

# BEAUMONT CARDIOLOGY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021

ISSUE 1



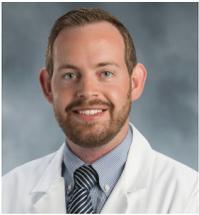
## Welcome

The Cardiology Fellowship program at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan has a rich history with alumni across the country. We are immensely proud of the quality of our training and our graduates. This is the first edition of a new annual newsletter we are launching to keep our alumni informed about our fellows, advancements and research. We recently graduated 12 fellows from our programs including the clinical, interventional, structural interventional, and advanced imaging programs. We have welcomed new faculty and continue to grow as a leader in cardiac care in Southeast Michigan. We would like to hear from you as well to highlight our alumni in our next edition; next spring we will have a call for announcements and alumni spotlights. In the meantime, please follow us on Twitter [@BeaumontCards](#), watch our new [recruitment video](#), and check out our [research page](#) on our updated website.

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## Cardiologists Battle Covid on the Frontlines



### Richard Bloomingdale, MD

- Associate Program Director, General Cardiology Fellowship
- Director of Structural Imaging

The year 2020 will forever be remembered for the COVID-19 pandemic, which has infiltrated all aspects of our lives. During the initial surge, the Detroit area was hit especially hard, and Beaumont physicians and nurses cared for more COVID patients than any other health system in Michigan. As we are now transitioning from winter to spring of 2021, another wave is passing through southeast Michigan, and it is difficult to remember what life was like a little more than one year ago.

Reflecting back, it was surreal seeing a dozen hospital facilities workers removing the tables and chairs from the cafeteria, and the atrium was unrecognizable after being converted into a scrubs and PPE distribution site. The hallways were eerily quiet after visitor restrictions were implemented. Even the highways leading toward the hospital felt deserted as a statewide lockdown was taking effect.



As bed capacity was reached on the medical floors, hospital administration worked to convert patient care areas into specialized COVID units, and typical patient care was shifted into post-op and post-cath holding areas.

Through all of this, our cardiology department and fellowship were particularly involved and proactive supporting many aspects of care for COVID patients. We canceled elective cases ahead of the state mandate to allow inpatient and ICU beds to remain free for the expected surge of patients. Once the surge hit, we reimagined the entire structure of our care delivery model to provide support to the internal medicine and critical care teams, while reducing the use of PPE and limiting exposure of higher risk providers to the COVID virus.

A unified consult team was designed to provide streamlined cardiac care. Cardiology staff and fellows worked together as a hospitalist team to manage a full census of COVID inpatients as the primary medical providers. Cardiology fellows and surgical ICU fellows together formed a procedural team available to place lines in critically ill COVID patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the initial surge. The fellows also diligently monitored ECGs and telemetry strips for patients with COVID who were receiving azithromycin and hydroxychloroquine. The ACGME made much of the redeployment of trainees possible with their "Stage 3 Pandemic Policy," which gave considerable flexibility to the normal mandatory curriculum for trainees.

Despite these changes, the department worked to maintain virtual learning through the Microsoft Teams platform, which continues as an option for offsite fellows and faculty. We were active in studying our COVID experience and outcomes during this time. Tom O'Connell, a second-year general fellow, now chief clinical fellow, led a team of fellows and faculty describing the ECG effects

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FELLOWS ON THE FRONTLINE

**Cardiologists Battle Covid on the Frontlines**

*(Continued from page 2)*

of hydroxychloroquine, which was published in [JACC EP](#). Dr. Jason Schott, a third-year fellow during the initial surge, now an interventional fellow, was first author on a [publication](#) in Echocardiography describing the echo findings in patients hospitalized with COVID. And Dr. Michael Gallagher and Dr. Rob Safian led a group of faculty in publishing the Beaumont experience of fellow redeployment

in the [Journal of the American Heart Association](#). This past year has presented unique challenges across all aspects of our lives. Thankfully though, our outlook has improved with a very effective vaccination campaign through the Beaumont Health System which is now available to all adults. Despite the heartache and struggles, we have grown stronger as a fellowship, as a department, and as a medical community.

