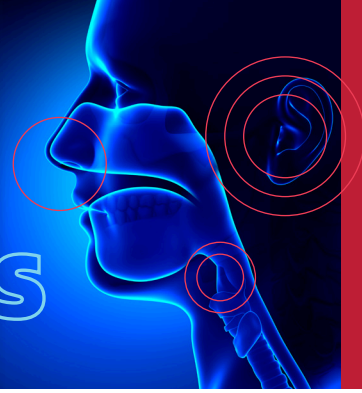




# Department News



## Chair's Welcome

Fall 2023



As physicians, we are accustomed to being caregivers to our patients. It's what we do every day, and for many, it's our passion. What about outside of work? Like most people, many physicians are caregivers in our personal lives, frequently as parents to children, but also

sometimes as caregivers for pets or for elderly parents. So, let me pose a question—does being a physician make us any better at being caregivers for our own families? And how do we balance our family caregiving responsibilities with our professional caregiving responsibilities?

Last year, my siblings and I helped my mom make the transition from living alone to living in a senior-assisted living center. A frequent difference when one compares supporting elderly parents versus raising children is that the myriad of medical needs of an older parent is usually much greater than a child's. My mother, in very good health most of her life, is now in her 80's and facing the typical health issues of a person her age. As physicians we are often looked upon for help to navigate the medical system for family members. I made the 6+ hour drive several times this past year to accompany my mom to her routine doctor's visits. Figuring out the various prescriptions, setting up consults for specialist's visits and physical therapy, and dealing with multiple insurance notices and bills was confusing even though I've worked in health care my entire professional life, and highlighted for me the often-crazy complexities of the US health care system.

According to the National Alliance for Caregiving and the AARP, in 2020, the number of family caregivers for seniors in the US reached 9.5 million people.

The average age of a family caregiver is 49, but nearly 10% are seniors themselves (over age 60).

A recent study<sup>1</sup> carried out by Johns Hopkins gerontologists Kimberly Skarupski, David Roth, and Samuel Durso, looked at the experience of older academic faculty at 14 medical schools across the US. One third of all medical school clinical faculty are aged 55 or older, and of this group, 20% report taking care of elderly relatives—a proportion significantly greater than the general population. Of clinical faculty who are family caregivers of elderly relatives, 90% report experiencing some or a lot of emotional strain. Those faculty who reported experiencing a lot of emotional strain were more likely to also report experiencing depression. For physicians who care for elderly relatives, there may be an especially heavy burden of responsibility since parents and other siblings often look to us for pretty much all medical decision-making and may expect greater financial support.

In recent decades, advocacy for working parents, especially moms, in both universities and academic medical centers led to greater options for younger faculty including more flexible work schedules, more caregiving options for young children, and greater time allowed for early career promotion and advancement. However, support for senior faculty caring for elderly parents generates little attention and action. But with an overall aging population, this issue will only increase in magnitude for medical schools and academic medical centers in the years to come, and definitively deserves a greater focus today.

Last month, my wife and I moved her parents from California to our home in Tucson. That act alone represented an incredible feat of accomplishment, the culmination of many months of effort to convince and plan.

<sup>1</sup>Skarupski KA, Roth DL, Durso SC. Prevalence of caregiving and high caregiving strain among late-career medical school faculty members: workforce, policy, and faculty development implications. *Hum Resour Health* 19, 36 (2021)

## IN THIS ISSUE

1. Chair's Welcome
3. Graduation and Awards Ceremony
4. Faculty Spotlight - Dr. Helena Yip
5. New Multispecialty Laser and Aesthetics Program
6. Resident Spotlight - Dr. Zachary Elwell
7. New Resident Orientation Picnic
8. Rhinology Spotlight
10. Alumni Update - Dr. John Symms
10. Banner Health Hero - Dr. Nicholas Dewyer
11. Summer & Fall Conferences

Department News is published twice yearly by the UArizona College of Medicine Department of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery.

