# The Murmur

Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency Newsletter June 2020 – Issue 3

# **RAJ WOOLEVER, MD – RESIDENCY DIRECTOR**

Raj Woolever, the (relatively) new Residency Director joined Maine-Dartmouth 18 months ago. The following is a brief introduction to how he came to become a physician and found his way to Maine-Dartmouth.

Raj joined Maine-Dartmouth as the new Residency Director in October, 2019. While it was a short trip to move from the Residency Director position at the Central Maine Residency to the Director position here, like many of us, his longer term journey to Maine and Maine-Dartmouth was a serpiginous one.

Raj grew up in the town of Oneonta in upstate New York. His father was a Professor of South Asian Geography, and he and his family would spend 3-6 months every seven years during sabbaticals living in India. Raj attended school during his time there. After finishing high school, he entered Tufts where his studies focused on History and Anthropology. When he graduated, he obtained a Fullbright Scholarship to Sri Lanka, where he worked with UNICEF evaluating health and sanitation services. It is in Sri Lanka that he first became interested in getting involved in a health care career. Consequently, on returning to the U.S, while working on a Masters in History at Tufts, he started taking health related courses. He eventually entered premedical training at Bryn Mawr, where he met his wife, Cindy Dechenes. They received US Air Force scholarships which paid for their medical school training in Rochester, New York. It was on a rural rotation in Rockport, NY that Raj became interested in Family Medicine, and he went on to receive his Family Medicine residency training at the Travis Air Force Base in California.

Raj and Cindy spent the seven subsequent years in the Air Force. The first year Raj provided primary care, the subsequent three years, he was a full time faculty member at a military Family Medicine Residency in Florida. In his final three years in the military, he provided emergency services in Germany.

On separation from the service, Raj and Cindy decided to move to Maine where she had roots. He joined the Central Maine Family Medicine Residency faculty where he served as Medical Director and eventually Residency Director.

Raj says several things interested him in eventually transitioning to the Maine-Dartmouth program:

- 1) He felt ready for a new challenge;
- 2) He knew Maine-Dartmouth was a strong program with a passionate and dedicated faculty;
- 3) Its commitment to the underserved; and
- 4) The new hospital and the residency's structure as a separate entity from the hospital.

It has been a busy first 18 months for Raj, but several of his priorities are clear:

- 1) Continue to emphasize the Family Practice Centers, making "clinic first";
- 2) Increase diversity;
- 3) Focus on wellness;
- 4) Increase the residency's presence at a national level; and
- 5) Most recently, help shepherd the residency through the myriad of COVID challenges.

Cindy and Raj have two grown children. Cindy works as a family physician in Boothbay Harbor, Maine providing both outpatient and nursing home care. They both continue to enjoy traveling and are avid runners. Raj most recently completed the Disney marathon this past year.

If you are one of the few people who haven't yet met Raj, please introduce yourself, whether it is at the FMI, at one of the many COVID meetings, or out running on area trails.

### **COVID-19 RESPONSE**

As the SARS-CoV2 pandemic was declared in March 2020, residents at MDFMR were progressing through their academic year and looking forward to a beautiful Maine spring. After all, Punxetawny Phil had predicted an early one, and his forecast was looking pretty accurate! Unfortunately, all plans for the coming months were canceled or postponed indefinitely. With board exams on pause and many block rotations no longer a possibility, the residency had to act quickly to ensure the residents' training would not be further impacted. Indeed, the residents are essential workers and they need to continue training in order to become the independent practitioners that help our communities in such times of crisis.

The residency opted to completely reconstruct the schedule for the last three months of this academic year. Each resident now rotates through the following two week blocks: inpatient medicine (MDIS), home elective (Individually Designed Elective Activities, or IDEA), and outpatient medicine. In the hospital, residents continue to run all codes, which are now all considered "COVID codes." In the clinic, they are also on the front lines assessing patients and testing for coronavirus as indicated. During the IDEA block, residents are given some much needed respite from the front lines and work with various faculty members on self-directed projects with the support of a home elective advisor.

