

Northern California Society for Clinical Gastroenterology

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 16 | October 2025



2026 NCSCG 11TH ANNUAL LIVER SYMPOSIUM

**JANUARY 31, 2026
SAN FRANCISCO, CA**

REGISTER NOW 

VIEW AGENDA 

VIEW FACULTY 

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS AND CASE VIGNETTES

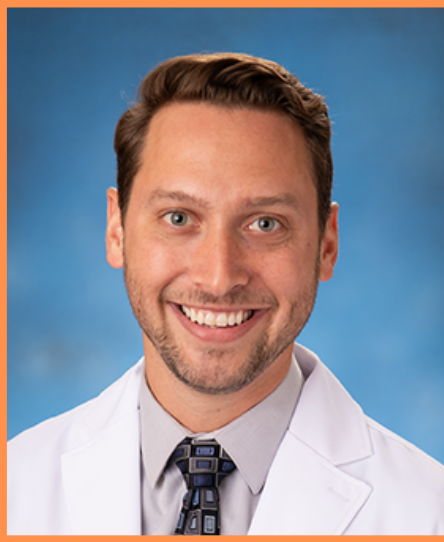
There will be visa gift card awards and overnight hotel stays for the top placements!

Submission Deadline: Monday, December 8, 2025

Notification of Acceptance: Monday, December 22, 2025

Click here to learn more or submit!

MEET OUR TRAINEE COMMITTEE



MAX GOLDMAN, MD - COMMITTEE CHAIR

Kaiser Permanente
San Francisco, CA

Background:

I was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia and completed my undergraduate degree at Emory University. I then completed a Fulbright Fellowship in the rural village of Jorakhe, Thailand for nearly 1.5 years, before returning to Emory University for medical school. I moved to the Bay Area for my internal medicine residency at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). After residency, I stayed on as faculty at UCSF and spent two years working as a hospitalist at UCSF and the San Francisco VA, where I served as project lead on systemwide quality improvement initiatives and as the Director of Patient Flow Operations. I am now in my final year of gastroenterology fellowship at Kaiser Permanente, Northern California where I am serving as Chief Fellow and completing a concurrent fellowship in Delivery Science.

Interest in Gastroenterology:

I plan to pursue a clinical career in general gastroenterology and hepatology. My focus has been on improving care delivery to our patients with chronic conditions both through my work in quality improvement and clinical outcomes research. My pursuits have focused on methods of early detection of advanced hepatic fibrosis in high-risk MASLD patients, in order to stave off progression to cirrhosis, and investigating factors affecting survival and recurrence in hepatocellular carcinoma. I am currently completing an implementation science project investigating a 5-ASA deprescribing intervention to improve the care of patients with IBD on both 5-ASA and a biologic or immunomodulator and align such treatment with society guidelines.

Interests Outside of the Hospital:

I enjoy spending my free time in the great Northern California outdoors through camping, hiking, backpacking, and kayaking. I also love exploring new countries and cuisines and am an avid reader.

MEET OUR TRAINEE COMMITTEE



GRACE ZHANG, MD

University of California, San Francisco
San Francisco, CA

Background:

I am originally from Gaithersburg, Maryland. I did my undergraduate degree at University of Maryland where I studied both biology and operations management. I went to medical school at the University of Pittsburgh and completed my internal medicine residency at UCSF.

Interest in Gastroenterology:

I'm interested in exploring integrative health and how to blend conventional and complementary medicine approaches to best take care of patients with gastrointestinal conditions.

Interests Outside of the Hospital:

Outside the hospital I enjoy staying active with various activities including climbing, backpacking, skiing, biking, and yoga. When feeling creative, I enjoy writing fiction with a nice cup of coffee.



CATH XU, MD

University of California, Davis
Davis, CA

Background:

Originally from Portland, Oregon, I completed my undergraduate studies at the University of Washington, followed by a Master's in Human Nutrition at Columbia University. I earned my medical degree from Oregon Health & Science University and went on to complete my internal medicine residency and chief year at UC Davis.

Interest in Gastroenterology:

My clinical and academic interests include nutrition, motility disorders, and hepatology. I am passionate about integrating quality improvement into patient care and advancing the understanding of complex GI conditions.

Interests Outside of the Hospital:

Outside of the hospital, I enjoy exploring new cities with my husband and daughter, discovering local food spots, and staying active through hiking and Pilates.

