiology
Sheena Weaver | Associate Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology | Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine
10 Years
John Corey | Associate Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology | Pain Medicine
Lara Craig | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Lindsay Dickson | Program Manager | Administration
Kurt Dittrch | Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology | Pain Medicine
Matthew Fosnot | Service Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Judy Lashbrook | Senior Business Process Manager | Administration
Marcos Lopez | Assistant Professor | Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine
Laura Payne | Service Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Thomas Romanelli | Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology | Pediatric Anesthesiology
Kara Siegrist | Assistant Professor | Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology

5 Years
Misty Ball | Program Manager | Research
Matthew Bell | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Lucille Brunker | Assistant Professor | Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine
Ashley Burdette | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Joshua Campbell | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Christy Crockett | Assistant Professor | Pediatric Anesthesiology
Jeremy Donegan | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Erin Dunavant | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Holly Ende | Assistant Professor | Obstetric Anesthesiology
Robert Freundlich | Associate Professor | Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine
Kristy Garner | Anesthesia Tech
Brian Gelfand | Associate Professor | Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology
Alexander George | Assistant Professor | Multispeciality Adult Anesthesiology
Dillon Heath | Service Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
LaurieAnn Hembree | Associate Program Manager | Education
Alan Hendon | Service Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Harrison Johnson | Assistant Director | Administration
Frederick Lombard | Associate Professor | Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology
Katharina Modes | Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology | Pediatric Anesthesiology
Maryann Otto | Instructor | Obstetric Anesthesiology
Hunter Peek | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Krystal Peek | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Elizabeth Sutherland | Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
Brian Allen, MD, received the ASA & SEA Distinguished Educator Award.

Matthew Barajas, MD, won a Young Investigator Award at the 2021 American Heart Association Resuscitation Science Symposium for his submission of the abstract “Intravenous Waveform Analysis Correlates With Volume Status in Resuscitation in In-Vivo Rat Model.”

Susan Eagle, MD, and Liza Weavind, MBCh, FCCM, MMHC, were selected to be part of the inaugural class of the Academy for Excellence in Clinical Medicine (AECM) at VUMC.

Marc Lopez, MD, was appointed associate program director of the Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine Fellowship.

Christina Hayhurst, MD, was invited to serve on the APSF Patient Safety Advisory Committee on Opioid-Related Harm.

Matthias Riess, MD, PhD, has been accepted into membership of the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research (FAER) Academy of Research Mentors in Anesthesiology.

Jonathan Wanderer, MD, MPhil, received the Department of Biomedical Informatics (DBMI) Technology, Organizational Development and Evaluation (TODE) Award.

Jonathan Wanderer, MD, MPhil, was selected to serve as the Society for Technology in Anesthesia (STA) President-Elect on the 2022 Board of Directors.

Department Promotions

Pamela Butler was promoted to Business Intelligence Analyst.

Melanie Cundiff was promoted to Program Manager.

Lindsay Dickson was promoted to Program Manager.

Leslie Fowler, EdD, was promoted to Assistant Professor.

Calvin Gruss, MD, was promoted to Assistant Professor.

Rajnish Gupta, MD, was promoted to Professor.

Robert Freundlich, MD, MS, MSCI, was promoted to Associate Professor.

Latishe Jones was promoted to Program Manager.

Karen McCarthy, EdD, was promoted to Assistant in Anesthesiology.

John Rutledge, CRNA, was promoted to Service Specialist for Ambulatory Anesthesiology.

Sharae Shipp was promoted to Project Manager.

Joseph Teamer was promoted to Project Manager.

Jonathan Wanderer, MD, MPhil, was promoted to Professor.
Hawa Abubuakar, MD  
*Fellow*  
*Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**
*Fellowship*, Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)  
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, Washington University, St. Louis, MO (2020)  
*MD*, King’s College London GKT School of Medicine, London, UK (2010)  
**Fun Fact:** I speak Swahili fluently.

Kayvon Alizadeh, MD  
*Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology*  
*Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**
*Fellowship*, Pain Medicine, University of Florida Health Sciences Center, Gainesville, FL (2013)  
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, University of Florida Health Sciences Center, Gainesville, FL (2012)  
*MD*, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Medicine, Denver, CO (2002)  
**Fun Fact:** I enjoy running, biking, and martial arts.

