



FOUNDATION OF THE CMSC

# 10th Anniversary Publication Multiple Sclerosis Mentorship Forum

2015-2025

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

This publication is supported by Viatris.

Thank you!



We extend our sincere gratitude to Viatris for their generous support of this publication for the 10th Anniversary of the Mentorship Forum. Your contribution to this milestone celebration is deeply appreciated.



# The

## Legacy of our Beloved June Halper

The Foundation was established in 1999 to improve education and research in the field of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and to enhance the quality of life for those living with MS. June Halper, a key founding member of the Foundation of the CMSC, envisioned a world where individuals battling with MS receive optimal care and healthcare professionals have the necessary resources, training, and support to provide such care. Fueled by this vision, the Foundation created programs that aim to increase the workforce of neurologists, researchers, nursing professionals, mental health professionals, and rehabilitation professionals committed to delivering MS care.

### MS Mentorship Forum Timeline & Development

**January 2015:** Inaugural MS Mentorship Forum (MF) launches\*

The multiple sclerosis (MS) healthcare field is experiencing rapid knowledge growth and treatment expansion, creating challenges for providers to stay current, with a projected shortage of MS specialists relative to patient needs within the next decade. In response, June Halper and the Foundation of the CMSC organized the first MS Mentorship Forum in January 2015 at a Newark airport hotel. This pilot program brought together 23 neurology residents from CMSC-affiliated institutions across North America. Participants completed a pre-meeting survey to guide the program structure, which ultimately featured a two-day colloquium with expert faculty and peer mentors. The 2-day program used a variety of educational strategies. Presentation formats included seminars about a range of neuroimmunology topics; small-group, neuroimmunology-focused, case-based discussions; interactive large-group experiential sharing; and informal, fireside chats about medical/neurology topics and career issues facing neurology trainees.

**2016:** Following the pilot's success, MS Mentorship Forum becomes a permanent annual program

**2015-2025:** Program steadily expands over the decade

**2025:** Ten-year anniversary of the MS Mentorship Forum

Now, ten years later, the Foundation has expanded the Mentorship Forum beyond just neurology residents to include medical students, MS fellows, and healthcare professionals from various MS disciplines. June's vision continues to guide this expansion, with the aim of improving skills in MS care and meeting the growing demands of patients. Her legacy is evident in every healthcare professional who has benefited from this mentorship program.

\*DeLuca, G. C., Buckle, G., Cortese, I., Graves, J. S., Halper, J., Newsome, S. D., Sicotte, N., & Ford, & Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers. (2017). Cultivating the Multiple Sclerosis Workforce of the Future. *International Journal of MS Care*, 19(3), 123-129.

## How the Foundation of the CMSC Mentorship Forum Shaped My Professional Journey?



### **Mima Akinsanya, DO (Member, MS Mentorship Forum Committee)**

Attending Neuroimmunologist, Assistant Professor at Georgetown

The Mentorship Forum has been a cornerstone in my evolution as a neuroimmunologist. I began this journey as an eager medical student, excited to absorb as much knowledge as possible. Along the way, I have received support and guidance through each stage of my career, from residency to fellowship, and now as a junior attending. This path has been enriched with opportunities for growth, collaboration, and mentorship. I encourage all participants to seek mentorship and collaborations, and remember that your unique perspective and voice can make a profound difference in your field.



### **Moein Amin, MD, MS**

Neuroimmunology Staff Physician at Cleveland Clinic Mellen Center, Cleveland, OH

I found the mentorship forum incredibly helpful as it allowed me to connect with great mentors, colleagues, and leaders in the field. The forum provided valuable tools and insights in navigating the job application stage and facilitated understanding and recognition of the various possible career pathways.



### **Nidhi Anadani, MD**

Associate professor department of Neurology at University of Oklahoma Health Science Center

Mentorship forum helped me shape my neuroimmunology career by providing me resources and importantly connect with colleagues with similar interest in the field.



### **Diana Andino, MD**

Neuroimmunologist at Austin Regional Clinic, Austin, TX

Very helpful to hear different perspectives of practice setting. The mentorship and information provided has been invaluable for my success.



### **Rikka Azuma, MD**

Neuroimmunology Fellow, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

The Mentorship Forum gave me real-world wisdom about starting a career in this field and the opportunity to meet colleagues from multiple disciplines.



### **Rae Bacharach, DO**

Assistant Professor, Penn State Department of Neurology, Neurology Residency Program Director

The Mentorship Forum and attendance at CMSC as a resident was one of the defining experiences that helped solidify my plans to pursue an MS fellowship. I'm so grateful for this opportunity I was given and encourage my current residents to do the same.



