



2022 Colorado Chapter Awards



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Colorado
Chapter

Laureate Award: Colorado Distinguished Internist Award Jennifer Ziouras, MD, FACP



Jennifer Ziouras is the Senior Medical Director for the IPA and Risk for Optum Care Colorado, which partners with community primary care physicians to help deliver value-based care. She received her bachelor's degree at the University of Chicago, studying the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of the Sciences, and her medical degree from the

University of Chicago. She completed her residency and chief residency at the University of Pittsburgh. She is also a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, a certified executive coach, and a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt.

Dr. Ziouras has a passion for process improvement, leadership development, and patient care. As the Vice President of Operations for the largest multispecialty medical group in Colorado, she led efforts in patient safety, quality, leadership development, patient experience, and improvement in access. She also created a lean operating system in more than 25 primary care clinics, improving on all aspects of the quadruple aim. She served as the ACP local chapter chair for 5 years, creating educational events for the state of Colorado; served on the board for the Movement Disorder Foundation; and has served multiple medical missions for Mwandi Mission Hospital. Dr. Ziouras is happily married and has four wonderful children.

Robert Gibbons Award: Distinguished Medical Educator Karen Chacko, MD, FACP



Karen Chacko grew up in the San Francisco Bay area before moving to San Diego for both undergraduate and medical school. She first moved to Colorado in 1996 to start her internship and residency in the primary care internal medicine program in Denver, Colorado. She stayed on for a year of chief residency and then joined faculty

immediately upon graduation, knowing that she wanted to continue both in academics and to work with learners throughout her career. She started working with the internal medicine residency program shortly after joining faculty, and she served as the program director for the primary care internal medicine residency program for over 15 years, as well as being the senior associate program director for the internal medicine residency program for over 10 years.

Karen currently holds roles as the Associate Dean of Clinical Outreach and the Medical Director of Digital Health for the School of Medicine faculty at the Anschutz Medical Campus in addition to being the Director of Admissions for the CU SOM at CSU Medical Branch Campus. Her greatest joys in her career include caring for her patients (many of whom she has seen for over 20 years) and working with learners at any stage with a focus on career mentorship and personal development.

Most important, Karen is the mother to two wonderful teenage girls, Adele and Isabel, and wife to her husband, Guner, who hails from Montana originally. Her marriage to Guner has brought Karen an amazing stepson, Payton; his wife, Kayla; and now a grandson, Kaysen, to enjoy! In her free time, she enjoys exercising (with a particular addiction to Peloton most recently), cooking, spending time with family, traveling, and card games.

Joel Levine Award: Distinguished Healthcare Advocate Rita Lee, MD, FACP

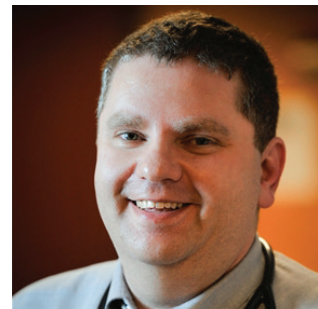


Rita Lee, MD, is a Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. She received her medical degree at the University of California, Los Angeles, and completed internal medicine residency training at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. She has a passion for medical education, leadership

development, and advocacy. She is the Director of Health Systems Science and Health Equity Education and Chair of Health and Society, leading the team focused on integrating health systems science education into the new curriculum. She also serves as the Director of Health Equity Education and Training for the Anschutz Medical Campus. She is core faculty for the ACLGIM LEAD program (a faculty leadership development program) and serves on the SGIM Council and the National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center Advisory Board. Her advocacy work has been primarily around lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender health equity.

Dr. Lee is one of the founding members of the UCHHealth Integrated Transgender Program, a multidisciplinary clinical program to provide gender-affirming care to individuals with gender incongruence. In addition to her clinical work, she has partnered with local advocacy organizations to develop trainings and work toward systems change to improve LGBT health.

Volunteerism and Community Service Award Daniel Witten, MD, FACP



Daniel Witten, MD, FACP, or Dr. Dan, was born in Vilnius, Lithuania, and is a graduate of Vilnius University School of Medicine. He completed his internal medicine residency at SUNY UB, Buffalo, and internal medicine and primary care residency at University of Colorado School of Medicine, Denver. Since 2003, he has been

a founding and managing partner of Ninth Avenue Internal Medicine, LLC, internal medicine practice, which is located on Denver's Rose Medical Center campus. For a decade, Dr. Witten has been traveling as a part of the Operation Walk Denver global charity mission, as well as helping the mission as a social media coordinator.

Dr. Witten was elected as a Board Member of the Denver Medical Society in 2014 and served as Society Treasurer in 2021. He became a Fellow of the American College of Physicians in 2015. In the early days of the pandemic, Dr. Witten's Metro Denver private practice staff became pioneers in joining the CDC and Colorado Department of Public Health COVID-19 vaccination campaign. They organized countless weekend and evening events for not only Dr. Witten's patients but also various and diverse Metro Denver community members. By vaccinating many thousands of patients, he has earned the ACP Colorado Chapter Volunteerism and Community Service Award.

Early Career Physician Award Heather Cassidy, MD, FACP



Dr. Cassidy graduated from Williams College and then from the University of Colorado School of Medicine. She completed her residency training in general internal medicine at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University in 2012. Following residency, she was a Chief Medical Resident at Brown; she joined Brown's Division of General Internal Medicine

from 2013 to 2015, where she piloted a novel resident-faculty primary care co-practice and developed an elective in addiction medicine for internal medicine residents. She subsequently served as an academic hospitalist at the University of Utah Hospital from 2015 to 2016.

In 2016, she joined the fledgling leadership team for the University of Colorado School of Medicine's new Colorado Springs Branch as the Director for Community Engagement. In her role, she worked with nonprofit organizations, advocacy agencies, and school districts to design a year-long service-learning curriculum for the Colorado Springs Branch's third-year medical students. The resultant Clinical and Community Leadership Curriculum paired medical students with community partners across the arc of the core clinical year for the purpose of learning collaborative leadership, community engagement, and public health. She also worked closely with medical students and community leaders to embed a monthly student-led interface into Mission Medical Center, a local safety-net clinic; that collaboration has grown to include prehealth, pharmacy, and medical students and is now in its fifth year of providing free student-led primary care to resource-limited adults in Colorado Springs.

Dr. Cassidy became the Assistant Dean for Community-Based Medical Education for the CU School of Medicine in 2019. In this capacity, she advocates for CU's community-based preceptors and education programs statewide and builds programming to help preceptors achieve excellence and find fulfillment as medical educators. In 2020, she became the co-director of the Colorado Springs Branch Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship.

Her commitment to building connectivity between medical students and their community earned her a Healthcare Hero award from *Springs Magazine*, an Outstanding Physician Award from the El Paso County Medical Society, and recognition as a finalist for the Colorado Springs' Mayor's Young Leaders awards in 2018. She was also honored by her students with selection for Faculty AOA membership (2019) and the Student National Medical Association Faculty Award (2020).