



ITL IN THE LOUPES

FACULTY

Two new Assistant Professors join Maryland Neurosurgery!

PROMOTIONS & AWARDS

Liz Cahill receives new title, Taylor Miese is Inaugural Team Member & More!

RESIDENCY

Resident Interviews begins on November 3rd! Read More on Page 9



*We face challenges to improve
lives by solving complex
neurosurgical problems.*

**Patients first,
together!**

**Always do the right
thing**

**Leave it better than
you found it**

Drive to mastery

Maryland Neurosurgery
CORE VALUES



Drs. Hooten with their children Alessandra and Max

Faculty

Welcome to Maryland Neurosurgery, Dr. Kristopher Hooten!



*Clinical Assistant Professor of
Neurosurgery at UMMC Shock
Trauma and Walter Reed
National Military Medical Center!*

In a significant development for Maryland Neurosurgery and the Shock Trauma Center, **Kristopher Hooten, MD**, has recently been recruited as part of a groundbreaking military-civilian collaboration. The department is buzzing with excitement as they welcome Dr. Hooten and his military colleagues to the team!

Dr. Hooten will be a regular presence within the

department, continuing the cutting-edge work in neurotrauma care and research originally established by **Bizhan Aarabi, MD** and his team. Apart from his expertise in neurotrauma, Dr. Hooten also brings a keen interest in pediatric and adult spinal deformities. Not only is Dr. Hooten active in surgical quality and research, he also holds the prestigious position of NSQIP Surgeon Champion for the United States Army.

Born in the small town of Menard, Texas, he embarked on his educational journey at Trinity University, where he earned a degree in chemistry in 2005. During this time, he joined the United States Army as a 2nd Lieutenant through the health professional scholarship program. It wasn't until his father getting diagnosed with ASL, that Dr. Hooten

discovered his passion for neurosurgery and further research of neuro-regeneration, neuroinflammation in neurotrauma, and neurodegenerative diseases. In June 2009, Dr. Hooten received his medical degree and highest honors from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and was promoted to the rank of Captain. Proceeding medical school, Dr. Hooten completed his residency training at the University of Florida in Gainesville in June 2016, prompting his promotion to the rank of Major. In 2017 after residency, he then completed a fellowship in pediatric neurosurgery at Duke University.

Following his extensive training, Dr. Hooten was stationed at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, where he rose to become the chief of neurosurgery and surgical subspecialties division. He played a pivotal role in establishing a military-civilian partnership, ensuring 24/7 pediatric neurotrauma and acute care neurosurgery for the state of Hawaii. During this period, he made history as the first ABPNS Certified Pediatric Neurosurgeon in the United States Military and he was the last neurosurgeon deployed in Afghanistan. Prior to his current change of station to Walter Reed, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.



Dr. Hooten moved to Columbia, Maryland from Hawaii in 2022 with his wife, Dr. Claudia Hooten, Retina Surgeon with Retina Group of Washington, and their two children—Alessandra (5) and Max (2). Dr. Hooten will work primarily at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center when he's not covering at Shock Trauma. In his leisure time, he loves traveling around the world with his family—recently having traveled to Norway to see the Northern Lights! Whenever possible, he prefers to spend his time outdoors with his wife and children hiking, fishing, golfing, and skiing.



Looking ahead, Dr. Hooten is eager to embrace the incredible collaborative spirit and teamwork ingrained in the University of Maryland's culture. He aims to uphold the department's clear objectives of providing exceptional patient care and fostering world-class education and research. His involvement in the military-civilian partnership represents a unique opportunity to set an example for the entire United States Military, with the shared goal of enhancing both military and civilian trauma care.

Welcome to Maryland Neurosurgery Dr. Hooten—we're thrilled to have you join the team!



Welcome to Maryland Neurosurgery, Dr. Ross Puffer!

Clinical Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery at UMMC Shock Trauma and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center!