CHANGES IN TRAINING AND EDUCATION

**Virtual Education Training and Interaction in a Covid World**



**Tom O'Connell, MD**

- Former Chief General Cardiology Fellow
- Advanced Cardiology Imaging Fellow
- Junior Faculty

The COVID-19 pandemic altered our approach to almost every facet of life, and training and education practices were no exception. In fact, developing methods for continuing didactic lectures and case conferences during the height of the pandemic presented a particularly unique challenge. The fellowship conferences – noon conference, cath conference, interventional conference, echo conference, and EP conference – have long been a cornerstone of the fellows’ education experience, with the interaction between faculty and fellows paramount to their impact and success. After a brief hiatus during the initial surge, conferences resumed with limited seating capacity, with a virtual option. The Microsoft Teams platform was operationalized to broadcast conferences live, allowing online participants to speak seamlessly with fellows and lecturers. While this virtual conference format was at first a necessity, it has

transitioned into an option that facilitates enhanced participation from off-campus fellows and faculty. As COVID-related restrictions continue to ease, the team continues to offer virtual options. Fellows have greatly appreciated faculty input during conference, regardless of whether the faculty is in person or online.



*Pre-Pandemic Conference Room*



*Pandemic Conference Room*

The Covid-19 pandemic also resulted in a unique fellowship recruitment season, as no in-person interviews or site visits were allowed. The Graduate Medical Education department and cardiology leaders transformed the experience, including:

- Developing a [Cardiology Fellowship Program Recruitment video](#) highlighting what has made, and continues to make, this fellowship one of the best
- Leveraging the Microsoft Teams platform for our interview days, allowing us to both video conference with applicants and to display key documents such as schedules, research, and information about the area.

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CHANGES IN TRAINING AND EDUCATION

**Virtual Education Training and Interaction in a Covid World**

*(Continued from page 3)*

In short, recruitment season was a tremendous undertaking for faculty and fellows alike. Our efforts did not go to waste—we matched a fantastic group we are extremely excited about!

Finally, one of the highlights of each fellowship year is graduation. With thoughtful planning, and a little help from our IT colleagues, the 2020 graduation

was transitioned to a virtual event, a special and memorable night. Fellows were able to attend virtually from their homes with their families, and friends and family members from around the world were also able to tune in. One of the key messages from faculty to graduating fellows was that they will always be a part of the Beaumont family. The ceremony was reaffirmation of the outstanding group of physicians this fellowship recruits, trains, and sends out into practice.

MEET THE FACULTY



**Welcome to Nishaki Mehta, MD,  
 from the University of Virginia**

Since arriving at Beaumont, Nishaki has quickly established herself among Royal Oak faculty, finding unique ways to contribute through clinical, research and teaching opportunities. We recently sat down with Nishaki to hear more about her transition into her new role as an electrophysiologist at Royal Oak.

**Q:** *What do you enjoy most about working at Beaumont Royal Oak?*

When I was recruited to Beaumont, Dr. David Haines was one of my major draws to this powerhouse. The opportunity to work with a legend in EP and advance the field was very exciting for me. And this has translated to a meaningful clinical, research and teaching strides for me over the year. Clinically, it has been incredibly rewarding to collaborate and develop shared care plans with my colleagues. Working cohesively with my senior partners and other mentors and colleagues has both encouraged me to try new things and continue to add to teaching strides for me over the year. Clinically, it has been incredibly rewarding to collaborate and develop shared care plans with my colleagues. Working cohesively with my senior partners and other mentors and colleagues has both encouraged me to try new things and continue to add to my clinical care skills. I have also appreciated the opportunity to participate in the growth of the atrial fibrillation and left atrial appendage occlusion device clinic, as well as to peripherally support the new POTS clinic launching in the Max & Debra Ernst Heart Center with Anna Marandici, MD.

