



Delivering Premier Surgical Care **Across** the **Baltimore Region**

**Baltimore Integrated Surgery Department
2022 Annual Report**


MedStar Health

2022 Surgical Cases—**Baltimore Region**

Bariatric
867

Breast
261

Colon & Rectal
1,607

Endocrine
141

**Gender
Affirmation**
157

General
1,773

**Gynecologic
Oncology**
297

Total
10,133

Plastic
1,928

Podiatry
1,163

Pulmonary
84

**Surgical
Oncology**
521

Thoracic
257

Vascular
1,234

Robotic
1,360

A Message from the Chief of Surgery Building Success through Uncertain Times



Uncertainty can be stressful and difficult for all of us, and it is time that we simply acknowledge that uncertainty is our new normal in healthcare. So how do we cope with uncertainty, yet continue to build successful programs? I believe it is by following our values and ensuring that we are all a part of a high-functioning team.

As I have stated many times, our departmental core values are ownership, integrity, and transparency. Following our values has allowed us to work towards maximizing collaboration among all members of our department, and most importantly establishing trust between each and every one of us.

I often cite Google’s Project Aristotle, which was launched in 2012. The primary take home message from this and other similar studies is that there is a fundamental need to create environments of “psychological safety.” Dr. Amy Edmondson of the Harvard Business School defines this as the “shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking. Psychological safety is a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up. It describes a team climate characterized by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves.”

How many of us can truly declare that our teams and work environments are places of psychological safety? I believe we all need to strive to continually foster these environments. One simple way to assess your team is to ask yourself—are you willing to speak freely and communicate openly about any topic with a teammate? If you are not comfortable, then your team is likely not operating at maximal efficiency.

As you read through this year’s annual report, I hope you can appreciate the continued growth and success of our department, and especially our people. It is a truly remarkable team and one I am incredibly proud of. As you turn the pages, take some time to reflect on who you are, both inside and outside of work, and share these thoughts with your teammates. Together we can accomplish wonderful things, which is our recipe for dealing with uncertainty.

Sincerely,

David E. Stein, MD, MHCM
Chief of Surgery, Baltimore Region
MedStar Health

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Spotlighting New, Evolving, and Growing Surgical Service Lines



The Building of a Comprehensive Lung Program

When Duane Monteith, MD, FACS, was hired to serve as MedStar Health's regional chief of thoracic surgery in Baltimore, he made his vision very clear. He was here to build a comprehensive lung program, merging preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, and support-based providers and services all under one roof.

"With the right people and technologies in place, I knew we could build a program that would allow patients to receive a diagnosis, confirmation of staging, evidence-based treatment, and support, in one location," said Dr. Monteith. "The Angelos Center for Lung Diseases can be a one-stop shop that truly makes the care process easier for our patients and their families."

Staff recruitment was a key first step in bringing Dr. Monteith's vision to fruition. In August 2022, interventional pulmonologist Jay Kirkham, DO, was hired with a goal to implement a true end-to-end robotic surgical program for lung cancer care. MedStar Health invested in a robotic bronchoscopy system, housed in the hybrid OR suite in the Surgical Pavilion at MedStar Franklin Square, which aids in the process of identifying and treating cancer in a remarkably streamlined manner.

"Our collaborative approach means that we can confirm pathology results associated with a detected nodule or mass, determine the staging of the cancer, and remove the cancer, all during a single case in the OR," said Dr. Kirkham, who was recruited by Dr. Monteith based on their earlier work experiences together at Jefferson Health in New Jersey, where they helped build one of the most robust lung programs in the region. "This approach can make a lifesaving difference for many, especially when you consider the high smoking rates and chemical exposures in the region. Timely and effective care is key as we aim to help our patients go into remission and survivorship."

Dr. Monteith and Dr. Kirkham collaborate daily with Michele Dona, lung cancer nurse navigator and Stella Wise, a thoracic nurse practitioner. The team's commitment to optimizing workflows as well as patient outcomes and experience is evident in their day-to-day work.