### CONTACT:

Steven J. Wang, MD, FACS  
Professor and Chair  
Otolaryngology -  
Head and Neck Surgery  
College of Medicine,  
Room 5401  
The University of Arizona  
1501 N. Campbell Ave.  
P.O. Box 245074  
Tucson, AZ 85724-5074  
520-626-6673  
Fax: 520-626-6995

All contents © 2023  
Arizona Board of Regents.  
All rights reserved.  
The UArizona is an EEO/AA  
- M/W/D/V Employer.

Design:  
UArizona Health Sciences  
BioCommunications

To read this and past issues  
of Department News online,  
visit [www.otolaryngology.medicine.arizona.edu](http://www.otolaryngology.medicine.arizona.edu)



So, we are now a multi-generational family living under one roof—an arrangement quite common in many places around the world, but less so in this country. Multigenerational households, no doubt, are associated with both benefits and drawbacks. For my wife, it can be a challenge to navigate the changing parent-child relationship that comes when one invites parents to live in one's own home. As a parent ages, there is an unexpected transition—a role-reversal—that occurs in the parent-child relationship where the children exert a greater role in important life decisions and sometimes even must step in to be guardrails for their parents' safety. It may sometimes be easier for me, the son-in-law, to see the benefits. Last week, my 13-year-old son shared over dinner his social studies homework on world history which led my father-in-law to share his personal experience during China's Cultural Revolution. Seeing my son bonding with his grandfather is a clear benefit of a multigenerational household.

When I reflect on my original question of whether being a physician makes one a better caregiver to one's family, I realize that I got it backwards. Being a caregiver to others, for whomever that may be, is exasperating, humbling, enriching, and so many other emotions all at once. But ultimately, taking on these responsibilities makes us more empathetic and compassionate human beings, whether we are physicians or not. As for how we can successfully balance caregiving responsibilities—personal versus professional—that is indeed the challenge of our generation. There are no easy solutions, but it certainly begins with recognition of the problem.

When it comes to elder care and supporting families struggling to care for older parents, society can do better. We can find ways to provide more quality elder care options and build easier to navigate medical and social services for seniors. Medical schools and academic medical centers need to invest in policies and programs to support older faculty with extraprofessional caregiving responsibilities similar to what exists for early career faculty. Lastly, it's important to remember that we also cannot neglect to take care of ourselves. Otherwise, both our dependent family members and our patients will suffer.

In this issue of our department newsletter, the clinical faculty spotlight is on Dr. Helena Yip who, in addition to caring for elderly parents and 3 middle-school-age children, is the Director of Laryngology for our department. Dr. Eugene Chang describes the clinical and research work of the Division of Rhinology. We catch up with residency alumnus, Dr. John Symms. Other recent happenings and activities of the faculty, residents, and staff of the Department of Otolaryngology are highlighted.



## 2023 Graduation and Awards Ceremony

On June 10, 2023, we celebrated two graduates at our annual otolaryngology graduation ceremony at the Westin La Paloma Resort.

Dr. John Richards received his certificate as the seventh graduate from the University of Arizona Department of Otolaryngology Residency Program. Dr. Richards will be joining an otolaryngology practice outside of Portland, Oregon, where he hopes to provide a wide breadth of otolaryngology care.

Dr. Shireen Samargandy received the University of Arizona Rhinology and Skull Base Surgery Fellowship certificate. Dr. Samargandy's academic interests include biologic therapies for chronic sinusitis with polyps, medical education in surgical training, and sinonasal malignancies. After fellowship, she plans to return to her home medical school of King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where she will pursue an academic practice in Rhinology & Skull Base Surgery as an assistant professor.

During the graduation dinner, remarks were given by Dr. Steven Wang, Professor and Chair, Dr. Eugene Chang, Professor and Vice-Chair, and Dr. Shethal Bearely, Residency Program Director. The following awards were presented during the evening's event:

### The Stephen Goldstein Memorial Teaching Award:

Established to honor a faculty member who offers excellence in teaching the principles and practice of Otolaryngology. The 2022-2023 recipient was Dr. David Chen.

### Affiliated Clinical Faculty Teaching Award:

Presented to an affiliated faculty member within the Tucson community. The 2022-2023 awardee was Dr. Jonnae Ostrom.