### **Mara Bahri, MD, MSc**

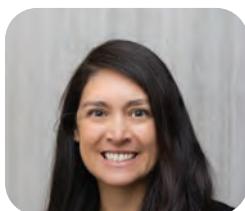
The MS Mentorship Forum has been instrumental in shaping my career in MS research. These experiences have provided invaluable mentorship offering insights I will carry with me throughout my career.



### **Brinda Bhaskar, MD**

Well-Star Medical College of Georgia Neurology Residency 2021-2025. Neuro-Immunology Fellowship in July 2025 at the University of Florida at Gainesville.

The Mentorship Forum has helped provide the tools for me to help start my career into neuro-immunology by giving me a space to help foster connections with people in the field both directly and indirectly. I was able to meet both physicians and other healthcare professionals who manage MS patients. They have provided useful insights on how to navigate contracts for new jobs, advocate for yourself in the field, and find useful resources for my practice.



### **Nina Bozinov, MD, MS (Member, MS Mentorship Forum Committee)**

Director Kootenai Clinics Center for Comprehensive MS Care, Clinical Assistant Professor University of Washington School of Medicine

The Mentorship Forum gave me pearls of wisdom for navigating career transitions, how to focus on what really matters and the importance of collaboration of care.



### **Alise Carlson, MD**

Staff Neurologist at the Mellen Center for Multiple Sclerosis Treatment and Research at the Cleveland Clinic and Assistant Professor of Neurology at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine (CCLCM) / and Case Western Reserve University (CWRU)

The forum provided me the opportunity to take a deep dive into diagnosis and treatment of MS, which I would have not otherwise received through my residency training.



### **Gina Chang**

Neurology resident, PGY-5, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

The CMSC Mentorship Forum was my first real exposure to the world of MS; the Forum solidified my plans to do MS fellowship — which I will be starting in July, at UCSF — and helped me to start making connections with others in the field.



### **Veronica Cipriani, MD, MS (Member, MS Mentorship Forum Committee)**

The University of Chicago

I credit the FCMSC for sparking my passion for MS care and shaping my career. As a medical student scholar in 2010, I had the incredible opportunity to meet inspiring leaders in the field and present my research at an international conference. Fast forward 15 years, and I am now honored to serve as faculty for the Mentorship Forum, where I hope to give back and help inspire the next generation of MS professionals.



### **Amanda Codling, MD, MS and Autoimmune Neurology Fellowship Trained**

Clinical Neurophysiology Fellow (EMG focus) at University of Arizona in Tucson

The Mentorship Forum helped me network but also helped me see different opportunities that I have with my training. I received so much career guidance and personal guidance regarding transitioning from trainee to fellow to attending. These have helped guide my career decisions and helped guide the way I mentor others.

## How the Foundation of the CMSC Mentorship Forum Shaped My Professional Journey?



### William Conte, MD, MS

Neuroimmunologist, Methodist Hospitals, Merrillville, IN; Adjunct Assistant Professor of Neurology, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

The Mentorship forum was immensely helpful for me. Not only did it provide education about MS and related disorders, but the career advice was important for me to jump-start my MS center. Further, the networking opportunities was critical and I have formed lifelong friendships with colleagues I met at the forum.



### Maria Tedi Coronel, MSCN, AGACNP-BC, CCRN, BSN-RN

Hackensack Meridian Health Care

CMSC mentorship forum helped me strengthen my confidence in navigating the daily challenges of seeing MS patients: the complicated haywire pathophysiology and the individualized symptoms. As a new APN in the field of MS, I was grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in the mentorship.



### Kyra Curtis, MD

PGY3 at the University of Rochester Medical Center

Attending the MS Mentorship program was an invaluable experience for me! The information presented and networking opportunities was very helpful for me applying to neuroimmunology fellowships this year. The session on CVs and applying for jobs was also very helpful in preparing me for my future career. I'd recommend this experience to anyone considering a career in MS and neuroimmunology!



### Alejandra Duque Ramirez, MD

Neuroimmunology fellow at The University of Chicago in Chicago, IL

The Mentorship Forum was a great experience that helped me network, project my career, identify growth opportunities and things I had to do to take the best possible advantage of my fellowship. The things I learned also helped me while I was looking for a job. I am very glad I participated last year and it is an experience I recommend to everyone wanting to join the Neuroimmunology world!



### Svetlana Eckert, MD

Assistant professor at the Jacobs Multiple Sclerosis Center for Treatment and Research

The Mentorship Forum allowed me to explore training options in MS and helped me figure out what I would want out of a future career in terms of balancing research, clinical care, and family life. It also helped me believe in myself and inspired me to pursue the complicated but extremely rewarding task of taking care of MS patients. It also allowed me to make connections with other future MS neurologists, who are now my colleagues in the field.



