

LANE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY | FEBRUARY 2026

MEDICAL MATTERS

The Surgeon's Surgeon

Dr. Arielle Perez brings advanced abdominal wall expertise while reshaping the role of women in surgery.



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LCMS MISSION STATEMENT

The Lane County Medical Society is a professional organization that represents, unifies, and supports its physician members as they practice medicine. The Society promotes the interests of member physicians and advocates for the health of the community.



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New providers have been added to the PWP. Visit lcmcdsociety.com/pwp to view the full list or for more details.

Reflection & Direction

Last year's theme was one of transition and trajectory — what can we improve? Where are we going next? How can we look beyond what we do to further support our members and their goals in the community?

Project 52

One of our goals was to meet with 52 physicians in 52 weeks, gathering direct feedback as well as sharing wellness resources and other projects we're working on. We asked what we're doing well, what could be improved, and whether there are other ways we could support our members' community efforts.

After wrapping up our final meetings, we can confidently say these conversations did not disappoint. Each discussion highlighted challenges faced by different specialties, groups, and practices, while also bringing to light the many projects physicians are focused on, such as job shadowing programs for students, and the organizations they partner with, including the Eugene Family YMCA and the NAACP, to improve various aspects of community health.

These conversations also gave us direction toward the types of materials and educational opportunities members are seeking, including resources related to medical malpractice and financial literacy, support for affinity groups, and additional opportunities for social connection.

Healthcare Sector Partnership

Throughout the year, we were also able to kickstart several ideas that emerged from Project 52. One of the larger initiatives was the formation of a partnership with Lane Community Health Council (LCHC), Collaborative Economic Development Oregon (CEDO), and Lane Workforce

Partnership (LWP) to develop the Lane County Healthcare Sector Partnership.

At the kickoff meeting, more than 60 people representing healthcare and healthcare-adjacent organizations worked together to identify three key focus areas that could improve access in our region: Collaboration, Advocacy, and Workforce. Since then, we've formed working committees around each focus area and established at least two achievable priorities for each group over the next year.

We're ideating ways to more easily share information about which providers are accepting new patients, as well as identifying a common platform to share information about health-related events happening in the community.

The advocacy committee is working on a series of meetings with local legislators later this year in preparation for the 2027 long session. And the workforce committee is reviewing best practices for recruitment and identifying ways to better integrate healthcare workers into the community and all it has to offer.

If you'd like to join these conversations, please email kianna@lcmedsociety.com.

Affinity Groups

Another topic raised during multiple conversations was the reformation and support of several physician affinity groups, including the Small and Private Practice Physicians Group and the Women Physicians Group.

Prior to the COVID shutdown, both groups met regularly throughout the year, with physician members leading each group.

Last year, we connected with several small and private practice

physicians who were interested in restarting the group and helped host a simple social later in the year to gauge interest. Suffice to say the group wants more, and we're seeking a physician to lead ongoing gatherings.

The Women Physicians Group has continued under the leadership of a couple of LCMS board members. These casual gatherings are scheduled quarterly and have included an end-of-year holiday party in past years. This year, we're also bringing back the Women Physicians Celebration Dinner on Wednesday, February 11th, with Kidsports Executive Director Bev Smith joining for a conversation around resilience and supportive leadership. All members are welcome to attend.

Up Ahead: 2026

Looking ahead, a couple of big events in the first half of the year also include an adults-only carnival social at Chambers Construction on March 5th with games, prizes, and more; and the biennial fundraising gala benefiting the Physician Wellness Program and LCMS Foundation on May 2nd.

We're looking forward to more opportunities to connect, expanding wellness resources, and building community support. With so many ways to get involved, we hope you'll join us at one or more events this year. ♦



Kianna



OHVI Heart & Vascular Symposium 2026

Saturday, Feb 14 | 7:15 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
at The Valley River Inn, 1000 Valley River Way, Eugene

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- Cardiac MR
- Lipids
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- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- “A Day in the Structural Clinic”
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- The Changing Landscape of CV Economics

OHVI Presenters:

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- Aaron Harding, PhD
- Donna D. Kang, MD
- Hiro Kawata, MD
- Kristin Linzmeyer, MD
- Eric R. Muller, MD
- Barry Royce, RN, MHA
- Mark A. Scaife, MD
- Ashok Venkataraman, MD

**Agenda Topics and Presenters subject to change*

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Chart Notes

“There is something that drew me to being in [surgery] and getting the satisfaction of seeing a problem and getting to fix it right away. ...it’s still a fairly male-dominated field, but I think Lane County itself is actually very lucky to have a lot of female surgeons.”