### Highest In-Service Score Award:

Presented to the resident earning the highest in-service score. Dr. John Richards was the proud recipient of the 2022-2023 award.

### Outstanding Research Presentation Award:

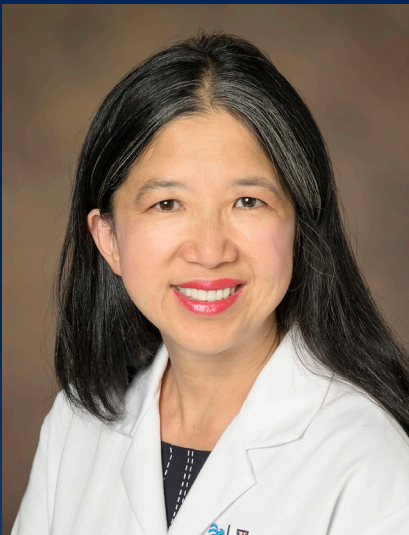
Given for the best presentation at the Research Symposium held the day prior to graduation, where senior residents showcase their ongoing research projects. The 2022-2023 recipient was Dr. Claire Gleadhill, who presented on several outstanding projects, including Vocal Cord Dysfunction and In-Office Intralesional Steroid Injections for Subglottic Stenosis.



Dr. Eugene Chang,  
Dr. Shireen Samargandy,  
and Dr. Chris Le



Dr. Shethal Bearely,  
Dr. John Richards,  
and Dr. Steven Wang



## Faculty Spotlight – Dr. Helena Yip

### What drew you to laryngology in particular?

The immediate improvement of voice in someone after a medialization procedure of the vocal cord is what initially drew my

interest in laryngology. Very few procedures in medicine or otolaryngology have that kind of immediate gratification.

### What part of your job never gets old?

Going into the exam room and meeting someone for the first time. The sacred privilege of being a physician and having someone's trust and confidence to lay bare their fears and worries in front of you is something that never gets old for me.

### What is your favorite surgery to perform?

A type I thyroplasty is a procedure where I surgically move a weak or paralyzed vocal cord to the midline. Technically, it is challenging to perform, but can be life-changing for the patient at the end of a successful procedure. Having a hoarse or breathy, weak voice can make a person withdrawn. Giving them their voice back enables them to be heard and to interact socially with friends and family again.

### Tell us about your research.

I have a big practice in dyspnea, chronic cough, and airway stenosis. I have been looking at some of my patient outcomes in those areas, and that is what my research is focused on.

### Your husband is also a surgeon. Does that bring an interesting dynamic to your relationship?

My husband is a head and neck oncologic surgeon, and so we are both otolaryngologists. We do share a lot of shop talk at home. He is also the department chair. It can be tricky to navigate the dynamic of working not only in the same field but in the same place; however, we have managed somehow to have a good partnership professionally as well. I am very thankful that we met when he was a resident and I was a medical student at UCLA. He has been a mentor to me my entire career.

### What do you and your family like to do for fun?

We do three ski trips a year generally to California and Colorado. We haul all our gear with us in our SUV and drive long distances often in bad weather conditions.

Getting to the mountain can be treacherous but once we get there, it is great family time. We also invest a great deal in our children's musical education. The kids and my husband put on home concerts twice a year, a tradition that we developed during the Pandemic. I don't know anything about music, but I'm the support staff. Recently I have been relieved of my page turning job because my daughter can do it herself now.

My husband and I strongly believe in the value of good public schools which allow all children to thrive, and I volunteer with parent groups to support local school board members who share our values.

### What were you like as a kid?

I was a precocious kid and my mom put me into first grade when I was 5, two years ahead of my peers in China. I stood out as the smallest kid in the class for several years. I still had plenty of friends. I enjoyed the free ranging that we had as children, taking the city bus to school or walking to school. I finished 6th grade in China, and that is why I am fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese. Coming to the States as a 7th grader was a huge transition. Being a first-generation immigrant toughened me up and prepared me for the challenges ahead as a physician.