Faculty have been rotating through the following blocks: one week of inpatient medicine (MDIS), one week working on administrative/teaching/clinical duties, and two weeks of outpatient medicine.

Additionally, the clinics have each been hard at work restructuring scheduling protocols, working mostly with phone visits, and configuring how best to care for our sick patients while minimizing risks to staff and other patients. Clinic medical directors are working with "COVID Captains," outpatient faculty from each clinic to make sure this restructuring goes as smoothly as possible. Of course, the residency and clinic administrative teams have been the backbone of transition. COVID-response meetings continue to be held most days (via Zoom, of course). In true MDFMR form, Raj has set up weekly "family meetings" with all faculty and residents to ensure everyone feels heard, appreciated, and supported.

These uncertain times have highlighted the cohesiveness which has always been an important part of our program, but we now consider "essential." From a swift curricular response to weekly "family meetings," MDFMR has truly been resilient in the face of this new challenge.

## **2020 SCHOLARLY SYMPOSIUM**

Given the circumstances, the Scholarly Symposium was held over Zoom this year and things ran fairly smoothly! Residents and fellows had the opportunity to share their work and spark discussion among attendees. The Russell DeJong Excellence in Scholarship award was given, virtually for now, to Caroline LaFave, DO for her work on "Epidemiology Research in the Clinical Setting: Lessons Learned from a Retrospective Study Exploring Unintended Pregnancy among Women with Opiate Dependency."

## WHERE ARE OUR 2020 GRADUATES HEADING?

#### PGY3

Georgia Ballem, MD	-	Locums in New Brunswick, Canada with a long term plan to establish a practice in British Columbia.
Manya Bernbaum, MD	-	Returning home to Alberta, Canada before deciding on her next move, possibly international.
Andrew Bray, MD	-	Full time Emergency Department Physician at Redington-Fairview General Hospital in Skowhegan, ME.
Nadine Byers, DO	-	Maternal Child Health Fellowship at WVU Rural Family Medicine Residency, Harpers Ferry, WV.
Caroline LaFave, DO	-	Full spectrum faculty member at Maine-Dartmouth Family Practice.
Natasha Lantz, MD	-	Outpatient with OB at Norridgewock Health Center, Norridgewock, ME.
Sara Modlin, DO	-	ONMM PGY4 year at Maine-Dartmouth Collaborative Care Center beginning October 2020.
Josée Proulx, MD	-	Full time Emergency Department physician at Sebasticook Valley Hospital, Pittsfield, ME.
Cassandra Rodrigues, DO	-	ONMM PGY4 year at St. Barnabas Health System in Bronx, NY
FELLOWS AND PGY4		
John Diefenderfer, DO	-	Faculty at Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency and Maine-Dartmouth Collaborative Care Center.
Stefanie Lewis, DO	-	Peds faculty at Family Medicine Institute and Maine-Dartmouth Family Practice.
Billy McDougall, DO	-	Undecided as of the writing of this newsletter.
Angelo Rufo, DO	-	Undecided as of the writing of this newsletter.
Carlen Smith, MD	-	Full time faculty at Maine-Dartmouth Geriatric Medicine.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

**John Diefenderfer, DO** – John has accepted a full-time faculty position at the Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency and Collaborative Care Center, which he will start in September 2020. John graduated from the University of the South, Sewanee, TN with a B.S. in biology. He then obtained his masters in biological sciences in from Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA. John graduated in 2015 from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg, WV and completed his residency at St. Vincent's Family Medicine Residency in Jacksonville, FL in 2018. Following residency, he joined the Maine Dartmouth Sports Medicine Fellowship where he graduated from in June 2019, and successfully passed his sports medicine CAQ boards in July 2019. John then became an ONMM PGY4 resident at the Maine-Dartmouth Collaborative Care Center, where he will graduate in July 2020. John is active in the community, covering sports for Winslow High School, and hopes to compete in a triathlon someday. He is married to Catherine Batz, DO, a soon-to-be PGY3 resident at Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency. They live in Hallowell and enjoy spending time with their mini Goldendoodle, Gemma, hiking, biking, going to the farmers' market, and working in their gardens.

