

## Appointments

### Samir A. Shah, MD, elected president of the American College of Gastroenterology

LAS VEGAS, NV – **SAMIR A. SHAH, MD, FACG**, was elected 2021–2022 President of the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG). Dr. Shah is Clinical Professor of Medicine at the Alpert Medical School and Chief of Gastroenterology at the Miriam Hospital. He is a partner with Gastroenterology Associates, Inc., a private practice GI group affiliated with Brown and Lifespan.

Dr. Shah officially took his position as President during the College's Annual Scientific Meeting and Postgraduate Course held recently in Las Vegas. In this position, Dr. Shah will direct ACG's programs, which include continuing medical education in the clinical, scientific, and patient-related skills of gastroenterology, activities involving national and state medical affairs, health policy issues, and clinical investigation.

Dr. Shah earned his BA in Biochemistry magna cum laude at Brown and his MD at Harvard Medical School. After graduating, he completed his residency in internal medicine at the Harvard-affiliated Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. He continued on for a fellowship in gastroenterology at the same institution where he was awarded a Howard Hughes Postdoctoral Fellowship for Physicians and spent two years in the laboratory studying murine models of inflammatory bowel disease.

A member of the ACG Board of Trustees since 2013, Dr. Shah has served as an officer of the College since 2017. From 2002 to 2006, he was elected ACG Governor for Rhode Island and in 2003 received the Freshman Governor's Award for Outstanding Service. His leadership path with the Board of Governors included a term from 2005 to 2008 as Vice-Chair, and from 2008 to 2010 as Chair. In 2012, Dr. Shah was honored with the distinguished William D. Carey Award for outstanding service to the College and the Board of Governors.

His service to the College has included significant roles in a number of committees, including a long tenure from 2000 to 2017 on the Practice Management Committee, from 2004 to 2005 on the Credentials Committee, Chair of the Membership



Committee from 2005 to 2008, and a member of the Awards Committee from 2011 to 2017. He also serves as co-chair of the IBD Circle, an online professional networking community sponsored by The Crohn's and Colitis Foundation and ACG.

Active and engaged in legislative and regulatory matters impacting GI practices, Dr. Shah became involved as ACG representative to the

Digestive Diseases National Coalition (DDNC) and from 2018 to 2020 served as DDNC President.

Dr. Shah has co-authored more than 100 articles, book chapters, and abstracts and has given over 100 invited presentations primarily devoted to inflammatory bowel disease. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including Brown University's Teaching Recognition Award, the Dean's Teaching Excellence Certificate, Brown University's Excellence in Teaching Award for Clinical Faculty, and the Beckwith Family Award for Outstanding Teaching. He has participated in several multi-center clinical trials of cutting-edge therapies for IBD and was co-principal investigator for OSCCAR (Ocean State Crohn's and Colitis Area Registry). His group participates in the IBD QORUS program through the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation.

"The ACG is the professional home of the clinical gastroenterologist. If an immigrant son of immigrants from India and Kenya can become President of the ACG, the ACG is clearly open to all and a place where anyone can and will thrive," said Dr. Shah. "So, my message is: if you are engaged in clinical gastroenterology – physician, nurse, advanced practice provider, researcher, etc. – the ACG should be your professional home regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, academic or private practice," he added. ❖



### SCH welcomes Dr. Michael Mason to its medical staff

WAKEFIELD – Dr. Michael Mason is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon with Ortho Rhode Island who specializes in total joint replacement of the hip and knee, including robotic-assisted, as well as replacement of the shoulder.

He earned his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1987.

He then completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at Community General Osteopathic Hospital in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and his fellowship training at

Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital, affiliates of Harvard Medical School.

In addition to working with patients, Dr. Mason is a member of the Walk Strong Foundation, a nonprofit humanitarian organization that provides hip and knee replacements to underserved communities in economically challenged developing countries.

He also has a strong interest in biomechanics and material science, and has both designed and been on the design teams of multiple medical implants and instruments that are used worldwide. ❖

## Brown School of Public Health welcomes new faculty to advance the School's work on pandemic preparedness and mis/disinformation

PROVIDENCE – The Brown University School of Public Health is welcoming new leaders bringing global and national expertise to advance the school's work on pandemic preparedness and mis/disinformation. These hires mark the ongoing efforts and commitment of Dean Ashish K. Jha to expanding the impact and reach of the school across the most urgent issues in public health.