"We are putting new programs in place that can help us detect and address lung cancer earlier, and also analyze and treat lung nodules using advanced technologies including robotics, artificial intelligence, and natural language processing," said Dr. Monteith. "These are the things that you expect at an academic medical center, yet we are making available right here in the community-based hospital setting."



A Multidisciplinary Approach to Gender Affirmation



Collaboration between colorectal and plastic surgeons is not a new concept. But these days, colorectal surgeon David Lisle, MD, and plastic reconstructive surgeon Gabriel Del Corral, MD, are spending a tremendous portion of their time together. They are merging their two specialties in new and exciting ways to optimize care for patients undergoing the process of gender transition.

“When MedStar Health launched our gender affirmation service line a few years ago and patients from across the country started seeking our help, it became very clear that a multidisciplinary approach was key as we looked at ways to streamline the process of care and assure our patients would be happy with their results,” said Dr. Del Corral. “Gender affirmation cases are complex, and I needed a partner who could bring the right clinical and technical skills to the table, and who would also provide sensitive and compassionate care for patients as they go through this complicated journey of transition.”

Dr. Del Corral found the answer he was looking for by establishing a partnership with Dr. Lisle, recognized as an expert in the use of robotic surgical techniques for cases involving the pelvic area. Together, they could offer gender

affirmation patients new reconstruction options, accounting for their personal lifestyle goals and functional needs while also reducing risks for complications and comorbidities. What they quickly learned is that their team-based approach would draw in new gender affirmation patients as well as patients in need of revisional surgery.

“There should never be a ‘one size fits all’ approach as gender transition surgeries are performed,” said Dr. Lisle. “There are a variety of different ways to create the vaginal canal, for example. We take care of a lot of patients who come in to consult with us after having surgery somewhere else. We show them what we can do to fix their areas of concern through revisional surgery. We give them new options, and hope.”

Gender affirmation patients see both Dr. Del Corral and Dr. Lisle before and after surgery. The two surgeons collaborate daily, accounting for every detail of each patient’s plan of care. They are unified in their message that gender affirmation care is a lifelong journey and commitment.

“Continued surveillance is important, especially as life goes on and other medical issues present that require surgical intervention,” said Dr. Lisle. “The relationships we form with our patients are long-term.”

Both surgeons also stress the importance of ongoing education for their patients as well as their colleagues at MedStar Health - both in and out of clinical settings.

“We are working hard to make sure everyone understands the sensitive needs of gender affirmation patients as they come into our hospitals,” said Dr. Del Corral. “This means educating providers as well as staff who work in other areas such as patient registration and the cafeteria. Every encounter impacts patient experience.”

Standardizing Peri-Operative Services Across the System

Historically, peri-operative services across MedStar Health have been managed independently at each of the nine entities across the Baltimore and Washington regions. In 2022, peri-operative, nursing, surgical, and operational leaders came together to develop and begin deploying a new approach—one that emphasizes the value and benefits of standardization and collaboration, for the good of all.

“There was a clear opportunity to identify and adopt best practices from all surgical locations, with focus on standardizing our peri-operative policies, processes, and benchmarks,” said Joe Vichot, multi-site director of operations in the department of surgery. “Doing this allows us to create a seamless and consistent workflow for surgeons who operate in multiple locations.”

Along with Joe, LynnMarie Verzino, MHA, BSN, RN, NE-BC, vice president and associate chief nursing officer, Courtney Pearson, MBA, MHA, system director of operations, and Linda Caridad, MSN, RN, CNOR, senior director of peri-operative services at MedStar Franklin Square, have played an instrumental role as planning and initial steps to standardize have taken place. Bradley Chambers, senior vice president and chief operating officer for the Baltimore Region of MedStar Health, and David Stein, MD, MHCM, regional chief of surgery, have provided executive and physician leadership oversight.

“It is really important that we do everything we can to maximize utilization of our operating room space efficiently and productively,” said Linda. “Our new model is essential as we look for ways to build volumes, fill scheduling gaps, and manage our department with ‘best in class’ approaches in place.”