Rochester, Minnesota – a city in the heart of the "Land of 10,000 Lakes," but curiously enough, it's one of the few places in the state without a *natural* lake. Rochester's true claim to fame, however, is being the home of the renowned Mayo Clinic. For **Ross Puffer, MD**, however, this bustling healthcare hub holds special significance, as it was where his parents, both accomplished physicians in Family Medicine and Radiology, first crossed paths while attending Mayo Medical School. Little did they know that their shared medical journey would lay the foundation for a family legacy deeply rooted in the field of medicine.

Dr. Puffer is part of a tight-knit family of four brothers, with each of them having chosen a career path in medicine. "You could say that Thanksgiving dinner conversations always seem to find a way back to medicine!" Dr. Puffer exclaims.

Adding to the medical tapestry, Dr. Puffer's wife, Emily, is also a physician. Undergoing her OB/GYN residency at Mayo Clinic, she then went on to complete her fellowship at Magee Women's Hospital at University of Pittsburg Medical Center, specializing in reproductive endocrinology and infertility.

Of the eleven years of medical training between the couple, they spent seven of those years apart from one another and living in different cities. "With two pagers in the house at the same time, it was a challenge to get anything done. It's finally great to be in the same place after so long apart—and without pagers!" Together with their two sons—Knox (3) and Nate (4 months)—



Dr. Puffer's parents and three brothers

they currently reside in Bethesda, Maryland, right by Walter Reed National Military Medical Center where Dr. Puffer will be spending his time while he is on active duty for the Army.

Dr. Puffer's journey in medicine took an unexpected turn after completing his neurosurgery residency at



Dr. Puffer in residency at Mayo Clinic, 2013



Dr. Emily Puffer, Knox, and Nate



Dr. Puffer in Baghdad, 2021

Mayo Clinic. Within just six months of joining the staff at Walter Reed, he found himself deployed to Baghdad with the 499th Head and Neck surgical team in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, spanning from December 2020 to May 2021. This transition from the state-of-the-art operating rooms at Mayo to a tent-based surgical environment in Baghdad was a stark change. Despite a reduction in the pace of conflict-related surgeries compared to earlier stages of war, there were still critical cases to handle and plenty of moments to forge new friendships. “It has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my early career, and I made several close friends from not only the Head and Neck surgical team, but also with several Australian surgeons who were deployed at the same time.”

Dr. Puffer discovered early on in medical school that he was interested in surgery, and before too long, had the opportunity to observe a medical procedure—“thankfully it was a resection of a subependymoma and not a shunt revision, otherwise I might have made a different specialty choice!”—Dr. Puffer says. After seeing that surgery, he was hooked.

During his residency, two unique opportunities shaped Dr. Puffer’s early career. The first—working with Dr. David Okonkwo at UPMC in Pittsburg on neurotrauma research, and the second—completing his fellowship in brachial plexus reconstruction and peripheral nerve surgery with Dr. Robert Spinner at Mayo Clinic. Both experiences helped foster a strong interest in neurotrauma and associated

research, particularly in combating ‘neurosurgical nihilism’ in the care of severely injured patients.”

At Walter Reed, Dr. Puffer co-manages a multi-disciplinary peripheral nerve clinic with a plastic surgery colleague, where they treat service members and their families who’ve sustained all types of peripheral nerve issues. From brachial plexus injuries and nerve tumors, to neurodegenerative conditions. “It is really a great experience to have physicians from hand surgery, neurosurgery, plastic surgery, neurology and PMR all in the same room talking about complex patients. I usually learn something new at every clinic.”