Matthew Bell, DNP  
*Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist*

**Education and Training:**
*DNP*, Nurse Anesthesia, Union University, Jackson, TN (2021)  
*BSN*, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA (2014)  
**Fun Fact:** I take great pride in my holiday decorating skills (especially when it comes to Halloween and Christmas).

Darlia Bethel  
*Research Assistant I*  
*Research*

**Education and Training:**
*BS*, Chemistry, Middle Tennessee State University (2021)  
**Fun Fact:** I enjoy composing music and poetry.
Meghan Breed, MD  
Fellow  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

**Education and Training:**  
*Fellowship*, Obstetric Anesthesiology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)  
*DO*, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, Erie, PA (2015)  
*MPH*, The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, Hanover, NH (2009)  
**Fun Fact:** I was a member of the NYU Equestrian team in college!

Kaitlyn Brennan, DO, MPH  
Assistant Professor  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

**Education and Training:**  
*Fellowship*, Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)  
*DO*, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, Erie, PA (2015)  
*MPH*, The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, Hanover, NH (2009)  
**Fun Fact:** I was a member of the NYU Equestrian team in college!

Lucille Brunker, MD  
Assistant Professor  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency*, Emergency Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2020)  
*MD*, George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Washington DC (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** I have two redbone coonhounds - Pete and Charley.

John Bryant, MD  
Fellow  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (2021)  
*MD*, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** I have two French bulldogs named Petunia and Wilbur-Daffodil.
Angela Cain
*Financial Analyst
Administration*

**Education and Training:**
*MPA*, Public Administration, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN (1999)
*BS*, Public Administration, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN (1997)

**Fun Fact:** I adore traveling! My last vacation, prior to the pandemic, was spent backpacking through Costa Rica.

Anarius Cathey
*Research Assistant I
Research*

**Education and Training:**
*MS*, Biomedical Sciences, University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson, MS (2021)
*BS*, Sociology, Women and Gender Studies, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN (2020)

**Fun Fact:** I enjoy horseback riding in my free time!

Manuel Cavazos, MD
*Fellow
Pediatric Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)
*MD*, University of Texas School of Medicine, San Antonio, TX (2017)

**Fun Fact:** I am bilingual.

Neenah Cutler, DNP
*Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist*

**Education and Training:**
*DNP*, Nurse Anesthesia, Emory University, Atlanta, GA (2021)
*BSN*, Emory University, Atlanta, GA (2015)

**Fun Fact:** I adore traveling! My last vacation, prior to the pandemic, was spent backpacking through Costa Rica.

James Damron, MD
*Fellow
Obstetric Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**
*Residency*, Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, University of Alabama, Birmingham, AL (2021)
*MD*, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY (2017)

**Fun Fact:** I am a board game collector.
Vivian Doan, MD  
Fellow  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

**Education and Training:**
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Chapel Hill, NC (2021)
*MD,* University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC (2017)
**Fun Fact:** I’ve been doing krav maga for about five years now.

Charles Doyle, MD  
Instructor  
Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology

**Education and Training:**
*Fellowship,* Regional Anesthesia & Acute Pain Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL (2020)
*MD,* University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL (2016)
**Fun Fact:** I grew up in Florida but have been playing ice hockey since I was four.

Steven Durning, MD  
Fellow  
Regional Anesthesia & Acute Pain Medicine

**Education and Training:**
*MD,* Ohio State College of Medicine, Columbus, OH (2010)
**Fun Fact:** I’ve flown in F16s and several other military aircraft, and I have been stationed in South Korea, Germany, and England with the U.S. Air Force.

Sarah Faulk  
Senior Administrative Assistant  
Administration

**Education and Training:**
*MHA,* University of North Carolina Wilmington, Wilmington, NC (2021)
*BS,* Exercise Science, University of North Carolina Wilmington, Wilmington, NC (2020)
**Fun Fact:** I know how to unicycle!

Nicholas Flores-Conner, MD  
Fellow  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

**Education and Training:**
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, Boston Medical Center, Boston, MA (2021)
*MD,* Universidad Internacional del Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador (2015)
**Fun Fact:** I am a fan of fermentation and have made multiple treats and drinks during residency. Most recently, have been focused on sourdough, kimchi, and beer making. My next big experiment is barreling beer in a bourbon barrel.
Jessica Grundt, MD  
Fellow  
Interventional Pain

**Education and Training:**
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, University of Texas Southwestern, Dallas, TX (2021)  
*MD,* University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, TX (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** I used to coach skydiving and be on a collegiate skydiving team, I invest in more exercise equipment and memberships than is probably financially responsible, I love dogs more than most humans, and I cannot wait to travel again with my husband.