While many operational changes slated to take place will occur in 2023, some key progress was made in 2022, including:

- Creation of the Robotics Steering Committee to govern, manage, and optimize use of robotic technologies across the system
- Launch of peri-operative team quarterly retreats, which merge nursing and business leaders for collaborative discussions



- Introduction of monthly peri-operative service meetings, designed to create a collaborative colleague network for directors
- Engagement with a consulting firm, hired to optimize sterile processing workflows
- Regionalization of surgical scheduling team members and processes, allowing all schedulers to post cases at all four hospitals in Baltimore
- Investigation into a new block utilization analytics platform, to offer a real-time view of open operative room space so surgeons can add cases—thus building volumes and eliminating scheduling gaps

“This is a true system effort that we believe will lead to better performance, streamlined workflows, and high surgeon and staff satisfaction,” said Joe.

A photograph of three surgeons in an operating room. They are wearing blue scrubs, blue bouffant caps, and surgical masks. The surgeon on the left has a beard and is wearing a yellow mask. The surgeon on the right is wearing a blue mask. They are all focused on a surgical procedure. The patient is draped in blue, and the surgical site is illuminated by bright lights. Various surgical instruments are visible on a tray in the foreground.

**Advancing Our Practice
Through **Teamwork and
Collaboration****

Achieving Continuity in Surgical Practice Through Advanced Practice Providers



For nearly a decade, MedStar Health has been growing its base of advanced practice providers (APPs) to streamline and optimize the process of care for the benefit of both patients and clinical providers. APPs provide constant, comprehensive support in the patient care environment, adding a level of continuity that is considered invaluable to many clinical service lines, including the department of surgery.

APPs collaborate closely with surgeons, nurses, and technicians, before, during, and following surgical cases, and play a key role in the continuation of patient care that takes place on inpatient units. They are skilled in the operating room but are also known to have excellent patient care management skills. In July, the organization launched a new inpatient APP model to improve continuity in care models as patients remain in the hospital to recover, post-operatively. Evan Dilks, PA, joined as the first member of the integrated APP surgical residency team at that time, and Michelle Baumgardner, PA, was hired in September. Alex Bernal, PA, is slated to join the team in early 2023, and recruitment efforts are underway to add a fourth inpatient provider to the team, also in 2023.

"Interns and residents provide incredible value, but they come and go based on their clinical training rotations and commitments. The APP team is fully integrated into the department of surgery and provides a great level of stability as

these transitions take place," said Mark Small, PA, chief APP at MedStar Franklin Square. "Our surgeons trust and respect them, and appreciate the structure they bring to the department."

The general surgery APP service lines are thoracic and gynecologic oncology. The team also provides support for specialty services including neurosurgery, urology, plastic surgery, and orthopaedics, each of which operates with embedded APPs. Recently, the team also added management of

skin punch biopsy consultative services to its scope. The APPs procure tissue samples at the bedside from critically ill patients who have developed unexplained skin issues or rashes. Skin punch biopsies are useful in the work-up of cutaneous neoplasms, pigmented lesions, inflammatory lesions, and chronic skin disorders.

They also help the primary medical teams rule out issues such as vasculitis, toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN), and Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS), that may cause significant morbidity/mortality and prolong hospital stays.

"I envision that we will continue to grow and expand the APP team within the department of surgery," said Mark. "Our group is highly motivated and is willing to jump in and help wherever we are needed. We are flexible, adaptable, and always looking for opportunities to identify and use best practices."



Connecting the Dots Through Clinical Practice Managers



Kayla Lochary



Latasha Clark



Tiesha Cropper



Lauren Davis, MPH

Across MedStar Health, collaboration between teams working in the operating room and the practices that drive surgical volumes is critically important. Kayla Lochary, Latasha Clark, and Tiesha Cropper are clinical practice managers whose roles are integrated into the department of surgery. Under the leadership of Lauren Davis, MPH, director of operations for Integrated Surgical Services in Baltimore, their work assures surgical planning and operations are optimized, creating a productive work environment for surgeons and staff and a positive care environment for patients and their families.

"It's truly a team effort to get patients who require surgery from the practice environment into the operating room," said Kayla, who oversees bariatrics, general surgery, acute care surgery, and endocrine surgery at MedStar Franklin Square. "There is a lot that needs to be coordinated before, during, and following surgical cases to assure each goes as planned."

