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Nebraska

ACC

SUPPORTING PHYSICIANS, TRAINEES, AND CARDIOVASCULAR TEAM
MEMBERS WITH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, & NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Chapter News

Empowering Hearts, Igniting Minds, and Shaping Futures – Nebraska ACC takes the lead in promoting Education, Networking and Advocacy!

As the year draws to a close, I want to extend my warmest wishes to each and every one of you. This holiday season, may your well-deserved moments of rest be plentiful. Your dedication to advancing cardiovascular care in Nebraska has been truly inspiring. Here's to a joyful holiday season and a new year filled with continued progress and success!

Keep up with the latest science!

Attend the American College of Cardiology Annual Scientific Sessions April 6-8, 2024 in Atlanta, GA. Register at [ACC.24](#). Meet up with Nebraska Colleagues in Atlanta for coffee. Once the details are finalized, we'll send you an email with all the information!

In case you missed it!

A consortium of CV societies have come together to submit an application to the ABMS requesting the creation of a new Board of CV Medicine. Learn more [here!](#)

ACC Advocacy

Thanks to Rep. Mike Flood, Rep. Don Bacon, Sen. Pete Ricketts, and Sen. Deb Fischer and their staff for meeting with the Nebraska ACC team on the Hill at #ACCLegConf2023. We are advocating for increasing patient care access by updating MPFS with MEI (keep up with inflation), support great #AED access, support #PAD screening, increase access to cardiac rehab and reform prior authorization. Over 400 cardiovascular clinicians were advocating to improve CV car at Capitol Hill on October 17, 2023. Save the date for next year's meeting, set to take place September 29-October 1, 2024. This is a great opportunity for Fellows in Training and CV team members to get involved and make a difference in the field of cardiology, and meet face-to-face with lawmakers to discuss top issues affecting patients and providers.

Nebraska ACC 6th Annual Fall Meeting took place on October 11th, 2023 with Keynote Speaker Cathie Biga, MSN, FACC. Thank you to the 120 Cardiologists, CV members, Trainees, and Exhibitors who attended. A big thank you to Dr. Selma Mohammed, Chair of Strategy for the Nebraska ACC, for all her help in making the annual meeting a huge success.

The 5th Annual FIT Poster Competition was a resounding success. Thanks to all the fellows for your outstanding abstract submissions, your work is truly commendable. Congratulations to the winners, Drs. Elawa, Alampoondi, Balakrishna, Shabbir, and CV Research Team Member, Eh Khaing. A heartfelt thanks to the Education Committee Co-Chairs- Drs. Abuissa and Tiwari, Abstract Graders Drs. Mohammed and Madan, and Chief Fellows Drs. Aggarwal, Nickol, Kousa, and Shin for all of their hard work in planning this event. All the abstracts are published online on our [event website](#).

Newsletter Contribution

We want to hear from YOU! Please reach out to me on X @atunuguntla1 if you would like to write for the Nebraska ACC Newsletter. The Newsletter features four brief articles quarterly: Chapter News, Cardiology Update (by a cardiologist), FIT Corner (by a fellow in training), and CVT Corner (by a CV team member).



Anuradha Tunuguntla
MD, FACC, FSCAI
Governor, Nebraska ACC



Nebraska
CHAPTER

CHAPTER NEWS CONTINUED

Let us collaborate and create a vibrant and informative newsletter that showcases the expertise and achievements of our members.

As we continue to grow and thrive as a chapter, I want to express my gratitude for your ongoing support and engagement. Let's further strengthen the bonds within our Nebraska ACC Community.

Please follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!

CARDIOLOGY UPDATE

THE NOW OF CARDIAC GENETICS



Douglas Stoller, MD, PhD
Cardiovascular Genetics
Program, UNMC

Current emphasis in cardiac genetics is genetic testing. The primary reasons to obtain genetic testing are (1) to aid cascade screening of first-degree relatives and (2) to clarify diagnosis. Patients commonly cite “helping family” as their rationale. Using blood, saliva or buccal samples, DNA sequencing reveals variants which are subsequently classified into five categories (pathogenic, likely pathogenic, unknown significance, likely benign, and benign). Pathogenic and likely pathogenic variants can be used to identify high-risk first-degree family members; other variants are not informative for the purposes of identifying risk.