### Would it have surprised you to learn that you would grow up to become a surgeon and would move to Arizona?

My mother was treated by a community neurosurgeon for a very large acoustic neuroma when I was 14 years old. I thought about being a neurosurgeon for a while. Then I fell in love with otolaryngology as a medical student. I also liked Internal Medicine, too. In the end, otolaryngology won out because it had a nice combination of medical and surgical management of many conditions affecting people of all ages.

After immigrating to the US, I called California home for the next thirty years. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would live in Arizona. But I am so glad that I made the move to the desert! My family and I love living here and everything this community offers, including natural outdoor beauty, great schools, wonderful friendships, and terrific colleagues. The professional opportunities I've had here are unparalleled, as I have built a busy, interesting subspecialty practice in Laryngology at Banner-University Tucson.



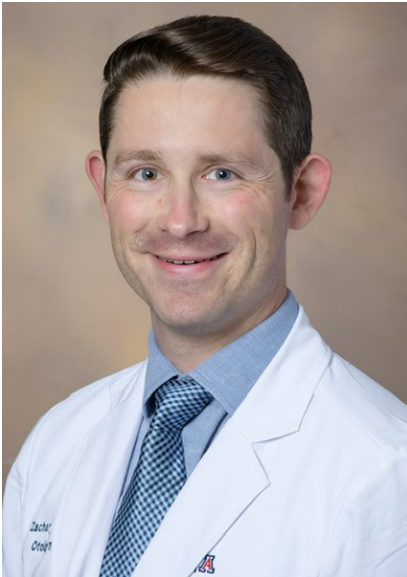


## New Multispecialty Laser and Aesthetics Program

Dr. David Chen, director of the Division of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (pictured, center), spoke at an open house event on July 25, 2023 to unveil the new Multispecialty Laser and Aesthetics Program at Banner – University of Arizona. The program is a collaboration between the departments of dermatology, otolaryngology, ophthalmology, and surgery, to offer comprehensive aesthetic care in the setting of an academic medical institution. This includes the full gamut of laser treatments, injectables, skin care, and cosmetic surgery. The program will not only open the door for patients to receive high-quality aesthetic care through the University of Arizona, but also allow trainees exposure to this unique facet of otolaryngology.

The open house event, the first of several planned, was held at the Banner – University Medicine Multispecialty Services Clinic at 7164 N. Pima Canyon Drive. Among those present were University of Arizona President Robert C. Robbins, MD, Senior Vice President for Health Sciences Michael D. Dake, MD, College of Medicine – Tucson Dean Michael M. I. Abecassis, MD, MBA, Department of Medicine Chair James K. Liao, MD, College of Engineering Dean David Hahn, PhD, BIO5 Institute Director Jennifer Barton, PhD, Banner – University Medical Group CEO “Bob” Venkata Evani, MD, Banner – University Medical Center Tucson and South hospitals CEO Sarah Frost, and of course our very own chair Dr. Steven Wang.





## Resident Spotlight – Zachary Elwell, MD – PGY1

Earlier this year, Zachary Elwell traveled to Kapsowar, Kenya, for a one-month externship at the Africa Inland Church Kapsowar Mission Hospital Medical Training College. He worked directly with Bill Rhodes, MD, a US-trained, board-certified plastic surgeon who has dedicated his life to providing comprehensive surgical care for the people of Kenya. Zach experienced the importance of establishing sustainable, in-person relationships with people in their local communities to provide equitable and informed global surgical care. He was joined by his classmates from the University of Arizona, Lee McMahon, and Ling Xie, in addition to US medical student Michael Powell, UK medical student Emily Tindall, and US OB/GYN resident Kelsey Williamson.



From left to right: Kelsey Williamson, Zachary Elwell, Ling Xie, Emily Tindall, and Lee McMahon at the Kapsowar Station.



Zachary Elwell at the front entrance of the AIC Kapsowar Mission Hospital MTC.



From left to right: Ling Xie, Zachary Elwell, and Dr. Bill Rhodes setting up to perform a mandibular distraction.



Dr. Bill Rhodes (yellow scrub cap) and Zachary Elwell (black scrub cap) performing a total thyroidectomy.

