



## CGA-IGC Newsletter 2022 Kickoff Newsletter

Happy 2022 everyone! We had so many exciting updates to share with you at the end of last year, that we decided to create a separate newsletter to kickoff 2022 to make sure none of this great news got overlooked. If you haven't already, don't forget to [renew your membership here](#).

This newsletter highlights CGA-IGC's new member-only portal, updates from the CGA-IGC Fund, updates from the Education, Research, DEI and Communication & Membership Committees including new member bios. Read on to find out more!

### **1. Introduction to Member Portal**

Have you explored the new [members-only CGA-IGC website](#) yet? We are so excited to see how it will facilitate connections between fellow CGA-IGC colleagues and inspire new collaborations. The new website contains these exciting features:

- ❖ Click on the [Member Directory](#) to view all members who have made their profiles public. If members have included their Twitter and/or LinkedIn handles, you will be able to find it in their profile.
- ❖ If you are curious about all the amazing individuals who volunteer on committees, click on [Committee Members](#) to find out more. If you are on a committee and have not provided us with your biography, please reach out to the Communications and Membership Committee.
- ❖ If you have lost any of the Journal Scan e-mails, don't worry, all 2019-2021 are also [archived](#) on the member portal. Similarly, if you are looking for an old newsletter, you will be able to find them [archived](#) on the member portal as well.
- ❖ Are you looking for a new position or hoping to fill one? The CGA-IGC member portal also now has a [Job Board](#)!
- ❖ If you are looking for previous [Webinars and Challenging Cases](#), you're in luck. Of course, we all know one of the huge benefits to our membership is the ongoing education that CGA-IGC provides!
- ❖ We have also added the chat transcript from the 2021 CGA-IGC Annual Meeting to the [Annual Meeting](#). Within the Meeting Transcript, you will find links to recorded presentations that are available on YouTube. Have you gone back to watch the concurrent sessions you missed yet?
- ❖ Lastly, check back [here](#), once registration for the 2022 Annual Meeting is available!

We encourage all members to update their own member profiles to include a photo and to complete the "About" section to help everyone to get to know each other better. You can even add a link to a video if you have one.

## 2. CGA-IGC Fund Updates

- **Fund members – new and departing**

The Collaborative Fund saw another successful year with CGA-IGC. We would like to thank Wendy Kohlmann, CGC for her 6 years of dedicated service on the Collaborative Fund Committee and we welcome Sonia Kupfer MD who joins Elena Stoffel MD, Matthew Kalady MD, Steven Erdman MD, and Susan Peterson PhD on the Committee.

- **Ahnen award**

The Dennis J. Ahnen Outstanding Service Award was established in 2021 to honor Dr. Ahnen, a tireless and selfless champion who was committed to advancing care of patients with gastrointestinal hereditary syndromes and the CGA-IGC organization. This award honors individuals who have contributed significantly to the society's health and welfare. The CGA-IGC Executive Council and the Collaborative Fund Committee are honored to recognize **Steven Erdman, MD** as the recipient of this prestigious award. Dr. Erdman was a past president of the CGA-IGC and has continued his active service with the organization, establishing the CGA-IGC Collaborative Fund and supporting collaborative research.

- **2021-2022 Grant Recipients**

Each year the collaborative fund issues a request for applications for research projects which advance the CGA-IGC's missions to educate healthcare providers patients and families about hereditary GI cancer, reduce morbidity and promote collaborative research. We congratulate **Sukh Makhnoon PhD** from MD Anderson as the 2021 grant recipient for a project entitled "Cultural adaptation of family talk to improve family communication in genetics."

- **2022 CGA Fund Grant Deadline**

Looking towards 2022, The Collaborative Fund Committee is looking forward to working with CGA-IGC Council and the CGA-IGC Research Committee to continue to promote collaborative research. Please be on the lookout for our request for applications! Grant applications for the next funding cycle will be due on September 9, 2022.

## 3. Education Committee Updates

- The Education Committee is excited to introduce **three new members**:

**Pooja Dharwadkar, MD** is a gastroenterologist and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Division of Gastroenterology at the University of California San Francisco - Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital. She completed her undergraduate and medical school training at the University of Miami (FL) followed by residency and fellowship in Gastroenterology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. She has published on racial and ethnic disparities in germline genetic testing of patients with young-onset colorectal cancer as well as in better describing the phenotype of young-onset colorectal cancer. Her interests include hereditary GI cancer syndromes and young-onset colon cancer.

**Jessica Long, MS, CGC** is a Licensed, Certified Genetic Counselor specializing in Cancer Genetics. After completing her Master's Degree in Human Genetics/Genetic Counseling at the University of Michigan, Jessica spent several years as a genetic counselor in the University of Michigan Cancer Genetics Clinic before joining the University of Pennsylvania's Cancer Risk Evaluation Program, Gastrointestinal Cancer Genetics Program and Basser Center for BRCA in 2012. Her expertise encompasses a variety of hereditary cancer conditions, including Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer syndrome and hereditary gastrointestinal syndromes such as Lynch syndrome and familial polyposis, and she has contributed to a number of peer-reviewed articles and reviews on these topics. Jessica also actively contributes to the University of Pennsylvania Master's Program in Genetic Counseling.