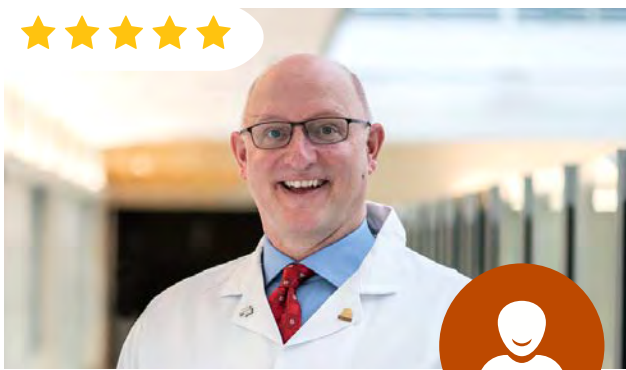
As Dr. Puffer embarks on this new chapter of his career at Maryland Neurosurgery, his focus remains on trauma patients and neurotrauma research. He recognizes the importance of staying up-to-date in the field, especially considering the potential for future deployments to conflict zones. Much like fighter pilots honing their skills before combat, military neurosurgeons must maintain their expertise to operate and care for TBI patients in challenging environments with limited resources.

Over time, Dr. Puffer aims to deepen his understanding of referral patterns for patients with brachial plexus and peripheral nerve injuries, and perhaps collaborate with other faculty at the University of Maryland in other surgical discipline to care for nerve trauma patients. In many cases, these nerve injuries aren’t recognized until later in their recovery course, which sometimes limits reconstructive surgical options.

“Overall I am very grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Maryland Neurosurgery faculty, and I’m always happy to look at a scan and discuss a case!”

Welcome to the team Dr. Puffer! We look forward to working with you as well!

Department Updates



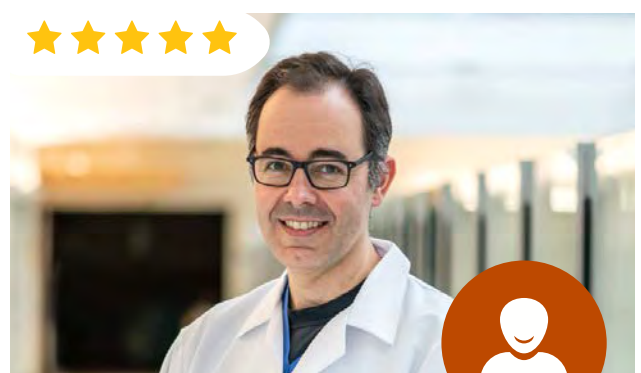
Grateful Patient

Dr. Schwartzbauer is a very caring physician who listened to me, answered my questions, and spoke about potential tests and possible future treatments.



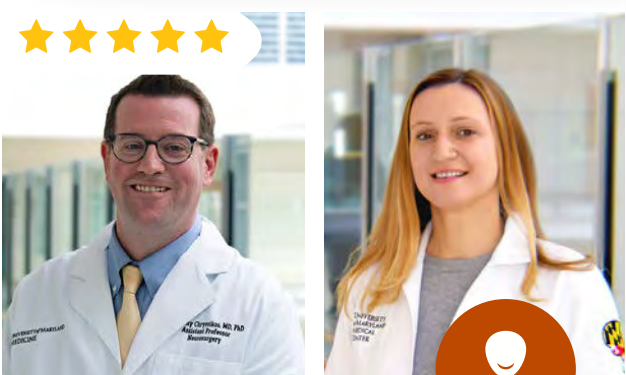
Grateful Patient

Dr. Parker and her staff are the best!



Grateful Patient

Dr. Sansur is an amazing doctor! He is kind, he listens, answers any questions, and doesn't give up on tough cases.



Grateful Patient

Knowledgeable and courteous. As a new patient in the neurosurgery department my stress and anxiety levels were very high. But the doctor and PA quickly put my mind at ease with their patience and expertise. Dr. Chrissykos and Olga work very well together.

★★★★★ Grateful Patient

I have had 16 surgeries in the last 15 years and have had visits with several other surgeons along the way. Dr. Charles Sansur is a model of surgical skill of the highest level. He sets the standard that all others should be equal. He is a man of unusual interpersonal attention and kindness. In his patient reviews on the Univ. Of MD. website, all of the reviews reflect the same as I am stating.