Clinical practice managers also serve as a key "go-to" resource for the multidisciplinary teams of physicians, nurses, patient service representatives, medical assistants, and operative assistants who lead and practice within their service lines. Together, the practice managers and their teams plan strategically, problem solve on a whim, and work to navigate patients and their families through the surgical process of care.

"Our teams know that they can come to us for help and support with just about anything," said Latasha, who manages breast surgery, general surgery, and acute care surgery at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital. "This is especially important for service lines that use a multidisciplinary approach to patient care. For example, the breast surgeons are often collaborating with the plastic surgery team to map out and activate a patient's plan of care. I am here to coordinate and support those processes."

Tiesha Cropper, who oversees the MedStar Franklin Square Center for Digestive Disease, which includes colorectal surgery, says that she and her colleague, Kerrie Pickle, also play a key role in filling gaps as everyday operations unfold in the clinical practice environment.

"A big part of my job as a leader is to be of service to my team by stepping in and providing support wherever it is needed, whether that is assisting at the front desk, obtaining insurance authorizations, or helping inside the clinic to support patient care," said Tiesha. "The diversity of the work we need to do each day has helped us develop into the strong clinical practice managers we are today."

"I am proud to lead a team of skilled, dynamic, and incredibly committed practice managers who work tirelessly to serve both our staff and our patients."

—Lauren Davis, MPH, regional director of operations

Establishing a Foundation and Building a Vision

An Update from the MedStar Center for Surgical Innovation

One of the primary goals of the MedStar Center for Surgical Innovation is to create a network of centralized resources for all surgical departments and teams across the healthcare system. It has united a group of thought leaders, strategic visionaries, and tech-savvy specialists, who are interested in transforming the process of surgical care for the benefit of both providers and patients. 2022 proved to be a truly foundational year for the Center, with the hiring of Ellie Hwang, who serves as program director. Additionally, a Surgical Innovation Advisory Board was formed, with 11 surgeons representing various clinical specialties taking a seat at the table to define the future of surgical services at MedStar Health.

“The advisory board will play a crucial role as we identify priorities and opportunities, conduct research, and create new partnerships,” said Ellie. “We are exploring industry trends and evaluating investments that could help our surgeons achieve their goals, and at the same time, elevate MedStar Health’s reputation as a national surgical leader.”

The exploration of advanced digital approaches to surgery will be a key theme for the MedStar Center for Surgical Innovation in 2023. Operating room telepresence is one investment under consideration. Similar to telemedicine, this technology would allow surgeons not physically present during a case to observe, provide guidance, and offer perspective as needed. Another goal is the continued exploration and integration of 3D printing and virtual reality tools in the OR.

“Our initial use of these tools will be at the Transplant Institute at Georgetown, to support planning for complex cases,” said John Lazar, MD, medical director of the Center. “Using what we learn in our early applications, we will understand other utilities across our healthcare system, and how these tools can be used to optimize patient care.”

Jeffrey Collins, vice president of the business innovation lab at the MedStar Institute for Innovation, says the work done by the Center for Surgical Innovation will open a door for the organization to

reinvent, realign, and stand as a true pioneer in the delivery of state-of-the-art surgical care.

“A ton of phenomenal progress has been made by MedStar’s surgical teams

over the years by integrating the latest technologies into practice, but it’s never been anyone’s full-time job to think about all of this opportunity, until now,” said Jeffrey. “We can achieve so much by exploring new, innovative digital tools that are available, and aligning them with our clinical applications, strategically.”

Ellie believes surgical innovation will give patients and highly-trained clinicians another reason to choose MedStar Health.

“Patients want to go where the latest approaches are practiced,” she said. “At the same time, providers want to work at a hospital that is leading and making investments in innovation that matter on the front line. We have so much opportunity.”