– DR. ARIELLE PEREZ
ON THE IMMEDIACY OF SURGERY AND PRACTICING IN A COMMUNITY RICH WITH WOMEN SURGEONS. SEE MEMBER PROFILE ON PAGE 12.

Spring Social Carnival Hosted at Chambers Construction



Register now for the LCMS Spring Social Carnival on Thursday, March 5th, from 5:30–7:30 PM at Chambers Construction.

Join colleagues for an adults-only social with games, connections, and prizes. Enjoy carnival-style activities like Hammer Race, balloon darts, and more – along with light bites and beverages throughout the evening.

This casual event is a great opportunity to unwind, reconnect, and get a private tour with our generous venue sponsor, Chambers Construction. Registration is required. Scan the QR code or visit our website to RSVP. Bring your colleagues and see you there!



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“When I realized I needed help for my substance use disorder I was anxious about sharing that information as a doctor (who should know better). My welcome into the Caduceus meeting 12 step program (for licensed health care professionals) was just what I needed as part of a program of recovery. I have been coming weekly for 15 years and care for and admire the people I've shared this journey with.”



UPCOMING

Last Chance! Join LCMS for a special Women Physicians Day Celebration Dinner on Wed., February 11th, at 5:30 PM in the Gordon Hotel Ballroom. Enjoy an evening of connection, conversation, and community as we come together to celebrate women physicians, with featured remarks from Bev Smith. Dinner is \$20 per person. All are welcome!

SAVE THE DATE! LCMS is hosting its third biennial fundraising gala benefiting the LCMS Foundation on Saturday, May 2nd, 2026. You won't want to miss this! Contact us today to learn more about donation or sponsorship opportunities.





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How We Ensure Transition of Care: Trillium's Commitment to Lane County

BY JEANNE SAVAGE, MD
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, TRILLIUM
COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN



As a practicing family physician, I've had the privilege of sitting beside patients through some of their most vulnerable moments — listening to their worries, celebrating their wins, and helping them navigate the complexities of their health. That experience shapes everything I do.

Today, as Chief Medical Officer for Trillium Community Health Plan, I am equally committed to ensuring that every Oregon Health Plan (OHP) member has access to the services they need to support their whole health.

Trillium recently learned that PacificSource Community Solutions (PacificSource) would no longer be a coordinated care organization (CCO) in Lane County in 2026 and that we would welcome approximately 90,000 new members to our plan. Our primary priority, as always, is uninterrupted access to high-quality integrated healthcare. We immediately began collaborating closely with PacificSource and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to ensure a smooth transition for both members and providers.

Connecting community members to care is an honor and a privilege. Trillium has proudly served OHP members since 1999. We have deep

roots in Lane County, where many of our staff and their families work and live.

In the last two years alone, Trillium has invested more than \$7 million in Lane County community initiatives that advance housing stability, food security, provider workforce development, and more.

“Our focus is seamless transitions through proactive outreach, warm handoffs, and personalized support... New members will continue to have access to all medically necessary services during the transition.”

In 2025, we earned 100% of our quality performance incentive funding, a testament to our commitment to providing outstanding care and service to our members. And now we have the opportunity to partner with you to help Lane County communities — Eugene, Springfield, and surrounding rural areas — reimagine healthcare for the future.

As Trillium became the sole CCO in Lane County on February 1st, 2026, I'm sure you have many questions about what this means for

your patients who are transitioning to a new health plan.

What is the Transition of Care (TOC) period for new Trillium members? How does it work?

During the TOC period, new Trillium members will continue to have access to all medically necessary services previously authorized by their former providers, including prescriptions and care coordination. This period is usually 30, 60, or 90 days, depending on healthcare needs and the type of care. After the TOC period ends, non-contracted providers may continue to provide covered services to Trillium members with an approved authorization.

How will Trillium ensure smooth care transitions for high-risk members?