### JENNIFER NUZZO, DrPH,

Senior Scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, will lead a new effort on Pandemic Preparedness and Response at SPH, expanding a deep and accomplished Brown team to address the urgent issues exposed in this pandemic and intrinsic to every pandemic, to alleviate human suffering and economic loss.



**SCOTT RIVKEES, MD**, former Florida Surgeon General and Secretary of Health, brings to SPH unique frontline experience managing the COVID-19 pandemic in the nation's third most populous state with the largest fully-integrated department of health system. He joins SPH as a Professor of the Practice.

**CLARE WARDLE, PhD**, the founder of First Draft News, will join an expanding effort at SPH on mis/disinformation and

the information needs of communities as a Professor of the Practice. Building on the groundbreaking work she launched and grew to empower people with the knowledge, understanding, and tools needed to find and follow trustworthy sources of information, Wardle will work closely with SPH professor of the practice Stefanie Friedhoff in directing research, education, and policy efforts around these issues. ❖



## Retina Consultants

### Altin Pani, MD

is pleased to announce that



### Scott H. Greenberg, MD

has joined the practice specializing in diseases and surgery of the retina and vitreous.

Dr. Greenberg is a graduate of Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York. He completed a residency in ophthalmology and a fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery at Albany Medical College in New York.

### Referrals welcome

#### Providence

**401-274-5844**

#### North Kingstown

**401-294-9429**

**RetinaConsultantsRI.com**

## Recognition

### Dr. Ashish Jha among honorees at COVID-19 recognition event

MARY KORR  
RIMJ MANAGING EDITOR

WASHINGTON, DC – The Alliance for Health Policy recognized officials from Operation Warp Speed, researchers who developed a COVID-19 spike antibody program at the height of the pandemic, members of the care team who treated U.S. Patient Zero, and community leaders steering the efforts for an equitable pandemic response in a virtual event held Nov. 18th.

Among those honored was **ASHISH JHA, MD, MPH**, Dean and Professor of Health Services, Policy, and Practice, Brown School of Public Health. Speakers gathered in conversation virtually to highlight several key areas of pandemic response, sharing personal insights and lessons learned from their work in national policy, antibody and vaccine research, and public health.

Dr. Jha reflected on his role as a communicator of public health during the nascent to present period of the pandemic and his perspective on communicating complex health information.

“My first real concern came in late January 2020 with the data coming out of China. In late February, my second realization came that we had wasted five weeks doing no preparation and community spread here was probable. Five weeks is a lifetime to waste in a pandemic,” he said.

He called a meeting of his team at Harvard, where he then worked, to strategize. “My mental model was this would last a few weeks,” he said. By the spring of 2020, he believed the acute phase was going to be over by the summer.

However, he and his team continued to be flooded with requests from journalists, receiving sometimes 150 to 200 calls a day. Critical and credible information was lacking and White House briefings were not that helpful.

“In a public health crisis the public needs to know what is happening and how to keep themselves safe. You have to talk to people about process – there is a scientific process we use and it might change as evidence changes,” he said.

He concluded that it is inevitable “we are going to see more pandemics.” To address the response, “we need to build up our public health system. We need to invest more in science and scientific platforms and we need to do a better job in training public health officials to be better communicators and to speak up against misinformation.”



Dr. Ashish Jha during a panel discussion with Sarah J. Dash, president of the Alliance for Health Policy.

In addition to Dr. Jha, the honorees included:

**Col. (Retired) Matthew Hepburn, MD**,  
Senior Advisor on Pandemic Preparedness to the Director,  
White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

**Peter Marks, MD, PhD**,  
Director, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research,  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration

**Lisa Macon Harrison, MPH**,  
Health Director, Granville Vance Public Health

**Anne Schuchat, MD**,  
Former Principal Deputy Director,  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Reed Tuckson, MD**,  
Founder, Black Coalition Against Covid

**Alina Baum, PhD**,  
Associate Director, Infectious Diseases, Regeneron

**George Diaz, MD**,  
Chief of the Division of Medicine,  
Providence Regional Medical Center Everett

**Sarah Wilkerson, MN, RN**,  
Regional Director, Infection Prevention,  
Providence Washington & Montana

**Robin Addison, BSN, RN**,  
Clinical Lead, Biocontainment,  
Evaluation and Specialty Treatment (BEST) Team,  
Providence Regional Medical Center Everett

