

USSONAR Summer Newsletter



July 2025

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President's Message



Minna Kohler MD, RhMSUS

Dear Ultrasound Friends,

I'm thrilled to share an exciting milestone as we conclude another successful academic year of the **USSONAR Fundamentals of Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Program**. A total of **66 participants** have officially passed the program — a testament to their hard work, perseverance, and the outstanding mentorship that defines our USSONAR community. This year's cohort included:

- 51 Adult Rheumatology Fellows
- 3 Pediatric Rheumatology Fellows
- 11 Adult Non-Fellow Participants
- 1 Pediatric Non-Fellow Participant

We also tracked an impressive volume of scan reviews, with a total number of **4802 scans** read this year.



2025 Fundamentals class

A special thank you to our **Top 10 Scan Reviewers**, whose tireless efforts ensured robust educational feedback:

1. Gene Kissin – 756 scans
2. Prashant Kaushik – 682
3. Lily Kao – 556
4. Jon Arnason – 413
5. Fawad Aslam – 315
6. Dan Malone – 230
7. Michelene Hearth-Holmes – 195
8. Arash Mollaeian – 188
9. Samar Aboulenain – 178
10. Jen Medlin – 160

We extend our deepest gratitude to outgoing **Program Director Dr. Norm Madsen** and **Assistant Program Director Dr. Michelene Hearth-Holmes** for their outstanding leadership and commitment to the Fundamentals Program. Their thoughtful stewardship has advanced our educational mission and deeply enriched the experience for learners.

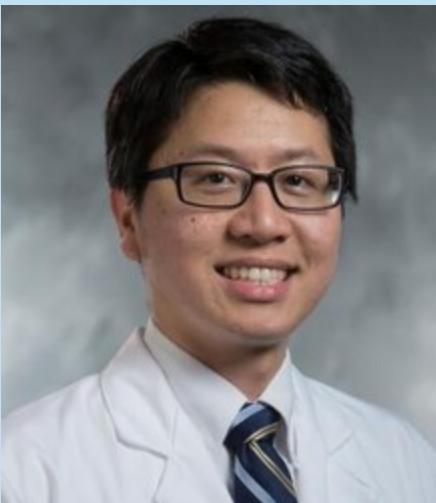


**Norm Madsen, M.D., MSC, RhMSUS, FACR,
FRCPC**

**Michelene Hearth-Holmes, M.D., MED,
RhMSUS**

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that the Fundamentals Program will transition to a new educational learning platform, **Canvas**, for the 2025–2026 academic year. This shift will enhance usability and streamline workflow for both faculty and participants. Our new leadership: **Program Director Dr. Phil Chu (Duke University)** and **Assistant Program Director Dr. Erin Chew (Vanderbilt University)** have already been hard at work behind the scenes — both bringing fresh energy and innovation to update the program curriculum, including new pediatric ultrasound modules.

Fundamentals Program Director



Philip Chu, MD, RhMSUS

Assistant Fundamentals Program Director



Erin Chew, MD, RhMSUS

A special thank you to **Jane Nishio** and the **Canvas Implementation Team — Drs. Samar Aboulenain, Ed Oberle, Patricia Vega-Fernandez, Janeth Yinh, Fawad Aslam, Jen Medlin, and Michelene Hearth-Holmes**, in supporting the technical and scientific content transition. Your efforts are laying the groundwork for a more efficient and user-friendly experience in the years to come.

We're also excited to share that **USSONAR faculty will again be represented at the upcoming ACR Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Pre-Course this October 2025 in Chicago, IL**, led by **Drs. Janeth Yinh and Fawad Aslam**. This annual course continues to be a key venue for showcasing the expertise and educational leadership of our community, including our APP ultrasound teaching faculty Heather Benham NP (the 1st pediatric APP with RhMSUS certification) and Christopher Estes NP (the 1st adult APP with RhMSUS certification).



Beyond the Fundamentals Course, we continue to expand our educational offerings through the **USSONAR Webinar Series**, held **monthly on Monday evenings at 8:30 PM EST / 5:30 PM PST**. Under the steady leadership of **Dr. Diane Mar**, this series continues to grow and thrive, offering practical education, clinical updates, and a sense of community across the USSONAR network.

USSONAR is also proud to be partnering with the **American College of Rheumatology (ACR)** on important **Ultrasound Guidance Projects** to standardize and elevate clinical practice:

Diane Mar, M.D., RhMSUS

- **Inflammatory Arthritis (RA, PsA)** – led by **Drs. Gurjit Kaeley, Veena Ranganath, and Catherine Bakewell**
- **Soft Tissue Disorders and Procedures** – led by **Drs. Myma Albayda and Norm Madsen**

Look for these manuscripts to come out later this year.

Thank you all for your unwavering commitment, enthusiasm, and expertise. Together, we are shaping the future of rheumatologic ultrasound education, expanding our impact to improve patient care and understanding of our rheumatic diseases.

