The Internal Medicine Residency Program
at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth

“Our program cultivates compassionate, patient-centered physicians dedicated to professional excellence. We develop outstanding officers and future leaders in Navy Medicine prepared for independent and operational practice.”

From the Program Director

In 2013, we assembled a working group to chart a course for the future of our training program. The mission statement you’ve just read is a result of that collaborative process and serves to remind us of our guiding principles as we continue to lead Navy Internal Medicine through educational innovation. If these ideas resonate with you, perhaps you should join our team.

Personally, I believe great physicians are able to see patients as people. My goal is for our program to help you learn how to treat the whole patient, not just their disease, and we’re building a comprehensive program with that goal in mind.

Our program invests in the development of our trainees and is continually improving through feedback from them. I believe in appreciating and playing to people’s strengths while also ensuring that everyone meets or exceeds a standard of competence before graduating from our program. Since 2013, our Clinical Competency Committee has evolved to provide a robust system of meaningful feedback and evaluation using the wisdom and experience of the physicians and nurses who make up its membership and meet with each trainee on a semiannual basis. In 2015-16 we developed a Clinical Orientation curriculum to support our trainees who were preparing to begin their clinical leadership positions as PGY-2s, whether they were coming directly from internship or returning to us from an operational medicine tour. In 2016-17 we implemented a formal mentoring program to match trainees with invested faculty members based on shared interests, and in 2017-18 we began a new seminar series aimed at recognizing diversity as a valuable component of any robust medical education program. In 2018-19 we’re excited to provide trainees with weekly half-day academic sessions designed to facilitate small group learning and didactic teaching sessions, while remaining free from clinical duties. All of these initiatives have grown from ideas and suggestions made by our trainees!

Our program also invests in the development of our faculty and those who design and lead your educational experiences. I personally play a role in faculty development for all teachers at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, and we have reorganized our program’s leadership structure to allow me to do this in a more focused way for our program faculty. In 2015-16 the program supported a complete redesign of our scheduling structure and converted to a 4+1 model (4 weeks of a rotation followed by 1 week dedicated to continuity clinic) to facilitate a more comprehensive experience from which to learn the practice of outpatient general internal medicine. In 2016-17 we went a step further and with the support of our institution, developed a group of academic general internists to perform the bulk of the teaching of inpatient and outpatient general internal medicine, while also having dedicated time to develop scholarly projects alongside trainees like you!

Although our training program is one of the oldest in the country (1951), our team is going places! I’m confident that our program will provide you with the best training experience in the Navy. After completing my internship here in 2007, it’s been exciting for me to be a part of our program’s evolution.

I invite you to join us!

[Signature]
Learning

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is located in the Hampton Roads region of southeastern Virginia. This area is home to the Navy’s Atlantic Fleet, and Naval Station Norfolk is the largest Naval base in the world. We serve over 450,000 Tricare beneficiaries, which offers our trainees a broad exposure to patients with common and uncommon illnesses alike.

Our curriculum is revised based on the recommendations of the Internal Medicine Education Committee, made up of faculty and PGY1-3 representatives selected by their peers. We seek to innovate and constantly improve the educational product that we deliver. Results of this process have recently yielded a standardized way to deliver curricular content across rotations via an online learning platform (Sakai), an elective in bedside ultrasound, a resident-led, evidenced-based curriculum for teaching Inpatient GIM topics (“T-time”), and what we consider the crown jewel of our program, the Outpatient GIM continuity clinic experience, where trainees enjoy a longitudinal doctoring and learning experience shared between the patient, trainee, and outpatient GIM faculty preceptor.

Trainees move through the curriculum on a 4+1 schedule. This allows them to learn outpatient GIM in their continuity clinic for a week at a time every 5th week (the +1), followed by 4 weeks of an inpatient rotation or outpatient electives. Experiential learning is complemented by a daily case-based morning report, and a once-weekly half-day academic session. This provides protected time for didactics and small group learning activities in separate sessions for PGY1s and PGY2-3s. Trainees also participate in twice-monthly activities in the NMCP Simulation Center.

We deliver a diverse training experience both within, and beyond the Military Health System. Believing that the best physicians have a strong foundation in both outpatient and inpatient medicine, we are consistently balancing these learning environments. Beyond Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, all of our PGY2-3 trainees spend two months rotating through the ICU at Norfolk General and a month-long experience in geriatric medicine hosted by Eastern Virginia Medical School. We also support trainees interested in taking advantage of research electives, specific off-service electives and opportunities available in international health and tropical medicine.

Trainees complete two scholarly projects and participate in a quality improvement initiative during their three years with our program. Depending on each trainee’s level of interest and initiative, the results of these projects range from clinical vignettes presented at local meetings to peer-reviewed publications and national presentations.
Dedication to professional excellence includes a commitment to your personal well-being and using time in training to develop a balance that works for you. To this end, we like to celebrate all that Hampton Roads has to offer. Trainees live in Portsmouth and the surrounding areas of Norfolk, Chesapeake and Virginia Beach. Some spend 5 minutes walking to work each day, and no one has a commute of more than 30-40 minutes. With the lowest cost of living of any of the Navy’s three largest MTFs, many trainees opt to purchase a home during their time in our program. We have designed our rotation schedule to maximize the amount of call-free weekends trainees can use to take advantage of all that is available in the local Hampton Roads area. The program supports a weekly social gathering, which is organized and advertised by the residents rotating on their +1 week. All trainees, family members, rotating students and departmental faculty are invited to attend these events. At the end of each academic year, trainees look forward to our departmental Dining Out, where we honor our graduates and teachers. We begin each academic year with a traditional Hail & Fairwell hosted by the program leadership, which allows trainees to meet and mingle with faculty and the newest members of the training program in an informal social setting. In keeping with recently updated ACGME requirements, the program also provides formal curricular elements focused on physician well-being. Trainees receive yearly formal lectures on burnout in academic medicine, and trainee well-being is formally assessed by program leadership on a semi-annual basis. Our institution provides faculty and trainees support through a provider wellness program. We also hope to expand our wellness curriculum with a broader range of activities for both trainees and faculty in the coming years.