Jasmine Gray  
Senior Administrative Assistant  
Office of Anesthesiology Faculty Affairs

**Education and Training:**
**Fun Fact:** I play soccer.

Travis J. Hamilton, DO, MMHC, FASA  
**Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology**  
**Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology**

**Education & Training:**
*MMHC,* Vanderbilt University, Owen Graduate School of Management, Nashville, TN (2021)  
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium - Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, TX (2011)  
*DO,* University of Pikeville, Kentucky College of Osteopathic Medicine, Pikeville, KY (2007)  
**Fun Fact:** I served for 12 years in the US Army and deployed to Afghanistan to provide trauma care in the world’s busiest trauma hospital. While attached to the British Army, I developed an insatiable love for Land Rovers.

Richard Haring, DO, MPH  
Fellow  
Interventional Pain

**Education and Training:**
*Residency,* Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)  
*DO,* Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, Bradenton, FL (2015)  
*MPH,* Public Health Policy, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD (2014)  
**Fun Fact:** I’m not good at running, and I’m a mediocre fly fisherman, but I’m great at eating rocky road ice cream.
Braden Hestermann, MD
Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology
Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology

Education and Training:
MD, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, MD (2013)
Fun Fact: I have been on Active Duty in the Army since 2004 and have had the opportunity to take part in many unique schools and deployments. While in medical school I was certified as both an accelerated free fall and tandem skydiving instructor.

Alan Hoang, MD
Assistant Professor
Pain Medicine, Pediatric Anesthesiology

Education and Training:
Fellowship, Pediatric Anesthesiology, Boston Children’s Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA (2021)
Fellowship, Pediatric & Adult Pain Medicine, Boston Children’s Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA (2020)
Residency, Pediatrics, University of California, Irvine, CA (2019)
Residency, Anesthesiology, University of California, Irvine, CA (2019)
MD, Boston University, Boston, MA (2014)
Fun Fact: I am an avid cook and have only made a handful of dishes more than once.

Michael Kuntz, MD
Assistant Professor
Pediatric Cardiac Anesthesiology

Education and Training:
Fellowship, Pediatric Cardiac Anesthesiology, Boston Children’s Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA (2021)
Fellowship, Pediatric Anesthesiology, Boston Children’s Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA (2020)
Residency, Anesthesiology, Jackson Memorial Hospital - University of Miami, Miami, FL (2019)
MD, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA (2015)
Fun Fact: I lived in Brussels for several years while growing up, and subsequently learned Flemish simultaneous to when I was learning English... sadly I’ve forgotten it all.

Daniel Larach, MD, MSTR
Assistant Professor
Pain Medicine, Informatics Research, Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology

Education and Training:
Fellowship, Pain Medicine, New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell/Hospital for Special Surgery/Memorial Sloan Kettering, New York, NY (2019)
Residency, Anesthesiology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (2018)
MD, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (2014)
MSTR, Translational Research, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (2014)
Fun Fact: I played college soccer.
Dianne Lou, MD, PhD  
Fellow  
Interventional Pain

Education and Training:
Residency, Anesthesiology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2020)  
MD, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, TX (2016)  
PhD, Institute for Cell and Molecular Biology, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX (2014)  
Fun Fact: I have a newfound interest in interior design.

Brittany McCann, MD  
Assistant Professor  
Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology

Education and Training:
Fellowship, Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)  
Residency, Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, Pennsylvania State University, Hershey, PA (2020)  
MD, Pennsylvania State University, Hershey, PA (2016)  
Fun Fact: I studied abroad in the UK in college.

Lisa McIntosh  
Associate Program Manager  
Pain Medicine

Education and Training:
BS, Psychology, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, IN (2013)  
Fun Fact: Although I am not athletic, I won a competition at my gym where I beat a girl who competed in the 2020 Olympics.

Melissa McKittrick, MD  
Fellow  
Interventional Pain

Education and Training:
Residency, Anesthesiology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)  
MD, University of Kansas School of Medicine, Lawrence, KS (2017)  
Fun Fact: We have a rescue dog named Cody.
Monique Osigbeme, MD  
Fellow  
Obstetric Anesthesiology

Education and Training:
Residency, Anesthesiology, University of Louisville School of Medicine, Louisville, KY (2021)
MD, University of Louisville School of Medicine, Louisville, KY (2017)
Fun Fact: I am an All American athlete in Track and Field.