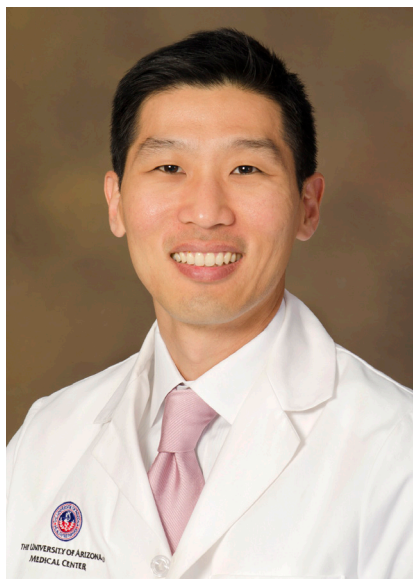


## New Resident Orientation Picnic

Faculty and staff gathered at Rio Vista Natural Resources Park to welcome our incoming residents and visiting medical students and to give advice about embarking on a career in otolaryngology.



# Rhinology Spotlight



Eugene Chang, MD

## Message from the Division Director:

*The Rhinology and Skull base division strives to fulfill the tripartite mission of healthcare – providing cutting-edge research, educational excellence, and advanced clinical care. The dedication to this mission is based on a team approach and drives our progress as a leader in this specialty. In this spotlight, we highlight the work of our team and their accomplishments.*

## Research

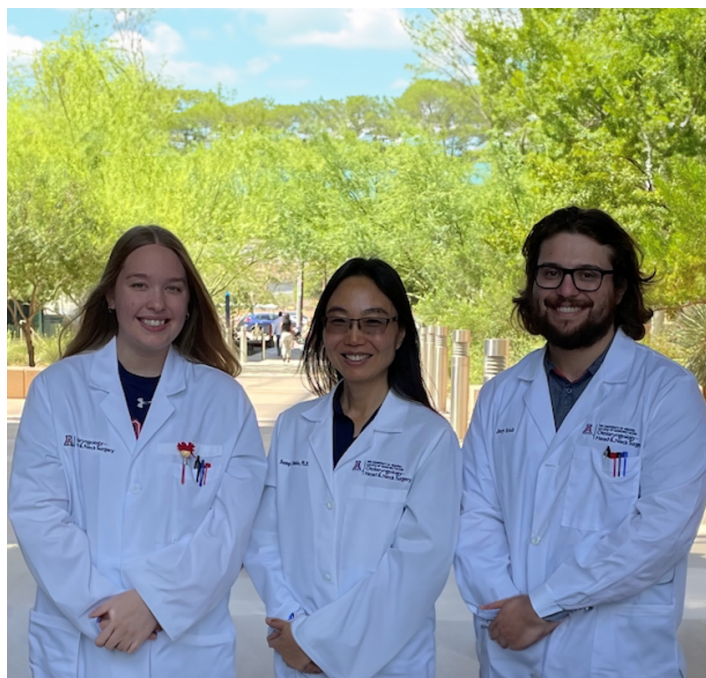
The Chang laboratory is focused on exploring the molecular mechanisms of chronic sinusitis, a common condition that affects 10% of adults in the United States. We are a translational laboratory, enrolling patients in our research and using tissue samples to develop cultures that recapitulate the nasal and sinus environment. Dr. Sunny Palumbo is our research scientist who leads members of the lab in looking at genetic and environmental factors for sinus disease. Her team, including Dr. Joseph Irish, has been instrumental in performing viral challenges to these cultures and assessing their epithelial response. Sophia Volpe, a research technician in the lab, then looks at genetic markers in these samples to correlate risk factors for disease. Their work has identified that rhinovirus is a common virus that drives sinus exacerbations, and that mutations in the CDHR3 gene increase the risk of disease.

This work is supported by a \$3 million dollar grant from the National Institute of Health.



