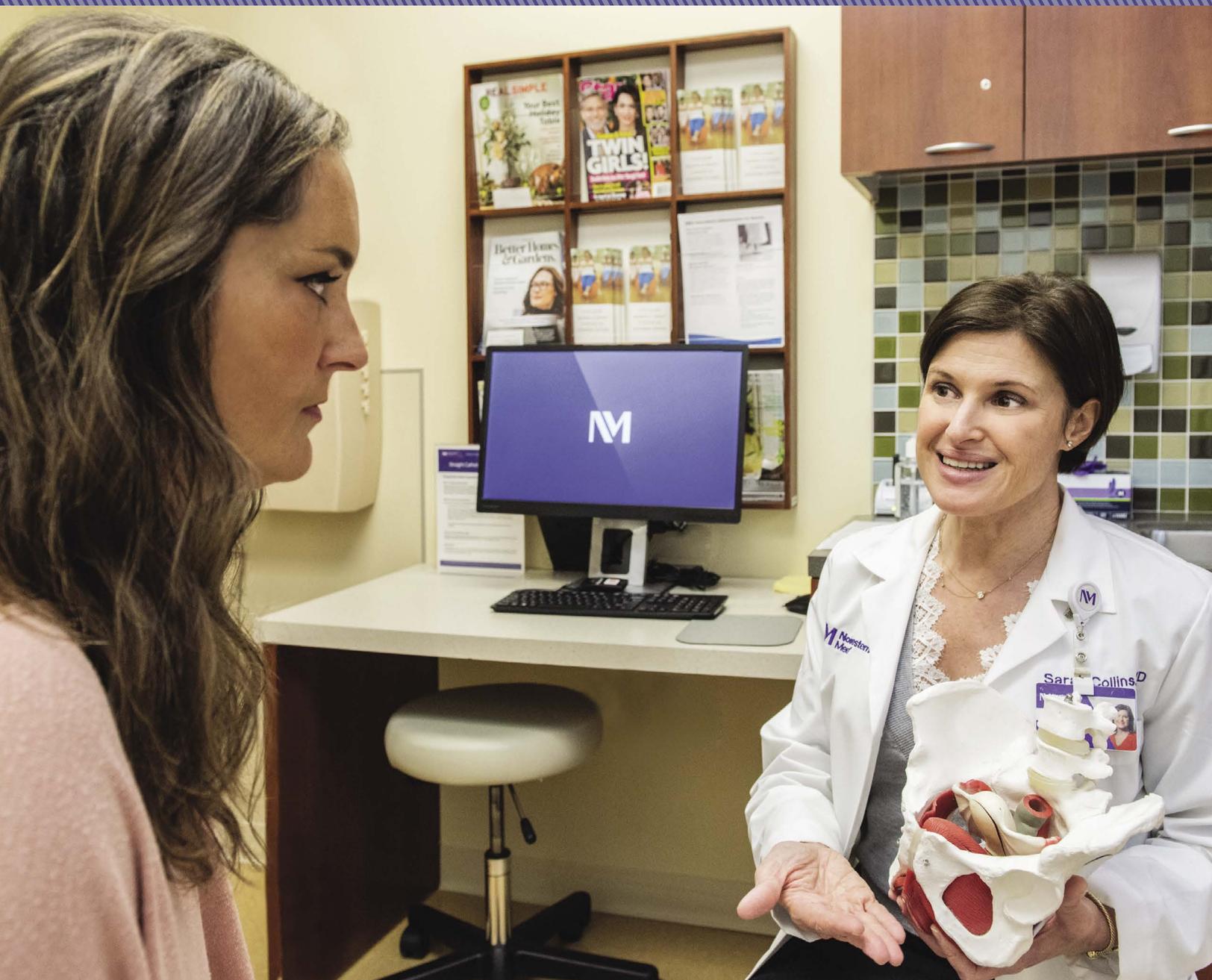


# Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (Urogynecology)

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology



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## Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Pelvic floor disorders are far more common than many of us might imagine and have an impact on the health and quality of lives of millions of women. Pelvic floor disorders include pelvic organ prolapse, urinary tract symptoms or urinary incontinence, and fecal incontinence.

One in four women report pelvic floor symptoms and a negative impact on their quality of life from those symptoms. Nearly one in five women will undergo surgery for a pelvic floor disorder with 30 percent of these women needing a second or third surgery in the future. Many risk factors for pelvic floor disorders are unavoidable and include aging, pregnancy, and childbirth. In addition, significant health disparities exist around access to care, evidenced-based treatments, and pelvic floor outcomes. With increasing longevity, the prevalence of pelvic floor disorders among women in the United States is increasing significantly. Treatment for women with such disorders is expected to increase dramatically in the coming years—from 28 million women in 2010 to 43 million women in 2050.

### A Commitment to Women with Pelvic Floor Disorders

At **Northwestern Medicine's Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (Urogynecology)**, we are passionate about helping all women with pelvic floor disorders by providing patient-centered, individualized clinical and surgical care, conducting leading-edge clinical and translational research, addressing health inequities, and training the next generation of physician leaders.

Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (FPMRS), also known as Urogynecology, is a new specialty that was approved in 2011 by the American Board of Medical Specialties. As a leading academic center, Northwestern is at the forefront of this burgeoning field and has a growing complement of diverse, internationally renowned, fellowship-trained and board-certified surgeons.