MEET OUR TRAINEE COMMITTEE



ABHISHEK (SHAKE) DIMOPOULOS-VERMA, MD

Stanford Health Care
Stanford, CA

Background:

I grew up in the Bay Area and completed my undergraduate studies in Biological Sciences at the University of Southern California. After college, I lived and worked in Lausanne, Switzerland for a year -- studying gene therapy approaches to treating neurodegenerative disease -- prior to attending medical school at UCLA. I moved to New York City to join the internal medicine

residency at New York University (NYU), where I also served as chief medical resident. Following residency, I worked as a hospitalist for a year at Yale New Haven Hospital in Connecticut, prior to returning to California for GI fellowship. I feel especially grateful for the diverse paths that have shaped my training, and it has been a privilege to bring those experiences back home to care for patients in my native Bay Area.

Interest in Gastroenterology:

My clinical interests include general gastroenterology, inflammatory bowel disease, and immune checkpoint inhibitor-mediated colitis and enteritis.

Interests Outside of the Hospital:

Outside of work, I can usually be found swimming laps in the pool, brewing specialty coffee, or reading high fantasy in the company of my spouse and our two cats, Pocket and Snapdragon.

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MEET OUR TRAINEE COMMITTEE



JOSEPH TOTH, MD

University of California, Davis
Davis, CA

Background:

I am originally from Upstate New York, where I completed both my undergraduate and medical school training. I then moved to Southern California for residency at UC San Diego, which also marked my first time exploring the West Coast. From there, I made the leap to Northern California to pursue a fellowship in Gastroenterology and Hepatology at UC Davis.

Beyond gastroenterology, I have a strong passion for global health. In medical school, I spent a summer volunteering in areas of Ecuador along with completing research/. During residency, I spent a month in Mozambique, where I had the opportunity to both observe and support the practice of internal medicine and GI in a resource-limited setting. I'm eager to continue this work and will be traveling to Rwanda next month—this time as a gastroenterology fellow—to contribute to patient care.

Interest in Gastroenterology:

Professionally, I'm drawn to GI and Hepatology because of the field's dynamic and evolving nature. The intersection of advancing technology and emerging therapies makes it an exciting time to be involved, with so much still to discover and improve for our patients. My clinical interests include medical education, hepatology, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and advanced therapeutic interventions in GI. During residency, I completed the Resident as Clinician Educator (RACE) track, where I learned to teach using a variety of educational philosophies and led morning reports for our program. I was fortunate to join the Northern California Society for Clinical Gastroenterology (NCSCG) this year and am excited to collaborate with other fellowship programs in the region. We have a wealth of outstanding lecturers and learning opportunities across our institutions, and I look forward to sharing knowledge and growing together.

Interests Outside the Hospital:

California has been a perfect fit for my life—I enjoy hiking, camping, and snowboarding, and have loved taking advantage of the natural beauty the state has to offer. I look forward to continuing

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MEET OUR TRAINEE COMMITTEE



MATTHEW BELL, MD

California Pacific Medical Center
San Francisco, CA

Background:

I was born here in San Francisco and was raised primarily in San Francisco and Marin. I traveled around for my training, attending medical school at Saint Louis University SOM and Harbor-UCLA for Internal Medicine training, before fortunately returning to the bay area for fellowship.

Interest in Gastroenterology:

My clinical and research interests are in advanced endoscopic techniques and providing patients safer, less invasive procedures in lieu of surgery. I plan to apply for advanced endoscopy fellowship this year.

Interests Outside of the Hospital:

Outside of the hospital I love trying new restaurants in the city, going to live music shows (SF has had some great free concerts this summer!), and traveling to nearby areas like Monterey, Napa, and Tahoe. I joined NCSCG last year and have found it to be a great way to meet other trainees in the area as well as learn from some of our incredible local bay area gastroenterologists!



HUMZAH IQBAL, MD

University of California, San Francisco - Fresno
Fresno, CA

Background:

I am originally from Orange County and grew up in Irvine. I am currently doing my GI fellowship at UCSF Fresno and did my residency training here as well.

Interest in Gastroenterology:

My clinical and academic interests in GI include CRC Screening, chronic liver disease, and bariatric endoscopy. I have been a member of NCSCG since residency and have presented multiple abstracts at the symposia. I enjoyed learning from our many guest speakers and am excited to continue my involvement as a fellow.

Interests Outside of the Hospital:

When it comes to having fun outside the hospital, you can usually find me in the gym, at a car show, trying a new restaurant, or fishing/camping in the mountains!

MEET OUR NEW APP COMMITTEE

Committee Leadership

Co-Chairs:

Shraddha Batra, MMS, PA-C
Antonia “Nia” Maninang, RN, MS, ACNP-BC

Secretary:

Deepa Mani, MPAS, PA-C

Board Member:

Mikhail Alper, MD, PA-C

The Northern California Society of Clinical Gastroenterology (NCSCG) proudly launched the Advanced Practice Provider (APP) Committee to strengthen the role of APPs in gastroenterology and hepatology.