Department Updates

★★★★★



Grateful Patient

*I have always had immediate responses to help with all my concerns or questions. **Chiquita Bell** has been very helpful in keeping me in contact with my doctor. She deserves a big raise!*

★★★★★ **Grateful Patient**

The surgeons are excellent. Patient, respectful, listens, and explains. All wonderful qualities.

★★★★★ **Grateful Patient**

Everyone was very responsive. EXCELLENT. Overall very good and friendly.

★★★★★ **Grateful Patient**

I love the concern and courtesy shown by the doctors and staff at Neurosurgery.

★★★★★ **Grateful Patient**

Front desk person was on the ball - with so many things she had to do, she was always pleasant and made calls back to me or my daughter.

★★★★★



Grateful Patient

*Communication was very good with the office coordinator, **Taylor Miese!***

★★★★★ **Grateful Patient**

The staff at the University of Maryland is nice, courteous, and friendly. I am so glad I chose to have my surgery here.

Dr. Bizhan Aarabi Stepping Down as Director of Neurotrauma at The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center



Drs. Graeme Woodworth and Tom Scalea address UMSOM colleagues on September 14th in this official announcement:

The Program in Trauma and Department of Neurosurgery are announcing an important leadership transition. Since 2000, **Bizhan Aarabi, MD, FRCSC** guided by his mentor and former Department chair **Howard Eisenberg, MD**, has directed the Neurotrauma service at The R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center at UMMC.

Under Dr. Aarabi's leadership, the neurotrauma program gained national and international prominence for significant contributions to the management of brain and spinal injuries including the works: "Guidelines for Management of Acute Cervical Spine and Spinal Cord Injuries," (2013) "A Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Patients with Acute Spinal Cord Injury," (2017) and "Decompressive Craniectomy" (2018).

Dr. Aarabi transformed Neurotrauma in all of its missions - clinical, research, and education - through his protocols, publications, and nationwide influence. The Neurotrauma service

at Shock Trauma is a marquee program for the University of Maryland - there is nothing else like it in the world. Dr. Aarabi developed and led this program for two decades with compassion, skill, and excellence. His passion, expertise, and innovations have saved thousands of lives and advanced the care of brain and spinal cord injury around the world.

Dr. Aarabi has been a highly-sought-after teacher and speaker; he has co-authored over 200 peer-reviewed manuscripts, receiving over 17,000 individual citations, and garnering an H-index of 73. The clinical neurotrauma service cares for over 3,000 patients with brain and spinal injuries yearly, performing over 500 procedures. Dr. Aarabi will continue clinical and research work in part-time roles.

Current Medical Director of the Neurotrauma Center **Gary Schwartzbauer, MD, PhD**, Associate Professor of Neurosurgery and Orthopaedics, has agreed to serve as the Interim Director of Neurotrauma and lead the transition further integrating the multi-disciplinary team of surgeons from neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, and Walter Reed Medical Center.

Promotions & Awards

Liz Cahill Gets Promoted to Director of Clinical Operations!



Elisabeth Cahill, BSN, has moved into a new role as **Director of Clinical Operations!**

Liz will help navigate our continuously growing practice at downtown and across the medical system. “Liz

is the back-bone of our clinical programming and we are excited to expand and grow as a group.” Alex Palleschi says. And the department couldn’t agree more—this elevation in position is most deserved, and we are all incredibly excited to see what that you will accomplish in your new role. *Congratulations Liz!*

Dr. Tim Chryssikos Receives Award at 2023 CNS Annual Meeting in DC



During the 2023 CNS Annual Meeting on September 13th in Washington, DC, it was announced that **Tim Chryssikos, MD, PhD** poster entitled “Intra-operative Ultrasound Using a Linear (minimally invasive) Transducer During

Anterior Cervical Surgery” was selected as the Best Operative Technique Poster in the Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves Section Session. *Amazing work, Dr. Chryssikos!*

Taylor Miese Awarded Inaugural Team Member of the Month



Taylor Miese, our Lead Practice Representative has been awarded our Inaugural Team Member of the Month! Taylor is the first to offer a helping hand and fill in for other team members to ensure that the daily

office functions are running smoothly. She is an example of putting our core values, especially “Patients First, Together!” at the forefront. We appreciate her dedication to our patients, team members, and department. *Thank you, Taylor!*