Happy summer!

Minna Kohler, MD, RhMSUS

USSONAR President 2024-2026

Big Thanks to our Sponsors!

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2025 USSONAR Schedule of Events

July 14th Webinar - Psoriatic Disease and the Gut-Skin-Joint Axis

July 28th Webinar - Pulmonary Involvement & Lung US in Connective Tissue Diseases

Aug. 1st-3rd Conference - Multi-Track Ultrasound in Rheumatology Conference

Aug. 18th Webinar - Lupus Myopathy & Myositis US

Sept. 15th Webinar - Ultrasound Pitfalls

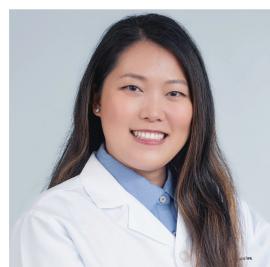


Webinar Series

Non-CME educational session, courtesy of **Johnson&Johnson**
Psoriatic Disease and the Gut-Skin-Joint Axis
Monday, July 14 | 8:30 PM EST



Anthony M. Todd, PharmD
Pathophysiology connection
IBD and Psoriatic Disease



Dr. Cindy Law MD
Intestinal Ultrasound for
IBD



**Dr. Catherine Bakewell
MD, RhMSUS**
Ultrasound for Psoriatic
Disease

July 14
8:30 PM EST

Psoriatic Disease and the Gut-Skin-Joint Axis
**You do NOT need to re-register if you have participated in
previous webinars*

[Register here](#)

Webinar Series

CME available

Lupus Webinar Series: Pulmonary involvement and lung ultrasound in connective tissue diseases

Monday, July 28 | 8:30 PM EST



**Dr. Kristin Highland,
MD, MSCR**



**Dr. Rob Fairchild,
MD, PhD, RhMSUS**

USSONAR would like to recognize AstraZeneca for the medical education grant for this webinar series.

**July 28
8:30 PM EST**

[Register here](#)

Join us for the last Lupus webinar on Pulmonary involvement and lung ultrasound in connective tissue disease.

****You do NOT need to re-register if you have participated in previous webinars***

2025

Multi-Track Ultrasound in Rheumatology Conference

August 1-3, 2025 | Irvine, CA

Hands-On Ultrasound Training

– Three Focused Tracks

- **Intermediate MSK Ultrasound Track** – Deepen your skills in musculoskeletal ultrasound.
- **Vasculitis Ultrasound Track** – Learn advanced vascular imaging techniques for inflammatory disease.
- **Cadaveric Ultrasound Guided Injection Lab Track** – Practice procedures on cadavers for real-life application.



Aug. 1 - 3, 2025

- **Dates:** August 1-3, 2025
- **Locations:** [Westin South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa](#) and [Axis Research & Technologies Lab](#)

- [Conference Website, Agendas and Registration](#)
- Approved for CME and MOC credit. Earn up to 17.5 hours of credit!

Take advantage of your USSONAR membership today.

Webinar Series



Lupus Webinar Series: Lupus Myopathy and Myositis Ultrasound

Monday, August 18 | 8:30 PM EST



Dr. Myma Albayda
MD, RhMSUS



Dr. Eleni Tiniakou
MD

USSONAR would like to recognize AstraZeneca for the medical education grant for this webinar series.

August 18
8:30 PM EST

**You do NOT need to re-register if you have participated in previous webinars*

[Register here](#)



Webinar Series

*You do *NOT* need to re-register if you have participated in previous Webinars **Monday, September 15 | 8:30 PM EST**

[Register here](#)



SAVE THE DATE!

USSONAR

Annual Business & Networking Meeting

C H I C A G O
October 25th, 2025

Committee Updates

Membership Committee

We have been busy building our state society contacts. If you are involved in your state society's leadership and interested in collaborating, we would love to hear from you

Advocacy Committee

We welcome new committee chair Dr. Mark Matza! Several of our members also took to the Hill this spring to advocate on Medicare reimbursement, protecting access to care, and supporting research and innovation

Special Interest Groups

We have hosted excellent speakers reviewing US use in Lupus arthritis, ophthalmic and myopathy

We are always looking for new faces in our committees including Membership, Bylaws, Communications/ Media, Education and our Special Interest Groups! Ready to Get Involved?

Email: ussonar@srahec.org with the subject line being which committee you are interested in joining. We will direct your message to the correct Committee Chair.

Bylaws Committee.

Responsible for the review of the organizational bylaws including amendments, adoptions, and repeals

Membership Committee.

Maintaining membership database and recruitment of new members

Education Committee

Develop educational resources such as literature, image atlases, case studies, and discussion forums.

Consists of a Fundamentals Education and Multi-track Ultrasound Conference

Research Committee

Oversee the research activities of the organization. Help create opportunities for interested rheumatologists to collaborate on research projects in rheumatology ultrasound.