Trillium focuses on seamless transitions through proactive outreach, warm handoffs, and personalized support for high-risk members. We will provide warm handoffs between PacificSource and Trillium for members with complex conditions. Care managers will coordinate with providers and ensure continuity of care.

What will new members receive?

New members will receive a packet that includes a member handbook, ID card, and welcome letter. The packet also provides instructions on how to check if their provider is in-network or out-of-network.

What does this mean for Health-Related Social Needs services?

Trillium will be taking over all PacificSource Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) services effective February 1st, 2026. All authorized

WOMEN PHYSICIANS

covered services will be transferred to Trillium. Trillium and PacificSource are working closely with UniteUs to ensure a seamless transition for HRSN providers and members.

How does Trillium support its providers?

Trillium has an expert Provider Engagement (PE) team that ensures providers have what they need to deliver high-quality care to their Trillium patients. Physicians are assigned a dedicated PE Account Manager who can help with just about any question related to their contract or services to Trillium members.

Your PE Account Manager is a problem solver, active listener, and skilled performance manager. They are your partner in care and provide support tailored to your unique needs. To find your

PE Account Manager, visit our website at trilliumohp.com/provider and go to the Regional Rep Contact webpage or email ORProviderExperience@trilliumchp.com.

How do I join Trillium's network?

If you are interested in participating in our network, you can visit our website at trilliumohp.com/provider and fill out the form on the Request Participation Within Our Network webpage or email NewProviderRequestBox@TrilliumCHP.com.

What's next/other areas to highlight/how do we reimagine healthcare for the future, etc.?

As we welcome new members and deepen our partnerships across Lane County, Trillium is focused on more

than just ensuring a smooth transition — we're committed to shaping a stronger, more responsive healthcare system for the long term. That means continuing to listen closely to providers, community partners, and members to understand what's working and where gaps still exist.

Our commitment is simple: to be a partner you can rely on, to continue investing in the health of the community we call home, and to build a system that delivers not just care, but meaningful outcomes.

Together, we have an opportunity to shape a future where every member receives the right care, at the right time, in the way that best supports their whole health. I'm grateful to walk alongside you in this work — and excited for what we can achieve together. ♦

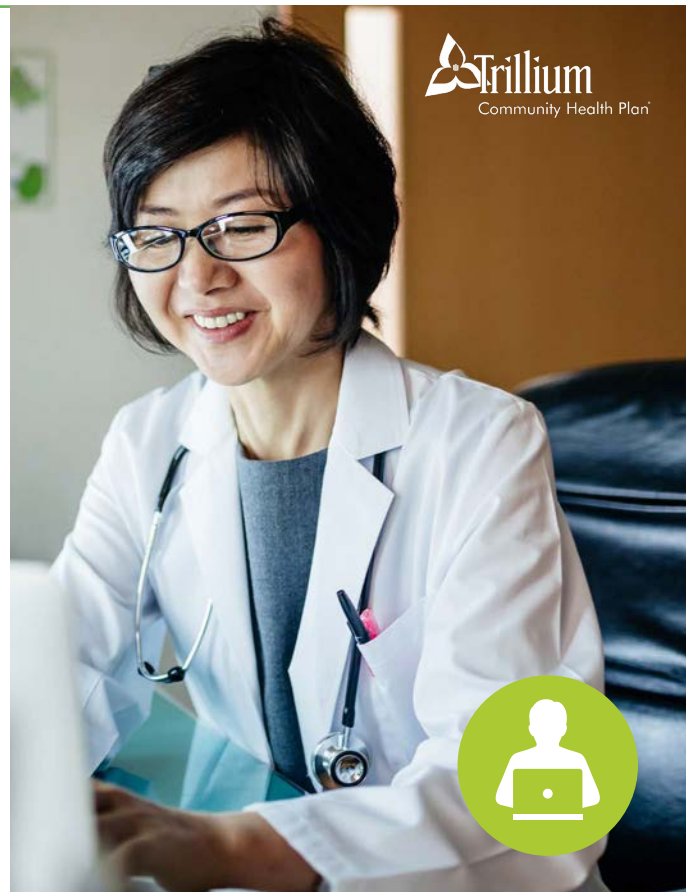
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- Every Wednesday through February 25, 2026 (choose the date that works best for you)
- 12:00-1:00 p.m.
- Register at www.trilliumohp.com/providers

Questions?

