

## Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation Medicine Division of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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Dr. Sanjeev Agarwal

I am thrilled to update you on the latest developments and achievements within our esteemed Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) Program at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University. As we usher in a new academic year, we are excited to welcome a fresh cohort of residents and medical students eager to

make their mark in the field of PM&R. Witnessing new faces join our program and seeing our graduating residents advance to fellowships, jobs, and the next stages of their careers is immensely gratifying.

Our commitment as educators is to provide an exceptional and diverse training environment, equipping our trainees with the skills, knowledge, and principles they will carry throughout their careers. I often reflect on our role as akin to that of a master sculptor. Our trainees arrive with raw potential, and through careful guidance, support, and mentorship, we help shape them into confident, skilled professionals. It's incredibly rewarding to watch them develop and refine their abilities, eventually stepping out as leaders in their own right.

I am pleased to announce that we had another exceptional year in matching our residents to ACGME-accredited fellowships, with all residents who applied successfully securing positions. Additionally, I am happy to report that all our residents who took the Part 2 board examination passed, showcasing the high level of competence and dedication within our program.

Throughout the years, I have learned that each trainee's journey is unique, requiring a personalized approach to support and guidance. Some may need more time and encouragement, while others quickly find their stride. Regardless, witnessing their growth and eventual independence is a source of immense pride. Our alumni have gone on to achieve remarkable success, serving as department chairs, educators, clinical innovators, researchers, and even social media influencers, making significant contributions across the globe.

### SUNY Downstate Attendings



Dr. Lawrence Chan



Dr. Marc Ross



Dr. Tsai C. Chao

### Kings County Attendings



Dr. Robert  
Deporto



Dr. Marcel G.  
Bayol



Dr. Stella  
Mansukhani



Dr. Getahun  
Kifle

### St. John's Attendings



Dr. Hana Ilan



Dr. Edbert Morales

### Staten Island Attendings



Dr. Jack Mensch



Dr. Christopher  
Szeles



Dr. Jeffrey  
Weinberg

### Bronx VA Attendings



Dr. Marinella Galea



Dr. Stephen  
Kornfeld

### St. Albans VA Attending



Dr. Chow Ng

## Welcoming Dr. Marc Ross to Our Team!



It is with great pleasure that we introduce you to the newest addition to our team here at SUNY Downstate - Dr. Marc Ross, our esteemed new Inpatient Rehabilitation Director. Dr. Ross brings with him a wealth of experience and dedication in the field of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and we are thrilled to have him join our residency program.

Dr. Ross graduated from New York Medical College in 1989 and completed his internship at Westchester County Medical Center. He then pursued his residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Mount Sinai in New York, where he honed his skills and passion for helping patients regain their independence and quality of life.

Throughout his career, Dr. Ross has held several notable positions, including serving as the Medical Director of Rehabilitation Medicine at Cabrini Medical Center and later as the Director of Rehabilitation Medicine at Maimonides Medical Center. His dedication to expanding rehabilitation services, providing leadership in both inpatient and outpatient settings, and his commitment to teaching and mentoring residents make him an invaluable asset to our program.

Dr. Ross's extensive experience includes establishing and leading rehabilitation clinics, overseeing electrodiagnosis departments, and providing consultation services to nursing and rehabilitation centers. His leadership roles have ranged from leading clinical services to chairing executive committees and spearheading the implementation of electronic medical record systems.

Beyond his professional achievements, Dr. Ross is known for his passion for teaching and his interest in advancing the field of physiatry. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time at the beach, where he finds solace and relaxation.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Dr. Marc Ross. We are excited about the knowledge and enthusiasm he brings to our program. We are honored to have him join us and are eager to embark on this journey together.

## A Fond Farewell to Dr. Haris Choudry

With a mix of melancholy and gratitude, we announce the departure of Dr. Haris Choudry from his role as Associate Program Director of the SUNY Downstate PM&R Residency Program. Dr. Choudry's journey with us began in 2021, and over the years he left an indelible mark on all who have had the privilege of working alongside him.

Throughout his tenure, Dr. Choudry's dedication and passion towards higher education was unwavering, driving positive change and innovation within our program. As a former graduate of the program, he brought a unique perspective and a deep commitment to enhancing the educational experience for the residents. And under his leadership as the Director of Inpatient Rehabilitation, the inpatient unit evolved into a more efficient and patient-centric system.

