University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery Fellowship

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**Program Description**

Our fellowship program in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery at the University of North Carolina is a three-year program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). One fellow is accepted at the first year level each year. The educational objectives are:

1) To prepare fellows to provide excellent clinical care, both medical and surgical, in the comprehensive evaluation and management of women with pelvic floor disorders, including urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, neurogenic bladder, defecatory dysfunction, fecal incontinence, and complex benign conditions such as vesicovaginal and rectovaginal fistulas and congenital anomalies.

2) To provide the fundamental research and analytical skills necessary for a successful career as an academic leader in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery and to nurture a drive towards independent scientific investigation.

3) To promote skills in teaching, curriculum development, and leadership essential for excellence as future educators, mentors, and leaders in our field.

We aim to train FPMRS subspecialists while promoting the academic goals of teaching and research within this rapidly advancing subspecialty. This goal is accomplished through a multidisciplinary team approach to patient care involving nationally and internationally recognized experts in GI Medicine, Urology, Colorectal Surgery, and Neurology. Our diverse patient population allows for training opportunities in multiple surgical modalities including vaginal, abdominal, laparoscopic, and robotic approaches. In addition, the medical care offered to patients allows for advanced training in physical therapy, pain management, neuromodulation, and pharmacotherapy. This collaborative effort encourages a diverse range of clinical and scientific viewpoints and experiences.
The School of Medicine at the University of North Carolina and UNC Healthcare comprise North Carolina’s most comprehensive public center for medical care, health careers, education and biomedical research. The UNC Department of OB/GYN also has a very strong research program and was ranked #6 nationally for NIH funding this year. The close association with the nationally recognized UNC School of Public Health further expands the quality and diversity of opportunities available. The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UNC is one of only a few departments in the nation with fellowships in all recognized Ob/Gyn subspecialties. The residency program, ranked as the #2 OB/GYN residency program in the nation, recruits outstanding physicians from across the country and is fully staffed with 7 residents in each year.

**A major strength of the program is the diversity of experience and expertise within the faculty.**

**Core Faculty**

**Jennifer M. Wu, MD, MPH** is a Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Division Director of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She earned her B.A. in Biology from Harvard University and her M.D. from the University of California at San Francisco. She trained in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Brigham and Women’s Hospital & Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA and then completed a fellowship in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Concurrently, she completed the NIH T32 Triangle Clinical Research Fellowship in Reproductive Health and received her Masters in Public Health in Epidemiology at the UNC School of Public Health. After graduating from fellowship in 2007, she served on the faculty at Duke University until 2013, when she decided to rejoin the UNC-Chapel Hill Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Dr. Wu is a former Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health (BIRCWH) K12 scholar and was then funded by a NICHD K23 career development award to evaluate the genetic epidemiology of pelvic floor disorders. She is actively involved with NIH-funded studies, industry-sponsored trials and investigator-initiated studies. She is involved nationally as a board member of the American Urogynecologic Society and as Assistant Editor of the *Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery* journal. She assumed the role of Division Director in February 2018 and had previously served as interim Division Director from 2015-2016. As the Division Director, her vision is to be a premier division of FPMRS which provides outstanding clinical and surgical care, trains future leaders in FPMRS and conducts innovative research.

**Elizabeth Geller, MD** is an Associate Professor as well as Fellowship Program Director and Medical Director of the Rex Office in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She is board-certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Duke University, then completed medical school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and residency in Ob/Gyn at the University of California at Irvine. She completed her Fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2008. She has established an expertise in robotic and minimally invasive surgery and is a member of UNC’s Computer and Robotic Enhanced Surgery (CARES) Center, where she chairs the Education Committee. She is Ob/Gyn Clerkship Director for the Physician Assistants Training Program. She also directs the Interstim Neuromodulation Program and serves on the UNC Data Safety Monitoring Board. Her national leadership roles include the position of Vice Chair of the AUGS Program Directors Committee, membership on the AUGS Program Committee, and Programming Chair for the AUGS Fellows Day held during the AUGS annual scientific meeting. During residency at the University of California at Irvine she also served as Chief Administrative Resident, ACOG Section Chair, and Lead Fellow for the AUGS Fellows Task Force. Her teaching excellence is demonstrated by receiving the Berlex Best Teaching Resident Award at UC-Irvine, the Fellows Teaching Award at UNC and the annual Golden Tar Heel Teaching Award as faculty at UNC. Her research interests include clinical outcomes with robotic pelvic reconstructive surgery, minimally
invasive surgery for incontinence and pelvic floor dysfunction, neuromodulation, cognitive function with the use of anticholinergics, and predictors of chronic pain after mesh implant.

