

GW Heart and Vascular Institute e-Newsletter: March 2025

Education

GW Cardiology Support Next Generation of Young Scholars

As part of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) Camp Cardiac Program at ACC's Heart House, GW Cardiology Fellows **Malik Ghawanmeh MD**, **Fotios Gkargkoulas** and **Max Egers** with Professor of Medicine and Director of Noninvasive Cardiology **Dr. Andrew Choi** mentored and taught young scholars in high school and college from across the United States. They taught handheld echocardiographic imaging of the heart - "seeing the live heart". Many of the ACC Young Scholars come from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to inspire students into careers in cardiovascular medicine.



Dr. Andrew Choi (GW faculty), Dr. Fotios Gkargkoulas (GW fellow), & Dr. Malik Ghawanmeh (GW Fellow), with the ACC Young Scholars



GW Heart and Vascular Institute Aims to Revolutionize Nutrition Education for Cardiac Rehabilitation Patients

The GW Heart and Vascular Institute launched an innovative heart-healthy nutrition project for cardiac rehabilitation patients. Cardiac rehabilitation is a 12 week, 3 times a week, exercise program for patients recently hospitalized for myocardial infarction, coronary stenting or coronary bypass. Though a dietician is available for consultation at most rehabilitation centers, only a few patients meet with the dietician. Dr. Richard Katz (Cardiology) and Dr. Timothy Harlan (Director of the GW Culinary Medicine program) are conducting a trial for cardiac rehabilitation patients at the Shady Grove Adventist Hospital Cardiac Rehabilitation Center. Patients are being recruited to participate in our established GW Culinary Medicine hands-on virtual Mediterranean Diet 7 week Saturday 10am to 12:30pm class series run by a dietician and a chef.

Staying Healthy During American Heart Month

As part of American Heart Month, Dr. Andrew Choi, a cardiology specialist at George Washington University, shares valuable advice for protecting your heart in a recent [Q&A](#). With heart disease on the rise, especially among young adults, Dr. Choi stresses the importance of prevention through early lifestyle changes. He highlights key risk factors like obesity, high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol use, and poor diet. To safeguard your heart, Dr. Choi recommends regular exercise, a heart-healthy diet (such as plant-based or Mediterranean), and keeping track of important heart health numbers. He also offers tips for exercising safely during the winter and recognizing the symptoms of a heart attack. Prioritize your heart health this month and beyond!

<https://gwtoday.gwu.edu/q-staying-healthy-during-american-heart-month>

Heart Health Interview with Dr. William Borden

Dr. William Borden (Chief Quality & Population Health Officer at GWU) sat down with Asbury Senior Living Community to [discuss helpful tips on how to live a heart-healthy life!](#)



Cardiology Events

Revolutionary Pulse Field Ablation Procedure Performed at GWUH Offers Safer, More Efficient Treatment for Atrial Fibrillation

George Washington University Hospital (GWUH) has successfully performed a groundbreaking **Pulse Field Ablation (PFA)** procedure, advancing the treatment of **atrial fibrillation (AFib)**. This next-gen technique offers a safer, faster, and more precise alternative to traditional methods.

What Is PFA? PFA uses ultra-short electrical pulses to selectively target AFib-causing heart tissue without damaging surrounding structures. Unlike radiofrequency or cryoablation, PFA is non-thermal, minimizing risk to blood vessels, nerves, and the esophagus.

Advantages Over Traditional Methods:

- **Increased Safety:** Reduced risk of complications like esophageal injury or nerve damage.

- **Faster Procedure:** Shorter procedure times and less anesthesia.
- **Higher Precision:** Targets only the affected heart cells for more effective treatment.
- **Less Pain & Faster Recovery:** Minimizes discomfort due to non-extreme temperatures.

Why It Took Time: Advancements in PFA catheters and mapping technology have enabled precise lesion formation without thermal injury, revolutionizing AFib care.

Who Benefits? Ideal for patients with drug-resistant AFib seeking long-term solutions.

The Team Leading the Way: Performed by GWUH's expert electrophysiology team, including Dr. Cynthia Tracy, the procedure offers advanced arrhythmia care.

Physician Perspective

"Pulse Field Ablation is a breakthrough in AFib treatment, combining safety, speed, and precision in a way that was not possible with previous techniques. We are excited to offer this new therapy at GWUH and expect it to become a mainstay in the management of AFib, providing better outcomes for our patients." – Dr. Cynthia Tracy

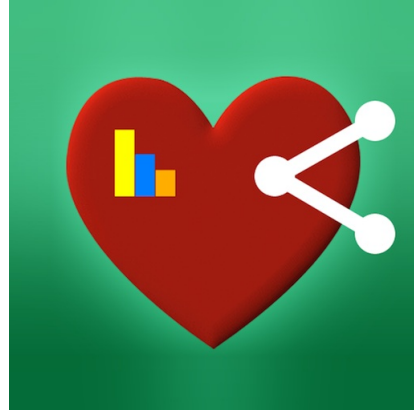
Community Service

GW HVI Promotes Hypertension Treatment in the DC Community

With support from the GW HVI, Dr. Richard Katz is mentoring Coolidge High School, students in the Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) track in a new project ***Implementation and Support of a Free Cell Phone APP for Patients with Hypertension***. Students have been trained in how to teach home blood pressures technique and act as “digital advisors” on how to download and use a free app (SmartBP) for monitoring blood pressure. The app records and classifies a patient’s blood pressures, sends reminders to take their pills and to check their blood pressure, and can email their data to their medical providers. The GW HVI has provided free automatic blood pressure devices to the students to give out to participants. This is an innovative project using high school students to assist DC patients in their community with a chronic medical condition.



Dr. Richard Katz with student from Coolidge High School



SmartBP App

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