Nirushan Narendran

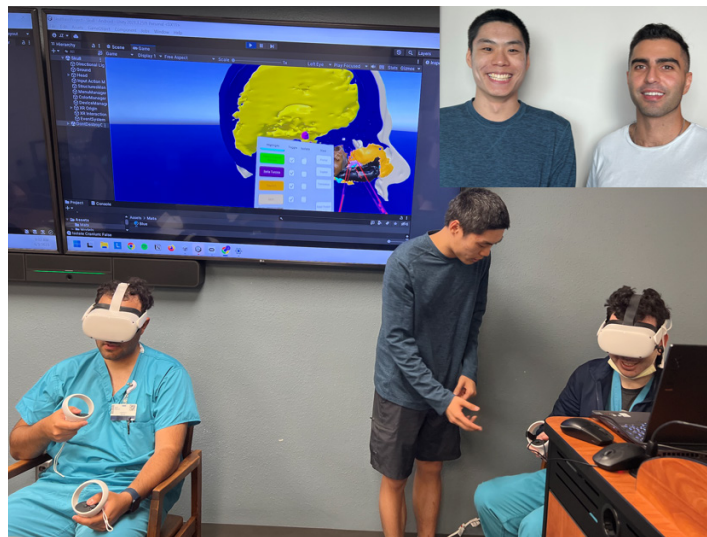
Dr. Nirushan Narendran is our clinical research coordinator who assists in enrolling patients in our research studies. His focus has been in patients with nasal polyps, a medical condition highly associated with type-2 inflammation. In his postdoctoral thesis, he is comparing clinical outcomes and molecular markers of patients undergoing functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS) to biologic therapies that target type 2 pathways. This work is supported by a \$1 million dollar grant from the Pathways mechanism. He also helps to coordinate clinical research trials of new therapies for chronic sinusitis, thereby allowing access for the people of Arizona to receive the latest in clinical care therapies.



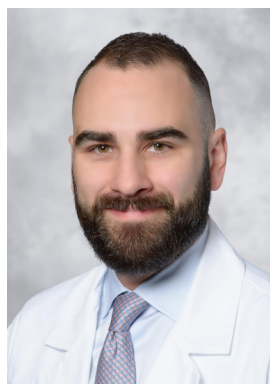
Sophia Volpe, Sunny Palumbo, Joseph Irish

## Education

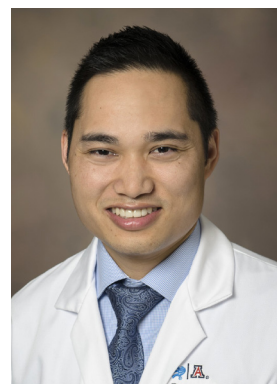
Our goal is to educate trainees to become excellent surgeons in endoscopic sinus and skull base surgery. Dr. Chris Le is our fellowship director in neurorhinology, and we are the only tertiary care fellowship in the state of Arizona. Dr. Eric Bailey, one of our former fellows, wanted to bring this level of training to medical students and residents to help understand complex skull-base anatomy. His team helped develop a training video incorporating radiologic imaging, highlighted anatomical structures, and surgical videos to introduce complex sinus anatomy to trainees of all levels. He distributed these videos to academic departments around the country where it is being incorporated as part of their curriculum. Dr. Shireen Samargandy, our most recent fellow, recently developed a SHERPA analysis for pituitary adenoma surgery, a common skull-base procedure. SHERPA analyses are commonly used for training in high-risk scenarios, such as aeronautics, to help trainees see the “big picture.” Her analysis is the first of its kind for skull-base surgery, and helps trainees to understand the steps of surgery and associate them with high-risk scenarios to reduce the risk of complications for patients. Over the past five years, we have also partnered with the College of Engineering to develop a virtual-reality simulator so that trainees can rehearse surgical procedures in an immersive environment. As a collaborative team our goal is to combine surgical knowledge with technical expertise so that trainees can perform these procedures at expert levels of proficiency. Our current members, Dr. David Ahmadian and Jason Zhang, implemented the use of this VR educational platform in our inaugural skull-base resident teaching course.



Jason Zhang and David Ahmadian



Michael Avery, MD



Chris Le, MD

## Clinical Care

We continue to collaborate with our partners in Neurosurgery, Dr. Michael Avery, to provide excellence in skull-base tumors. Dr. Chris Le and Dr. Michael Avery seamlessly work together in the operating room in the approach, resection, and reconstruction of skull-base tumors.