Contact us 1-877-600-5472 or
ORProviderExperience@trillium.com



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What Women Physicians Carry Forward

BY ALANNA HANNEGRAF, DO

DIRECTOR OF OBESITY MEDICINE,
PEACEHEALTH SACRED HEART MEDICAL
CENTER AT RIVERBEND

It's difficult to think of Women Physicians Day without thinking about Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman awarded a medical degree in the United States. If I were writing this article five years ago, my main message would have centered on how she was actually inducted into her class as a heartless prank, and no one thought she would ever succeed. Then I would drone on about how many women in medicine have proven themselves since then.

If I'm being honest, even the feminist in me sees it differently now. Gone are the days of "girl power, equality, I can do it backwards and in heels." Women Physicians Day no longer serves to remind us how far women have come, but rather our inheritance of medicine.

As Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell famously said, "We're smart enough to make these millions, strong enough to bear the children, then get back to business." OK, maybe Beyoncé said that, but I'm sure Dr. Blackwell would have wholeheartedly agreed.

When I began my quest to get into medical school, I was a scribe working in the Emergency Department at the Mayo Clinic, where there were two female physicians in the department. Unforgettably, when I asked for letters of recommendation, all the male physicians in my department wrote me glowing letters, while the two female physicians conscientiously objected. One told me, "I would never wish a career in medicine on another woman." I was heartbroken at the time, but I now understand their choice.

Later, on rotation in medical school, an internal medicine preceptor



Dr. Jordan Cook, Dr. Alanna Hannegraf, and Dr. Emma Sachs soaking up the joy at last year's Tulip Run at Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm

sat me down at the end of the rotation and told me she knew I was bright and had a great mind for medicine, but warned me that no one would ever take me seriously because I smiled and joked around too much. "Women need to be serious if they want to survive in medicine," she told me with tough love.

Residency brought the classic barrage of challenges as a female physician, from being constantly called a nurse to patients asking me if my husband knew what I was doing. One memorable patient was on caffeine restrictions, and I caught him with one of our cafeteria's enormous coffee carafes in his room.

I don't know how he got someone to bring him a full-sized coffee pot meant to serve the public, but somehow he did, and when I confronted him about it, his face contorted in anger, and he said, "Why would anyone want to be with a wretch like you? I would never marry you."

Hardened to this sort of insult by that time, I flippantly replied, "Well, it's a good thing I'm your doctor and not your wife." My poor male colleagues never seemed to get as many of those golden opportunities to shut down disparaging comments,

which is a shame: it's really fun.

However, I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge that male physicians have been some of my greatest teachers. I don't remember a single male physician trying to teach me how to be a woman physician, either; they just taught me medicine.

That said, there is a certain ferocity that has traditionally been required of women pursuing this calling: at some point, you have to reject society's prescribed default setting of being the full-time housekeeper, the primary parent, and the sacrificial lamb for the family.

Transcending this paradigm is a path of guaranteed friction, but look at what you get in return. You may need more help with the traditional responsibilities of womanhood, but you get to take care of more than just your own family. You get to live up to your full potential.

It is a supreme honor, and one I have found well worth the additional challenges. So thank you, Dr. Blackwell, Beyoncé, and to all those, regardless of gender, who have passed the torch to me and to all the exceptional women physicians."♦

*Photos provided by Dr. Alanna Hannegraf,
LCMS Member since 2022*

The Surgeon's Surgeon

Dr. Arielle Perez provides advanced abdominal wall reconstruction as a trusted resource for surgeons and patients.

BY STEVIE DAVISSON

FOR LANE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

Dr. Arielle Perez, a general surgeon at PeaceHealth, did not plan on becoming a doctor. “I really tried to avoid medicine,” she laughs. Following the example of her family — her father an OB-GYN, her mother an ICU nurse, and her two sisters, a rheumatologist and an OB-GYN — Perez knew she wanted to be part of the healthcare field, just not necessarily as a care provider. “I like taking care of people,” she says, “so my undergraduate degree was actually in public health.”