Alissa Dunn, FNP – Alissa is originally from Burlington, VT and was lured to Maine by the rafting industry. She earned a bachelor's degree in social work and women's studies from the University of New Hampshire, studied nursing at Kennebec Valley Community College, and completed her master's in nursing at Simmons University in Boston. Prior to becoming a family nurse practitioner, Alissa worked as an emergency department nurse for four and a half years. She joined the faculty of Maine-Dartmouth in the spring of 2020, and provides healthcare services at Four Season Family Practice in Fairfield. Alissa values the outdoors and spends her free moments staying active, enjoying time with her dog, friends and family, and cooking great meals.

**Joshua Giroux** – Josh joined the residency in February 2020 and works as a residency scheduler in the Augusta office. Before coming to Maine-Dartmouth, Josh was a PSR at Maine-Dartmouth Family Practice for approximately ten months and before that, worked as a dispatch lead for seven years at Spectrum/Charter Communications. Josh and his wife Amy live in Winslow with their children, son, Caden, 11, and daughter, Kayla, 10.

Kellee Gorgone, RN, MSN – Kellee will join Maine-Dartmouth Family Practice as a FNP in late June 2020. She obtained a BA in Environmental Studies from the University of Vermont in 2014, completed her nursing degree in 2018 and just graduated in May 2020 from the University of Southern Maine with a MSN degree, Family Nurse Practitioner specialty. She has several years of experience in diabetes management and as an outpatient women's health nurse. She is professionally fluent in Spanish and has used her talents in obtaining funding and implementing a home-based exercise and nutrition curriculum for the Spanish speaking migrant dairy farm worker population in Vermont. Kellee also served as a bilingual program coordinator for the Consortium for Older Adult Wellness in Lakewood, Colorado where she coordinated diabetes education programming in federally qualified health centers around the state. Kellee is passionate about providing patient-centered care to those who are financially challenged or have other obstacles in obtaining quality medical care. Kellee and her husband Sam are both Maine natives and have just bought a house in Falmouth. They plan to add a new puppy to their family in July – a Bernedoodle. They spend their free time with their families and friends in the Portland area and exploring the outdoors on their paddle boards, mountain bikes and skis. We look forward to Kellee joining our Residency family!

**Caroline LaFave, DO** – As a graduate of Colby College in Waterville, Caroline brings to Maine-Dartmouth a knowledge of and commitment to the local community. At Colby she studied biology with a concentration in neuroscience and a minor in art. After graduating college, Caroline worked as a clinical research coordinator, first for neuroimaging studies in the Memory and Aging Program at Butler Hospital in Providence, RI and then in the

Pediatric Pulmonology Division at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with cystic fibrosis and primary ciliary dyskinesia studies. She went on to medical school at the University of New England, College of Medicine, where she worked as a teaching assistant in osteopathic manipulative medicine, held leadership positions in the Global Health Club and the Pediatrics Club, and participated in a number of community-based activities. Caroline is currently completing her final year of residency as a co-chief resident and has been heavily involved in all matters relating to maternal-child health at the residency and hospital. Caroline will join the faculty at Maine-Dartmouth Family Practice as a full spectrum provider. When Caroline is not doctoring, she enjoys travel, swimming, painting, reading and spending time with her family and dogs on her parents' farm in Southern Maine. We're very excited she has decided to remain on board!

Louise Langlais, FNP-BC – Louise has been living in Maine her entire life and most recently hails from Western Maine. She is the mother of two wonderful adult children and together they share three dogs and two cats. She earned a master of science in nursing from Purdue Global University in Davenport, IA and has received advanced training in domestic violence, strangulation, child abuse, sex trafficking, and sexual assault. She is a certified forensic examiner for adult and pediatric populations through Maine's Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program. She is also an American Heart Association instructor in basic cardiac life support, advanced cardiac life support, and pediatric advanced life support courses. Louise has worked as a paramedic, and prior to joining Maine-Dartmouth, had a 26-year career as a registered nurse in pediatrics, cardio/pulmonary medicine, critical care, medical/surgical care, emergency medicine and medical education. She will be on staff at FMI in Augusta. In her spare time she enjoys movies, crafting, swimming and fishing.