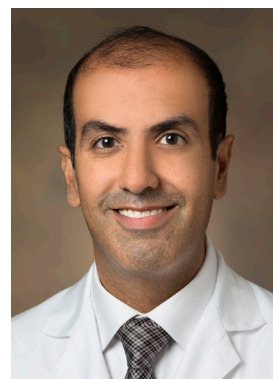
Dr. Chris Le also collaborates with our sinus experts throughout the country, by sharing his clinical experiences with our high volume of sinus and skull base tumors, by contributing to the CORSICA database. Information from this database culled from the top sinonasal and skull base institutions throughout the country, have led to several publications that have impacted clinical care algorithms in patients with these rare tumors. Dr. Le also leads a study assessing the role of novel cancer modulators to ensure that our patients get the most up to date care in these challenging disorders. Our partners in Allergy and Immunology, Drs. Tara Carr, Puneet Shroff, and Nora Odisho provide specialty care in sinus and nasal inflammatory disorders. By providing a multi-disciplinary clinic, patients can be tested for allergens, receive immunotherapy, and be worked up for structural anomalies in their nose and sinuses.



Tara Carr, MD



Nora Odisho, DO



Puneet Shroff, MD

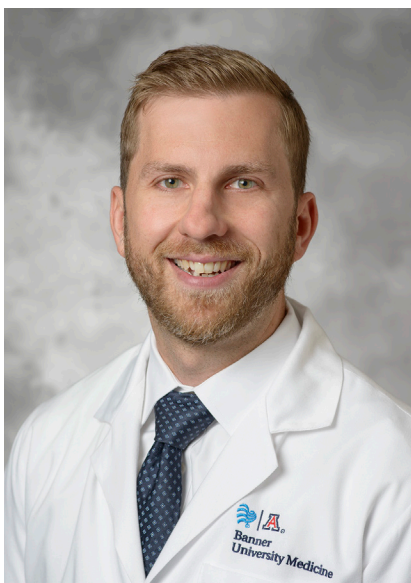


Dr. Symms shares a tender moment with his cherished dog and companion of ten years, Wilma.

## Alumni Update – Dr. John Symms

After finishing residency at the University of Arizona in 2021, Dr. Symms moved along with his wife Annie and their children to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There John completed a fellowship in otology and neurotology with Pittsburgh Ear Associates and the Pittsburgh Ear Research Foundation. While at fellowship Dr. Symms received extensive training in surgery of the lateral skull base and published on the surgical management of cerebrospinal fluid leaks of the temporal bone. Upon completion of his fellowship, he joined his fellow U of A alum Tyson Nielsen to work at Southwest Idaho ENT in Boise, Idaho. He has enjoyed developing a comprehensive practice encompassing complex chronic ear disease, surgical management of hearing loss, cochlear implantation and inner ear balance disorders. The Symms Family have all enjoyed being back in Idaho with family.

When he is not at his day job, Dr. Symms plays saxophone with The Afrosonics, the premier afrobeat and funk ensemble in the Treasure Valley. He also enjoys spending time with his beloved wife and their children, Lavender, Shane, Roland, Tyson, Magnus, Goldie, and the youngest, Oscar, whom they recently welcomed to the family in November 2022.



## Banner Health Hero Nicholas Dewyer, MD

Congratulations to Dr. Nicholas Dewyer, who was named a Banner Health Hero! The Banner Health Hero program allows grateful patients to recognize an employee for their exceptional care by making a donation to the Banner Health Foundation in their honor. The patient who donated in honor of Dr. Dewyer said, “I’ve been struggling with vestibular migraines for over a year. Dr. Dewyer has pulled out all the stops to get me the best treatment possible. He truly is my hero.”