Life, however, would lead her to a calling in medicine and to a career in general surgery, with a focus on complex abdominal wall surgery. “I’ve kind of lived my life where, when an opportunity presents itself or a door opens, you should at least peek behind it and take a look,” Perez says. With this outlook, and her focus on abdominal wall surgery, an opportunity led to a faculty position at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, director position at the UNC Hernia Center, and her current job as a general surgeon in our very own Lane County.



Arielle Perez, MD, MPH, FACS
Surgical Specialist

Dr. Arielle Perez in the lobby of PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend.
Photos provided by Angel Montes

An Unplanned Path to Surgery

Perez's education and medical career have taken her across the country, beginning in the Bay Area where she grew up, continuing to undergraduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley, then to Washington, D.C., where she earned a master's degree in physiology and biophysics at Georgetown University, and finally to Texas, where she was part of the inaugural combined MD/MPH class at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio School of Medicine and the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health.

Although initially drawn to primary care, she decided to pursue surgery during her third year. "There is something that drew me to being in the operating room and getting the satisfaction of seeing a problem and getting to fix it right away," Perez says.

Then she was on to general surgery residency at MaineHealth Maine Medical Center, which would serendipitously lead Perez to her specialty. While applying for general surgery jobs during her chief residency year, a friend of Perez's, a colorectal surgeon, mentioned a Cleveland Clinic fellowship focused on hernias. A mentor of Perez advised, "If you get the chance to do that fellowship, you better... because the person you'll be training with — Dr. Mike Rosen — is one of the foremost experts in the field."

Perez was intrigued and, recognizing hernias as a core part of general surgery, decided to take the chance and pursue additional training. "So I applied and figured, you know what? If I get into the fellowship, I'll do that," she laughs.

It was a good gamble. Perez was accepted, and the fellowship program exposed her to advanced techniques in abdominal wall reconstruction and hernia repair. "They tended to be fairly complex cases,"

she adds. "I realized that what I was learning at Cleveland was nothing like what I had seen in residency, and nothing that most general surgeons really were able to take care of at that point in time."

After completing the program, she was armed with a highly specialized skill set as she began looking for general surgeon positions, but again, fate intervened and sent her in another direction.

A Well-Timed Yes

An attending at the Cleveland Clinic suggested Perez to apply to lead the Hernia Center at UNC, which initially threw Perez for a loop. "I wasn't really thinking about doing any sort of academics," she says, but as she went through the interview process and saw the facilities at UNC, Perez began to consider the opportunity. "Given the skill set that I had, I thought it would be very beneficial to teach and train other residents because I, myself, had never been exposed to those skills as a trainee," she explains. "So I took the job thinking I would try it for a year — and I was there for almost eight."

After building a busy practice, authoring multiple articles, presenting at numerous national conferences, a successful run in education, and receiving numerous teaching awards, Perez was looking for a change.

Buoyed by a desire to be closer to family, she looked for general surgeon positions on the West Coast, where she and her husband's family live. Perez's sister-in-law recommended PeaceHealth after a successful heart operation her husband had at the hospital two years prior.

After talking to his sister about the hospital, Perez's husband looked up the PeaceHealth job board, Perez says. "He saw a job posting, sent it to me, and said, 'Is this what you do?' So I took a look at it, and the posting was for a

general surgeon with a focus on abdominal wall reconstruction," she laughs, "and so I said, 'Yeah — that's actually exactly what I do.'"

Advanced Care, Local Impact

Newly returned to the West Coast after leaving California for college in 2005, Perez brings a wealth of knowledge to an area of Oregon that has been sorely lacking in advanced abdominal wall reconstruction. Previously, patients seeking care in the Lane County area would need to make a trip up to OHSU or down to UC Davis to see specialists. "[OHSU is] booked six months out," Perez says, "so my hope is that I can provide quicker local care for patients."

As advances in hernia care and abdominal wall reconstruction have accelerated alongside new technologies, Perez notes that many surgeons perform hernia repairs, but were not formally trained in the advanced techniques she gained during her fellowship and continues to refine in her specialized practice.

In complex cases, that gap can call for an extra set of hands — or trusted guidance. "I think of my role as the surgeon's surgeon," she says. "When a surgeon isn't sure what the next step should be, my hope is that I can be there for them."

Uplifting Other Women in Surgery

Perez also speaks of the support and camaraderie she has found with other female physicians throughout her career. For her, the shared knowledge and experiences of women in the field are invaluable and well worth contributing to.

