Osher Center for Integrative Medicine
2018 Annual Report
Letter From the Director

Leading the way for the future of medicine

As we celebrate our 21st year as Northwestern University’s integrative medicine program, I would like to pause to give gratitude to all of the individuals — providers, patients, faculty, administrators and donors — who have made it possible for us to continue our evolution as a program. Without their inspiration, support and partnership, we would not have been able to take a leadership role to advance the field of integrative medicine. Together, our dedication to bringing new approaches to conventional medical care is making an impact on the practice of health care.

With stress, obesity, anxiety and depression rates reaching epidemic levels, there is even greater attention on integrative medicine and urgency to teach future physicians, patients and those in our communities how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Our modern lifestyle can quickly lead to burnout and unhealthy behaviors. We at the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at Northwestern University are relentlessly committed to spreading the word about wellness and making it accessible. Empowering others to live well is at the core of integrative medicine. The Osher Center provides education through innovative courses, and we are constantly improving our offerings. Our scientists and researchers are also helping to move the field forward in impressive ways, actively learning how integrative medicine works and sharing that information with a global audience.

Our mission to impact health care through integrative medicine research, education, clinical care and community programs has taken us to numerous destinations in the past year — many of them in our own backyard.

This annual report shares highlights from the past fiscal year, including:
- An introduction of our new clinical director and her philosophy on lifestyle medicine
- How Cooking Up Health — the culinary medicine course that teaches medical students that food is powerful medicine and how to cook nutrient-dense meals — is changing the way future physicians interact with patients
- A follow-up on our clinical integrative medicine fellows — our future leaders
- Updates on our robust, innovative research

From superfoods to sleeping well, integrative medicine truly has something to offer everyone on their path to healing. Our continued leadership in the field depends on our team, but it also depends on our advisory board, patients and community members. We’ve made it to lucky 21, and indeed feel fortunate to continue to innovate and make new contributions to the integrative medicine movement. Please join me in celebrating our past year’s accomplishments, and the people and efforts that are influencing the future of medicine.

Melinda Ring, MD, FACP
Executive Director
Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at Northwestern University
Drs. Pat and Carl Greer Distinguished Physician in Integrative Medicine and Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine and Medical Social Sciences, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
Advancing our understanding of the benefits of integrative medicine

Our research program made significant progress in FY18, including advancing studies in our areas of focus, and fostering successful collaborations at Northwestern Medicine and with colleagues at other integrative medicine centers.

A major area of focus in FY18 was studying interventions for addressing stress and burnout for people experiencing health-related and other types of life stress. We set out to investigate the effectiveness of mind-body approaches, such as mindfulness and positive emotion regulation. Some of the study topics and their principal investigators are included below.

**Increasing positive emotion to reduce stress and burnout:**
Elaine Cheung, PhD

**Mindfulness-based training program for medical students:**
David Victorson, PhD

**Mindfulness intervention delivered in a federally qualified health center:**
Inger Burnett-Zeigler, PhD

**Mindfulness-based stress reduction in patients with breast cancer:**
Betina Yanez, PhD

**Positive affect regulation for chronic pain:**
Judy Moskowitz, PhD, MPH; Elizabeth Addington, PhD; and Elaine Cheung, PhD

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**Osher Receives National Institutes of Health Grants**

In August 2018, Dr. Moskowitz was granted an R01 from the National Institute on Aging for a randomized trial of a positive emotion skills intervention for caregivers of those who have Alzheimer’s disease. The technology-based intervention is called LEAF (Life-Enhancing Activities for Family caregivers), and if effective, can be widely distributed to improve the lives of caregivers and the well-being of those living with Alzheimer’s disease.

Dr. Burnett-Zeigler also received an R01 from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities for the trial she is leading: Effectiveness and Implementation of a Mindfulness Intervention for Depressive Symptoms Among Low-Income, Racial/Ethnic Minority Adults in a Federally Qualified Health Center.
More to Come in FY19

From creating resources that address stress and burnout to digging deeper into why mindfulness-based practices work, our scientists continue to advance the evidence base for integrative medicine.
Clinical Care

Meet our new interim medical director of Clinical Operations

Catherine Cheng, MD, FACP, joined our team as the interim medical director for Clinical Operations in FY18. She is a national speaker on physician health and well-being, and she is passionate about stress management, social and emotional aspects of health, and health education.

Growing up with traditional Chinese medicine influences, which see the body and person as a whole, she is dedicated to helping her patients achieve their best health through a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach that includes special attention to mental wellness and positive health behavioral changes.

Dr. Cheng envisions a world of health care where integrative primary care is the standard rather than the exception. In this ideal setting, patients benefit from a team-based approach, embracing everything integrative medicine has to offer — from acupuncture to holistic medicine.

The lifestyle medicine philosophy she incorporates is that well-being is impacted by five areas:

1. Nutrition
2. Exercise
3. Sleep
4. Stress Management
5. Relationships

“People underestimate the importance of these areas and how they work together,” says Dr. Cheng. “When anyone has a complaint, we need to look at how it is impacted by each of these areas.”