**Stefanie Lewis, DO** - Stefanie, a current fellow at the Maine Dartmouth Sports Medicine Fellowship, will join the residency in August 2020 as a faculty member doing pediatrics at both the Family Medicine Institute and Maine-Dartmouth Family Practice. Stefanie obtained a B.S., with a Biomedical Concentration from New England College in Henniker, NH. She then obtained a M.S. in Nutrition from the Institute of Human Nutrition at Columbia University, New York, NY. Stefanie came to Maine for her medical training at the University of New England, College of Osteopathic Medicine, where she received her D.O. degree in 2016. She completed her pediatric residency at Baystate Medical Center, Springfield, MA in June 2019. Stefanie is married and she and her wife, Naunie, enjoy spending their spare time visiting family on the beaches of Cape Cod and the blueberry farm in Nova Scotia, game nights with friends and all things hockey!

**Angela Ripley, CNM, MSN, C-EFM** – Angela earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Maine at Fort Kent, a certificate in nurse-midwifery from Frontier University in Hyden, KY, and a master's degree in nursing from Francis Payne Bolton School of Nursing in Cleveland, OH. Angela is certified by the American Midwifery Certificate Board. She stared working with women and their families in 1994, and has been practicing as a certified nurse midwife in the Augusta area since 2001. Her midwifery career began at Miles Memorial Hospital (now Lincoln County Healthcare), first as a labor and delivery nurse and then as a certified nurse midwife. She also practiced full-scope midwifery at MaineGeneral Midwifery Services. During her last six years at MaineGeneral, she developed the Centering Pregnancy program, supported by water birth as a delivery option, and was a member of the Labor and Delivery Task Force, which focused on improving labor support and reducing the need for cesarean sections. Her professional interests include aromatherapy as a complementary approach to labor and delivery process, the Spinning Babies<sup>®</sup> approach to childbirth and adolescent health.

In addition to prenatal care, Angela provides women's health services throughout the lifespan, including contraceptive care and well-women care. She attends deliveries at MaineGeneral's Medical Center's Alfond Center for Health.

Angela resides in Jefferson, ME with her husband and daughter. She enjoys spending time with her family, which includes a son and daughter-in-law, as well as boating, kayaking and swimming in the Damariscotta Lake.

**Carlen Smith, MD** – Carlen is currently a fellow at Maine-Dartmouth's Geriatric Fellowship and will graduate in July 2020. She has accepted an offer to become a faculty member at the Maine-Dartmouth Geriatric Medicine practice and will start in mid-August 2020. Carlen received her undergraduate degree in Biomedical Sciences from Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI. She then graduated in 2016 from medical school at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI. Carlen completed her family medicine residency at the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington, VT in 2019, serving as co-chief resident her final year. Her firsthand experience with the challenges and rewards of caring for older adults is what sparked her interest in pursuing advanced training and practicing Geriatric medicine. Outside of work, Carlen and her husband Kyle enjoy exploring Maine and working on their house. We're so glad Carlen has decided to stay with the residency.

**Rebecca Spear, DO** – Rebecca has accepted a faculty position at Maine-Dartmouth Geriatric Medicine starting in late July 2020. Rebecca graduated from the University of Maine, Orono with a B.S. in biology. She went on to the University of New England, College of Medicine where she obtained her D.O. degree in May 2014. She completed her residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Connecticut in June 2017 and remained at UCONN until June 2018 as a Chief Resident. She is currently doing a Hospice and Palliative Medicine fellowship and Geriatric Medicine fellowship at Yale University School of Medicine, where she expects to graduate from in June 2020. When not doctoring, Rebecca enjoys spending time biking, exploring kid-friendly trails or at the beach with her husband Steve and their 2 year old son.