**AnnaMarie Connolly, MD** is a Distinguished Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery and also serves as the Vice Chair for Education, the Residency Program Director, and the Education Division Director. She is board-certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and FPMRS and completed her fellowship in Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery at the University of North Carolina. Her areas of research include nationally recognized work in medical education as well as work on the effects of pregnancy and childbirth on the pelvic floor, particularly on voiding function and anal sphincter integrity after delivery. Dr. Connolly’s commitment to education has also been recognized by both the School of Medicine and the University with multiple awards and leadership roles. For the past 13 years, she has served as the Director of the UNC-CH Teaching Scholars Program, a monthly educational faculty development seminar series for 12-15 participating faculty members from the School of Medicine. On the national level, she serves as the Vice Chair for the ACGME OBGYN Review Committee and is a Board Examiner for the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She is the immediate past Council Chair of the AUGS Education Council and serves as the co-director of both the ACOG Robert C. Cefalo Leadership Institute as well as the CREOG Residents As Teachers and Leaders Program. With support of the Foundation for Exxcellence in Women’s Health Research, Dr. Connolly is responsible for the development of the myTIPreport program, a web-based program for “real-time” work-place feedback on milestones and surgical skills currently in use nationally in over 150 residency and fellowship programs of 20 specialties including OB/GYN, FPMRS, other OB/GYN subspecialties, as well as other specialties such as Urology, Plastic Surgery, General Surgery, Colorectal Surgery, Anesthesia, and Diagnostic Radiology as well as other specialties.

**Alexis Dieter, MD** is an Assistant Professor and Research Director in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. Originally from Boulder, Colorado, Dr. Dieter completed her undergraduate studies at MIT with a major in Brain and Cognitive Science and obtained her M.D. from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. She completed her internship in OB/GYN at NYU and in 2009 she moved to North Carolina where she completed her OB/GYN residency and then her FPMRS fellowship at Duke University. Her areas of surgical expertise include robotic-assisted and vaginal reconstructive surgery both with and without mesh augmentation, as well as neuromodulation procedures including sacral neuromodulation. She is nationally involved as a member of the AUGS Scientific Committee and the SGS Systematic Review Group. She is the Director of the FPMRS clinical clerkships for medical students. Her current research focuses on perioperative outcome optimization, overactive bladder pathophysiology and treatment, stress urinary incontinence therapy, and exploring the role of the urinary microbiome in lower urinary tract disorders.

**Ellen C. Wells, MD** is an Associate Professor and Medical Director of the Hillsborough Office in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She is the Past President for the N.C. Obstetrical and Gynecological Society and previous Division Director and Fellowship Program Director of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery at UNC. She joined the faculty in 1993 and led the development of the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery, which has seen dramatic and consistent growth in research, clinical, diagnostic and surgical care volume during her tenure. She initiated the fellowship program at UNC, which became the sixth fellowship in Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery recognized by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1997 and transitioned to being jointly accredited by the American Board of Urology under the new title: Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. Dr. Wells has extensive clinical knowledge and research experience in female pelvic floor disorders including urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse and lower GI dysfunction. Her research has been supported by external funding from a number of sources including NIH and the pharmaceutical
industry. She was a co-investigator and principal gynecologist for the UNC site of the NIH sponsored Women’s Health Initiative for 10 years and a co-investigator at the UNC site of the Pelvic Floor Disorders Network for 5 years. Other previous research areas include trials in medical management of incontinence, efficacy of biofeedback therapy, hormonal influences in post-menopausal women, and effects of childbirth and parturition on the pelvic floor. Current interest includes outcome measures for efficacy of prolapse surgeries, physical activities in women undergoing and after prolapse surgery, and alternative treatments for overactive bladder.

**Dr. Marcella Willis-Gray, MD** joined our Division in August 2018 as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Willis-Gray grew up in Chesapeake, VA and went to Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans where she obtained a degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. She went on to attended medical school at the University of Virginia and then came to the triangle to complete her residency in OB/GYN at Duke University. She completed her fellowship in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery here at UNC. Her areas of surgical expertise include laparoscopic sacrocolpopexy, vaginal reconstructive repair, and sacral neuromodulation. She has a specific interest in medical education and leads the Medical Student Clinical Clerkship. Dr. Willis-Gray is also passionate about health care disparities and increasing diversity within medicine. She is an active member of the UNC OB/GYN Diversity Task Force. Her research interests include clinical outcomes research, postoperative recovery and minimizing opioid medication usage.

