

USSONAR Spring Newsletter



April 2026

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Dear Ultrasound Friends,

Happy Spring! 2026 is off to a great start with our successful USSONAR 2025–2026 Fundamentals of Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Program mid-year hands-on course. Thanks again to co-course directors Vice President Dr. Jonathan Samuels and Education Committee member Dr. Jen Medlin for organizing another well-run course! Being able to review both normal and sonopathology findings in our patient-models, recruited by Dr. Natalie Faith, no doubt helps solidify scanning techniques and image interpretation skills.



Minna Kohler MD, RhMSUS

Our Program Director Phil Chu, MD, RhMSUS, Assistant Program Director Erin Chew, MD, RhMSUS, along with Lead Education Committee members Samar Aboulain, MBBCh, RhMSUS, and Jane Nishio, MD, RhMSUS, have continued to work diligently to optimize our curriculum for the current class through our updated Canvas platform. We look forward to everyone completing their upcoming written and hands-on examinations.

We are pleased to announce that **Ralf Thiele, MD, RhMSUS**, has been elected to serve as USSONAR's next Board Treasurer. Congratulations Ralf!

Thanks to all who voted for the next USSONAR Board Member, who will help guide the vision for USSONAR and its mission of supporting education, research, and advocacy for the use of rheumatologic ultrasound.

The rest of the board members will be rotating into new positions as of July 2026.

President- Jonathan Samuels MD, RhMSUS

Vice-President- Anthony Reginato MD, PhD, RhMSUS

Secretary- Catherine Bakewell MD, RhMSUS

Immediate Past-President- Minna Kohler MD, RhMSUS

We also thank Dr. Jane Nishio, Board Member-At-Large, who will be rotating off of the board of directors, but will continue her role in the USSONAR education committee as well as providing historical context and institutional memory for our organization.

A special thank you to our Top 10 Scan Review Mentors:

Thus far, students have submitted over **4100 scans**.

- Lily Kao
- Phillip Chu
- Jon Arnason
- Eugene Kissin
- Dan Malone
- Arash Mollaeian
- Amy Cannella
- Prashant Kaushik
- Pankaj Bansal
- Charles Pritchard

The results of our USSONAR membership survey are currently being reviewed and our gift card winners for completion of the study are below in the membership committee update.

We are also excited for our upcoming [USSONAR Multi-Track Conference in May 2026](#). There are still spots available, so please sign up! All skill levels are welcome, and you will be placed into groups based on your level.

Many thanks to the course leadership:

- **Drs. Lily Kao and Zineb Aouhab**, leading the MSK Ultrasound Track
- **Dr. Ed Oberle**, dedicated Pediatric Ultrasound Track
- **Dr Minna Kohler**, leading the Vasculitis and Sjögren's Ultrasound Track

We continue to have great attendance for our monthly USSONAR webinars, free to anyone who wants to attend. See [events calendar](#) for the schedule of webinars. If you missed a webinar, all USSONAR members have access to the webinar archive to view prior webinar sessions.

We know many of you have questions about the state of ACR RhMSUS certification. The deadline for the RhMSUS certification application has been EXTENDED to May 14, 2026. This extension will provide additional time for eligible candidates to take this important step in their professional development and contribute to elevating the standard of care across our field. Credit hours earned at this year's [Multi-Track Conference](#) can be counted for certification or recertification since they will be earned before you sit for the exam in June.

As a reminder, the decision for the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) to pause the RhMSUS certification program does not invalidate existing certifications. Physicians who have already obtained RhMSUS certification will continue to hold a valid credential for the duration of their certification period. The anticipated change means that no new certifications will be issued after the Spring 2026 examination cycle, rather than affecting the validity of previously granted certifications. For example, individuals who successfully obtain certification by June 2026 will maintain their certification status through the standard certification cycle (currently valid until June 2037). For this reason, we strongly encourage eligible members to pursue certification during this final examination cycle while the opportunity remains available.

To apply for the examination, please follow the application links available on this page:

<https://rheumatology.org/rhmsus-certification>

Lastly, thank you to our generous **sponsors** and the **USSONAR Board of Directors** for their continued support and dedication to our growing organization, as well as our **USSONAR Association Manager**, [Aviva Rothman](#). As always, we want to hear your ideas, updates and feedback on how our

growing organization can continue to support the rheumatology ultrasound community. Enjoy the rest of the newsletter!

Sincerely,

Minna Kohler, MD, RhMSUS

USSONAR President, 2024–2026

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The 2026 USSONAR Corporate Sponsor Prospectus is available, including information about our 2026 events. [Learn more here.](#)

2026 USSONAR Schedule of Events

2026 Multi-Track Ultrasound in Rheumatology Conference

May 16th - 17th, 2026 | Tampa, Florida



Now is the time to secure your spot for the 2026 USSONAR Multi-Track Ultrasound in Rheumatology Conference, taking place May 16–17 in Tampa, Florida. With limited seats remaining, this is your chance to be part of an engaging, hands-on educational experience featuring expert faculty, small-group instruction, and practical training designed to elevate your ultrasound skills, with content and hands-on learning that support participants across beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels.

