

News from Calgary

By May Choi, MD, MPH, FRCPC; and Nicole Johnson, MD, FRCPC

Calgary's division has continued to grow tremendously over the last few years. This includes the appointment of our new Division Chief for Adult Rheumatology, Dr. Maggie Larché, as well as our Interim Division Chief for Pediatric Rheumatology, Dr. Jaime Blackwood. We have also added several new faculty members, including Drs. Azin Rouhi, Syed Bukhari, and Ambika Gupta, and welcomed back our fellows following post-graduate training, Eugene Krustev and Alexandra Kobza. In 2025, the pediatric team welcomed Dr. John Storwick, who will incorporate point-of-care ultrasound in the pediatric clinics. A couple of years ago, Dr. Jeanine McColl joined the team and continues her scholarly work in transition care. This new generation of rheumatologists brings diverse expertise and skill sets that strongly complement our division, particularly in the areas of lupus, myositis, and psoriatic arthritis.

We celebrated the retirement of Dr. Gary Morris last year after stepping down as Interim Division Chief. Dr. Frank Jirik also retired from clinical practice but continues to work on exciting research at the University. We were deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. Ray Lewkonja, whose contributions to the division and to the care of patients were highly valued and will be long remembered.

We also saw three wonderful rheumatologists, Drs. Jason Lee, Ali Shams, and Greg Koller, leave the city to pursue clinical practice opportunities elsewhere in the country. The Pediatric team saw transitions as well. Dr. Paivi Miettunen has assumed the position of Consultant Rheumatologist at Cambridge Uni-



Members of the Division of Rheumatology at the 2025 CRA Meeting in Calgary, Alberta. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Steven Thomson)

versity Hospitals in the United Kingdom. Similarly, Dr. Susa Benseler transitioned to the role of Chief Academic Officer and Head of Paediatric Health Affairs, Children's Health Ireland. Their dedication, expertise, and collegiality made a meaningful impact on our division, and we wish them continued success in their future endeavours. They will be greatly missed, and we wish them every success in the next chapter of their lives.

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The Latest in Edmonton

By Stephanie Keeling, MD, MSc, FRCPC

For better and for worse, lots has changed in Edmonton in the post-COVID era.

Dr. Steven Katz was formally appointed in 2023 as the Divisional Director of Rheumatology and Edmonton Zone Rheumatology Section Lead for Alberta Health Services. Steven continued to grow the division over his time as our Division Head, fostering growth by recruiting new rheumatologists, mentoring trainees, and working with our colleagues at the University of Calgary (e.g., Dr. Claire Barber) to promote initiatives to improve electronic medical records, triage and access to care. This culminated in Steven's 2026 CRA award for leadership which was very well deserved. For family reasons, Steven left in the fall of 2025 to join the Division of Rheumatology at Queen's University and is becoming their Division Head. He leaves behind enormous shoes to fill. Frankly, my feet are wide but not quite so big (I am currently the interim Divisional Director in his place).

We have seen successes by our colleagues. Dr. Carrie Ye was awarded the 2024 Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Early Career Investigator Award in Cancer, as well as two CIHR grants in immuno-oncology and artificial intelligence in rheumatology. Dr. Mo Osman has continued his work in scleroderma, inflammatory myopathies, long COVID and lupus with many accolades, including winning the 2025 Lupus Canada Catalyst award and 2026 CRA Early Career Investigator Award.

Drs. Dylan Johnson and Whitney Hung have joined the University of Alberta Division of Rheumatology and have assumed many responsibilities, from teaching of multi-level learners to improving our huge wait times with their clinical acumen. Dr. Justin Smith also returned to the Division and joined the Lupus Clinic of Northern Alberta (LUNA) after spending a year with Dr. Zahi

Touma and colleagues at the Toronto Lupus Clinic with a Geoff Carr Lupus fellowship. Our community colleagues continue to support northern Alberta, and we have welcomed Dr. Oke Anuoluwapu from the United Kingdom to join the division.

While her life was commemorated in the spring 2025 issue of the Journal of the Canadian Rheumatology Association, the November 2024 loss of Daniah Basodan, Pediatric Rheumatologist at the University of Alberta, devastated the entire rheumatology community, including patients from the University of Alberta and beyond. Our colleagues in Pediatric Rheumatology (Drs. Dax Rumsey, Tara McGrath, Audrea Chen, Lillian Lim) continue to feel the depth of this loss but have worked tirelessly to continue to help the pediatric rheumatology patients of northern Alberta.

For the better – several colleagues and trainees have been blessed with healthy new babies in 2025-2026, including Drs. Shahad Al-Matar, Dr. Lillian Lim and Dr. Latifa Aljabar.

So, in grief and goodbyes we have also found joy and support amongst colleagues and remained unified – even in the province of Alberta.

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The University of Alberta's Division of Rheumatology at the Farewell Party for Dr. Steven Katz in June 2025.