Under the distinguished directorship of Kimberly Kenton, MD, MS, FACOG, FACS, the Division of FPMRS (Urogynecology) at Northwestern has become a national leader in offering patient-centered, evidence-based, and minimally invasive treatments to women with pelvic floor disorders. We have set the standard for high-impact research studies focused on prevention and improving health outcomes for women with these disorders.

The division comprises a transdisciplinary team that includes surgeons, advanced practice specialists, sexual counselors, physical therapists, and nurses who collaborate to ensure that each patient receives a tailored and highly individualized plan of care.

### Breakthrough Urogynecology Programs

With Northwestern's investment and the support of generous individuals and groups, we are endeavoring to strengthen and grow our urogynecology programs and our nationally renowned fellowship to best serve women here in Chicago and around the globe. Through the division, we have launched the following unique programs within urogynecology:

#### **Peripartum Evaluation and Assessment of the Pelvic Floor around Delivery (PEAPOD) Clinic**

The birth of a child can be a hectic and overwhelming time for new moms, and pelvic floor complications are not always addressed. At Northwestern Prentice Women's Hospital, more than 12,000 women give birth each year. With this incredibly high delivery volume, Northwestern Medicine's Urogynecology faculty surgeons are uniquely positioned to offer comprehensive specialty care for the pelvic floor needs of women before, during, and after pregnancy.

Christina Lewicky-Gaupp, MD, FACOG, founded this transdisciplinary care program for new mothers. With Dr. Lewicky-Gaupp's leadership, our urogynecologists work collaboratively with obstetrician-gynecologists, physical therapists, and sexual counselors to provide comprehensive care for women with birth injuries. In addition, Dr. Lewicky-Gaupp and her team have published practice-changing research on prevention and early management of pelvic floor injuries.





## Collaborative Advanced Reconstructive Evaluation (CARE) Clinic for Women with Congenital Anomalies

Through our affiliation with Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, our urogynecologists have partnered with renowned pediatric surgeons to develop a nationally recognized program to care for young women with complex congenital genitourinary anomalies.

Led by Margaret Mueller, MD, FCOG, FACS, urogynecologic surgeons, pediatric surgeons, urologists, and infertility specialists collaborate to provide individualized, comprehensive care for these young women. Our urogynecology and pediatric surgery faculty also jointly cross-train fellows in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery and Pediatric Surgery. These exceptional trainees can create similar cutting-edge programs when they graduate.

## Innovative Clinical and Translational Research Programs

As an academic medical center, we believe that robust clinical and translational research programs are essential to improving equitable care and outcomes for the millions of women suffering from pelvic floor disorders. We are working to translate promising research advances into more effective and precise treatment approaches and prevention strategies for our patients.

Our urogynecology surgeon-scientists have extensive experience as leaders in surgical trials and patient-centered outcomes research. They have published their work in well-respected medical journals, including *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, the *Journal of Urology*, the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, and the *Journal of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery*.

With colleagues here at Northwestern and other academic centers, we are spearheading high-impact studies on patient-centered outcomes, maternal pelvic floor outcomes, bladder health and prevention, health inequities, and the impact of estrogen and the genitourinary microbiome on pelvic floor symptoms. As a site known for initiating novel research, we are honored to be a member of several national, multi-centered networks including the Lower Urinary Tract Research Network and the Prevention of Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms Consortium.

## Education and Training

We believe that it is critical to train the next generation of diverse surgeon-scientists to provide high-quality, patient-centered care for women with pelvic floor disorders. Our faculty within the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (Urogynecology) provide education for trainees at all levels, including medical students, residents, and fellows.

We are preparing academic leaders in this field through our Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited fellowship program. A urogynecologist is a fellowship-trained surgeon subspecialist in the care of women with pelvic floor disorders. After completing medical school and a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology or Urology, urogynecologists complete 2-3 additional years of fellowship training for a total of seven years of surgical training after medical school. This prepares them to provide comprehensive clinical care and minimally invasive surgical treatments for pelvic floor disorders, childbirth injury, complications from gynecologic surgery such as fistulas and lower urinary tract injuries, and congenital genitourinary disorders.

After completing fellowship training, urogynecologists must complete certification exams offered by the American Boards of Obstetrics and Gynecology or Urology. Therefore, they are "board-certified" in both Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (Urogynecology) and Obstetrics and Gynecology or Urology. The opportunity to educate our fellowship trainees is a privilege and a crucial responsibility, but the financial cost is immense. One of our highest priorities is to seek philanthropic support for our fellows during their training in this internationally recognized program. These future leaders will advance healthcare for women as expert surgeon-scientists who not only provide outstanding clinical and surgical care, but also serve as inspiring mentors and educators for future generations.

## Advancing Equity

There are substantial disparities in access to pelvic floor care, surgical outcomes, and participation in clinical trials for women of different racial and ethnic groups. We are committed to ensuring all women have access to patient-centered, evidenced-based care. We provide world-class care to underserved women at John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County and lead federally funded clinical research to reduce health inequities in pelvic healthcare. We also champion advocacy efforts to reduce disparities in funding for women's health research, and eliminate gaps in reimbursements for procedures to treat women.

## Philanthropy Makes a Difference

At Northwestern, we recognize that the positive contributions we are making to the field of pelvic healthcare, research, and education are made possible by donors who entrust us with their philanthropic support. We invite interested friends to join us in supporting the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery at Northwestern and ensuring the success of the Women's Integrated Pelvic Health Program. It is an exciting time as we pursue advances in research and training that will ultimately improve the lives and health of women living with pelvic floor disorders.



For more information about supporting the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (Urogynecology), please contact:

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