Planning to stay onsite? Be sure to reserve your room before the hotel room block closes on April 24. 👉 [Reserve your room today](#)



Basic/Intermediate Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Track

Participants will build practical skills in rheumatology musculoskeletal ultrasound across all major joints, including the hand, wrist, shoulder, elbow, hip, knee, ankle, and foot. The course emphasizes image optimization, dynamic scanning techniques, and identifying key findings in inflammatory and crystalline arthropathies. Through expert instruction and case-based discussions, attendees will explore ultrasound-guided procedures, clinical decision-making, and current billing practices.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)



Lupus Webinar Series: Cutaneous Manifestations of Lupus and Dermatologic Ultrasound

May 4th, 2026 8:30 PM EST

SPEAKERS:

Anna Haemel, MD

Ximena Wortsman MD, FAIUM



USSONAR would like to recognize AstraZeneca for sponsoring this webinar series.

USSONAR is excited to bring back the Lupus Webinar Series for 2026. This five-part series begins May 4, with the first session offering timely, expert-led discussions designed to support continued learning in rheumatology ultrasound and lupus care. Be sure to keep an eye on your inbox and USSONAR's social media channels for additional dates, topics, and speaker details as the full series unfolds. The Lupus Webinar Series is just one part of USSONAR's 2026 educational programming, with additional webinars planned throughout the year.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Next Session in the Lupus Webinar Series

Lupus Webinar Series: Gastrointestinal Manifestations in Lupus and Intestinal Ultrasound

June 8th, 2026 8:30 PM EST

SPEAKERS:

Zsuzsanna McMahan, MD, MHS

Phillip Gu, MD



Committee Updates

Fundamentals Committee: (Program Director- Dr. Philip Chu and Assistant Program Director Dr. Erin Chew)

This year marked several major advancements across the program. We successfully transitioned Fundamentals modules onto Canvas LMS for the first time, improving course flow and enabling better tracking of educational objectives.

Our Education Committee reached its largest size yet, now supported by dedicated section leads who are accelerating curriculum updates. We also introduced a new pediatrics-focused anatomy and pathology course, complete with custom video content for each topic.

Recruitment reached record levels, with the highest number of applicants (140), the largest pediatrics group (16), and the most international students in program history! We will also be piloting new technology that allows students to take the hands-on exams on their local devices.

Special thanks to Jen Medlin and Jonathan Samuels, our Mid-year Fundamentals Workshop directors, which was a major success.

Looking ahead, final written and practical examinations are scheduled for May 2026.

Membership Committee: (Committee Chair- Dr. Zineb Aouhab)

Thank you for being part of the USSONAR community. We recently sent a survey to current members to learn how we can better support you and strengthen the overall member experience. We take this feedback seriously and will use it to guide improvements across our programs and resources. Once the survey closes, we'll review the data and develop a thoughtful action plan based on member input.

Congratulations to our four member survey drawing winners!

\$200 off of registration for the Multi-Track Conference:

Andrew Grim

Beth Scholz

\$50 Gift Card:

Dierdre De Ranieri

Elana Eisner

Advocacy Committee: (Committee Chair- Dr. Mark Matza)

The USSONAR Advocacy Committee has been busy at work the last month with the unfortunate news that RhMSUS certification will not be funded for the next fiscal year after June 30th. Be sure to sign up for the next exam before the deadline, May 14, or recertify if you are due for renewal. USSONAR is actively engaged with ACR to advocate for the survival and safekeeping of RhMSUS certification. We will continue to keep you updated as information unfolds. At the same time, the advocacy committee is working to update our knowledge of ultrasound practice expenses and billing practices to use in advocacy for preservation of our current and hopefully new ultrasound billing codes. More to come soon!

Research Committee: (Committee Chair- Dr. Robert Fairchild)

The USSONAR Research Committee is committed to supporting trainees and members in the development and advancement of ultrasound-related research. We welcome the opportunity to review study ideas and proposals at any stage and can provide guidance on study design, methodology, and implementation. For those interested in pursuing ultrasound-focused scholarship, the Committee also offers mentorship and can help connect members with collaborators and resources within the USSONAR community.

In parallel, the Committee is actively engaged in several faculty-led initiatives aimed at advancing the field. Current efforts include projects to quantify practicing ultrasonographers and ultrasound practice patterns across the United States, as well as work to better understand regional trends in global ultrasound research. These initiatives are intended to inform future research priorities and strengthen the evidence base supporting ultrasound use in clinical practice.