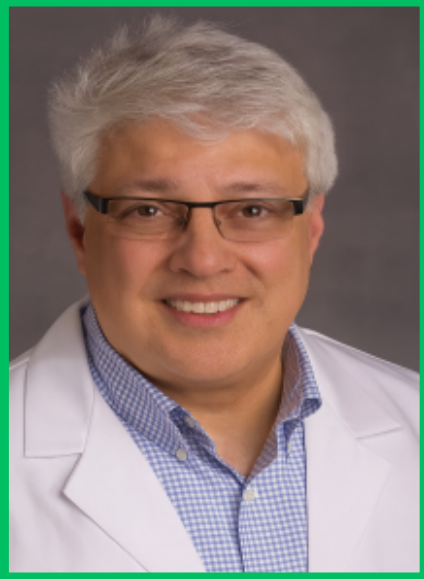
Our mission is to:

- Elevate clinical excellence and leadership among APPs.
 - Create opportunities for networking, mentorship, and education.
 - Increase visibility and recognition of APP contributions within the GI community.
- As the first APP Committee within NCSCG, we are laying the foundation for a stronger, more connected professional community.

Key Initiatives

- APP Travel Award Scholarship – Supporting APP participation in conferences and professional development opportunities.
- APP Registry (in development) – Building a resource to connect APPs across Northern California and foster collaboration.
- Social Media Presence (coming soon) – Launching official LinkedIn and Instagram accounts to share updates and highlight APP achievements.
- Dedicated APP Webpage – Serving as the hub for APP initiatives, resources, and events.

MEET OUR NEW APP COMMITTEE



MIKHAIL ALPER, MD, PA-C

For more than 25 years, Mikhail Alper has served the Central Valley community as a Physician Associate at California Gastroenterology Associates, where he provides comprehensive care in gastroenterology and hepatology with a strong commitment to underserved populations.

Mikhail Alper earned his M.D. from Moscow Medical School in 1988 and later completed the Stanford Primary Care Associate Program, becoming a PA-C. His dedication to advancing the field extends beyond patient care through active professional leadership.

He serves as a board member of the Northern California Society of Clinical Gastroenterology (NCSCG), contributes to the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) Advanced Practice Provider Committee, and is a member of the GHAPP Member Engagement Committee. He has also been recognized as a Fellow of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD).

In addition to his clinical and leadership roles, Mikhail Alper is GI faculty at Dominican University PA Program, where he mentors future providers. Driven by a lifelong commitment to learning and knowledge-sharing, Mikhail Alper mentors fellow providers while applying his expertise to deliver high-quality, compassionate care to the diverse and underserved communities of the San Joaquin Valley.



SHRADDHA BATRA, MMS, PA-C

Shraddha Batra is a board-certified Physician Assistant specializing in gastroenterology and hepatology. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree at American University in Washington, D.C. and her Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies at Midwestern University in Glendale, AZ. She currently serves as a Senior Physician Assistant at Kaiser Permanente South San Francisco Medical Center. In her current position, Shraddha works in the outpatient setting and provides comprehensive care in areas of hepatology and Inflammatory Bowel Disease. She also helps to coordinate

ERCPs for post-liver transplant patients across KP Northern California. She is an active member of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD), and she is the recipient of the 2023 AASLD Emerging Liver APP award. She currently serves as Co Chair of the NCSCG APP Committee and hopes to cultivate an APP community across Northern California, expand educational opportunities, and provide a platform for networking and professional development.

MEET OUR NEW APP COMMITTEE



REENA GUPTA, RN, MSN, ANP-BC

Reena Gupta, RN, MSN, ANP-BC received her Bachelor's in Science at Boston University and her Master's in Nursing at Simmons College, Boston Massachusetts. After working in several subspecialties on the East and West Coast, including Orthopedics, Colorectal Surgery, and Obesity Medicine, she decided to dedicate her work to Gastroenterology. For the past eight years, she has provided comprehensive care for patients at the Kaiser Permanente Gastroenterology Department in Oakland, CA. Her clinical specialty includes General Gastroenterology and Inflammatory Bowel Disease, in addition to performing sigmoidoscopy exams. At Kaiser Permanente, Reena is an elected member of the Nurse Practitioner

Professional Performance Committee, The Nursing Quality Forum Committee, The Nurse Practitioner Mentorship Committee, and Secretary for the Kaiser Regional APP GI Committee. Additionally, she is a member of the Northern California Society of Clinical Gastroenterology APP GI Committee (NCSCG). By joining the NCSCG APP Committee, she hopes to connect GI APPs from across the region, provide educational opportunities, and help expand the role of the APP in GI care.