"I am a member of the Association of Women Surgeons, and at UNC, I was the faculty adviser for the medical student chapter of the association," she says, as examples of her community involvement.

Perez also contributes to an annual conference for female residents, hosted by one of her mentors, Dr. Ajita Prabhu. There, Perez serves on faculty and advises female surgical residents from across the country on how to advance in a field that is still not always welcoming to women. “Some residents don’t have another female attending surgeon that they get to train with, and so I think being able to work with them, talk with them, and be available for them is rewarding.”

At PeaceHealth, Perez has found herself among a uniquely female-heavy team. “We have five female surgeons – soon to be six – to three male surgeons. And, I mean, that’s kind of crazy in terms of ratio,” she laughs. “It’s still a fairly male-dominated field, but I think Lane County itself is actually very lucky

to have so many female surgeons.”

Life Beyond the OR

In her free time, Perez unwinds by simply getting out and doing things unrelated to medicine. “It’s been nice getting a little bit more time with family and friends, you know, being able to kind of be out in this area and go on hikes,” she says. “My husband and I like to go out and just kind of have new experiences – trying new restaurants, visiting new breweries – basically anything and everything that helps us recharge.”

She also has the comfort of her three pets: two dogs, Bajie and Bella, and her aptly named cat, Kittner. Perez is interested in getting more involved with LCMS events as she settles further into the area. She is already making connections where

she can, and has attended one of the Women Physician Group meetings.

Perez’s career has been marked by taking opportunities when they come her way and embracing the advice and experiences of her colleagues, and she’s excited to carry that mindset forward as she continues on in Lane County. “It feels like a very friendly community. It seems like everybody kind of just wants to help each other out.”

Helping each other is at the core of Perez’s beliefs, and as she forms new connections here, she emphasizes the importance of staying true to one’s values as a physician. “It’s easier said than done, but try not to forget who you are when you’re practicing and caring for patients because if you can’t take care of yourself, it’s going to be hard to take care of patients.” ♦

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OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT
MANAGER, WELLMAMA

One in four new mothers in Oregon experiences depression or anxiety during or after pregnancy. For many families in Lane County, support does not arrive quickly or at all. On Women Physicians Day, it is worth recognizing the leadership of women physicians at Women's Care, while also acknowledging the broader community of physicians and clinicians who are responding to this reality not only through clinical care, but by building partnerships that ensure patients are supported beyond the exam room.

Perinatal mental health conditions affect parents across all income levels, communities, and backgrounds. When left untreated, they can interfere with bonding, strain relationships, and impact long-term outcomes for children. While screening during pregnancy and postpartum is now standard practice, access to timely behavioral healthcare remains limited. Long wait times, insurance barriers, transportation challenges, and provider shortages often leave families without the help they need during one of the most vulnerable periods of their lives.

Physicians at Women's Care are often the first to identify signs of perinatal distress. For many women physicians, this recognition is informed not only by training, but by lived experience — navigating pregnancy, new parenthood, and shifting family dynamics alongside demanding careers.

In routine visits, patients share feelings of anxiety, grief, exhaustion, and isolation, while providers remain keenly aware of the limits of what can be addressed in a brief appointment, particularly when access to therapy may be delayed by weeks or months. In response, physicians and care teams

in Lane County are strengthening connections between clinical care and community-based support to ensure patients are not left without help during critical periods of need.

While Women Physicians Day centers the contributions of women in medicine, perinatal mental health care at Women's Care is strengthened through the shared commitment of physicians and providers of all genders working toward the same goal.

Providers know that medical care alone is not enough for many patients experiencing perinatal anxiety, depression, or loss. Emotional support, practical resources, and ongoing connection between visits are often essential to recovery. This understanding has driven a close partnership with *WellMama*, a Lane County nonprofit dedicated to pregnancy and postpartum mental health support.

“As a working OB/GYN, when I had my own babies, I was deeply grateful to my physician colleagues who watched over me during prenatal care and delivery. I felt safe in their capable hands as I held them in high esteem for their professionalism, training, and expertise. However, the transition to parenthood is more complex emotionally than the birth alone, and it was a broader community of support that helped me through the months and years following delivery. Having *WellMama* as a resource for new parents ensures that all new parents have access to the necessary social supports for growing families,” Dr. Catherine York recalls.