# A SPECIAL DEPARTURE: ALANE O'CONNOR, DNP

As MDFMR continues to live through many changes, we must highlight the fact that one of our longtime faculty members is leaving our team. Alane O'Connor, DNP, has worked at the residency since the inception of the substance use disorder treatment program at MDFMR, circa 2006. She has worked tirelessly to improve outcomes for her patients both individually and at a population health level. She has published many landmark articles relating to treatment of substance use disorders, particularly in pregnant patients. Alongside this, she has served as a mentor for countless residents who have gone on to practice Addiction Medicine as part of their Family Medicine careers. She truly has made a lasting impact on MDFMR and her departure saddens us all. We wish her the very best moving forward and we anticipate hearing great things about her ongoing endeavors.

# **CURRENT FACULTY OPENINGS**

The following are open faculty positions in the various Maine-Dartmouth Programs. If you know of anyone who might have the skills for and the interest in any of the following positions, please encourage them to look at the more complete job descriptions and information found on the Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine website www.mainedartmouth.org under the headings: Our People, Faculty, Open Positions.

**INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE-FAMILY PHYSICIAN** faculty position: A family physician with advanced training in Integrative Medicine.

**OSTEOPATHIC NEUROMUSCULOSKELETAL MEDICINE** faculty position: Located at MDCCC in Waterville.

**DERMATOLOGIST** faculty position: We are currently recruiting for another dermatologist to join our practice in the Waterville office.



#### Please welcome the newest members of the residency family!!

Sara Modlin and her husband, Ian Tucker, welcomed their first child, a daughter, Freyja Liv Tucker, on January 15, 2020.

Megan and Ben Wei welcomed their first child, a boy, Evan Nathan Wei, on March 18, 2020.

Kate and Till Hoffmann welcomed their fourth child, a girl, Sofie James Hoffmann, on May 14, 2020. Sofie joins siblings Gabriel, age 6, Elli, age 4, and Julian, age 2.

Nate and Taunia Rifai welcomed their second child, a girl, Zara Rifai Bowling, on May 28, 2020. Zara joins her big brother Loïc, who will soon be 2 years old.

Congratulations to all of you!!!

# Alumnus Spotlight: Robert Gramling, MD, D.SC



Robert "Bob" Gramling, M.D., D.Sc. graduated from MDFPR in 2000 and is the Holly & Bob Miller Chair in Palliative Medicine, Head of the Division of palliative medicine and Tenured Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Vermont. After MDFPR, he completed a two-year research fellowship at the Boston University Department of Family Medicine and subsequently held academic faculty positions at Brown University and the University of Rochester. Bob has received major research funding from the National Institutes of

Health, the National Palliative Care Research Center, the Greenwall Bioethics Foundation and the American Cancer Society. His research is focused on understanding and promoting high quality communication in serious illness. He has authored more than 100 publications, including more than 80 original research manuscripts. Bob received his undergraduate degree from Colby College, his Doctor of Medicine from Dartmouth Medical School, and his Doctor of Science (Epidemiology) from Boston University School of Public Health. Bob and Lindy are the proud parents of Cailin, age 22 and Finian, age 20 –two pretty amazing UVM students who were both born during Bob's wonderful years at MDFPR!

#### What drew you to the field of Palliative and Hospice Care?

I am drawn to the intensity of relationship, the high value of being fully present in meaningful conversation and the freedom to apply my medical knowledge and skills to attend to suffering as defined by the person experiencing it.

# As you are still very involved in medical education, do you see any major differences between Family Medicine residency training now and when you were a FM resident?

Yes, I founded and teach in our required week-long classroom course, Palliative Medicine, for 3rd year medical students. I also teach at the bedside with learners of all disciplines and levels. I am also looking forward to undergraduate teaching this fall with a new course entitled, "Conversation Epidemiology", where we will focus on the science of conversational storytelling and story listening in healthcare.

Regarding changes in the last 20 years of residency training, I think the restrictions on work hours had the single biggest impact on what happens now from my experience. (This is always a rich and inspiring discussion of pros and cons!)

#### What advice do you have for new Family Medicine Graduates?

Give yourself the freedom to keep reinventing yourself. You have chosen a profession where you will always have choices. You can make the world a better place in so many ways...so keep dreaming. Work that makes you smile is worth a whole bunch.