Beyond his administrative duties, Dr. Choudry's impact on education and mentorship has been profound. His enthusiasm for teaching was contagious, and he revitalized the didactic sessions for residents by introducing engaging learning materials and inviting esteemed lecturers from various specialties. His goal was to not only ensure that the residents received a proper foundation of knowledge, but to also foster their fascination with learning itself. To this end, he worked tirelessly to transform the residents into future educators to others. As the main advisor for the PM&R Student Interest Group and the Sports Medicine Interest Group, he provided invaluable guidance and support to aspiring physicians, fostering a culture of excellence and collaboration between the residency program and the university as a whole.

Dr. Choudry's genuine warmth and approachability made him a beloved figure among residents and faculty alike. He championed resident wellness and organized numerous events and activities to promote camaraderie and self-care. Whether it was a karaoke night or a gym day, Dr. Choudry's infectious energy and genuine care for others always shone through. Just don't expect his basketball game to live up to his teaching skills.

As Dr. Choudry embarks on his new role as Residency Program Director at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, we extend our heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for continued success. We also wish him the best of luck as he also endeavors on his journey of being a father to his newborn baby boy. While we will miss his presence dearly, we take comfort in knowing that his legacy of leadership, advocacy, and compassion will endure in our program for years to come.

On behalf of the entire SUNY Downstate PM&R community, we thank Dr. Haris Choudry for his unwavering dedication and countless contributions to our program. May his future endeavors be as enriching and rewarding as his time with us has been.



## Spotlight on Training Sites



**Dr. Chow Ng**

Residents have the pleasure of spending their time at the St. Albans VA with Dr. Chow Ng. Dr. Ng acts as Section Chief of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the St. Albans VA Medical Center, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to her role. With a longstanding passion for education, Dr. Ng plays a key role in the training of our PGY-2 residents all while providing comprehensive rehabilitative care to veterans.

Dr. Ng's journey obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University, followed by a Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition from New York University. She pursued her medical degree education at SUNY Health Science Center in Brooklyn. Dr. Ng then completed her internship in internal medicine at New York Downtown Hospital before completing her residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at New York University Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation in 1996.

Throughout her career, Dr. Ng has held various clinical and academic positions, providing her with the experience and expertise in rehabilitation medicine. She has served as an attending physician at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers and Saint Vincent's Catholic Medical Center in Queens. In these roles, Dr. Ng performed electrodiagnostic studies and delivered comprehensive rehabilitative care, with a focus on both inpatient and outpatient management. She particularly has garnered significant experience in the prescription and management of orthotics, prosthetics, and mobility devices.

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Her commitment to education is evident in her previous roles, which include serving as a director of the rehabilitation division of clinics at Terence Cardinal Cook Health Care Center in NY. Here, she was responsible for providing rehabilitative care for patients in various clinical settings and teaching medical students rotating from Valhalla Westchester Medical School.

Currently, as the Section Chief of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the St. Albans VA, Dr. Ng oversees patient care at the VA working closely with a multidisciplinary team. She serves as a clinical instructor, supervising Downstate residents and mentoring them in physiatric care across various settings. She is key in teaching PGY-2 residents the fundamentals of EMG/NCS, prosthetic management, and mobility devices. Residents are very fond of her teaching skills as she allows residents to maintain autonomy while still providing them the training they need to be successful.

Dr. Ng's dedication to teaching extends beyond the clinic, as she is passionate about empowering residents with the skills and autonomy to excel in their practice. In her spare time, Dr. Ng enjoys choir, watercolor painting, bicycling, and swimming.

### The St. Albans VA Medical Center



Since July 2020, our Downstate PM&R Residency Program has been privileged to include the St. Albans VA Medical Center in Queens as one of our rotation sites. This VA hospital provides an invaluable experience for our PGY-2 residents, offering a comprehensive exposure to both inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation medicine.

Under the guidance of Dr. Ng, our residents spend two enriching months at this site, immersing themselves in the medical complexities associated with the rehabilitation of veterans. One of the highlights of this rotation is the opportunity for our residents to gain their initial exposure in performing EMG and Nerve Conduction Studies.