### Evy Eleftheriou, MD

Attending neurologist under Multiple Sclerosis/Neuroimmunology division at MaineHealth Neurology Scarborough, ME affiliated with MaineHealth Maine Medical Center since 2017. Assistant Clinical Professor of Neurology for Tufts University School of Medicine

The Mentorship Forum had a strong impact on my MS education but also networking with faculty/mentors and other residents who shared common career interests in MS, which I feel accelerated my competence and success in the field of MS/neuroimmunology as a future attending.

## Mentorship Forum Alumni



### **Aisha Elfasi, MD**

Clinical and Research Fellow, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

The CMSC MS Mentorship Forum was an amazing opportunity for me to learn from and network with other MS providers in the field. Through the forum, I have learned helpful information to guide my ongoing career search as well as ideas on how to structure my future career.



### **Mah Fereidan, MD**

Neurology Resident-PGY3, Neurology Department at University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

Participating in the Mentorship Forum was a transformative experience during a critical period in my career. Some faculty members went above and beyond by helping me secure additional interviews and explore job opportunities, opening doors I hadn't anticipated. This experience underscored the power of mentorship and networking in shaping a successful career trajectory.



### **Claudia Gambrah-Lyles, MD, MSCI**

Clinical Fellow, Washington University in St. Louis

The Mentorship Forum provided invaluable guidance and connections as I launched my career in MS and neuroimmunology. Participating inspired me to pursue a clinical research career that focuses on leveraging technology to improve outcomes for children with neuroimmunological diseases all over the world. Key takeaway: seek mentors who inspire and challenge you, and stay adaptable as you grow!



### **Stephanie Gandelman, MD, MS**

Neuroimmunology Attending at Westchester Medical Center and Assistant Professor of Neurology, New York Medical College, Westchester Medical Center and Assistant Professor of Neurology, New York Medical College

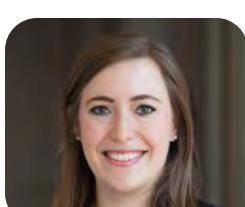
The Mentorship Forum was a wonderful opportunity to see what a clinical career in MS might look like, and meet people who would become my future colleagues in the MS world. I am glad to have had the opportunity and encourage budding MS specialists to participate as well!



### **Alex Gill, MD, PhD**

Associate Medical Director, Translational Medicine, Neuroscience, Novartis

The CMSC Mentorship Forum was vital in shaping my career path in multiple sclerosis (MS) and neuroimmunology. Through the Forum, I not only honed my clinical and research skills but also learned the importance of aligning with management and funders, building collaborations with MS clinical and research community at large, and adaptability — key lessons that continue to guide me in my current role as a medical director at Novartis. My advice to future mentees: seek mentors that care about your personal success, embrace challenges, and collaborate widely.



### **Lauren Gluck, MD**

Associate Professor of Neurology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center, Director of the Division of Multiple Sclerosis

The mentorship forum was an exceptional opportunity to network with established faculty in the field of multiple sclerosis and meet other trainees entering fellowship and attending practice. The CMSC conference also exposed me to new information about MS and related diseases, as well as the extent of the multidisciplinary nature of this specialty! Learning from nurse practitioners, physiatrists, rehab therapists, and neuropsychologists is invaluable.



### **Daniel Gratch, MD**

Senior Multiple Sclerosis Fellow, Mount Sinai Hospital

The Mentorship Forum was an excellent opportunity to meet neuroimmunology colleagues at all stages of training from residents to well-established leaders of the field. There was invaluable career advice delivered both formally and informally, and I was able to use negotiation strategies when navigating my job search this Fall. I recommend this program for any resident or fellow interested in careers in neuroimmunology.

## How the Foundation of the CMSC Mentorship Forum Shaped My Professional Journey?



### **Mysti Harrison, MD, MSCR (Member, MS Mentorship Forum Committee)**

Assistant Professor of Neurology, John L. Trotter MS Center, Washington University in St. Louis

Participation in the Mentorship Forum was greatly beneficial for my career growth. The program was offered during a very important time in my training and provided helpful insights and networking opportunities that I may not have otherwise had without it.



### **Savannah Hays, M.S.E., PhD Student**

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Johns Hopkins University

The Mentorship Forum has been instrumental in shaping my understanding of the impact of medical imaging in healthcare, particularly in the MS field. As an engineer working on medical image analysis, the insights gained from the forum have guided the purpose and focus of my research. It is both humbling and motivating to see how my work can potentially make a difference in the lives of people with MS, bridging the gap between engineering and clinical care.