Dr. Cheng’s goal is to ensure our providers have enough time and resources to meaningfully support patients’ well-being in all five areas to keep patients engaged in the integrative medicine field.
Comprehensive Clinical Services at the Osher Center

- Integrative medicine consult
- Integrative pediatric consult
- Primary care
- Functional medicine
- Chiropractic medicine
- Massage therapy
- Energy medicine
- Traditional Chinese medicine (acupuncture and herbs)
- Registered dietitians/nutrition
- Fitness and wellness classes
- Behavioral medicine
- Integrative women’s health
- Corporate wellness
We are training the next generation of medical students to make an impact on our communities. One way we are achieving this is through Cooking Up Health, an innovative project that includes research, education and community impact.

Future physicians cook up health
Over the course of three months, first-year Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine students sauté, simmer and slice their way to nutrient-dense meals in a course called “Culinary Medicine: Cooking Up Health.” Led by Dr. Ring and Rupa Mahadevan, MD, the course expands students’ comfort in cooking to benefit their own health during busy medical school years, and to counsel patients in successful behavior change around nutrition and cooking.

A unique aspect of this course is the service component that brings medical students into the Chicago Public Schools. Feinberg students teach middle-schoolers in at-risk communities about nutrition and its impact on our health, using a curriculum developed in partnership with the non-profit organization Common Threads.

The course has deepened students’ understanding of relationships among food, health and disease. Upon completion of the elective, medical students report an increased comfort in counseling patients about nutrition and a strong commitment to including nutrition counseling in their future patient encounters.

Cooking Up Health expands to include Train-the-Trainer workshops
We received a pilot grant from Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute to support implementation efforts of Train-the-Trainer workshops. These workshops teach faculty at other schools to incorporate our Cooking Up Health curriculum into their programs, helping to expand the culinary medicine movement and teaching kitchen concept.

We partnered with the non-profit community organization Common Threads, which helps address childhood obesity through cooking and nutrition education, to host these workshops. The first training includes faculty from seven outside health professional schools interested in bringing the Cooking Up Health program to their home institution.

Cooking Up Health: Docs & Kids in the Kitchen receives award
We received the 2018 Community Engaged Research Partnership Award from the Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC) for Cooking Up Health: Docs & Kids in the Kitchen. This award recognizes the innovative partnership between Dr. Ring and Common Threads, and their ability to bring hands-on experience and learning to grade school students.

ARCC developed the award to distinguish research partnerships that exemplify strong collaborative research principles and are working to impact the health of the community.
Fellowship updates

Our fellows help us further and deepen our collaborative projects in an important way. Their work with us guides them on the next step in their journey — whether it’s to develop a program for underserved communities or to create an innovative curriculum.

Sreela Namboodiri, MD, completes integrative medicine fellowship

Dr. Namboodiri recently completed her integrative medicine fellowship with a focus on bringing integrative medicine to the underserved. She presented “Stirring the Pot: Writing the Recipe for Integrative Medicine at an FQHC” at the 8th Annual Integrative Medicine for the Underserved (IM4US) Conference in June 2018. She also presented “Integrative Medicine for the Underserved: Innovative Models of Care” at the June 2018 Grand Rounds.

Dr. Namboodiri’s goal is to create a model of integrative care with physician consults and complementary practitioners for the underserved at a federally qualified health center. Dr. Namboodiri has been hired by a Chicago area federally qualified health center to lead the development and implementation of integrative medicine options for the community they serve.

Meet our 2017 – 2019 fellow: Anna Balabanova, MD

Dr. Balabanova is our current clinical fellow in integrative medicine. She sees patients for integrative consults and is pursuing academic projects in her role at the center. To get to the root of their medical concerns, she looks at her patients physically, mentally, spiritually and socially. She believes in bringing integrative medicine to a broad audience, including all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Dr. Balabanova uses both conventional and complementary methods to facilitate the body’s innate healing abilities. As a competitive athlete who figure skated and competes in marathons and triathlons, Dr. Balabanova coaches patients on diet and exercise to reach their health goals.

Enhancing Our Integrative Medicine Fellowship

Some exciting changes, including our fellowship moving to a two-year program and collaboration with other Osher Centers on a fellow exchange program, are being made possible through $300,000 in funding received in fall 2017 from Karen and Steve Malkin.

We are also working with other Osher Centers to develop a unique curriculum that will be used to train fellows across the programs and eventually be offered to other institutions.

As one of seven members of the international Osher Collaborative (www.oshercollaborative.com), we continue to partner with our fellow Osher Centers on other initiatives to advance integrative medicine across the globe.
Community Engagement

Serving our communities and beyond

In FY18, we had a strong presence at international and local conferences. We presented at and attended multiple prestigious integrative medicine conferences in the last year to help advance the field and make wellness more accessible for all.

**7th Annual Integrative Medicine for the Underserved (IM4US) Conference**

**Impact:** Through integrative medicine, IM4US aims to reduce health disparity caused by poverty, racism and the social determinants of health. The conference was held at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in August 2017. The topic was “Equity and Healing: Integrative Approaches to Bridging Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities in Health Care.”