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## MEET THE FACULTY

**Meet Nishaki Mehta, MD***(Continued from page 4)***Q:** *What are your research interests?*

Since arriving at Beaumont, I have been working closely with Dr. Haines to explore the basic electrophysiology understanding of pulsed field ablation, the promising new tool for ablation procedures. I have also been fortunate to participate in the REDEFINE trial led by Dr. Simon Dixon. It has been exciting to lead the EP arm of the first study in the world to test this new radiation protection system, which has significant future implications for the safety of myself, my colleagues, staff and patients. I have also been working with Beaumont to develop a device I invented in my previous position to improve wound healing and reduce hematomas post-device implant. This has been an unexpected and welcome introduction to Michigan-based manufacturing prowess.

**Q:** *Have you enjoyed working with the fellowship program?*

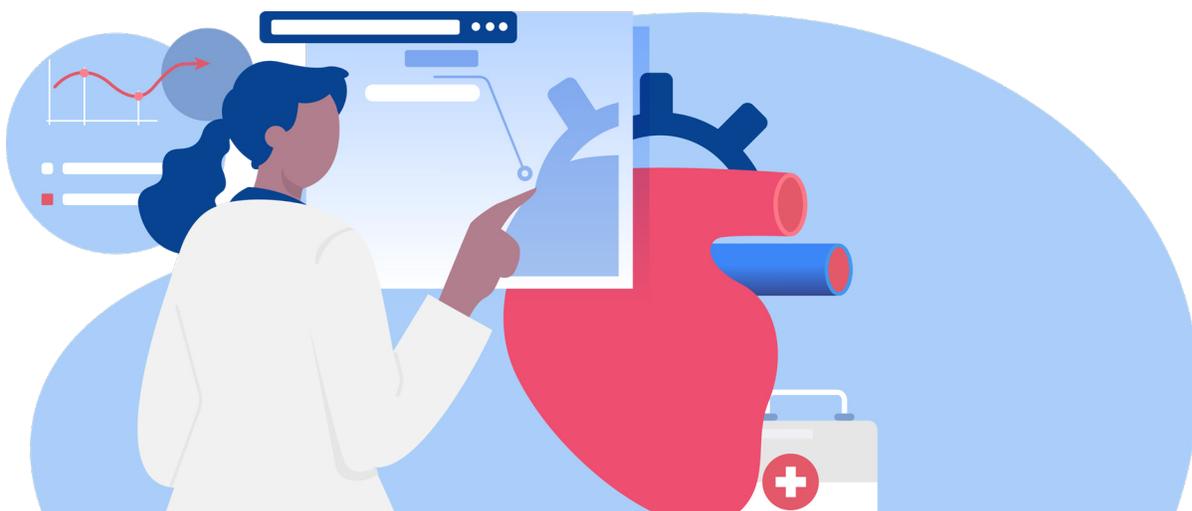
The recently operationalized EP consult service represents a unified approach, with Royal Oak electrophysiologists working together to allow fellows to gain experience with a variety of providers and cases. I have enjoyed demonstrating my practice style with our fellows, and then increasingly taking

a 'backseat' to watch them lead the team and integrate different styles, which has allowed me to also learn about Beaumont culture from them. I am also currently interviewing OUWB medical students for Capstone opportunities, and I am looking forward to mentoring them through these projects.

**Q:** *Any other highlights you want to mention about your experience so far?*

I have been so impressed with many of the strengths within Beaumont cardiology, including our expertise in CT and multi-modality imaging, which allows me to feel more confident I am doing the right thing for my patients. I've also enjoyed working with Dr. Barry Franklin, who has been a superb collaborator, mentor and educator about the value of cardiac rehabilitation.

Finally, I do aspire to get more of our general cardiology fellows excited about staying at Beaumont for an electrophysiology fellowship experience. We have so many excellent fellows recruited here—it would be a privilege to cultivate their skills and develop them into future electrophysiologists. With the support of my medical director, practice partners, and fellow providers, I am eager to make contributions that will elevate our heart & vascular programs.