**Maggie Wilkins, NP** is a Clinical Nurse Practitioner in Women’s Health in the Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. She received her undergraduate Nursing degree from Clemson University and received her graduate Nurse Practitioner degree from Emory University. She previously worked at Duke University as the Urogynecology Lead Nurse for 3 years and worked in the Duke OB/GYN Department assisting with gynecology consultations. Ms. Wilkins is excited to return to this specialty - in large part due to the patient population and focus on improving quality of life. As a nurse practitioner, she hopes to build on this knowledge, play an active role in research, and explore her clinical interests in sexual dysfunction.

**Kristy Borawski, MD** is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Department of Urology. Dr. Borawski received her Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine in a combined BS-MD program at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Albany Medical College in 2003. She completed her Urology residency in 2009 at Duke University Medical Center and then stayed at Duke for a fellowship in Urodynamics, Reconstructive Urology and Incontinence which she completed in 2010. She joined UNC Urology as an Assistant Professor in 2010 and has served as the Director of Urodynamics since August 2010. She has expertise in Female Urology, Reconstructive Urology and Neurourology, with a special interest in the urologic management of spinal cord injured patients.

**Off-Service Faculty**

**Minimally Invasive Gynecology**

**Erin Carey, MD** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Division Director of the Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgery Division. Dr. Carey received her Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Doctor of Medicine in a combined BA-MD program at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, in 2006. She completed her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota in 2010 and a fellowship in advanced laparoscopy and pelvic pain at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2012. Dr. Carey also received a master of science in clinical research at the UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Public Health in 2012 and completed a fellowship in pain anesthesia at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2013. She worked at the University of Kansas Medical Center as an Assistant Professor at the Center for Pelvic Pain and Sexual Health, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology before returning to UNC in 2016.
Urology

UNC, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Kristy Borawski MD is a urologist in our core FPMRS faculty. See her description listed above.

UNC Rex, Raleigh, North Carolina

John Kaspar MD is a urologist with a special interest in female urology with Associated Urologists and North Carolina. He is board certified in Urology and Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery. He received his Bachelor’s degree at Washington University in St. Louis, a Master’s Degree in Microbiology and his medical degree at Wake Forest University. He completed an internship in general surgery and residency in urology at Pennsylvania State University. He has been in private practice for 21 years.

Colorectal Surgery

UNC, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Timothy Sadiq, MD is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery and is a certified Colorectal Surgeon having completed his Fellowship at The Lahey Clinic in Massachusetts. He joined the UNC-CH GI Surgical Division on August 1, 2007. He completed his Surgical Residency at UNC-CH and served in the capacity of Administrative Chief Resident. His interests include complex anorectal disorders, transplantation and stem cell research. He has received several Chief Resident Awards and has served on Medical Student Education and Organ Donation Initiative Committees.

UNC Rex, Raleigh, North Carolina

Laura Altom, MD is a fellowship trained colon and rectal surgeon with North Carolina Surgery. She is board certified in both general and colon and rectal surgery. She completed her medical degree at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, general surgery residency training at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and her colon and rectal fellowship training at the Oschner Clinic in New Orleans. She also studied health outcomes and has a Master's in Public Health from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She sees all aspects of colon and rectal surgery including colon and rectal cancers, inflammatory bowel disease, diverticulitis and other benign disease of the colon and rectum, all benign anorectal disorders such as hemorrhoids, fissures and fistulas, pelvic floor issues such as rectal prolapse and fecal incontinence, as well as performing high resolution anoscopy for screening of anal dysplasia.

Reza Rahbar, MD is a fellowship trained colon and rectal surgeon with North Carolina Surgery. He is board certified in both general and colon and rectal surgery. He completed his medical degree at UNC School of Medicine, general surgery residency training at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and his colon and rectal fellowship training at Louisiana State University Medical Center. He sees all aspects of colon and rectal surgery including colon and rectal cancers, inflammatory bowel disease, diverticulitis and other benign disease of the colon and rectum, all benign anorectal disorders such as hemorrhoids, fissures and fistulas, pelvic floor issues such as rectal prolapse and fecal incontinence, as well as performing high resolution anoscopy for screening of anal dysplasia.

Women’s Health Physical Therapy

UNC, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Jenn Harrington PT, DPT, WCS, CLT is a Women’s & Men’s Health Physical Therapist, Clinical Specialist at UNC and Hillsborough Hospitals. She is APTA Board Certified in Women’s Health
Physical Therapy. She received her Bachelor of Health Science from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, FL and a Clinical Doctorate in Physical Therapy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also completed a Women’s Health Physical Therapy Residency at Centers for Rehab Services in Pittsburgh, PA. Jenn has a passion for this field and especially loves educating patients and healthcare providers about the importance of effectively evaluating and treating the pelvic floor. She enjoys providing one on one teaching of our UNC Urogynecology Fellows both in her clinic and in didactic conferences.