William Peters, DNP  
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

Education and Training:
DNP, Nurse Anesthesia, Emory University, Atlanta, GA (2021)
BSN, Duke University, Durham, NC (2013)
Fun Fact: I have enough music in my iTunes/Apple Music library to play for 21 days straight.

Brandon Pruett, MD  
Instructor  
Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology

Education and Training:
Fellowship, Regional Pain, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)
Residency, Anesthesiology, Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, Columbus, OH (2020)
MD, University of Mississippi Medical School, Jackson, MS (2016)
Fun Fact: I enjoy playing guitar.

Charles Quillen  
Research Assistant I  
Research

Education and Training:
MS, Physiology, Tulane University School of Medicine, New Orleans, LA (2021)
BA, Psychology, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC (2020)
Fun Fact: I am a musician.
**Greg Rechcigl**  
*Assistant Director*  
*Administration*

**Education and Training:**  
*MS*, Health Services Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL (2011)  
*BS*, Health Services Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL (2007)  
**Fun Fact:** I can always tell what time it is by looking at the sun.

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**Andrew Scot Resnick, MD**  
*Fellow*  
*Pediatric Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, Wayne State University School of Medicine, Pontiac, MI (2021)  
*MD*, American University of Antigua College of Medicine, Coolidge, Antigua, West Indies (2016)  
**Fun Fact:** I love yoga and have been practicing for about six years.

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**Megan Salwei, PhD**  
*Research Assistant Professor*  
*Center for Research and Innovation in Systems Safety*

**Education and Training:**  
*Postdoctoral Research Fellowship*, Biomedical Informatics, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)  
*PhD*, Industrial Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI (2020)  
*MS*, Industrial Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** I was on the University of Wisconsin-Madison dance team and performed at two Rose Bowls and a NCAA men’s basketball National Championship game.

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**William Shirer, MD**  
*Fellow*  
*Regional Anesthesia & Acute Pain Medicine*

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, Stanford Health Care, Stanford, CA (2021)  
*MD*, Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford, CA (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** I love wrestling my kids and teaching them about the Avengers and Star Wars; currently lobbying hard to get a doggy. Frequent Netflix-er, occasional chess player (not very good, but addicted to it); in a past life I loved running, and I sometimes fantasize about doing that again. If/when the COVID pandemic ends, the first place I will go is a movie theater.
Tatiana Sidorova, PhD  
*Staff Scientist*  
*Research*

**Education and Training:**  
*PhD, Biochemistry, Russian Academy of Science, Pushchino, Moscow (2000)*  
*MS, Biology, Tomsk State University, Russian Federation (1992)*  
**Fun Fact:** My hobbies include: knitting, crochet, and gardening.

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Christopher Siemer, DO  
*Fellow*  
*Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine*

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency, Anesthesiology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (2021)*  
*DO, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI (2017)*  
**Fun Fact:** I am a former Biotechnology Startup co-founder.

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Lauren Siemer, MD  
*Instructor*  
*Multispecialty Adult Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency, Anesthesiology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (2021)*  
*MD, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL (2017)*  
**Fun Fact:** I won first place in the 2012 BattleBots/Bots IQ national robotics competition (120 lb. college division).

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Matthew Smith, MD  
*Fellow*  
*Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine*

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency, Anesthesiology, Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, TX (2021)*  
*MD, Uniformed Services University, Bethesda, MD (2017)*  
**Fun Fact:** I’ve lived in seven different states and moved 12 times in the past 15 years.

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Stephanie Smith, MD  
*Physician*  
*Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital*

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency, Anesthesiology, Northwestern University, McGaw Medical Center, Chicago, IL (2003)*  
*MD, University of Tennessee, Memphis, TN (1999)*  
**Fun Fact:** I am an avid reader and trail biker.
Connor Snarskis, MD  
Fellow  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine  

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (2021)  
*MD,* Loyola University of Chicago Stritch School of Medicine, Maywood, IL (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** I worked as a janitor before medical school.

Shelly Stephens, MD  
Fellow  
Perioperative Medicine  

**Education and Training:**  
*Fellowship,* Perioperative Echocardiography, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (2021)  
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (2020)  
*MD,* University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis, TN (2016)  
**Fun Fact:** I used to play the drums (school band, jazz band, jam sessions) throughout middle school and high school.