Media and Communications Committee

Engage community through organization's social media sites, organizational announcements, and our newsletter.

Pediatric Committee

Promote training and education programs specific to the practice of pediatric rheumatic ultrasound.

Committee members will be pediatric rheumatologists or USSONAR members with a specific interest in pediatric rheumatic ultrasound.

Are you interested in joining a special interest group?

Lupus US Special Interest Group- contact Hulya Bukulmez hxb38@case.edu

Sjogrens/ Salivary Gland US Special Interest Group- Howard Yang HHYang@mednet.ucla.edu

Vasculitis US Special Interest Group- Minna Kohler mkohler@mgh.harvard.edu

**We would also like
to hear from you!**

If you have any updates, honors, or publications that you'd like to share with the USSONAR community, please send your information to ussonar@srahec.org. We'd love to review your submissions for inclusion in our upcoming newsletters!

USSONAR VIDEO ARCHIVE



Did you miss the latest Webinar Series session, *The Business of Ultrasound: Acquiring an Ultrasound Machine?*



[Catch up with the recording here.](#)

Membership Spotlight | By Dr. Zineb Aouhab

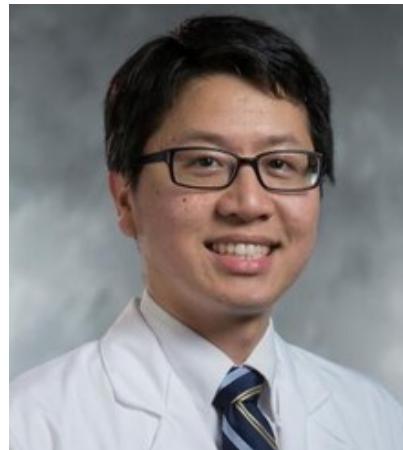
[View previous webinars here.](#)

This newsletter we are putting the spotlight on the new upcoming Fundamentals Program Director Dr. Philip Chu

Dr. Zineb Aouhab

How did MSK US impact your career as an rheumatologist?

USSONAR was the highlight of my 2nd year of fellowship! The pathology scavenger hunt led to me to seek out multiple attendings to scan their patients, which really publicized my interest and growing expertise in MSK US. Fast forward to present. In our rheumatology ultrasound clinics, we receive referrals from our colleagues. The opportunity to interact with multiple rheumatologists and trying to help with solving interesting cases has been very enjoyable. My colleagues are very appreciative, and I get to see high-yield interesting cases.



Dr. Philip Chu

MSK US is also a very useful tool for education. US has also provided many opportunities for teaching fellows and residents, and has made education a major part of my career.

How did ultrasound training prepare you to practice rheumatology?

MSKUS has been very helpful in learning anatomy and better correlating the physical exam with disease manifestations. The ability for immediate imaging feedback allowed me to better hone my physical exam skills paired with MSKUS in the same visit. Instead of just palpating “joints,” I am able to palpate for synovitis, osteophytes, or enthesitis.

What are some of the challenges you may have faced implementing ultrasound in your practice? How did you overcome them?

There was the initial hope that MSK US as an imaging modality could easily serve as the gold standard final answer, but I have found (as a common theme in medicine and rheumatology) that there still remains many gray areas.

As several examples: even with seemingly crystalline deposits, this does not guarantee gout vs CPPD; even if there are classic findings and locations for CPPD, this does not guarantee that it is responsible for the entire picture of inflammatory arthritis; even if there is enthesopathy, this does not separate between mechanical and inflammatory spondyloarthropathy etiologies. Thus I often find that while hoping for further MSK US clarification, there are more follow up questions being asked.

The radiology report phrase “clinically correlate” remains relevant. Thus I often find myself going back full circle to the details of the history and bigger picture again to arrive at the differential conclusions.

Having a network of colleagues to discuss these cases is very helpful. Many questions, such as “have you seen X finding in Y scenario?” or “The textbook says X, this but can Y be possible?” are fun to ask and get an idea for the range of possibilities and make this a group learning experience!

How do you imagine the future of MSK US?

At our institution, we have been piloting AI scribes, which has amazingly transformed my workflow. It allows me to start scanning the patient early on in the clinic visit without worrying about writing additional important history that come up when discovering synovitis on scanning and tenderness on sonopalpation. I do not have to worry about running behind when deciding to roll out the MSK US machine. I think with more universal adoption of AI scribes, we can become more efficient in diagnostic US in the near future.

As MSK US training and clinical use becomes more widely available, I hope to see more adoption of MSK US as a biomarker in clinical trials. In my clinical experience, I find that the physical examination can sometimes be equivocal, and patients with subtle synovitis, patients on active immunosuppression and prednisone, patients with fibromyalgia or higher BMI's can limit the accuracy of the physical exam, which can dilute the outcomes in current clinical trials.



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