**Joshua Sommovilla, MD** is a colorectal surgeon and new member of CGAs education committee. Prior to joining the colorectal surgery staff at the Cleveland Clinic, Josh completed a subspecialty fellowship at the Sanford R Weiss Center for Hereditary Colorectal Neoplasia Syndromes, and he has particular interests in polyposis syndromes and desmoid disease. In addition to his background as a colorectal surgeon, Josh is board-certified in palliative medicine and is passionate about high-stakes decision-making in the setting of serious illness. As part of the Education Committee, he is excited to help improve and standardize the teaching of hereditary gastrointestinal cancer syndromes to multidisciplinary providers everywhere!

- **Highlights from 2021**

#### **The CGA-IGC 2021 Webinar Series**

The 2021 webinar series included six webinars:

- Polygenic risk scores in colorectal cancers, presented by **Ulrike Peters, PhD**
- Hereditary GI cancers in diverse populations, presented by **Sonia Kupfer, MD**
- Novel genes in hereditary GI cancers, presented by **Laura Valle, PhD**
- Novel methods of Screening for Colorectal Cancer, presented by **John Kiesel, MD**
- Hereditary GI syndromes: what does sexuality have to do with it, presented by **Sharon Bober, PhD**
- The last webinar of the year, Challenging Polyposis Cases, was held on December 8<sup>th</sup> with our expert panel, **Melyssa Aronson, MS, CGC, Gregory Idos, MD, MS, and Brian Shirts, MD, PhD**. The panel provided comprehensive insights into the underlying causes, genetics workup, and management of three interesting polyposis cases. If you missed the live event, please [click here](#).

#### **Monthly Journal Scans with a Journal Club Podcast**

The monthly journal scan created by the Education Committee is a valuable resource that will save you time and keep you current. To access the monthly journal scan, [click here](#). In 2021, the Education Committee added a special alerts section to let you know when major updates to society and national guidelines have been released.

The Education Committee also produces a journal club podcast featuring an interview with one of the authors of a recently published journal article that is of interest to our membership. The last podcast of the year was released in September and features an interview with Dr. Amy Otto:

## **Episode 5**

Impact of Patients' Companions on Clinical Encounters Between Black Patients and Their Non-Black Oncologist

**Amy Otto, PhD** (University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine)

If you haven't already listened to them, you can access the podcast series here:

<https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/cga-igc>

- **Upcoming Events/Plans for 2022:**

Stay tuned for a new series of webinar and podcasts! Kicking off the 2022 Webinar Series will be Sonali Paul, MD, MS who will be discussing "[Caring for our LGBTQI+ Patients](#)" on February 24<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM ET/10 AM PT. Register now so you don't miss it!

#### **4. Research Committee Updates**

- The Research Committee is excited to introduce **six new members!**

**Francesc Balaguer, M.D, Ph.D**

Dr. Balaguer is Chief of the Gastroenterology Department of Hospital Clinic in Barcelona. He runs the high risk GI clinic and his interests include hereditary CRC, especially Lynch syndrome and serrated polyposis.

**Jose Guillem, MD, MPH**

Dr. Guillem is Chief of the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His research focuses on understanding the etiology and natural history of early-age-of-onset and hereditary forms of colorectal cancer in order to optimize early detection, treatment and prevention.

**Joanne Jeter, MD**

Dr. Jeter is the Medical Director of the Family Cancer Assessment Clinic and an Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Oncology at Huntsman Cancer Institute. Her primary research interest is in personalized chemoprevention for individuals at hereditary risk of cancer.

**Dan Li, MD, AGAF**

Dr. Li is a gastroenterologist and Medical Director of the Lynch syndrome screening program at Kaiser Permanente Northern California and Adjunct Investigator at the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Division of Research. His main research interests include screening and prevention of GI cancers, and in particular, inherited GI cancers.

**David Liska, MD, MA**

Dr. Liska is a colorectal surgeon at the Cleveland Clinic and Assistant Professor in the School of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University. His research focuses on the role the tumor microenvironment plays in the pathogenesis, progression, and resistance to therapies of colorectal malignancies.

**Joshua Melson, MD**

Dr. Melson is a gastroenterologist and Associate Professor at Rush University Medical Center. His work focuses on hereditary gastrointestinal cancer prevention and management.

- **Highlights from 2021**

We complete an internal study “Clinical practice survey 2021: Chemoprevention for LS and Polyposis” in December 2021. Thank you all who participated!