Dr. Ken Crandall Named “Top Doctor” in Baltimore Magazine



On October 16th, the University of Maryland Medical Center made an announcement regarding the physicians who have been named “Top Doctor” in the November 2023 edition of *Baltimore Magazine*, which is now

accessible in both online and in print. We want to congratulate our very own **Ken Crandall, MD, FAANS, FACS**, for being recognized as Top Doctor in spine surgery! We also wish to congratulate our esteemed colleagues, **Drs. Guarav Jindal, Daniel Cavanaugh, and Steven Ludwig** for being named Top Doctors in their respective fields. You can find the complete list on the UMMC website [HERE](#).



Interview Dates!

Friday, November 3rd
 Friday, December 1st
 Friday, January 12th

Residency Interviews Begin In November!

Interview Structure

In Person	12th Floor D Wing
3 Interview Days	~16 Applicants per Day
15 Minutes per Interview	Interviewing in Pairs

November Interview Schedule

THURSDAY, 11/2
 7:00 PM Cocktail Hour & Dinner

FRIDAY, 11/3
 7:45 AM Applicants Arrive
 9:30 AM Interviews Begin
 4:00 PM Interviews End

Applications: New This Year

Preference Signals	Applicants have 25 signals to send programs indicating preference
Meaningful Experiences	Brief Narrative Highlight 3 most meaningful experiences; limit of 10 experiences total

Match Violations

Avoid questions about age, race, family/children, religion, sexual orientation
Do not ask about interview locations or ranking preferences
We cannot communicate with applicants between the Rank Order List Deadline (March 1st) and Match Week (March 17th).

UPCOMING EVENTS



Skull Base 360° Lab Courses

Time: Varies

Dates: October 13th - October 14th (Open Skull Base Course); October 20th - October 21st (Endoscopic Endonasal Course)

Location: AXIS Labs, Columbia, MD

OCT
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Department Happy Hour!

Time: 5:30 PM

Date: October 26, 2023

Location: UNION Craft Brewing
1700 W 41st St #420, Baltimore, MD 21211

OCT
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NASS 38th Annual Meeting

Time: Time varies each day

Dates: October 18th - October 21st

Location: Los Angeles California

*Click [HERE](#) to view the entire schedule

OCT
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Ibrahimi Lecture with Ziya L. Gokaslan, MD, FAANS, FACS

Time: 7:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Dates: November 16, 2023

Location: HSFIII 1st Floor Lecture Hall

NOV
16



OCTOBER 2023

GRAND ROUNDS SCHEDULE

September

7th	7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Breakfast & Open Discussion	
14th	7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Ken Crandall, MD <i>Associate Professor of Neurosurgery</i>	"OR Best Practices"
21st	7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Bizhan Aarabi, MD, FRCSC <i>Professor of Neurosurgery</i>	"What a Journey"
28th	7:00 AM - 8:30 AM	Gary Schwartzbauer, MD, PhD <i>Associate Professor of Neurosurgery</i>	M&M

October

5th	7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Josh Olexa, MD, PGY-6	
12th	7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Bradley Allen Dengler, MD <i>Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery</i>	
19th	7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Charley Sansur, MD, MHSc <i>Professor of Neurosurgery</i>	
26th	7:00 AM - 8:30 AM	Gary Schwartzbauer, MD, PhD <i>Associate Professor of Neurosurgery</i>	

EDITOR'S NOTE

We are looking for stories, achievements, heroics, tidbits, and fun stuff to feature in *In The Loupes* and to share within the University of Maryland and our surrounding communities.

If you are interested in writing a column or would like to share news you'd like to hear more of, feel free to email at rcmcgowan@som.umaryland.edu

If you would like to submit your news via the Neurosurgery News Portal, click [HERE](#).

Rachel McGowan