GENERAL FELLOWS AND IMAGING

## Update from the Clinical Cardiology and Advanced Cardiac Imaging Fellowship Programs



**Michael J. Gallagher, MD FACC**

- Program Director, Clinical Cardiology Fellowship
- Program Director, Advanced Cardiac Imaging Fellowship
- Director, Cardiac CT

The Clinical Cardiology Fellowship Program continues to excel in the training of fellows for both general cardiology practice as well as advanced fellowship training and sub-specialty careers. The goal of our fellowship is to train highly skilled and compassionate cardiologists with a broad range of clinical interests. Our celebrated academic faculty are committed to providing exceptional clinical training and exciting research opportunities for our fellows. We take pride in the collaborative environment of our fellowship, and maintain a focus on education and mentoring our fellows to become the best clinicians they can be. Fellow well-being and a proper work-life balance remain a high priority throughout the rigors of Beaumont fellowship training. This past year, we have continued our nearly decade long tradition of all graduating fellows passing their board examinations in General Cardiology, Echocardiography and Cardiac CT. In the midst of a challenging year, we are exceptionally proud of the response, dedication and professionalism of our fellows for the care they provided to Beaumont Health patients hospitalized with COVID-19. As the pandemic restrictions begin to ease, we are excited to resume our robust in-person core teaching curriculum, and continue to offer a virtual educational option via a Microsoft Teams platform. We look forward to reaching out to our robust alumni network (of over 200 Beaumont Cardiology Fellowship graduates!) to re-connect, establish new relationships with our graduates, and collaborate via a web-based platform of education and networking. We want to hear from you!



*Back (left to right) Olivia Allen, DO; Akash Rusia, MD; Amit Vira, MD; Daniel Tim, MD; Kuldeep Shah, MBBS  
Front (left to right) Stacy Willner, DO; Ramy Mando, MD; Andres Palomo, MD; Travis Tagami, DO; Tom O’Connell, MD  
Not pictured Swapna Gudipati, MD; Adam Tawney, MD; Rick Gaines, MD*

We are proud to graduate four exceptional clinical fellows this year. Rick Gaines has accepted a position in Cincinnati as part of a large Cardiology practice with a focus on non-invasive imaging. Travis Tagami and Daniel Tim will be staying at Beaumont for an additional year of interventional cardiology fellowship training, and Tom O’Connell will dedicate a fourth year of fellowship to advanced Cardiac Imaging with a focus on Cardiac CT/ MRI, Echocardiography and structural heart imaging.

On July 1, our clinical fellowship family welcomed Dr. Vishal Birk from Rush University (Chief Resident), Dr. Saavia Girgla from University of Cincinnati (Chief Resident), and Dr. Marina Maraskine from Beaumont Hospital (Chief Resident). Dr. Timothy Pow comes to us from Loyola University and is our first fellow to return to Beaumont as a graduate of the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine!

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GENERAL FELLOWS AND IMAGING

**Update from the General and Imaging Fellowship Programs**

*(Continued from page 6)*

For over three decades, Dr. Robert Safian has served as the Clinical Fellowship Program Director (1992-1996; 2003-2017), Associate Program Director (1991-1992; 2018-2021), and Fellowship Program Director of Interventional Cardiology (2011-present). The Beaumont Cardiology fellowship has thrived under his advocacy and leadership. No doubt, for many of you reading this newsletter, Dr. Safian is regarded as a cherished mentor, educator and

friend. He will be stepping down from his official role as the Associate Program Director, however as expected, he will remain a key teaching core faculty member with a passion for fellow education. We are pleased to introduce Dr. Rick Bloomingdale, a recent graduate of our Clinical Fellowship (June 2020) and Advanced Cardiac Imaging training program. Over the past four years at Beaumont, Rick has established his role as an incredible leader and educator, and will be staying on Faculty as the Director of Structural Imaging and the Associate Program Director for the General Fellowship. Welcome Rick!

**INCOMING CLINICAL FELLOWS 2021**



**Vishal Birk, MD**

**Medical School**

Wayne State University

**Residency**

Rush University

- Huge gamer
- Toronto Raptors fan
- Dog lover



**Saavia Girgla, MD**

**Medical School**

Central Michigan University

**Residency**

University of Cincinnati

- Grew up in six countries prior to college
- Currently trying to teach myself the ukulele
- Kayaking enthusiast