As an example, consider patient Mr. Jones with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy who has two biological children, Sam and Sally. In the absence of genetic testing, guideline recommendations are for Sam and Sally to undergo regular screening with clinic visits and imaging on a regular, ongoing basis. Mr. Jones undergoes genetic testing that reveals a likely pathogenic variant in beta myosin heavy chain (MYH7). Sam is found to carry the variant, but Sally does not. Based on genetic test results, Sam is now at known risk for developing HCM and continues ongoing screening. Sam's children are also at potential risk and should be offered screening. Sally and her children, on the other hand, are not at risk and can stop screening.

Genetic testing includes panel tests, exome sequencing, and whole genome sequencing. Whole genome (sequencing one's entire genome of approximately 3 billion base pairs) and exome (sequencing one's protein coding regions of approximately 30 million base pairs) sequencing are rarely used. A genetic panel is a curated list of genes known to cause a particular disease. A panel can be narrow (hypertrophic cardiomyopathy or Long QT syndrome) or broad (general cardiomyopathy or arrhythmia syndrome). Panel tests range from a handful to a couple hundred genes. Over time, the cost of genetic testing has decreased considerably and become affordable for most patients. A typical cardiac panel will cost a few hundred dollars, and several commercial genetic testing companies offer a self-pay option in this range as well.

Who should be offered genetic testing? The likelihood of informative (positive) genetic testing guides this decision at present. Patients with Long QT syndrome, Catecholaminergic polymorphic ventricular tachycardia, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy should be offered testing. Genetic testing is likewise recommended in select patients with thoracic aortic disease and hyperlipidemia. Notably, first degree relatives at risk for a pathogenic or likely variant should be offered testing.

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CARDIOLOGY UPDATE CONTINUED

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FIT CORNER

SURFING THE SURGE: TRIUMPHING IN THE CARDIOLOGY FELLOWSHIP HUSTLE



Sowjanya Kapaganti, MD
Cardiology Fellow
Creighton University

Transitioning from residency to the role of a cardiology fellow presents a daunting challenge due to the substantial increase in the volume and complexity of information. The leap in medical knowledge and the intricacies of cardiology demand a rapid adaptation to a more specialized and nuanced field. While residency lays the foundation, the learning curve intensifies during the early stages of cardiology fellowship, requiring a cardiologist-in-training to assimilate vast amounts of data, ranging from intricate diagnostic techniques to the latest advancements in treatment modalities. ¹ The relentless pace of research and evolving clinical guidelines add to the complexity, necessitating a commitment to continuous learning.

The Importance of Staying Informed: Access to the latest research allows cardiologists to integrate cutting-edge knowledge into patient care. New treatment modalities, diagnostic techniques, and evidence-based guidelines can significantly impact clinical decision-making and improve patient outcomes.

Professional Development: Remaining current in cardiology is vital for continuous professional development, ensuring healthcare professionals stay at the

forefront, enhancing competence, and fostering confidence and credibility.

Here's my take on staying current with Up-to-Date Research while anchoring strong basics:

Utilize Academic Journals and Publications: Start your exploration by delving into 2-3 esteemed journal like *Circulation*, the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology (JACC)*, the *European Society of Cardiology*, and the *Journal of the American Heart Association (JAHA)*. ²

Reading on the Go: Embrace the power of knowledge in motion! Transform idle moments into learning opportunities by reading on the go—your journey, your pace, and a wealth of insights at your fingertips. I usually like to have a few PDFs on my phone or iPad that I would go through while waiting for a flight or during travel.

Nightly Heights: Elevate Your Evening Ritual by keeping a book on your nightstand and delve into a new topic each day. Prior to bedtime, my favorite ritual is focusing on learning something that had stung me during the day for not knowing offering a satisfying sense of accomplishment.

Conference Connect: Initially daunting, attending cardiology conferences may trigger anxiety and imposter syndrome. Yet, as familiarity grows, the experience becomes not only enjoyable but also a valuable avenue for firsthand exposure to cutting-edge research and networking with field experts. ³

Tweeting Insights: In the digital age, we leverage most of our time on smartphones. Much like scrolling through Instagram, exploring Twitter becomes a valuable avenue for learning, offering insights from thought leaders, discovering recent studies in cardiology, and gaining perspectives on diverse treatment approaches across institutions. ²

Forming a StudySquad: Bring together like-minded friends, create a shared Google Drive, and enjoy collaborative information exchange while having an enjoyable learning experience together.

Time Blocking: Optimize productivity by allocating focused time blocks for distinct activities. ⁴

FIT CORNER CONTINUED

Nurturing Mentorship Relationships: In the vast expanse of cardiology, having a mentor is akin to having a seasoned navigator on your ship. Seek out mentors who align with your interests and goals. [4,5](#)

Weathering the Storms: Embrace setbacks as opportunities for growth in the challenging journey of cardiology fellowship. Learn, adapt, and let resilience be your anchor during stormy times. Achieving small goals boosts confidence and fosters a sense of accomplishment.