## Save the Date ENT in the Desert 2024

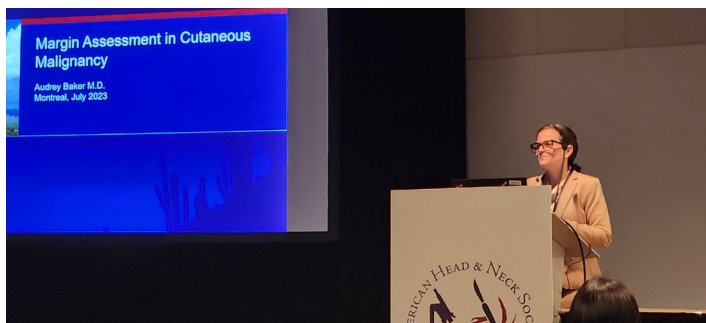
February 8 – 10, 2024

Focused on the general otolaryngologist. Best practice panels, evidence based recommendations, practice management, and a focus on new and evolving technologies. Featuring nationally renowned speakers and society leaders.

<https://www.entinthedesert.otolaryngology.medicine.arizona.edu>



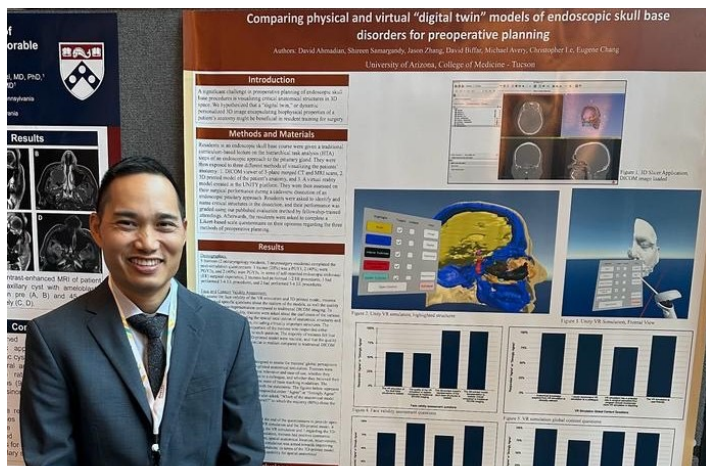
# Summer & Fall Conferences



Dr. Audrey Baker and Dr. Steven Wang were invited speakers at the American Head and Neck Society's 11th International Conference on Head and Neck Cancer in Montreal, Canada



Dr. Steven Wang was invited speaker at the 7th World Congress of the International Federation of Head and Neck Oncologic Societies in Rome, Italy



Dr. Steven Wang, Dr. Chris Le, Dr. Austin Lever, Dr. Nicholas Dewyer, and David Ahmadian presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Otolaryngology, Nashville, TN.



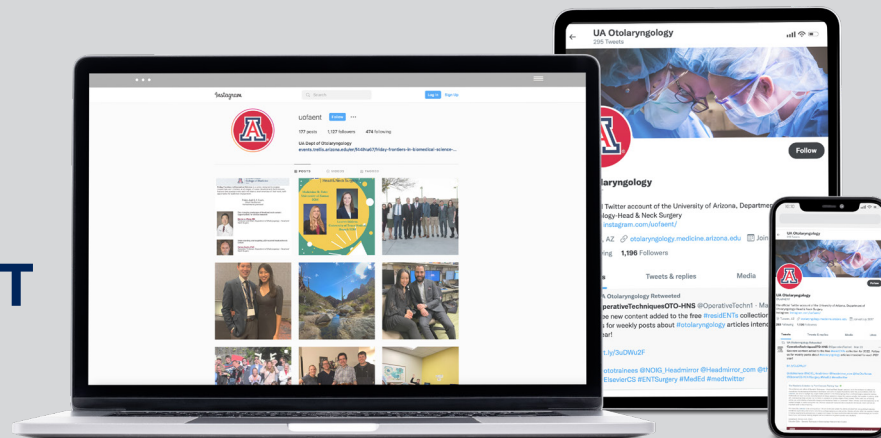
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

## Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery

PO BOX 245074  
TUCSON AZ 85724-5074



Follow us  
**@UofAENT**



[www.otolaryngology.medicine.arizona.edu](http://www.otolaryngology.medicine.arizona.edu)