Dr. Ng works to both teach the basics of the procedure as well as interpretation of the

results. Moreover, the autonomy provided allows residents to tailor their rotation to their individual interests, fostering a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

The St. Albans VA Medical Center is home to both inpatient and subacute rehabilitation patients, providing residents with exposure to a diverse range of clinical settings. Residents actively participate in the management of patients in both settings, honing their skills in both acute and transitional care. This, combined with their outpatient exposure, allows residents to experience the full spectrum of rehabilitative care.

One of the unique aspects of training at the VA is the access to government resources, which translates into exposure to specialized wheelchairs, adaptive equipment, and prosthetics. This exposure enhances our residents' understanding of the breadth of rehabilitation options available to veterans. The presence of a dedicated prosthetist on-site facilitates learning in prosthetic management with residents witnessing firsthand the creation of prostheses and adaptive equipment.

The St. Albans VA Medical Center rotation has quickly become a favorite among our residents, thanks to its unique learning opportunities, hands-on experiences, and supportive educational environment. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with the VA in serving our nation's veterans and providing exceptional training to our residents.



## St. John's Spotlight

### St. John's Episcopal Hospital



St. John's Episcopal Hospital in Far Rockaway, Queens, serves as a crucial rotation site for our residents, offering invaluable training experiences throughout all three years of residency. This site is dedicated to providing both a comprehensive inpatient consultation service as well as an autonomous outpatient clinic. The combination of these two settings ensures our residents develop the skills needed to excel in their future careers as PM&R physicians.

Residents engage in rehabilitation consultations within the hospital, working closely with various specialties to provide physiatry recommendations and disposition plans

for patients. This rotation is integral for residents as it hones their consultation skills from PGY-2 through PGY-4. As the residents progress through their years, they become more confident with how to manage providing recommendations regarding a patient's care, as well as determining which consults require more in-depth analyses. The interdisciplinary collaboration at St. John's enhances residents' ability to offer well-rounded care, ensuring patients receive optimal rehabilitation support. As PGY-3 and PGY-4 residents, our trainees transition to the outpatient PM&R clinic at St. John's. Here, they evaluate and manage a wide array of musculoskeletal and neurological conditions, including joint pains, musculoskeletal injuries, neurologic disorders (such as multiple sclerosis and ALS), prosthetics, orthotics, and chronic pain. The clinic also serves as a training site for performing ultrasound-guided joint injections and EMG/nerve conduction studies. One of the standout features of the St. John's rotation is the significant autonomy granted to residents in the outpatient clinic. Under the guidance of Dr. Hana Ilan and Dr. Edbert Morales, residents have the flexibility to shape their training according to their interests and career goals, especially in the clinic setting. This empowerment fosters a proactive learning environment, encouraging residents to take initiative and develop their clinical judgment and procedural skills.

The rotation at St. John's Episcopal Hospital emphasizes a collaborative learning environment. Residents work closely with attending physicians and other healthcare professionals, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and continuous education. This collaboration ensures that residents are well-prepared to handle diverse clinical scenarios and provide high-quality patient care. We are proud to highlight the exceptional training opportunities available at St. John's under the tutelage of Dr. Hana Ilan and Dr. Edbert Morales. For years, their unwavering dedication to resident education has been a cornerstone of our program.

#### Dr. Hana Ilan



Dr. Hana Ilan is a distinguished physician and educator who has made significant contributions to our residency here at Downstate. She has been a guiding force to many of our residents throughout the years and has continually provided wisdom and training in many facets of the field of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Starting her career with a degree in Speech and Language Pathology from City College of the City University of New York, Dr. Ilan worked for many years as a CCC-certified speech and language pathologist before pursuing her medical degree at SUNY Downstate in Brooklyn. She completed her PM&R residency at SUNY Downstate,

where she served as Chief Resident. Her extensive career spans various esteemed institutions, including Long Island Jewish Medical Center, Nassau County Medical Center, Lawrence Nursing Care Center, and the Joseph P. Adabo Family Health Center. Her roles have included Director of Outpatient PM&R, Pediatric Rehabilitation, and Residency Program Director at Nassau County Medical Center from 1988 to 1993.