Conclusion: As you navigate the seas of advancing research in cardiology fellowship, remember that the journey is as significant as the destination. By embracing the currents, charting your course, seeking mentorship, maintaining balance, fostering collaboration, and weathering storms, you can not only survive but thrive in this exciting and challenging expedition.

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CVT CORNER

MEET OUR NEW CVT REPRESENTATIVE- NICOLE J LOPEZ-SCHAECHER, APRN-NP



Earlier this year, the Nebraska ACC underwent elections for the position of Cardiovascular Team Representative. The CVT Representative serves as the state's Chapter representative for the national ACC's Cardiovascular Team Section. The mission of the position is to ensure bi-directional communication between the CV Team Section and ACC leadership, and the state chapter leadership and chapter members, while promoting the core missions of the College. The position is a three-year term commitment to serve as a leader and point of contact for cardiovascular team members within our Nebraska Chapter.

We are happy to announce that the elections results are in and the winner is Nicole Lopez- Schaecher, APRN-NP! On behalf of the Nebraska ACC board, please join us in congratulating Nicole!

Nicole J Lopez-Schaecher,
APRN-NP
Structural Heart Program
Nebraska Medicine

About Nikki

Nikki Lopez- Schaecher is currently a Cardiology Nurse Practitioner specializing in Structural Heart Disease at Nebraska Medicine. She has been practicing in the field of cardiology as a health educator, nurse, and a nurse practitioner for over 25 years in the areas of community health/outreach, advocacy, hospital administration, and direct patient care. She has been a member of the ACC Interventional and CV Team for three years, and has earned her MSN-NP Acute Care from UNMC College of Nursing in 2018.

Her background in health education, program development, legislation/advocacy and nursing knowledge is used to create a compassionate environment for patients that respects their dignity, while providing resources and collaborating with the healthcare team to achieve quality outcomes.

ACC CV TEAM NEWSLETTER

Did you know? The ACC has a monthly newsletter for CV Team Members.

Click on the link below to learn more about what is happening on the national stage!

Read the ACC CV Team Newsletter [here!](#)

WELCOME OUR NEW EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Nidhish Tiwari, MD, FACC

Director of Heart & Vascular Clinic

On behalf of the Nebraska ACC board, please join us in welcoming Dr. Nidhish Tiwari as the new Editor-in-Chief for the Nebraska ACC's quarterly newsletter. Dr. Tiwari is an Associate professor of medicine at UNMC's Division of Cardiovascular Medicine. He also serves as the program director of clinical cardiology & cardiac imaging, and he also serves as the subspecialty education coordinator for cardiology medicine. Dr. Tiwari considers the practice of cardiology as "the marvelous culmination of physics, engineering and physiology, all in a human body".

We are confident that with his dedication, wealth of experience, and commitment to this role, his leadership will contribute to the continued success of our newsletter and Chapter.

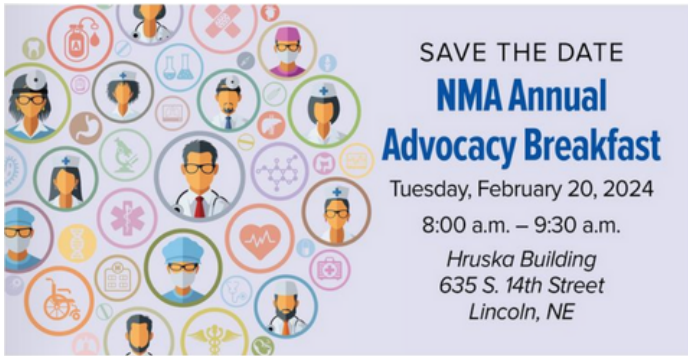
Welcome Dr. Tiwari!

SAVE THE DATE! ACC.24- ATLANTA



Register at ACC.org/ACC24

SAVE THE DATE! NMA ADVOCACY BREAKFAST



Join the Nebraska Medical Association during its annual Advocacy Breakfast on February 20, 2024 from 8:00am to 8:30am CST at the Hruska Building, located at 635 S. 14th Street in Lincoln.

To attend, you must be a member of the Nebraska Medical Association (members of the Lancaster County Medical Society or Metro Omaha Medical Society members are joint members with the NMA).

For more information, please [visit: www.nebmed.org](http://www.nebmed.org).

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Happy
Holidays

and a

Happy New Year