Edward Stredny, MD  
Fellow  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine  

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, Penn State University, Hershey, PA (2021)  
*MD,* Penn State University, Hershey, PA (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** I enjoy scuba diving, particularly on shipwrecks, despite the fact that I once accidentally swam into a shark.

Alaine Walsh, MD  
Fellow  
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine  

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency,* Anesthesiology, University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, TX (2021)  
*MD,* University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, TX (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** I love to listen to fantasy and sci-fi audiobooks.
Kylie Weston, DNP
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

Education and Training:
DNP, Nurse Anesthesia, Duke University School of Nursing, Durham, NC (2021)
BSN, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR (2015)
Fun Fact: I am a former Vanderbilt MICU nurse.

Brian Whitson, MS
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

Education and Training:
MS, Nurse Anesthesia, Gooding Institute of Nurse Anesthesia, Panama City, FL (2006)
BS, Business Administration, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, TN (1999)
Fun Fact: I have completed my 200 hour Yoga Teacher Training and am an avid practitioner.

Chris Williams, MSN
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

Education and Training:
MSN, Anesthesia, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, TN (2018)
BSN, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL (2013)
Fun Fact: I have a dog named Jeffrey. I love to hike and ski.

Jared Wilmoth, MD
Fellow
Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

Education and Training:
Residency, Anesthesiology, Washington University in St Louis School of Medicine, St Louis, MO (2021)
MD, University of Kansas School of Medicine, Kansas City, KS (2013)
Fun Fact: Nerd alert! I went to space camp...twice.

Rachel Wood, MD
Fellow
Pediatric Anesthesiology

Education and Training:
Residency, Anesthesiology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)
MD, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA (2017)
Fun Fact: I was born on New Years Day!
**Stephanie Woodward, MD**  
*Assistant Professor*  
*Obstetric Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**  
*Fellowship*, Obstetric Anesthesiology, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, IL (2021)  
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC (2020)  
*MD*, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (2016)  
**Fun Fact:** I have a dog named Jeffrey. I love to hike and ski.

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**Brittney Wright, DNP**  
*Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist*

**Education and Training:**  
*DNP*, Nurse Anesthesia, Union University, Jackson, TN (2021)  
*BSN*, Union University, Jackson, TN (2013)  
**Fun Fact:** My husband once sent me on a Jackalope hunt in South Dakota.

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**Amy Zhang, MD**  
*Fellow*  
*Pediatric Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**  
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN (2021)  
*MD*, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA (2017)  
**Fun Fact:** My husband and I love to travel. One of our all-time favorite trips was a last minute four day “mini-moon” to Mexico City a week after we got married. We fell in love with its colorful and rich culture and history, explored museums and parks, and indulged in world-class restaurants and unbeatable street food. We would go back in a heartbeat!

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**Taylor Ziga, MD**  
*Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology*  
*Obstetric Anesthesiology*

**Education and Training:**  
*Fellowship*, Obstetric Anesthesiology, University of Washington, Seattle, WA (2021)  
*Residency*, Anesthesiology, Virginia Mason, Seattle, WA (2020)  
*MD*, Medical College of Georgia, Augusta University, Augusta, GA (2012)  
**Fun Fact:** I played rugby all throughout college. Our team was formed my freshman year, and by my senior year, we made it to Nationals!
VUH Named a Top Teaching Hospital Nationally by the Leapfrog Group

From article by Doug Campbell originally published in the VUMC Reporter on Dec. 7, 2021

Highlighting its longstanding commitment to patient safety and health care quality, Vanderbilt University Hospital (VUH) has been named a Top Teaching Hospital by the Leapfrog Group.

Leapfrog is a large coalition of public and private purchasers of employee health coverage that works to encourage health care safety, quality and affordability.

Announced Dec. 7, the Top Hospital award is widely acknowledged as one of the most competitive awards American hospitals can receive. The quality of patient care across many areas of hospital performance is considered, including infection rates, surgery, maternity care, the hospital’s capacity to prevent medication and other errors, and other qualities.

“We recently celebrated an ‘A’ safety score from the Leapfrog Group; however, the Top Teaching Hospital award is a step above. This is an acknowledgment of the very high level of service patients receive across a range of areas from our outstanding teams. I want to express my gratitude to everyone contributing to this honor. I hope everyone takes a moment to reflect on their contribution to this accomplishment,” said C. Wright Pinson, MBA, MD, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Health System Officer for Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

More than 2,200 hospitals were considered for the award. A total of 149 nationwide were selected as Top Hospitals.