WellMama provides peer support, support groups, wellness workshops, education, and practical resources for new, expectant, and grieving parents.

The organization is entirely women-led, an intentional choice that reflects the importance of lived

experience in maternal mental healthcare. Its services are designed to be accessible and inclusive, offering culturally responsive programming, Spanish-language support, groups for pregnancy and infant loss, and virtual options.

At the heart of *WellMama's* model is peer support. Women care for women during one of the most transformative periods of life, drawing from their own experiences with pregnancy, postpartum adjustment, and early parenthood. This shared lived experience builds trust, reduces stigma, and allows women to speak openly about challenges they may not feel comfortable sharing in other settings.

For clinicians, this support fills a critical gap. “Some women really have minimal or no support, and the kind of support that patients have access to from *WellMama* is not available elsewhere. They provide all those things that, as a clinician, I would want to offer by way of support, but, for many reasons, cannot. Even for women who have a great support system, *WellMama* provides deeper insight and expertise to offer women,” says Dr. Brant Cooper, OB/GYN at Women's Care.

Clear referral pathways facilitate this partnership's effectiveness. When physicians can make warm, timely connections to trusted community support, patients are more likely to engage early and remain connected to care.

“A postpartum patient screens positive for anxiety during a routine visit, but hesitates to pursue formal therapy due to cost and wait times. Because the physician has an established relationship and access to *WellMama*, the provider can immediately offer a warm referral to peer support and practical resources. The patient attends a

WOMEN PHYSICIANS

WellMama group within days, feels less isolated, and gains coping strategies while continuing medical follow-up. This early connection prevents crisis escalation and strengthens adherence to care plans,” explains Elisabeth Cooper, Women’s Care Senior Project Manager. WellMama serves as a routine part of care, recognizing peer support as a powerful complement to clinical treatment.

“When I refer a patient to WellMama, I am giving them the help I wish I had. I remember trying to ‘do it all’ and feeling like I was failing at everything. I was either disappointing a patient who wanted me to come in for their birth when I wasn’t on call, or disappointing my baby who needed my milk. I’m so grateful for the support WellMama gives parents in our community, to understand that they are not alone, and there is hope in WellMama’s wraparound support,” notes Dr. Brooke Kyle, WellMama Board Member.

Women physicians, alongside their colleagues, are leading efforts to support the sustainability of the perinatal care workforce itself. Burnout and isolation are real challenges in maternal healthcare, particularly when clinicians carry the emotional weight of patients’ unmet needs. WellMama offers education, shared learning opportunities, and collaborative spaces that strengthen connections across disciplines.

In November 2025, WellMama hosted its annual Perinatal Mental Health Summit, bringing together physicians, midwives, nurses, doulas, and community members from across Lane County. The organization also hosted a Perinatal Psychiatry Update for Clinicians, featuring Dr. Arundhati U. Headrick from OHSU. These efforts reinforce best practices in care while reminding clinicians that they are not working in isolation.

Looking ahead, this collaboration is expanding. With support from the Lane

Community Health Council, trained Traditional Health Workers will be embedded directly within Women’s Care clinics to provide point-of-care emotional support, resource navigation, and case management through warm handoffs from medical providers.

“Having support outside of the practice setting is crucial for women who receive help they so desperately need, and it shares the burden of time and emotional energy that would otherwise fall squarely on providers,” Cooper says.

On Women Physicians Day, we should recognize that meaningful change in healthcare often comes from collaboration. By bridging clinical expertise with community-based support, physicians working in collaboration with multidisciplinary care teams are reshaping how perinatal mental healthcare is delivered. As a result, families are better supported, clinicians are better resourced, and the community is stronger. ♦

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How Women Physicians Can Find Balance In — and Out of — the Workplace

BY SARA BERG, MS
NEWS EDITOR, AMA

For women physicians — who often wear many other hats in addition to doctor — finding work-life balance can be difficult. This is because there are many challenges that women in medicine face compared with men. There is gender and maternal discrimination, lack of schedule flexibility that affects child care responsibilities, inequitable pay and time off related to parental leave, and more patient portal messages resulting in more time spent in the EHR.

