ASCI/AAIM/BWF
Physician-Scientist Pathways
Annual Workshop

Sunday, April 19, 2026
7:00 am-12:00 pm Central
Swissôtel, Chicago

Room: Lucerne

How to navigate, mentor, and support physician-scientists in an evolving federal and academic environment

Click or scan here for our pre-Workshop survey:

This Workshop is generously supported by

ASCI/AAIM/BWF Physician-Scientist Pathways Annual Workshop
Sunday, April 19, 2026, Swissôtel, Chicago

Thank you for participating in the 2026 ASCI/AAIM/BWF Physician-Scientist Pathways Annual Workshop. Our purpose today is to gather those engaged in training physician-scientists at the pre- and postgraduate levels, including faculty, junior faculty, postdoctoral trainees, and staff, to share best practices, network and explore the theme ***How to navigate, mentor, and support physician-scientists in an evolving federal and academic environment.***

Agenda:

7:00 am – Welcome; review of last year's output; and pre-meeting survey – Kyu Rhee, MD, PhD, Emily Gallagher, MD, PhD, and Christopher S. Williams, MD, PhD

7:15 am –

Perspectives on philanthropy, NIH priorities, industry partnerships and the physician-scientist
Organized by Keith Choate, MD, PhD, and David Mankoff, MD, PhD

Moderator

Victor J. Dzau, MD
President of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), formerly the Institute of Medicine (IOM); Vice Chair of the National Research Council; Chancellor Emeritus and James B. Duke Distinguished Professor of Medicine at Duke University; and past President and CEO of the Duke University Health System.

Victor J. Dzau, MD, is an internationally acclaimed physician-scientist and leader whose work has improved health and medicine in the United States and globally.

Keynote Panelists

Sindy Escobar Alvarez, PhD
Program Director for Medical Research, Doris Duke Foundation

Sindy Escobar Alvarez, PhD, directs the Doris Duke Foundation's Medical Research Program, where she drives efforts to reimagine how medical research can fairly and rigorously advance better health outcomes. Under her leadership, the program has evolved to focus on high-impact initiatives, including transforming how race is considered in clinical research, and forging pathways to support novel research to prevent and treat disease while prioritizing patient impact. Previously a senior program officer at the foundation, Dr. Escobar Alvarez brought her expertise in therapeutic development and biochemistry to shape strategies that now define the program's bold, equity-centered agenda. Her leadership has catalyzed support for physician-scientists and fueled critical research in sickle cell disease.

A respected voice in the field, she has contributed to national dialogue through publications and speaking engagements. She is a current member of the Civic Science Funders Collaborative Steering Committee and past chair of the Health Research Alliance board, and has served on advisory panels for the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) and Vivli. She earned her PhD from Weill Cornell Medicine and trained at the Sloan Kettering Institute.

(Keynote Panelists, continued)

Kenneth R. Chien, MD, PhD
Co-founder, Moderna; Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the Swedish Research Council, Karolinska Institutet

Kenneth R. Chien, MD, PhD, is an internationally recognized academic leader in teaching, leadership, and innovative roles in notable medical programs around the world, as well as having over 35 years of experience in biotechnology as a Board Member and/or Senior Advisor (Genentech, Roche, Pfizer, GSK, Wyeth, Pictet Biotech Fund, EQT Private Equity, AstraZeneca [AZ], etherna, etc.). He is the Co-Founder of Moderna Therapeutics and discovered, designed, and developed the first-time-in-human mRNA therapeutic (Nature, 2019) VEGF mRNA in a joint collaboration between his lab, Moderna, and AZ. The work helped to create the infrastructure and platform that led to the pioneering of a new generation of transformative medicines for patients, most notably the production of mRNA-1273, a vaccine candidate against COVID-19. Continuous advances in mRNA science, delivery technology and manufacturing are empowering a new generation of therapeutics and vaccines for infectious diseases, immuno-oncology, rare diseases, cardiovascular diseases, and autoimmune and inflammatory diseases. A seminal review of the area was published in Nature Biotechnology in 2022.