**Marina Maraskine, MD**

**Medical School**

Central Michigan University

**Residency**

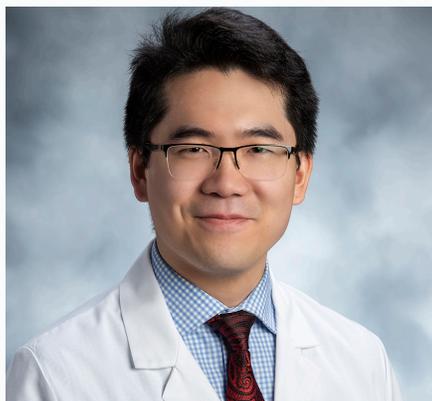
Beaumont, Royal Oak

- Has a six-month old son named Parker
- Enjoys playing soccer
- Has two dogs

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## INCOMING CLINICAL FELLOWS

(Continued from page 7)



### Timothy Pow, MD

#### Medical School

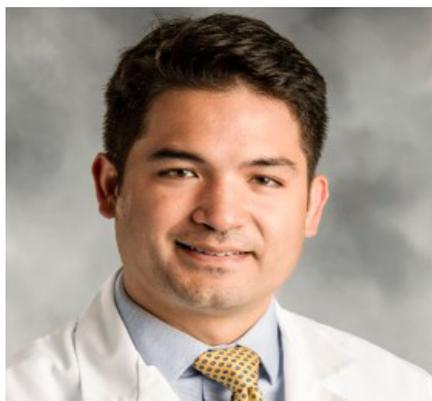
OUWB School of Medicine

#### Residency

Loyola University

- Performed in virtual concerts during the pandemic (guitar & vocals)
- Used to compete in Rubik's cube speed-solving competitions
- Fiancé is also a cardiology fellow

## ADVANCED IMAGING FELLOW 2021



### Tom O'Connell, MD

#### Medical School

Loyola University

#### Residency

Loyola University

#### CVD Fellowship

Beaumont, Royal Oak

- New dad to daughter Isabel

## INTERVENTIONAL, STRUCTURAL AND VASCULAR FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

### Interventional, Structural and Vascular Fellowship Update



#### Ivan Hanson, MD

- Associate Program Director, Interventional Cardiology Fellowship

When I first learned of the reputation of Interventional Cardiology at Beaumont during my Internal Medicine residency. I was intrigued by Beaumont's early adoption of primary angioplasty for acute myocardial infarction in the 1980s and 90s. I was amazed that the first trans-catheter aortic valve replacement

in North America was performed at Beaumont in 2005. I knew I wanted to be part of the action. I was fortunate to have Dr. Robert Safian as my Program Director for both Cardiovascular Disease and Interventional Cardiology fellowship. Rob was, and is, a role model, mentor and friend. I have to say that many of my personal practice patterns in the cath lab are modeled after Rob's example. So, when he selected me to serve with him in a leadership role for the Interventional Fellowship, I was elated. I love sharing my expertise with the fellows and watching their skill and ability flourish. It is much more gratifying than experiencing my own personal achievement.

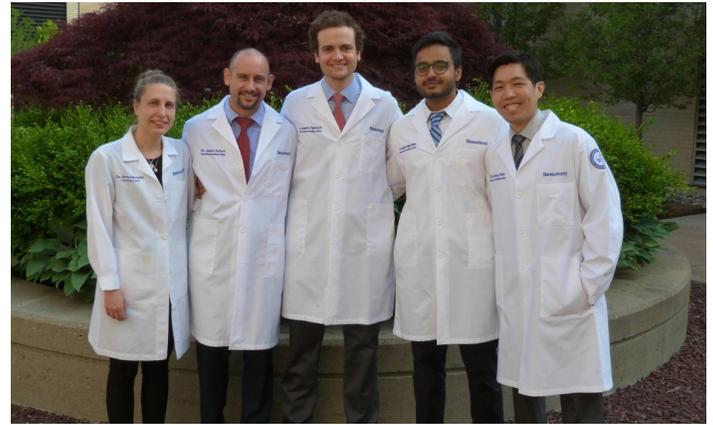
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## Interventional, Structural and Vascular Fellowship Update

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The bittersweet time of the year has just passed when our graduating fellows leave us to pursue further advanced training or to begin their careers. Our former structural heart fellow Dr. Brian Renard is going to remain at Beaumont as a core teaching faculty. Dr. Jason Schott will take Brian's place as the 2021 structural heart fellow. Dr. Jeffrey Park will be doing a structural heart fellowship at University of North Carolina. Dr. Amy Mertens is staying on at Beaumont for an extra year of advanced interventional cardiology training. Drs. Joaquin Cigarroa (Laredo, TX) and Arun Kahlon (Cheyenne, WY) are going into private practice. I am going to miss them all, but I know they will make us proud!