**A sample of activities & destinations within 1hr of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth**

Virginia Beach Oceanfront (beaches, boardwalk, art & music festivals)
First Landing State Park (beach, hiking, camping)
>30 local festivals and >50 local road races
Eclectic dining options and >10 craft breweries
Botanical Gardens
Multiple museums (air, space, art, aquarium, science & children’s)
Multiple music venues
Town Point Park (waterside art & music festivals)
Local zoo
Outer Banks, North Carolina
Historic Triangle (Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown) history tours, shopping
Local sports (including baseball & hockey)
Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge (hiking and biking trails)
Multiple theme & water parks
After Graduation

Our PGY1 graduates are well suited to continue on to complete their categorical training in Internal Medicine, or use the critical thinking skills they learned during their IM internship as a preliminary training year prior to further GME training in specialties like anesthesia, emergency medicine, radiology and dermatology. We encourage all trainees to use their PGY1 elective time to help them meet their specific career goals. Many of our trainees also opt to serve the fleet in an operational medicine setting prior to returning to complete their residency training with us.

We ensure that our PGY3 graduates are successful wherever they land, and we take an active role in mentoring them through the process of negotiating their next duty station as a general internist. By facilitating their longitudinal relationships with faculty mentors who share similar scholarly and clinical interests, we also ensure our graduates are highly sought after during the fellowship selection process, should they opt to pursue that path.

Our leadership team

Our Department Chair, CAPT Karl Kronmann, is board certified in Internal Medicine and Infectious Disease. He has an interest in tropical medicine and regularly teaches military tropical medicine to residents, staff physicians and allied healthcare professionals. His operational experiences include a deployment aboard the USNS COMFORT, and he was the officer in charge of a research detachment in Accra, Ghana, where he conducted research on a malaria vaccine, influenza in tropical countries and Lassa virus.

Our Program Director, CDR Justin Lafreniere, is a board certified General Internist who graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine and completed his residency training at NMCP before pursuing a fellowship in General Internal Medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. There, he developed an expertise in medical education and faculty development and scholarly interests in burnout in graduate medical education, patient-centered care & humanism in medicine. His operational experience includes a deployment to Joint Task Force, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He served as an Associate Program Director until being selected to assume the role of Program Director in 2016.

CDR Mike Kavanaugh is the Associate Program Director for Faculty and Curricular Affairs and is board certified in Infectious Disease and Critical Care Medicine. He is a prior line officer with operational medicine experience as a flight surgeon, and deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan. His scholarly interests include quality improvement in the intensive care unit and tropical medicine.

LCDR Ben Vipler is the Associate Program Director for Resident Trainees and is a board certified General Internist. He graduated from the University of Miami and completed his residency training at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. He supported humanitarian relief efforts in Puerto Rico while aboard the USNS COMFORT and has received numerous teaching awards at the local and national levels.

LCDR Peter McIntyre is the Associate Program Director for Intern Trainees and is board certified in Internal Medicine and Endocrinology. His operational experience includes a deployment to Joint Task Force, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Prior to his selection as an Associate Program Director, he served as the department’s HPSP medical student clerkship director. His scholarly interests include general endocrinology.
How to join us

We hope you’ll stop by to say ‘hi’ if you are in or around Naval Medical Center Portsmouth at any time of the year. Dr. Lafreniere and the Chief of Residents both have offices located with the Internal Medicine Clinic on the second floor of Building 2. Our Program Coordinator, Ms. Delilah Roman, has an office located in the GME suite on the third floor of Building 3.

The program hosts PGY1 and PGY2 applicants on formal interview days throughout the July-October application season. These days begin with a light breakfast with the PD, APDs and Chief of Residents during a group information session, and include a tour of the facility and the IM spaces by the Chief, an informal lunch with current trainees, a visit to our noon conference session, a question & answer session with the PD about the Navy GME process, and formal interviews with a member of the program leadership team.

The residency application and selection process is equally important to both the trainee as well as the residency program. These interview days are designed to give you the best ‘look’ at your future training program and allow us a chance to get to know you. **To that end, we encourage applicants to make every effort to attend one of these days (listed below) to complete their interview.** Requests for interviews by phone or outside of our interview day schedule should be reserved for extenuating circumstances. Please reserve your spot by contacting our Program Coordinator using the information provided below. At that time, we ask you to also forward her a copy of your CV and personal statement (and any additional application materials you would like to send), so that we may review them in advance of your visit with us. We are all very much looking forward to meeting and working with you!

A sample of recent peer-reviewed scholarship by our faculty and trainees


Quick facts about NMCP IM

| 19 PGY1 trainees selected for training/yr |
| 9 PGY2 trainees selected for training/yr |
| ABIM pass rate = 92% (2015-2017) |
| >50 departmental faculty |

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Interview Days 2018


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