DEEPA MANI, MPAS, PA-C

Deepa Mani, MPAS, PA-C Physician Assistant – Hepatology, Liver Transplant, and Gastroenterology Stanford Health Care Deepa Mani is a Physician Assistant specializing in inpatient hepatology, liver transplant, and gastroenterology at Stanford Health Care. With 7 years of experience as a Physician Assistant, she brings a strong clinical foundation in internal medicine and outpatient gastroenterology, allowing her to deliver comprehensive, patient-centered care across the continuum of liver and digestive health. Deepa is deeply engaged in professional development and organizational leadership. She serves as Co-Chair of the Stanford Health Care APP'preciate Diversity Committee, Secretary of the Northern

California Society of Clinical Gastroenterology (NCSCG), and is an active member of the Medication Task Force and APP Week Committee. She is also a candidate in the Stanford Medicine APP Leadership Certificate Program, reflecting her commitment to advancing her leadership skills to better serve both patients and colleagues. Her work within the NCSCG APP Committee is driven by a passion for advocacy and representation. Deepa is committed to elevating the visibility of Advanced Practice Providers in gastroenterology, ensuring their contributions are recognized, their expertise is valued, and their voices are heard in shaping the future of the specialty.

MEET OUR NEW APP COMMITTEE



ANTONIA "NIA" MANINANG, RN, MS, ACNP-BC

Antonia "Nia" Teresita A. Maninang, RN, MS, ACNP-BC Board-Certified Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Antonia "Nia" Maninang is a board-certified Acute Care Nurse Practitioner at Stanford Health Care specializing in liver transplant, hepatology, and gastrointestinal disease. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in the Philippines and completed both her Master's degree and Post-Master's Acute Care Nurse Practitioner training at the University of California, San Francisco. With more than 20 years of experience, Nia provides expert inpatient and outpatient care, leads quality improvement initiatives, and mentors the next generation of

Advanced Practice Providers. She serves as Co-Chair of the NCSCG APP Committee, Co-Chair of the Stanford APP Diversity Committee, and is the founder of the Love for Our Little Angels™ Foundation, a grassroots nonprofit dedicated to community health outreach in the Philippines. Nia is the recipient of numerous honors, including the 2024 ACG Inaugural APP Scholarship Award, the 2025 GHAPP Inaugural Clinical Excellence Award in Hepatology, and the Stanford C-I-CARE Service Spotlight Award (September 2025). She was also recognized as a 2025 APP Humanitarian Award Nominee. These honors highlight her leadership, clinical expertise, humanitarian service, and commitment to advancing the APP role. Through her work with the NCSCG APP Committee and beyond, Nia continues to champion the voice and visibility of Advanced Practice Providers, fostering collaboration and expanding opportunities for education, mentorship, and professional recognition across the APP community.

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MEET OUR NEW APP COMMITTEE



SARA MILLER, NP, MPH

Sara Miller, NP, MPH, is a nurse practitioner with more than a decade of experience in liver disease and transplant care. She joined the UCSF Liver Transplant and Hepatology Program in 2016, building on ten years as a bedside nurse at UCSF Medical Center. With a Master of Public Health from UC Berkeley, she brings a holistic approach to patient care, combining health promotion and disease prevention with empathy for the emotional challenges faced by patients with serious illness. At UCSF, she has been instrumental in program development, including the creation of the BRIDGE Program, a first-of-its-kind telehealth education series for patients with Metabolic Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD). She also supports

staff development through UCSF's Mini-Medical School, curating lectures to expand clinical knowledge and strengthen the patient experience. Sara's leadership extends beyond clinical innovation. On the APP Clinical Ladder Committee, she helps guide nurse practitioners toward advancement and leadership roles, while her work on the APP Committee on Justice, Equity, and Inclusion led to the creation of the Collaborative Career Advancement Network (C-CAN), a program dedicated to diversifying the APP workforce. An active member of AANP, AASLD, and NCSCG, Sara is dedicated to advancing the role of APPs in gastroenterology and hepatology. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling, surfing, dancing, reading, coaching girls' volleyball, and spending time with her two children, dog, birds, and fish.



GINA VALENTE-MOORE, DNP, MSN, BSN, RN, FNP-C, PNP-C

Gina Valente-Moore is a Nurse Practitioner specializing in Gastroenterology and Hepatology with more than 25 years of experience serving underserved communities. She practices at Adventist Health Sonora in Gastroenterology and at Mathiesen Memorial Health Clinic in Primary Care.