Currently, Dr. Ilan is the Chairman of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the Site Director for our residents at St. John's Episcopal Hospital. In her role, she provides exceptional education and guidance to residents during bedside consultations, focusing on discharge disposition and interdisciplinary collaboration for musculoskeletal management. In her outpatient clinic, she imparts valuable skills in electromyography, prosthetics/orthotics, and joint injections.

Dr. Ilan's extensive administrative and leadership experience as Chairman of the Department of PM&R and Residency Site Director at a community teaching hospital in Queens, New York, underscores her commitment to graduate medical education. Her prior role as Residency Program Director at a large teaching hospital in Nassau County further highlights her expertise in managing diverse and challenging patient populations while fostering clinical and didactic teaching. Many of our residents pride Dr. Ilan's extensive experience in managing clinical rotations and she constantly provides them with the insight on how

to manage their practices. Graduating residents often seek guidance from Dr. Ilan in how to manage the more administrative aspect of physiatry as well as how to properly handle billing and insurance issues.

A fixture of our program for many years, Dr. Ilan is deeply respected by residents for her incredible experience and breadth of knowledge. Her dedication to teaching and mentorship enriches the educational experience and ensures that our residents receive top-tier training in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. She has been crucial to the training of many of our alumni and continues to foster the future generation of physiatrists at Downstate.

### **Dr. Edbert Morales**



Dr. Edbert Morales is one of our most highly respected and motivated physicians with extensive experience in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. He has been a continuing force of education for our residents throughout the years. He brings specific expertise in musculoskeletal, electro-diagnostic, and pain management, alongside a strong capability for teaching and mentoring.

Dr. Morales graduated from Ponce School of Medicine in Puerto Rico in 1994. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Long Island Jewish Medical Center from 1995-1998 before pursuing a PM&R residency at SUNY Downstate from 1998-2001, where he distinguished himself as Chief Resident in his senior year.

Following his residency, Dr. Morales served as an attending physician at SUNY-HSC at Long Island College and as a consulting physiatrist with the Sunrise Medical Group (which is affiliated with SUNY-HSC). Currently, he is an academic physiatrist at St. John's Episcopal Hospital, where he trains PM&R residents across all three years of their residency.

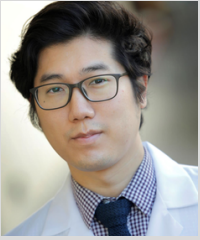
Residents love working with Dr. Morales due to his engaging teaching style and dedication to resident education. He provides comprehensive training in electrodiagnosis, joint injections, and the management of both inpatient and outpatient physiatry cases. His ability to connect with residents and foster a collaborative learning environment makes him a valued mentor and educator. Residents often find his jovial nature an exciting part of their rotations at St. John's Episcopal Hospital.

In his personal life, Dr. Morales enjoys a wide range of activities, including daily exercise, music, visual arts, sports, and international travel. His passions extend to reading classics and historical fiction, as well as attending opera and theater performances.

Dr. Morales's diverse interests and strong yet soothing demeanor help him build trust-based patient relationships. Residents often note how he is very well loved by his patients due to his skilled and friendly bedside manner. He believes that developing strong personal connections with patients allows him to more effectively guide them towards achieving their functional goals. By serving as a trusted guide throughout their recovery, Dr. Morales ensures higher levels of compliance and better life outcomes for his patients. And he imparts these teachings onto his residents such that they may also become caring physicians.

## Alumni Spotlight

### Dr. Philip Chang



We would like to highlight one of our esteemed alumni, Dr. Philip Chang, DO. Dr. Chang is a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician specializing in cancer rehabilitation. He completed medical school at the Michigan State College of Osteopathic Medicine and then came to SUNY Downstate to complete his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation. After graduation, Dr. Chang went on to complete a fellowship in hospice and palliative care at Montefiore, followed by a second fellowship in cancer rehabilitation at the University of Michigan. Dr. Chang's research interests include the utility of telemedicine in cancer rehab, the role and benefits of prehabilitation, and precision pain management for

post-mastectomy pain syndrome. He is currently an assistant professor at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and is the chair of Program Development and Advocacy with the Cancer Rehabilitation Physician Consortium of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Throughout the years, Dr. Chang has continued to be an educator to the residents at Downstate's PM&R program through multiple lectures and Grand Rounds. He maintains an interest in making sure our residents gain insight into the unique field of cancer rehabilitation and has served as an advisor to some of the residents interested in pursuing a career in cancer rehabilitation. We are very pleased to have Dr. Chang as such an engaging alumni who continues to offer his services to our residents.