UNC Rex, Raleigh, North Carolina

Erika N. Johnson, PT, MPT is the Lead Pelvic Health Physical Therapist at our Raleigh location located at UNC Rex Hospital. She received her Bachelor of Health Science in Computer Science at Mary Washington College (now University of Mary Washington), Fredericksburg, VA in 1996 and a Masters in Physical Therapy at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA in 1998. For 20 years I she has been dedicated to increasing public and professional awareness regarding rehab treatment options in women’s and men’s pelvic health. In addition to treating patients, her other professional interests include program development and collaboration with practitioners, including UNC Urogynecology Fellows. Having the access and opportunity for this collaboration has greatly improved patient’s access to services and to the level of care provided.

Gynecologic Oncology

Paola Gehrig, MD (Professor, Division Director), Linda Van Le, MD (Professor), John Soper, M.D (Professor), John Boggess (Professor), Leslie Clark (Assistant Professor) of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology. Drs. Gehrig, Van Le, Soper, Boggess and Clark have extensive experience in complex pelvic surgery as well as expertise in complex pelvic reconstruction, gastrointestinal, and genital-urinary procedures. Areas of expertise include large and small bowel procedures, ureteral anastomosis and reimplantation, and urinary diversion procedures. They are also nationally recognized researchers, educators, and mentors in the subspecialty of Gynecologic Oncology and have served as exceptionally strong supporters of the Female Pelvic Medicine/Reconstructive Surgery fellowship program both at the local and national levels.

Research

William Whitehead, Ph.D. is a Research Professor of Medicine and holds a joint appointment in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Dr. Whitehead is a nationally and internationally recognized expert in Gastrointestinal Medicine specializing the fields of constipation and fecal incontinence. Dr. Whitehead has served as a site Co-Principle Investigator to the Pelvic Floor Disorders Network. He is coordinator of the rotation in the GI Procedures laboratory and serves as an active research mentor to the Fellowship. He has a primary interest in defecatory dysfunction and fecal incontinence, and behavioral and biofeedback therapy for functional gastrointestinal disorders. His expertise includes anal manometry and anorectal biofeedback therapy. Dr Whitehead actively participates in the monthly Pelvic Floor Disorders Conferences.

Wendy R. Brewster, MD, PhD is the Director of the Center for Women’s Health Research. The mission of the CWHRT is to improve the health of women through multidisciplinary research, education and advocacy through the development of researchers and community partnership. Dr. Brewster is also an Associate Professor in the Division of Gynecologic Oncology, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, School of Medicine, and an Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health. Dr. Brewster is a population scientist with a research interest in early detection and prevention of gynecologic malignancies. Dr. Brewster’s academic interests are also in the areas of gynecologic oncology and cancer epidemiology. Dr. Brewster is a clinically active member of the Gynecologic Oncology Division in the Department of Obstetrics. Dr. Brewster received her medical degree from the Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and completed residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. She then completed her GYN Oncology Fellowship and PhD with an emphasis in cancer epidemiology at the University of California, Irvine.
John Thorp, MD is a Professor in a subspecialty certified discipline in Maternal Fetal Medicine and is the Director of the Division of General Obstetrics and Gynecology. He has particular expertise and interest in the relationship amongst pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum time period. These research interests focus on both immediate as well as long-term outcomes related to urinary, fecal, and pelvic floor dysfunction. He is recognized nationally and internationally for his excellence in clinical research and has many active research roles serving as, among many other research leadership roles, as the UNC site Principle Investigator to the Maternal Fetal Medicine Network. Dr. Thorp is also an educational leader within the department and has received the Resident Teaching Award three times. He is the Deputy Director of the Center for Women's Health Research.

Other University of North Carolina faculty who are directly involved in fellowship training are:

**James F. Howard, Jr. M.D.**
Professor, Neurology, and Medicine
Certified in electromyography and electrodagnosis.
Special interests: Clinical neurophysiology, neuromuscular physiology.

**Mark Koruda, M.D.**
Associate Professor, Gastrointestinal Surgery.
Special interests: GI surgery, critical care, and nutrition and metabolism.

**Yolanda Scarlett, M.D.**
Associate Professor, GI Medicine
Director, GI Procedures Laboratory.
Special interests: Motility disorders, fecal incontinence and constipation.

**Jan Busby-Whitehead, M.D.**
Professor, Medicine, Program on Aging.
Special interests: Geriatrics, Incontinence in the elderly.