The MedStar Center for Surgical Innovation Advisory Board

Christopher You, MD <i>Bariatric Surgery</i>	Jack Sava, MD <i>Trauma Surgery</i>
David Song, MD <i>Plastic Surgery</i>	Keith Kowalczyk, MD <i>Urology</i>
David Stein, MD, MHCM <i>Colorectal Surgery</i>	Tamika August, MD <i>Obstetrics and Gynecology</i>
Edward Aulisi, MD <i>Neurosurgery</i>	Thomas Fishbein, MD <i>Transplant Surgery</i>
Erin Felger, MD <i>Endocrine Surgery</i>	Zeena Dorai, MD <i>Neurosurgery</i>
Henry Boucher, MD <i>Orthopaedic Surgery</i>	

Snapshots of Our Team in Action





Surgical Education News & Notes



Greetings!

2022 was a wonderful and productive year! We have really turned the corner and it is great to have everyone back together for in-person meetings and activities. This has been especially beneficial for our residents, who really missed the comradery of being together with their colleagues.

We've learned that virtual meetings have ongoing benefits, too, however. Like many health institutions across the country, MedStar Health has remained committed to virtual recruiting as a way to standardize the field and make the recruitment process more equitable and affordable for applicants. We have had a lot of fun during our virtual meet-and-greet sessions, and have enjoyed our deeper dives with candidates via Zoom on their interview days. Because of this, we were able to recruit an outstanding class of interns from across the country, who hit the ground running in June and who have been a great addition to our team. Additionally, we continue to welcome medical students from Georgetown University School of Medicine as a Fourth Year Acting-Internship site, and have been fortunate to have several top-notch Georgetown medical students rotate with us. We look forward to strengthening our collaboration with Georgetown as we increase our educational offerings for their medical students.

In June, we said goodbye to our departing chiefs, Jason Howard, MD, and Alberto Parra-Vitela, MD. Dr. Howard is completing a fellowship in vascular surgery at the University of Miami. Dr. Parra-Vitela is in Chicago, where he is completing a colorectal surgery fellowship. Our newly-appointed chief residents are Anyelin Almanzar, MD, Ekaterina Fedorova, MD, Wei Liu, MD, and Sami Shoucair, MD.

As we have been able to come back together for in-person events, we have pursued some fun group activities and outings. We welcomed our new interns by taking a trip to Urban Axes, where they faced off in an axe throwing competition. We carved pumpkins together in October, and saw some very creative (and surgically-inspired) jack-o-lanterns. And to the delight of faculty and residents, I was able to open my home again for the departmental holiday party complete with fireside s'mores.

I am looking ahead to a bright 2023!

In good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. Arnold".

Maggie Arnold, MD
Residency Program Director
Vice Chair of Education



Our Virtual Grand Rounds featured many outstanding speakers this year, including Maryland Governor-Elect Wes Moore, who connected with our team to discuss the importance of leadership and community.

Introduction of the Research Education Initiative

In 2022, surgical oncologist Vinay Gupta, MD, and chief resident Sami Shoucair, MD, MPH, collaborated to launch the department of surgery's Research Education Initiative. It formalizes research requirements for residents as they are pursuing clinical training, and underscores the importance of both qualitative and quantitative studies as clinical research opportunities are explored, documented, and ultimately, published.

With guidance from Dr. Gupta and Dr. Shoucair, department of surgery residents identified a specific clinical or surgical topic to research, tied to minimally invasive surgery/bariatrics, colorectal surgery, vascular surgery, surgical oncology, endocrine surgery, surgical education, or social disparities impacting access to care. They were required to develop research questions and hypotheses, collect and analyze data, interpret and report study results with focus on the implications of their findings in clinical applications, and present their work during a Grand Rounds session. The final step in the process was to present a manuscript for submission to relevant industry conferences and publications.

Over a course of eight weeks, residents participated in five educational sessions, each with established objectives and speakers. The process was proven to be impactful; ultimately, seven residents published abstracts to conclude their research processes.

"No meaningful clinical work happens that is not impacted by research," said Dr. Shoucair. "The Research Education Initiative was created with that notion in mind, and keeps us in the game, as opposed to watching from the sidelines as others advance in our field. The program is designed to guide residents through a comprehensive and complex research process, start to finish."