**Lisa K. Fitzpatrick, MD, MPH, MPA**,  
CEO and Founder, Grapevine Health

The Alliance for Health Policy is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping policymakers and the public better understand health policy, the root of the nation's health care issues, and the trade-offs posed by various proposals for change. ❖

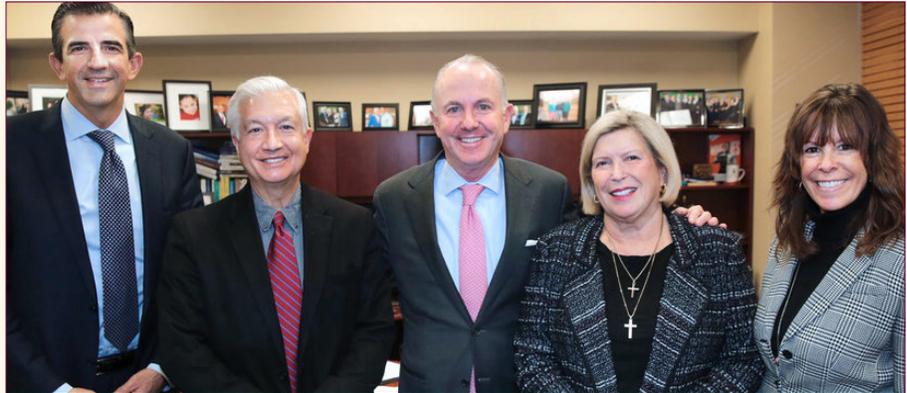
## Recognition

### Lifespan receives award for training, hiring of 1,000 BIPOC individuals

PROVIDENCE – Lifespan is expanding its suite of professional development programs and adding new career pathways for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) individuals. Through support from the Papitto Opportunity Connection (POC), Lifespan will hire more than 1,000 BIPOC individuals over the next four years.

The POC award will accelerate Lifespan's efforts to build a comprehensive and forward-thinking career development program that provides opportunities for entry and advancement, particularly in high-need areas. The result will be greater access to career pathways into higher-paying jobs for the state's BIPOC community.

Lifespan's workforce development program aims to create a workforce of well-trained, diverse health care professionals who are representative of the communities they serve. With the POC award, Lifespan will be able to expand programs to provide no-cost certification for high-demand medical professions, such



Pictured left to right: **Joe Pannozzo**, vice president and chief development officer, Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's Hospital; **John Tarantino**, trustee, Papitto Opportunity Connection; **Dr. Timothy J. Babineau**; **Barbara Papitto**; **Lisa Abbott**. [PHOTO: LIFESPAN]

as nursing assistant, pharmacy technician, medical assistant, behavioral health specialist, and doula. Lifespan will also develop a paid job-training program for formerly incarcerated BIPOC individuals, and a succession program to prepare diverse employees for leadership roles. Additionally, there are plans to create a Nursing Leadership Fellowship program and offer academic scholarships for employees from underrepresented communities.

Opportunities through Lifespan's workforce development program will be made

available to both existing employees and non-employees. The organization has already begun recruitment efforts for training sessions that begin in December, and will continue recruiting into 2022. Interested candidates can contact Lifespan directly for more information about available opportunities, by visiting [lifespan.org/POC](https://lifespan.org/POC).

The \$10 million commitment from the Papitto Opportunity Connection (POC) was made to Lifespan's charitable arm, the Lifespan Foundation, and is the largest gift to the foundation in its history. ❖

### Deborah L. Myers, MD, receives Lifetime Achievement Award

PROVIDENCE – **DEBORAH L. MYERS, MD, FACOG**, vice chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, director of the Division of Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Brown University, and a member of the active staff at Women & Infants Hospital, has received the Jack Robertson Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2021 American Urogynecologic Society meeting.

The award recognizes an individual who has had a lifetime of outstanding achievements in the field of female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery and has served as a role model through service, basic or clinical research and teaching.

AUGS' most prestigious award is presented periodically to an individual selected for recognition of extraordinary contributions to AUGS and the profession.