Gina began her career in marketing before pursuing her passion for health care and making a difference in patients' lives. She earned her Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate degrees at Case Western Reserve University with a focus in Pediatrics, followed by a Post-Master's Family Nurse Practitioner certificate from Sonoma State University. She also holds a degree in Marketing from Santa Clara University.

In addition to her clinical work, Gina is a speaker for the Hepatitis C Division with Gilead and serves on the boards of the Weitzman Institute and the Northern California Society of Clinical Gastroenterology (NCSCG).

MEET OUR NEW APP COMMITTEE



MARIBEL TORRES, MSN, FNP-C, BSN, RN

Maribel Torres is a Family Nurse Practitioner with extensive experience in gastroenterology and hepatology, grounded in a strong background in critical care and emergency medicine. She currently practices within the Adventist Health Central Valley Network, where she provides advanced, evidence-based care for patients with complex gastrointestinal and liver diseases. In addition to her clinical responsibilities, she serves as Lead Advanced Practice Provider, offering mentorship and training for colleagues across the specialty. Her professional journey began with LVN training at Porterville College, followed by her RN at Fresno City College, BSN at Fresno Pacific University, and MSN-FNP also at Fresno Pacific. Before

advancing her practice, she spent over a decade as an ICU emergency nurse, taking on leadership roles as charge nurse, rapid response team member, and mentor.

Dedicated to improving care for underserved communities in the San Joaquin Valley, Maribel manages a wide range of GI and liver conditions, including cirrhosis, hepatitis, NAFLD/NASH, and biliary and motility disorders. She has been recognized for her leadership regionally and nationally, serving on advisory boards, contributing to evidence-based initiatives, and being spotlighted by GHAPP and NCSCG. In 2025, she received the inaugural NCSCG Excellence APP Award. Fluent in Spanish and English, Maribel is deeply committed to cultural competence, mentorship, and delivering compassionate, high-quality care to vulnerable populations.



MELISSA VEPA, MS, PA-C, RD

Melissa Vepa is a board-certified Physician Assistant and Registered Dietitian specializing in gastroenterology and liver disease. She currently serves as a Senior Physician Assistant at Kaiser Permanente Oakland, where she provides comprehensive care for patients with a broad spectrum of gastrointestinal and hepatobiliary disorders. In her role, she performs and interprets esophageal manometry and ambulatory pH studies, collaborates closely with motility specialists and thoracic surgeons, and teaches gastroenterology fellows during their motility rotation. Prior to her current role, Melissa practiced as a gastroenterology PA at Kaiser Permanente Fremont and San Leandro, where she served as the dedicated liver PA, managing patients with chronic liver disease and

cirrhosis of diverse etiologies. Earlier in her career, she worked as a clinical dietitian for more than eight years, gaining experience in critical care, multidisciplinary clinics, and outpatient nutrition counseling. Melissa earned her Master's degree in Clinical Nutrition from New York University, a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Wagner College, and a Certificate of Clinical Proficiency in Physician Assistant Studies from the Stanford University-Foothill College Primary Care Associate Program. She is an active member of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) and the American Neurogastroenterology and Motility Society (ANMS). With her dual training as both a PA and RD, Melissa brings a holistic, patient-centered perspective to the management of complex GI and liver conditions.

TRAINEE WEBINAR SERIES

The NCSCG Trainee Webinar Series aims to provide an education and career development focused resource for our GI community.

Our series incorporates sessions specifically focused on important aspects of career development and the job search process. It will also include high yield and hot topics in clinical gastroenterology and hepatology. We offer these as a free resource to anyone interested in participating.

FELLOW & APP MEAL REIMBURSEMENT

Since we aren't meeting in person, we offer all NCSCG fellows and APPs who attend the webinars a meal up to the value of \$30 to be eaten at the time of the webinar.

1. [Register for the series](#)
2. [Join NCSCG](#)
3. **Attend the webinar live**
4. **Order & eat during webinar**
5. [Reimburse meal up to \\$30](#)



**REGISTER
NOW**

APPs are also encouraged to join the series and are eligible for meal reimbursement!

NCSCG GI SYMPOSIUM: SAVE THE DATE



MAY 16-17, 2026

HYATT REGENCY MONTEREY HOTEL
MONTEREY, CA

2026 NCSCG
23RD ANNUAL
GI SYMPOSIUM

SAVE THE DATE for the 23rd Annual GI Symposium,
taking place Saturday, May 16—Sunday, May 17,
2026, at the Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel in
Monterey, CA.

Registration will open in January 2026!

Stay tuned for more details!