For our future fellows, we are seeing an explosion in the venous intervention space. Our PERT team affords fellows the opportunity to perform aspiration thrombectomy for acute pulmonary embolism and limb-threatening venous thrombosis, which has really expanded the traditional, primarily arterial interventional training.



*(Left to right) Amy Mertens, DO; Jason Schott, DO; Joaquin Cigarroa, MD; Arunpreet Kahlon, MBBS; Jeffrey Park, MD*

In the structural space, it is predicted that trans-catheter mitral and tricuspid valve interventions will eclipse TAVR within the next several years. If these predictions come to pass, the sheer number of these interventions may necessitate that all interventional fellows be "structural" fellows! Finally, there has been some enthusiasm to perform cardiac interventions into outpatient labs, as is already being done for many peripheral interventions. It will be interesting to see what changes this will bring to the Interventional Cardiology fellowship.



# INTERVENTIONAL FELLOWS 2021



**Sorcha Allen, MBBCh, BAO**  
**Medical School**

University College Cork, Ireland

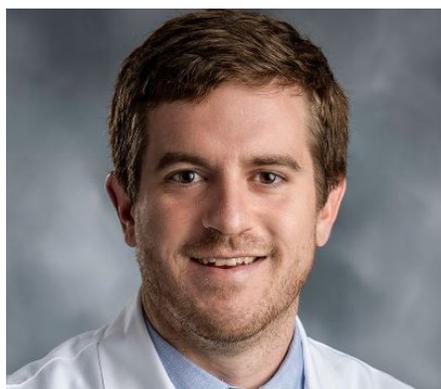
**Residency**

Mayo Clinic, Phoenix Arizona

**CVD Fellowship**

Loyola University

- From an old Viking town in Ireland called Wexford
- Has a 10 month old Irish Terrier puppy called Rua
- Huge Peloton fan



**Stephen Lynch, MD**  
**Medical School**

Drexel University

**Residency**

Beaumont, Royal Oak

**CVD Fellowship**

Beaumont, Dearborn

- Ran track in college at Notre Dame
- Has three young children
- Father & brother are both interventional cardiologists
- Once buried in an avalanche



**Lerin McCray, MD**  
**Medical School**

University of Kansas

**Residency**

University of Missouri

**CVD Fellowship**

University of Missouri

- Army Veteran
- Serbian/Croatian linguist
- Loves to travel
- Learning to play piano



**James Stone, MD**  
**Medical School**

Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara

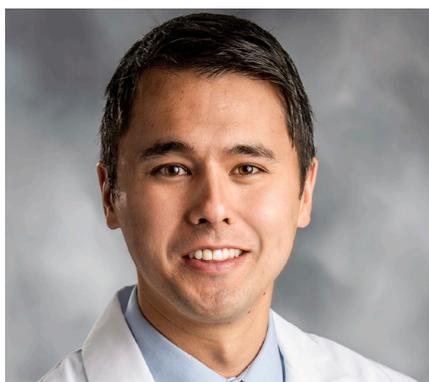
**Residency**

University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston

**CVD Fellowship**

University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston

- Enjoys Surfing & golf
- Plays Chess
- Likes to travel



**Daniel Tim, MD**  
**Medical School**

McGovern Medical School

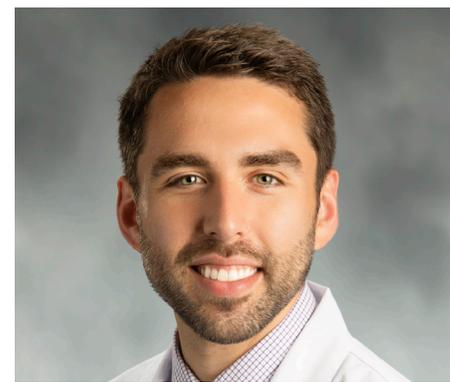
**Residency**

University of Cincinnati

**CVD Fellowship**

Beaumont, Royal Oak

- Second degree blackbelt
- Has two daughters—Olivia & Leila
- 3 brother in-laws who are fighter pilots (2 Airforce and 1 Navy)