### Dr. Jackie Weisbein



We would like to highlight another esteemed alumna by bringing attention to Dr. Jackie Weisbein, D.O. Dr. Weisbein completed her residency at SUNY Downstate in 2011 where she acted as Chief Resident. Following her graduation from Downstate, she went on to complete an interventional pain management fellowship at Virginia Commonwealth University. She then moved to Napa, California and joined the Napa Pain Institute where she honed her skills in implantable devices. After spending 5 years developing her craft, she then joined Napa Valley Orthopaedic Medical Group and became a partner. Dr. Weisbein has spent the last 12 years of her career heavily involved in clinical trials for devices as well as acting as an educator through her teaching in cadaver labs. She has held numerous positions including the Chair of

Women in Neuromodulation, a division of NANS. She was Vice President of Diversity and Inclusivity for the American Society of Pain and Neurosciences, a founding member of Women Innovators in Pain Management and current President-elect, as well as a co-chair of the membership committee of the Pacific Spine and Pain Society. In her boutique private practice in Napa, Ca, she continues to participate in clinical trials and participate in publications of best practice papers as well as book chapters. In her spare time, she competes her horse in dressage, plays golf, and indulges in fine dining. She has had an extensive career following the completion of her residency and she continues to be an excellent resource for residents who are interested in learning about her specific niche of PM&R.



### Want to Get Involved or Reconnect?

- Interested in acting as a mentor or advisor to Downstate PM&R residents or Downstate COM medical students?
- Interested in giving a Grand Rounds or lecture to the residency program (in-person and virtual options)?
- Interested in joining us for our annual program dinners at the AAPM&R or AAP conferences this academic year?
- Looking for a job? We are looking to hire full-time and part-time faculty for outpatient, inpatient, and sports faculty physiatry positions

Contact: [Sanjeev.Agarwal@downstate.edu](mailto:Sanjeev.Agarwal@downstate.edu) to learn more

## SUNY Downstate Graduating Class of 2024



**Teymur Aliyev**

**Hometown:** Born in Baku, Azerbaijan.  
Grew up in Brooklyn, NY

**Medical School:** Rowan University School  
of Osteopathic Medicine

Will be working as an attending physician  
in a private Physical Medicine and  
Rehabilitation clinic. He is currently in  
the process of applying for a Pain  
Medicine Fellowship.



**Marc Emos**

**Hometown:** Jamaica, NY

**Medical School:** SUNY Downstate Health  
Sciences University

Will be attending a Cancer Rehabilitation  
Fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering in  
Manhattan, NY



**Jayne Ha**

**Hometown:** Orange County, CA

**Medical School:** Touro University  
Nevada

Will be attending a Traumatic Brain  
Injury Fellowship at Burke  
Rehabilitation Hospital in White  
Plains, NY



**Michael Khalil**

**Hometown:** Queens, NY

**Medical School:** Rowan University School  
of Osteopathic Medicine

Will be staying at SUNY Downstate to  
complete a Sports Medicine Fellowship



**Muhammad Rizwan**

**Hometown:** Born in Karachi, Pakistan.  
From Piscataway, NJ

**Medical School:** Rowan University School  
of Osteopathic Medicine

Will be attending a Sports Medicine  
Fellowship at Burke Rehabilitation  
Hospital in White Plains, NY

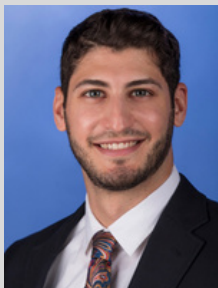


**Andrew Tom**

**Hometown:** Flushing, NY

**Medical School:** Rowan University  
School of Osteopathic Medicine

Will be working as an inpatient  
attending physician at Burke  
Rehabilitation Hospital in White  
Plains, NY



**Alex Vertes**

**Hometown:** Toronto, Canada

**Medical School:** Rowan University School  
of Osteopathic Medicine

Will be attending a Pain Management  
Fellowship at George Washington  
University Hospital in Washington D.C.