Dr. Shoucair Earns Certificate of Merit from the American College of Surgeons

Each year, the Division of Education of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) presents its prestigious Resident Award for Exemplary Teaching to a resident who has demonstrated teaching excellence through courses taught, educational activities and publications, and achievement of internal teaching awards within their organization. In addition to naming one award winner, the ACS Committee on Resident Education recognizes nine other nominees from across the country, who are determined to be the highest-scoring through the program's comprehensive evaluation process.

Congratulations to Sami Shoucair, MD, MPH, who ranked in the top 10, and received a certificate of merit from the ACS for his outstanding contributions to MedStar Health. He was nominated by Maggie Arnold, MD, general surgery residency program director.

Kudos!

Quality and Safety Update

Throughout 2022, a key quality and safety priority within the department of surgery was the continued optimization of the Morbidity and Mortality (M&M) Conference. The conference was initially established with a goal to foster a safe environment to openly discuss the unintended outcomes of surgical care. Previous work to improve this conference aimed to clarify and communicate what constitutes a complication in the patient care environment and how this information should be reported and discussed. This year, a significant change was the integration of an internal quality and practice improvement process, with system-wide adoption of a software program, RL Solutions, to report and store information—electronically—about adverse events.



“Previously, these events were essentially documented using pen and paper. Each event required someone to electronically fill out a Word document, that was then emailed and filed into a folder. It was labor intensive and provided challenges when we wanted to review our patient care outcomes,” said Nicole Chaumont, MD, vice chair of quality, safety, and outcomes for the department of surgery. “With our new electronic form submission process in place, our process is more efficient, improvement efforts are easier to track, and communication on events that involve multiple departments is much more streamlined.”

The customized submission form was created with collaboration from current surgical trainees, faculty, and support from Josanne Revoir, RN, clinical safety technologist and analytics manager. There has been a significant increase in the number of adverse events reported, and in turn, the number of events that have been discussed openly at the weekly M&M conference. These efforts reinforce principles of transparency and preoccupation with failure, which are essential in quality improvement and patient safety.

“Our new process has been well received,” said Dr. Chaumont. “It’s about identifying opportunities for improvement, rather than focusing on blame. When we are able to talk openly about unintended consequences of clinical care, we can put new and better processes in place to optimize safety as we move forward.”

Exploring New Approaches with Clinical Trials

Through collaboration with the MedStar Health Research Institute, the department of surgery has initiated several clinical trials focused on colorectal surgical care and the treatment of complex foot wounds. In addition to offering patients access to new care options, participation in clinical trials positions MedStar Health on the frontline of advances in medicine.

“Participating in clinical trials gives patients early access to the latest treatment options, but equally important is that it gives our organization a voice as research developments move forward. We can provide input and perspective from our physicians, and patient outcomes data that is valuable,” said Cynthia Yashinski, clinical research coordinator. “We are committed to growing these efforts and promoting research across the healthcare system.”

Making Better Balance and Personal Wellness a Team Priority



In spring 2022, the department of surgery officially launched a new wellness program, designed to promote the importance and value of good health, work/life balance, and a personal commitment to self-care. The program was named “Thrive,” in alignment with a vision to help people be their best, both inside and outside of the workplace.



“Our approach is holistic and encourages people to get out of their comfort zones and try new things,” said Maggie Arnold, MD. “We want people to think about personal wellness goals and ways to create new habits that will make them stronger and healthier as people, as well as practitioners.”



Thrive has opened a door for practitioners to get involved with a wide range of activities including book clubs, group fitness programs, and wellness walks. Guest speakers have been invited in to present on topics including how to better manage finances, how to optimize rest and sleep patterns, mental health awareness, and ways to express gratitude. In tandem, providers have been able to participate in fun social events - from pumpkin carving to axe throwing and dodgeball.

“Wellness is especially important for healthcare workers and we are working hard to make sure our team knows about the resources available,” said Rebekah Campbell, MD, who serves as wellness champion for the department. “If we are well on a personal level, we can perform our best as professionals.”



Faculty Directory



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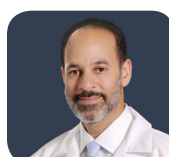
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