Dr. Chien received a Presidential appointment as a Professor to Karolinska Institutet in 2013, and previously was the Charles and Elizabeth Ann Sanders Professor in the Department of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology at Harvard University. For his scientific work, he has received several awards, including The Pasarow Award and The Walter B. Cannon Award from the American Physiological Society; is Foreign Member Elect to the Austrian Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Norwegian Academy of Sciences; and holds an honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of Edinburgh.

Bruce J. Tromberg, PhD
Director of the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), National Institutes of Health

Bruce J. Tromberg, PhD, is the Director of the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB) at the NIH, where he oversees research programs focused on developing, translating, and commercializing engineering, physical science, and computational technologies in biology and medicine. He leads NIBIB's Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics technology (RADx Tech) initiative, established in 2020 to increase SARS-COV-2 testing capacity and performance and broadened in 2023 to include over-the-counter and point-of-care devices for additional diseases and conditions. His laboratory, the Section on Biomedical Optics in the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), develops portable, bedside, non-contact, and wearable technologies for quantitative sensing and imaging of tissue composition and metabolism. Prior to joining the NIH in January 2019, Dr. Tromberg was a professor of biomedical engineering and surgery at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). During his 30-year academic career, Dr. Tromberg served in multiple leadership roles, including director of UCI's Beckman Laser Institute and Medical Clinic, principal investigator of the Laser Microbeam and Medical Program, an NIH National Biomedical Technology Center; and co-founder of UCI's Department of Biomedical Engineering. Dr. Tromberg specializes in the development of optics and photonics technologies for biomedical imaging and therapy. He has co-authored more than 450 publications and holds 29 patents on topics ranging from new technology development to clinical translation, validation, and commercialization of devices. Dr. Tromberg is a Fellow of the International Society of Optical Engineering, Optica, and the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering, and is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Engineering, and the National Academy of Inventors.

ASCI/AAIM/BWF Physician-Scientist Pathways Annual Workshop
Sunday, April 19, 2026, Swissôtel, Chicago

8:15 am – Early Investigators Panel: Moderators: Emily Gallagher, MD, PhD, and Daniel P. Cook, MD, PhD

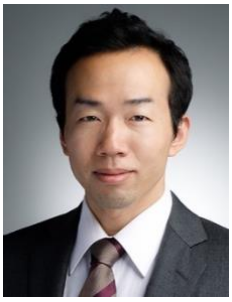
Overcoming challenges as an early-career investigator

Panelists:

Elizabeth B. Burgener, MD, is a pediatric pulmonologist and physician-scientist. She is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Pediatric Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine at Keck School of Medicine at University of Southern California. She is the Associate Director of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's Therapeutic Development Network Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. She cares for patients with pulmonary disease such as cystic fibrosis, asthma, bronchopulmonary dysplasia and other systemic illnesses that affect pulmonary health. In her laboratory at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, she conducts a translational research program focused on chronic airway infection. She is interested in understanding the interaction of bacteriophages and antibiotic resistance in chronic bacterial airway infections. She seeks to bring new therapies to individuals with chronic airway infections. Her work is currently funded by the National Institutes of Health as well as the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Brett Heimlich, MD, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Cardio-Oncology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), where he directs the Southeast's only dedicated cardiovascular clinic for clonal hematopoiesis of indeterminate potential (CHIP). His research program integrates single-cell genomics and molecular genetics to understand how somatic mutations drive cardiovascular disease and inform the development of precision therapies for cardiovascular diseases. His work is funded through the NIH, Department of Veterans Affairs, a foundation career development award, industry partners, as well as support provided by VUMC.