Media and Communications Committee: (Committee Chair- Dr. Mario Pompermayer)

The Communications Committee has been actively supporting USSONAR's educational mission through coordinated outreach, promotional communications, and member-facing content. Recent efforts have included creation of video and social media materials for upcoming courses, coverage of the successful USSONAR Fundamentals MSK Ultrasound hands-on conference in Tampa, and promotion of the 2026 Multi-Track Ultrasound in Rheumatology Conference. The committee also continues to support communications that highlight faculty, educational opportunities, and other initiatives that help keep members informed and engaged. Follow our platforms [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#) for updates.

Lupus SIG: (Committee Co-Chairs- Dr. Lily Kao and Dr. Hulya Bukulmez)

Planning and preparation are underway for this year's five-part Lupus Webinar Series, made possible by a generous educational grant from AstraZeneca. The series will begin on May 4, with additional dates and topics to be shared as they're finalized. The SLE SIG committee is actively seeking additional members for potential research initiatives.

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.

Advocacy Committee

Committee Chair - Mark Matza, MD, MBA, RhMSUS

Advances USSONAR's advocacy efforts by promoting the value of rheumatology ultrasound and supporting initiatives that strengthen access, education, and appropriate use in clinical practice.

Bylaws Committee

Committee Chair - Natalie Faith, MD, RhMSUS, RMSK

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

Education Committee

Committee Co-Chairs - Lily Kao, MD, RhMSUS & Zineb Aouhab, MD

Develop educational resources such as literature, image atlases, case studies, and discussion forums. Consists of a Fundamentals MSKUS Education subcommittee and Advanced Education subcommittee, which includes CME course planning, webinar program development.

Media and Communications Committee

Committee Chair - Mario Pompermayer, MD, RhMSUS

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

Membership Committee

Committee Chair - Zineb Aouhab, MD

Maintaining membership database and recruitment of new members.

Pediatric Committee

Committee Chair - Ed Oberle, MD, RhMSUS

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.

Research Committee

Committee Chair - Robert Fairchild, MD, PhD, RhMSUS

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

Are you interested in joining a special interest group?

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

Sjogren's/Salivary Gland US Special Interest Group- contact Howard Yang HHYang@mednet.ucla.edu

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

We would 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!



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

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

[View other previous webinars here.](#) Additional webinar topics and dates are forthcoming.



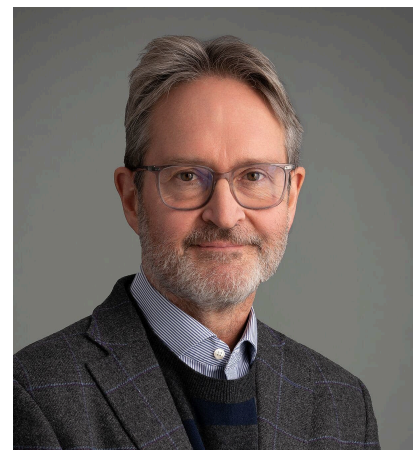
Dr. Zineb Aouhab

Membership Spotlight | By Dr. Zineb Aouhab

In this newsletter, we are putting the spotlight on Dr. Jon Arnason.

How did MSK US impact your career as a rheumatologist?

I had already been practicing rheumatology for 20 years when I started doing ultrasound. At first, I didn't think I needed it since I believed my diagnostic skills and procedural expertise were sufficient. However, my perspective changed when I began using ultrasound to detect subtle synovitis that I could not detect with physical exam alone, find enthesitis I didn't expect and do procedures more reliably and with less discomfort for my patients. MSKUS also became a valuable teaching tool as I developed and led the MSKUS curriculum for the rheumatology fellows at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and mentored trainees through USSONAR.



Dr. Jon Arnason

How did ultrasound training prepare you to practice rheumatology?

Before learning MSKUS, I managed well without it as a rheumatologist in both academic and private settings. However, once I had learned MSKUS and incorporated it into my clinical practice and teaching, things became more interesting, both for myself, the fellows and the patients who now saw with their own eyes what was taking place in their joints. They also appreciated not having to wait and get another appointment with a radiologist for a diagnostic exam or difficult procedure.

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

I was lucky, because my predecessor had already “broken the ice” within the practice and left me a decent US machine. Gradually I started doing US on my own patients and later I invited my colleagues to refer their patients for diagnostic and procedural ultrasound. I only started billing after obtaining certification and establishing internal credentialing for point of care ultrasound in rheumatology.

The high cost of good US machines remains a challenge, and the reimbursement rate is too low for the value we provide.

How do you imagine the future of MSK US?

As more rheumatologists receive comprehensive training and incorporate MSKUS into their practice and teaching, it is likely to become a standard of care for specific procedures and diagnoses. AI is of course on the horizon, if not already here, and it offers potential but carries a baggage as well.

I’m concerned that ACR may be stepping away from MSK certification which could compromise the quality among rheumatologists performing MSKUS. Other organizations might step in, or MSKUS could become a mandatory of every US rheumatology fellowship training and be integrated into rheumatology boards certification to ensure consistent quality.”

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