**Travis Tagami, DO**  
**Medical School**

West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine

**Residency**

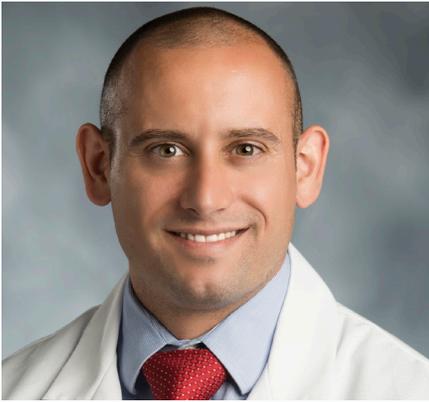
Beaumont, Royal Oak

**CVD Fellowship**

Beaumont, Royal Oak

- MSU Spartan fan
- Has two daughters—Lucy & Millie

## STRUCTURAL FELLOW 2021



**Jason Schott, DO**

**Medical School**

Ohio University

**Residency**

Riverside Methodist Hospital, Columbus, OH

**CVD Fellowship**

Beaumont, Royal Oak

- Classic car enthusiast
- Father of two daughters

## ADVANCED INTERVENTIONAL FELLOW 2021



**Amy Mertens, DO**

**Medical School**

Michigan State University College  
of Osteopathic Medicine

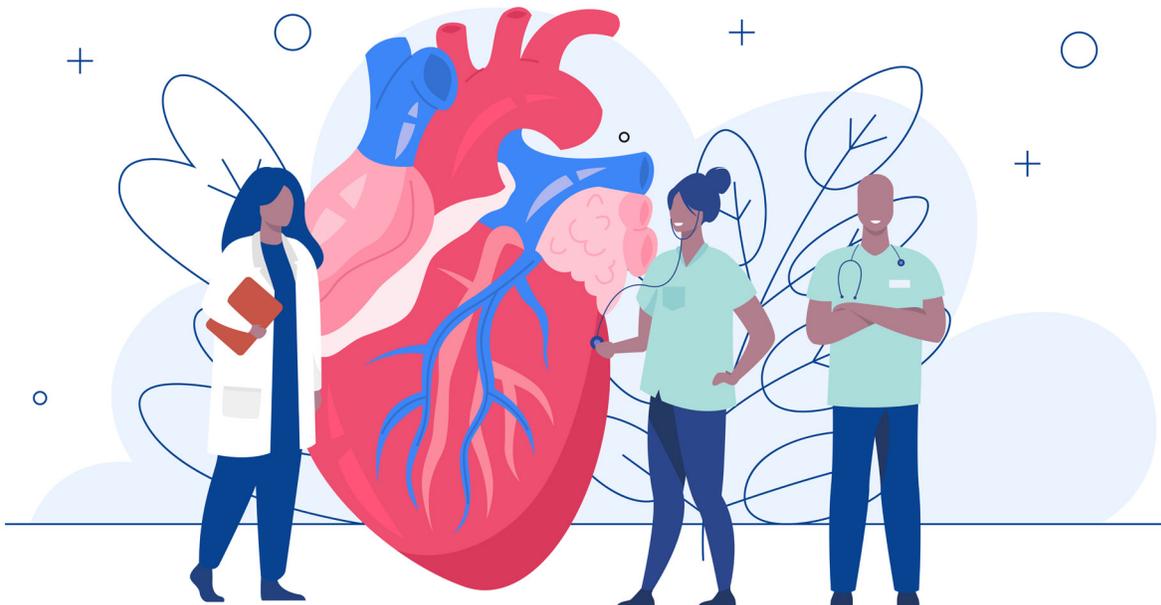
**Residency**

Beaumont, Royal Oak

**CVD Fellowship**

Beaumont, Royal Oak

- Mom of two awesome boys, Owen (4) and Noah (1.5)
- All-American swimmer
- Climbed Machu Picchu during medical school