Rachel Knipe, MD, is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School. Dr. Knipe is a physician-scientist with a clinical practice focusing on the care of critically ill patients and those with pulmonary diseases including interstitial lung disease. Her research program focuses on uncovering mechanisms of pulmonary fibrosis, especially on areas in which the lung microvasculature contributes to the development and progression of lung fibrosis. She has a basic and translational lab that uses preclinical models of disease including transgenic mouse models and human tissue ex vivo to probe mechanistic questions into ways in which endothelial dysfunction leads to vascular permeability and promotes profibrotic signaling in the lung. She has received support from the NIH through K08, R03 and R01 awards. She has also received support from the American Thoracic Society Foundation, the National Scleroderma Foundation, and the NIH Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Academia/Industry Joint funding programs.



Makoto Mori, MD, PhD, is a cardiac surgeon and physician-scientist at Yale School of Medicine, where he serves as Assistant Professor of Surgery and faculty at the Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation. His research focuses on the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning approaches to improve clinical decision-making and surgical outcomes in cardiovascular disease. Dr. Mori's work integrates multimodal data to develop predictive models and real-time decision support tools for cardiac surgery. His broader interests include distributed clinical AI, outcomes research, and the translation of data science innovations into surgical practice.

ASCI/AAIM/BWF Physician-Scientist Pathways Annual Workshop
Sunday, April 19, 2026, Swissôtel, Chicago

9:15 am – Break | Networking | Group Photo

9:30 am – Open Mic Q&A – Moderator: Jatin Vyas, MD, PhD

10:15 am – Breakout Sessions – Moderators: Ashley Steed, MD, PhD, and Christopher Pittenger, MD, PhD

1. How are we maintaining support for what we do?
Moderators: Kyu Rhee, MD, PhD, and Oliver Eickelberg, MD; scribe/presenter: David Mankoff, MD, PhD

2. Community outreach and engagement/communicating to the public
Moderators: Don C. Rockey, MD, and Charles W. Emala, MS, MD; scribe/presenter: Jatin Vyas, MD, PhD

3. Strategies for advising our trainees/resilience
Moderators: Talia Swartz, MD, PhD, and Peter Gruber, MD, PhD; scribe/presenter: Olujimi Ajijola, MD, PhD

4. If we started over: reimagining the training pathway for physician-scientists
Moderators: Audrea Burns, PhD, and Misty Good, MD, MS; scribe/presenter: Daniel P. Cook, MD, PhD

11:15 am – Break | Networking | Time for breakout groups to synthesize their conversations

11:30 am – Breakout Session report out

11:55 am – Closing Remarks – Ashley Steed, MD, PhD

Workshop Planning Committee

Committee Chairs:
Keith Choate, MD, PhD, Yale School of Medicine
Emily Gallagher, MD, PhD, Mount Sinai
Ashley Steed, MD, PhD, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis
Christopher S. Williams, MD, PhD, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Committee Members:
Olujimi Ajijola, MD, PhD, University of California, Los Angeles
Rajendra Apte, MD, PhD, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis
Rebecca M. Baron, MD, Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital
Audrea Burns, PhD, Baylor College of Medicine
Paige Cooper Byas, PhD, Burroughs Wellcome Fund
Daniel P. Cook, MD, PhD, University of Iowa
Holger K. Eltzschig, MD, PhD, McGovern Medical School, University of Texas
Charles W. Emala, MS, MD, Columbia University
Peter J. Gruber, MD, PhD, Yale School of Medicine
Marshall Horwitz, MD, PhD, University of Washington
Patrick J. Hu, MD, PhD, University of Colorado Anschutz
David Mankoff, MD, PhD, University of Pennsylvania
Christopher Pittenger, MD, PhD, Yale School of Medicine
Kyu Rhee, MD, PhD, Weill Cornell Medicine
Don C. Rockey, MD, Medical University of South Carolina
Tiffany C. Scharschmidt, MD, University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine
Talia Swartz, MD, PhD, Mount Sinai
Jatin Vyas, MD, PhD, Columbia University

Thank you for attending the
2026 ASCI/AAIM/BWF Physician-Scientist Pathways Annual Workshop

We request your participation in an evaluation of this Workshop.
Your feedback will help us improve our future efforts on behalf of pre- & post-graduate–level physician-scientists. Access the survey by clicking or scanning here:

This Workshop is generously supported by