Dr. Myers is a graduate of the State University of New York



at Stony Brook Medical School. She completed a medical-surgical internship at Rhode Island Hospital and a residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Women & Infants Hospital. She is director of Continuing Medical Education at Women & Infants Hospital and chair of the Promotions Committee of the Department of Ob/Gyn at Brown University. She is also the past president of the American Urogynecologic Society.

She is an oral examiner for the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a member of the FDA advisory panel on Ob/Gyn medical devices. ❖

## COBRE on Opioids and Overdose at Rhode Island Hospital holds community hackathon to stimulate creative solutions to the overdose epidemic

*Second annual event of the Center for Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) was virtual and finalists may move forward to apply for up to \$40K in additional funding*

PROVIDENCE – With innovation – there is hope. This was the message inspired by the COBRE on Opioids & Overdose Virtual Overdose ‘Hackathon’: a weekend-long event from Oct. 15–17 in which community members, researchers, students, and professionals worked together to develop innovative solutions to the overdose crisis in Rhode Island and beyond. An approach used widely in the design and technology fields, “hackathons” are a democratic process of interdisciplinary collaboration where design thinking is utilized to accelerate the development of novel products and services to address complex problems.

In 2019, the method was adapted by the COBRE’s Translational & Transformative Research Core as a mechanism to incubate research and project ideas and to offer everyone in the community an opportunity to voice their ideas for solving overdose – not just researchers, policymakers, and other usual decision-makers.

The following are the four groundbreaking projects selected to move forward to apply for up to \$40,000 in additional grant funding.

### Heal on Wheels

Heal on Wheels is a proposed mobile center that provides culturally competent, bilingual harm reduction and overdose prevention to historically underserved Hispanic and Latinx communities in Rhode Island. The mobile center would partner with local community organizations to deliver culturally responsive materials and determine optimal mobile site “pop up” locations.

Team members were **ASHLEY GAIPO, AMANDA BLOCK, PAOLA JIMENEZ, JHANAVI KAPADIA, SARAH TOKARZ,** and **SAGE MUELLER.**

### Access Express

Access Express is proposed as a physical solution to deliver harm reduction materials and other basic needs to people on their time. The idea is a modular, compact system of 24/7-access harm reduction dispensaries paired with a community engagement hub that democratizes harm reduction and facilitates movement of machines to be responsive to community needs.

Team members were **BRENDAN JACKA, PhD, LAURIE MACDOUGALL,** and **LEAH GERMINARA.**

### Naloxbox+

This team proposes to leverage an established IoT pipeline to ensure automated, hands-free supply monitoring and management for community naloxone programs in high-risk locations, in collaboration with Naloxbox team and Rhode Island DMAT. In addition to providing status updates on the box, the development of a web portal is proposed to collect metrics from owner-users of the boxes on the circumstances surrounding each use case.

Team members were **LEO KOBAYASHI, MD, GEOFF CAPRARO, MD, ASHESH GOHIL,** and **BROOKE LAWRENCE.**

### Portland Drug User’s Union Harm Reduction Center Model

This team proposes an initiative in partnership with a Rhode Island community organization that builds on a peer-centered, low barrier harm reduction model developed by people with lived experience of drug use. As future legalization efforts take hold, the guiding principles of this model will then be used to inform research opportunities and harm reduction initiatives.

Team members were **AVI YOCHED, JOSEPH CORDO, PEACH ANDERSON, FOREST TYLER,** and **ASHLEY PERRY.**

**DR. BRANDON MARSHALL, PhD,** Associate Professor at the Brown School of Public Health and Director of the Data and Research Methods Core at the COBRE, said, “A Hackathon democratizes the process of finding solutions. Anyone can participate and crucially are encouraged to work together to find solutions to a problem.”

**DR. TRACI GREEN,** who co-directs the COBRE and leads the Translational & Transformative Research Core stated, “Even within a pandemic and amidst the worst opioid and overdose crises we’ve experienced as a country, the energy and innovation of this Hackathon gives great hope for what more we can do to save lives.”

The group plans to continue the event into the future and to partner with other organizations to expand reach.

“As the only Hackathon event in the country focused on opioids and overdose, this COBRE event is a hallmark of Rhode Island innovation in public health and we can’t wait for the next one,” said Green. ❖