UPDATES FROM THE ELECTROPHYSIOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

## From the Electrophysiologist Fellowship Program Director



**Brian Williamson, MD**

- Program Director, Electrophysiology Fellowship Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak

The electrophysiology fellowship program at Beaumont Royal Oak continues to attract the best and brightest fellows seeking advanced training in heart rhythm management. With continual programmatic improvements and recent innovations at the Royal Oak campus, including establishing a collaborative EP rounding service, participation in a number of research and clinical experience opportunities, including cutting-edge pulsed field ablation research by David Haines, our fellows have access to the latest opportunities to train and optimize their talents.

Our most recently graduated cardiac electrophysiology fellows include:

**Chris Bradley, DO**

completed his two-year electrophysiology fellowship June 2020, and is now practicing with Ascension Health in Southeast Michigan. He joined Beaumont’s fellowship program after completing his general cardiology fellowship at McClaren Health. He was first author on several research studies, and presented his research at the national Heart Rhythm Society Meeting in San Francisco, CA in 2019, and at the European Cardiac Arrhythmia Society meeting in Marseille, France in 2019. He also had accepted presentations for HRS in San Diego and ECAS in Paris, France in 2020 which were cancelled due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

**Shengchuan Dai, MD**

completed one year of training in clinical cardiac electrophysiology with an emphasis on device implantation in August 2020, and is now

practicing with Northside Cardiology in Atlanta, Georgia. He joined us after completing his general cardiology fellowship at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He had research presentations accepted at ECAS 2020 in Paris, France which was cancelled due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions.



**Kuldeep Shah, MBBS**

completed his first year of electrophysiology fellowship in June 2021, and he will be our senior fellow starting in July. He joined us after completing his clinical cardiology fellowship at West Virginia University. He is involved in several ongoing studies, including pulsed field ablation, conduction system pacing, and methadone-related QT prolongation and has several submissions to Heart Rhythm Society meeting in Boston in July 2021.

## WE ARE EXCITED TO WELCOME



**Daniel Pinkhas, DO**

**Medical School**

NY Institute of Technology

**Residency**

Ohio State University Med Center

**CVD Fellowship**

Medical College of Wisconsin

- Grew up in Queens, NY
- Worked in commercial real estate during college
- Sports & NHL fan (NY Rangers)

FELLOW GOOD NEWS



(Left to right) Drs. Akash Rusia, Arun Kahlon, and Travis Tagami lead the Beaumont Cardiology Fellowship team to victory in the ACC Michigan Jeopardy competition.



Drs. Akash Rusia and Sati Patel



Dr. Andres Palomo and Gina Greco



FELLOWS AND THEIR NEW  
FOUR LEGGED FRIENDS



Dr. Andres Palomo's new pups Izzie and Lincoln



Dr. Jeff Park's new pup Oakley



Dr. Tom O'Connell and his wife Noami welcomed baby Isabel Grace



Dr. Jeff Park and Diane Weibeler



(Left to right) Daniel Tim, MD; Travis Tagami, DO; Michael Gallagher, MD; Rick Gaines, MD; Tom O’Connell, MD



(Left to right) Ivan Hanson, MD; Jason Schott, DO; Simon Dixon, MBChB; Amy Mertens, DO; Joaquin Cigarroa, MD; Arunpreet Kahlon, MD; Robert Safian, MD



(Left to right) Richard Bloomingdale, MD and Brian Renard, MD

## Congratulations to our 2021 Fellowship graduates

### Clinical Cardiology

Rick Gaines, MD  
Tom O’Connell, MD  
Travis Tagami, DO  
Daniel Tim, MD

### Interventional Cardiology

Joaquin Cigarroa, MD  
Arunpreet Kahlon, MD  
Amy Mertens, DO  
Jeffrey Park, MD  
Jason Schott, DO

### Advanced Imaging

Rick Bloomingdale, MD

### Structural Heart

Brian Renard, MD

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