More than 340 healthcare providers learned about a breadth of topics, including culinary medicine, yoga and mind-body interventions. Multiple faculty and staff from our center spoke at the conference.

**International Conference of the Society for Integrative Oncology**

**Impact:** In November 2017, the Osher Center co-hosted this important conference with the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University. It allowed more than 325 healthcare providers engaged in integrative cancer care to learn about leading-edge treatments and research findings, and to participate in workshops.

**Good Food Is Good Medicine**

**Impact:** In March 2018, Dr. Ring and Dr. Mahadevan were part of a panel of five experts at “The Doc Is In: Food, Health and Quality of Life,” which was held at the University of Illinois, Chicago Forum at the Good Food EXPO. They discussed the role of plant-based diets and the need to eat fewer processed foods, as well as getting children comfortable cooking in the kitchen.

**2018 Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine and Health**

**Impact:** This premiere international scientific conference on integrative medicine and health was held in Baltimore, MD, in May 2018. It highlighted the outstanding work being done in research, clinical care, policy and education to advance integrative medicine around the world.

We were well-represented in symposia, workshops, panels and posters. David Victorson, PhD presented “Is Mindfulness Immeasurable? Discovery and Dialogue of Conceptual, Practical, Scientific, and Experiential Solutions.”
Faculty & Staff

**Executive Director**  
Melinda Ring, MD, FACP

**Interim Medical Director**  
Catherine Cheng, MD

**Director, Program Development**  
Nancy Heap, LCSW

**Director, Research**  
Judith Moskowitz, PhD, MPH

**Director, Operations**  
Aura Reitneris

**Associate Director, Education**  
Rupa Mahadevan, MD

**Practice Manager**  
Briana Rader

**Operations Coordinator Nurse**  
Nicole Piotrowski

**Triage Nurse**  
Kristin Smith, RN

**Development**

**Executive Director, Foundation Relations and Corporate Engagement**  
Sarah Fodor

**Vice President, Northwestern Memorial Foundation**  
Dave Sack

**Associate Dean, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine**  
Terri Dillon

**Clinical Team**

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Ania Grimone, LAc  
Hannah Lapkin, RD  
Fang Lin, LAc  
Mary-Anne Meyer, CNP  
Jane Mockaitis, RD  
Helene Moore, PsyD  
Shibani Munshi, MD  
Dianne Seppelfrick, LMT  
Tatyana Shapiro, LAc  
Carly Trueger, RD  
Chris Wilson, LMT

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Jamie Klausing  
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Tonna Reinhold

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Jaret Carrasquedo  
Tina Garcia  
Leslie Pfeifer  
Sandra Rocha  
Yessica Roman Mendoza  
Vanessa Welch
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Jamie Griffith, PhD
Suena Massey, MD
Patty Moreno, PhD
Jason Ong, PhD
David Victorson, PhD
Lisa Wu, PhD
Betina Yanez, PhD

Advisory Council for the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at Northwestern Medicine
Looking Ahead

Continuing to change the world

Every year, we look for new ways to expand on how to make an impact with our research, clinical care, education, leadership and community engagement.

Research

Several studies made possible with grant money in FY18 will begin data collection and reporting, further expanding our evidence base for integrative medicine.

Our researchers are waiting for decisions on dozens of federal agencies and private foundations. We are optimistic that despite the current challenging funding climate, some of these will be awarded.

Clinical care

Our new interim medical director of Clinical Operations will deepen and expand our ability to make integrative medicine care the primary physician-based care.

Education

Increasing our fellowship programs to a two-year program and the fellowship exchange program with other Osher Centers will help us continue to shape the future of medicine. We expect our Osher fellowship curriculum, authored by expert faculty from across all seven renowned Osher Centers, to become the national model for patient-focused integrative medicine teaching.

Leadership

Dr. Ring will focus on the credibility of the integrative medicine field and maintaining the credibility of the field through engagement on the board of the national American Board of Integrative Medicine certifying exam, meaningful participation in the national Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine and Health, and editorial publications emphasizing the need for a commitment by individuals, educators and programs to maintain the highest level of ethics.

Community engagement

We are collaborating with Erie and Cook County health clinics to bring integrated medicine to their underserved patients.
A special thank you

On behalf of our faculty, staff, patients and the integrative medicine community, we would like to thank the many donors who have devoted time, money and resources that allow the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine to continue to thrive. As a non-profit organization, we depend on the generosity of our supporters, and we are grateful for their partnership as we grow the field of integrative medicine and improve the health and well-being of people across the globe.

Our philanthropic advisory council, IM AWARE (Integrative Medicine: Advising with Awareness, Resources and Education), has been instrumental in our success. For more information about IM AWARE, visit imaware.net.

We also express deep appreciation for the generous, multi-year financial support we’ve received from the Bernard Osher Foundation, The Greer Foundation and the Malkin family.