# Can you share with us any recent experiences related to how your work has changed, adapted to or been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic?

Our team deployed to set up a field palliative care unit at a local nursing home that was the epicenter of COVID in Vermont. More than half of the residents and a third of the staff were infected; the home was in deep crisis. The vast majority of residents desperately wished to stay in their home and be allowed to die with dignity should they become infected rather than to be transferred to the hospital. We deployed a team of palliative care nurses, chaplains, physicians, and advance practice providers for four weeks of 24/7 coverage (and established hospital level access to crisis medications/administration routes) to help see them through the height of the crisis. I was on the ground for the first 10 days and those have been the most meaningful of my career.

#### Is there anything else you would like to share with the Maine-Dartmouth community and Alumni?

I was drawn to the sense of mission and passion that MDFPR brings to the practice of medicine. I carry that with me and am happy to help any of you who wish to reach out.

\*Maine Dartmouth Family **Practice** Residency (MDFPR) changed their name to Maine Dartmouth Family **Medicine** Residency (MDFMR) in the summer of 2007.

## Staff Spotlight: Ann Byron, Administrative Assistant



I've been asked to write a piece on my decades-long work life with the FMI and the Residency Program. As my father often counseled, "Ann dear, work on being *curt-clear-concise* getting to the point quickly". Here goes, Dad:

I graduated from Westbrook College as a Medical Assistant in 1975, having spent a prior year at the University of Maine, Portland Gorham. Following graduation, I was employed briefly by a long-time Augusta family physician (Dr. John Barnard) as one his office receptionists. When home from work one day, my mother excitedly told me of a laboratory position recently posted at the newly opened Family Medicine Institute and wondered if I might be interested. I subsequently interviewed with Dr. John

Dennison, who offered me the position. I accepted. With that, my career at 6 E. Chestnut Street and later 15 E. Chestnut Street began.

The practice was growing by leaps and bounds in those early years. Before long, the FMI expanded to the second and third floors of the Haynes Building. Two practice teams were created. The Red Team occupied the first floor, the Blue Team the second and the Residency's administrative offices, along with the FMI medical records department, occupied the third. It wasn't long after that that I accepted the position of Team Activity Coordinator for the Blue Team, leaving my days in the lab forever. Each team had a coordinator and an assistant along with an LPN and Nurse's Aide. We took care of all patient business for our teams (from scheduling, to chart prep, to rooming, to assisting, etc.). It was bustling work for sure.

During this time, I married my long-time beau, Mark. A few years later, our first daughter, Ellie, was born. It was then that I moved to a third new position, the evening and weekend receptionist. This continued until our second daughter, Julie, was born. At that time, we decided I would end my employment, becoming a full-time mother to our growing girls instead.

When Julie was in preschool, I returned to part-time work for the Residency Program. I was hired to help "then and now" residency coordinator, Davene Fitch, during interview season. This grew into the full-time position I have held ever since.

I have many wonderful memories spanning my years with the FMI and MDFMR. It's within these walls that all of my adult years have been spent. Although I am nearing the end of my work life, I am not yet ready for retirement. I continue looking forward to the start of each new work day just as I did that fall in 1975 when a young and excited Ann Hichborn walked through the Haynes Building doors.

## **Mission Statement**

- Educating physicians for a lifetime of competent, compassionate & personally satisfying practice.
- Improving the health of Maine people with particular emphasis on rural areas & underserved
- Promoting the involvement of physicians in the life of the broader community.

#### **Calling All Former Faculty, Fellows and Residents**

Would you like to share your life's story since leaving the residency? If so, feel free to email Andrea Abrell, DO at <u>andrea.abrell@mainegeneral.org</u>. We'd love to know what you've been up to all these years so we can share it with our residency community.

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of the newsletter. We anticipate distributing it biannually and we welcome your suggestions on how to improve it. Please let us know what kinds of articles you would like us to include and what topics would interest you. Additionally, if you have information or announcements that you believe would be of general interest to the residency community, please forward them to us for consideration.

Please send suggestions, materials and updated contact information to: jennifer.goodwin@mainegeneral.org



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