“The Leapfrog recognition is a reflection that our culture of safety is thriving, and it’s driving quality outcomes for our patients and families. I am proud of our teams for all of the hard work this award reflects,” said Jenny Slayton, DNP, RN, Senior Vice President for Quality, Safety and Risk Prevention at VUMC.

To qualify for the Top Hospitals distinction, hospitals must rank highly among peers on the Leapfrog Hospital Survey, which assesses hospital performance on the highest standards for quality and patient safety and assigns a letter grade. VUH recently received an “A” safety grade on Leapfrog’s fall survey.

“Providing excellent patient-centered care requires a relentless drive by everyone, and I mean everyone, on the health care team,” said Shon Dwyer, MBA, RN, President of VUH. “Earning this distinction as a Leapfrog Top Teaching Hospital on the heels of recently earning a Leapfrog Safety Grade of A reflects the team’s consistency in developing and following safety processes with enormous attention to detail. I encourage everyone to take a moment to reflect on these positive validations of our care and to keep up the great work.”

The Leapfrog Hospital Survey collects and reports hospital performance, helping purchasers to find the highest-value care and giving consumers useful information to make informed decisions. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade, Leapfrog’s other main initiative, assigns letter grades to hospitals based on their record of patient safety, helping consumers protect themselves and their families from errors, injuries, accidents and infections.

“We are pleased to recognize Vanderbilt University Hospital as a Top Hospital this year,” said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. “Even with the continued strain of the COVID-19 pandemic, your institution has demonstrated an extraordinary dedication to excellent health care in your community. We congratulate the leadership, staff and clinicians who put their patients first.”


Gupta RK, Soffin EM, Schwenk ES. Impact of ultrasound-guided erector spinae plane block on outcomes after lumbar spinal fusion: a retrospective propensity score-matched study of 242


Hester D. Spraying Cotton in Bolivar County, Mississippi, the Summer Following My First Year of Medical School. JAMA. 2021; 325: 310-310.


Department Leadership

**Warren Sandberg, MD, PhD**  
Chair, Department of Anesthesiology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center; Chief of Staff, Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital

**Stephen Doherty, MMHC**  
Department Administrator

**Mark Rice, MD**  
Executive Vice Chair, Department of Anesthesiology

**Clayton Adams, MD**  
Medical Director, Preoperative Assessment and Teaching for Children’s Hospital (PATCH)

**Brian Allen, MD**  
Fellowship Director, Regional Anesthesia and Acute Pain

**Nathan Ashby, MD**  
Director, Policy Management

**Arna Banerjee, MD, MMHC, FCCM**  
Assistant Vice Chair, Faculty Development Programs

**Vikram Bansal, MD**  
Director, Clinical Operations, Ambulatory Anesthesiology

**Jeanette Bauchat, MD, MS**  
Chief, Obstetric Anesthesiology; Medical Director, OB/GYN

**Clayne Benson, MD**  
Medical Director II, Liver Transplant Team

**Josh Billings, MD**  
Director, BH Robbins Scholar Program

**Eric Briggs, MD**  
Medical Director, Vanderbilt Outpatient Surgery Center (FEL)

**Stephen Bruehl, PhD**  
Research Compliance Officer

**Christopher Canlas, MD**  
Chief, Ambulatory Anesthesiology

**Jeffery Clemmons, MD**  
Medical Director, Vanderbilt Surgery Center
Jaime Llobet, MD
Director & Coordinator, Pediatrics
Resident Simulation Program

Bevan Londergan, MD
Chief, Pediatric Cardiac Anesthesiology

Letha Mathews, MBBS
Chief, Neuroanesthesiology; Medical Director II, Neuro Anesthesiology Team

Koffi Kla, MD
Medical Director, VUAH & MCE Operating Rooms; Leader, Urology MCE Pod

Michael Mantinan, MD
Director, Clinical Operations, Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology

Miklos Kertai, MD, PhD
Assistant Vice Chair, Quality and Safety; Precision Perioperative Medicine Leadership

Elizabeth Hughes, MD
Clinical Director, Pediatric Anesthesiology; Associate Director, Anesthesiology Residency Program; Medical Director, Physician Workforce Development

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Associate Director, Faculty Recruitment

Marcos Lopez, MD
Associate Fellowship Director, Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

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Meredith Kingeter, MD
Assistant Director, Anesthesiology Residency Program

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