- **Upcoming Events/Plans for 2022:**

- 2022 Clinical Practice Survey
- Webinar to highlight collaborative research within the CGA

## **5. DEI Committee Updates**

- The DEI Committee is excited to introduce **two new members!**

**Lauren Gima, MS, CGC** is a certified and licensed cancer genetic counselor at City of Hope in Duarte, CA. She earned her MS degree in Genetic Counseling from Northwestern University in 2017. Her primary research interests are in hereditary GI cancer syndromes. She is a member of the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC), the Collaborative Group of the Americas on Inherited Gastrointestinal Cancers (CGAIGC), the Minority Genetics Professionals Network (MGPN), the City of Hope Clinical Cancer Genomics Community of Practice (CCGCoP), and the Southern California Genetic Counselors (SCGC).

**Amie Blanco, MS, CGC**, is a genetic counselor and director of the cancer genetic and prevention and hereditary cancer programs at UCSF. She has spent the majority of her clinical career caring for patients at risk for hereditary GI cancers. She is also the parent of a mixed-race child on the autism spectrum and has experience in building connections to foster inclusion and anti-racism.

**Charles Muller, MD** is a new gastroenterology faculty member at Northwestern Medicine by way of the University of Chicago. He has been a CGA member since 2018 including as a member of communications and membership committee. He has clinical and research interests in cancer risk assessment in diverse populations and is excited to contribute to the diversity mission for CGA.

- **Highlights from 2021**

The CGA-IGC DEI committee is proud to highlight some of our achievements during our inaugural year. In collaboration with the education committee, health equity focused journals have been added to the regular journal scans. Additionally, in conjunction with the communications committee we spearheaded a DEI focused hashtag (#CGA\_DEI) to highlight DEI in cancer genetics on the @CGAIGC twitter. Furthermore, we spearheaded a health equity submission category for the annual CGA meeting and led a community focused DEI session alongside providers and patient advocates.

- **Upcoming Events/Plans for 2022**

We are excited for the upcoming year as we are planning a number of interesting programs such as a Spanish-language based webinar in collaboration with the Education Committee. We also are actively expanding our membership demographic questions to capture the diversity of the CGA membership.

## **6. Communication & Membership Committee Updates**

- The Communication & Membership Committee is excited to introduce **four new members!**

**Nick Bartell** is a third year Gastroenterology fellow at the University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester, New York. After completion of my fellowship, he will be joining the Gastroenterology faculty at the University of Rochester with a particular clinical and research focus in hereditary cancer syndromes, specifically in pancreatic cancer.

**Kimberly Hilfrank** is a cancer genetic counselor at Columbia University Irving Medical Center in New York City, where she sees patients in the high-risk GI cancer genetics clinic. Originally from Massachusetts, Kimberly attended the University of Michigan for her graduate education, where she instantly became a huge Wolverines football fan. Go Blue! While at U-M, Kimberly also pursued a Masters in Public Health and has a particular interest in disparities in genetic testing among various communities.

**Dave Dubin** is a Co-founder AliveAndKickn Lynch Syndrome foundation, 3x cancer survivor, and VP Strategic Accounts Caris Life Sciences.

**Claudio Heine**

- **Highlights from 2021**

CGA-IGC Mentorship-Mentee Program launch: In 2021, the Communications Committee launched aimed to pair CGA-IGC mentors with a mentee based on fit and alignment of goals. Mentorship pairs were created based on responses to a survey that incorporated multiple elements, including career stage, professional expertise, and mentorship/mentee goals (e.g. research, clinical, academic, work life balance, professional society engagement, diversity engagement, etc). If you are interested in participating in this new program or interested in learning more, [CLICK HERE](#).

If you are in a mentorship pair and have not yet connected with your mentor or mentee, we encourage you to set up your first meeting soon. The success of this program does rely on you meeting regularly with your paired mentor/mentee.

- **Upcoming Events/Plans for 2022**

In 2022, the Communications and Membership Committee aims to increase advertising for CGI-IGC to the genetic counseling community and advocacy groups. We plan to encourage CGA-IGC membership through our presence on Twitter, continue to support the Mentorship-Mentee Program to ensure its success, as well as host Twitter Journal Clubs and Virtual Clinical Cases Conferences throughout the year.

We hope you are excited as we are about everything CGA-IGC aims to accomplish this year. We look forward to interacting with you on Twitter and hearing about the scientific progress you are making at the 2022 Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN November 11 – 13, 2022!

Sincerely,

The CGA-IGC Communications and Membership Committee

Julie Moskowitz MS, CGC (Chair)

Charles Muller, MD (Co-Chair)

Fay Kastrinos, MD, MPH

Michelle Savage, MS, CGC

Danielle McKenna, MS, CGC

Giulia Martina Cavestro MD, PhD

Cathryn Koptiuch, MS, CGC

Christine Droagn, CGC

Michelle Springer, MS, CGC

Warren Stopak, Student

David Dubin, Patient Advocate

Nicholas Bartell MD

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