And with so many challenges, women physicians continue to face an increased risk for burnout, but by aligning their career goals with personal responsibility, women physicians can find balance and improve their well-being.

“Women have increased EHR time both at work and at home. This is the time spent on notes and documentation during the workday as well as outside of work or the so-called ‘pajama time’ compared to men,” Jill Jin, MD, an internist and senior physician adviser for the AMA, said during a webinar. She is also an associate editor for JAMA®.

In fact, “a recent article from JAMA Network Open last year showed that women spend on average 41 minutes per eight hours of patient scheduled time than men in the EHR. That’s almost an hour more per day, and that is a problem,” Dr. Jin says. Additionally, “there is less mentorship for women physicians. This results in burnout, reduction in work

“...women spend on average 41 minutes per eight hours of patient scheduled time than men in the EHR. That’s almost an hour more per day, and that is a problem.”

effort — percent FTE — and exit from practice, all of which disproportionately affect women.”

“The AMA Organizational Biopsy®, which surveys physicians from around the country, in 2022 showed that 57% of female respondents reported at least one symptom of burnout, compared to 47% of men. That is a significant difference,” she says, but physician “burnout is not a problem with personal resilience. Physicians, we know, are more resilient than the average person. In other words, system-level changes are needed to reduce burnout and improve well-being.”

While system level change can be a slow process, there are some things individual women physicians can do.

“Advocate for your own work-life integration because at the end of the day, nobody else will.”

Don’t Be Afraid to Speak Up

It is so important for women physicians to “speak up. I know this is hard. We, as women physicians, have so much of a sense of learned helplessness that we need to work on

fixing,” Dr. Jin says. To overcome this, “build relationships. It’s all about the relationships at the end of the day — with your practice manager, with your medical director, with your site leads, with your wellness committee, with the senior leaders.”

“Building relationships is what creates change,” she says. Additionally, “propose solutions along with problems so you’re not just ranting, but also proposing a solution. If you get a no, ask why, and don’t take any cop out answers.”

“And by that, I mean, ‘That’s the policy.’ Well, show me the policy. Why is that the policy? Who came up with that and when was that made? And why can’t it be changed?” Dr. Jin added. “And if you still get a no, ask again later. Sometimes it’s all just a matter of timing and if someone’s having a good day versus a bad day.”

“This has happened to me on multiple occasions in my own practice. Sometimes if you just ask again in a different way to a different person or at a different time, you can turn that no into a yes,” she says...◆

This article was adapted from a publication by the American Medical Association (AMA). Read the full article at: www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/how-women-physicians-can-find-balance-and-out-workplace

Announcements

New Members

Welcome to LCMS! We're excited to welcome our newest physician members. Visit the LCMS website for events or email info@lcmesociety.com.

LCMS Events

Join LCMS for a special Women Physicians Day Celebration Dinner on Wed., February 11th, at 5:30 PM in the Gordon Hotel Ballroom. Celebrate women physicians during an evening of connection and community, featuring remarks from Bev Smith. Dinner is \$20 per person. All are welcome!

LCMS Spring Social Carnival on Thursday, March 5, 5:30–7:30 PM at Chambers Construction. LCMS is bringing the carnival to town with an adults-only Spring Social featuring games, light bites, beverages, raffles, and prizes — a relaxed opportunity to unwind and reconnect with colleagues alongside Chambers Construction. Scan the QR code to RSVP by March 1st. Registration is required.



Community

Help Dr. Nick Jones raise funds for St. Baldrick's Foundation and support childhood cancer research!

Join him on March 7th, from 3–5 PM at Claim 52 Brewing for an afternoon supporting and celebrating local families, featuring games, crafts, live music, and a silent auction. Once \$1,000 is raised, he will shave his head! Head shaving begins at 4:30 PM.



Join the Healthcare for All Lane County Chapter to advocate for affordable, simplified healthcare for all Oregonians. Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at First United Methodist Church, 1376 Olive St., Eugene, and on Zoom. All community members are welcome!

NOTES

Orders are now being accepted for the 2026 LCMS Directory. Please contact info@lcmesociety.com for more information, or watch for the directory order form included inside the magazine.

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KHURAM AMEEN MD

“MINIMALLY INVASIVE BIOPSY FOR DIAGNOSIS OF LUNG CANCER”

BO WANG MD

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