### **Daija Jackson, PsyD, U.S. Army Captain and Post-Doctoral Resident in Clinical Psychology**

Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX

The Mentorship Forum provided valuable information about how allied health professionals like me can support patients with MS and allowed me to connect with other healthcare professionals in the field working with this unique population I would not have otherwise met without this opportunity. The Mentorship Forum also helped me gain a colleague with a U.S. Air Force neurologist and now we are starting a research project exploring MS in U.S. service members.



### **Kayla Jacques, MD**

Clinical and research neuroimmunology fellowship at UC San Diego

The Mentorship Forum connected me to other neurologists at my level of training for valuable networking and community building. The forum also provided insight on navigating an academic career with interests in both research and teaching.



### **Yasir Jassam, MD FRCP FAAN**

Division Chief of Neurology, Chair, Department of Psychiatry and Neurology, Director of Multiple Sclerosis & Neuroimmunology Program, Hoag Memorial Hospital, Newport Beach California.

The Mentorship Forum opened doors for me to connect with the community, it has shaped many of my future career directions in both clinical and research phases, many of my subsequent projects were with people I met on the forum.



### **William Kilgo, MD**

Neuroimmunology Division Director, Associate Professor, Residency Program Director at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama

Attending the Mentorship Forum was highly beneficial early on in my career. I came from a small program without a robust MS presence, but I was able to network with faculty, residents, and fellows from other programs who are now friends and colleagues. Many of them have given me great advice over the years. This was a great event that I truly feel helped me get started on the path to a successful career as an MS specialist at an academic institution.

## Mentorship Forum Alumni



### **WooJin Kim, MD, PhD, FRCPC**

Professor, Division of Neurology and Division of Palliative care, Department of Medicine, University of Ottawa, Canada

The MS Mentorship Forum profoundly influenced my career, offering a deeper understanding of the multifaceted roles of an academic neurologist and neuropalliative care specialist in MS. Engaging with experts, mentors, and peers provided invaluable insights into excelling as both a compassionate physician and a dedicated researcher. The mentorship I received not only honed my clinical expertise but also underscored the importance of building a career centered on empathetic, patient-focused care.



### **Avi Kolly, MD**

PGY-4 USF Neurology. 2025-2026 Neuroimmunology Fellow Oregon Health Sciences University

The mentorship forum helped me network with current neuroimmunology faculty, fellows, and program directors allowing me to decide on which programs I would apply to for fellowship. The mentorship forum also exposed me to a variety of career pathways in multiple sclerosis/NI that I otherwise would not have known about.



### **Jonathan Krett, MD, FRCPC**

Clinical & Research Fellow, Division of Neuroimmunology and Neurological Infections, Department of Neurology, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Attending the mentorship forum solidified my desire to continue my career as a clinically oriented MS neurologist with an interest in sharing knowledge needed to provide high-quality MS care.



### **Elijah Lackey, MD**

Assistant Professor of Neurology, Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroimmunology, Duke University

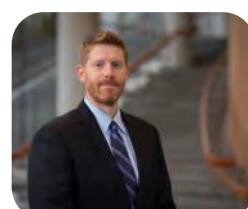
The forums taught me to search for mentorship and sponsorship. They also taught me how to better mentor others, which is something I really enjoy.



### **Amy Laitinen, MD (Member, MS Mentorship Forum Committee)**

Director of Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroimmunology, Marcus Neuroscience Institute, Baptist Health South Florida

My first CMSC conference was as a mentee in the Mentorship Forum in 2022. The program connected me to peers around the country that has continued to serve as a support network and provided me with the information needed to help me build a new MS center. The Mentorship Forum has been instrumental in my career thus far and I am extremely grateful to the program!



### **Christopher Langston, MD**

Assistant Professor Neurology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, New York. Medical Director, Madlyn Borelli Multiple Sclerosis Center, Nyack, New York; appointed at Burke Rehabilitation Center, White Plains, New York

A unique experience to hear from a diverse range of experts from across the United States. A resource or memories that have served me throughout my professional development.

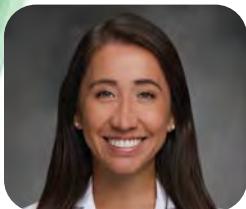


### **Mark Leekoff, MD, MPH**

Atlantic Medical Group Multiple Sclerosis Comprehensive Care Center

This forum was very helpful in teaching the other things that were not taught in fellowship ie. Job hunting etc.

## How the Foundation of the CMSC Mentorship Forum Shaped My Professional Journey?



### **Andrea Linares Lopez, DO**

Current PGY-4 Chief Resident at Duke University

Attending the conference solidified my decision to go into this specialty ultimately and motivated me to wanting to get further involved in this field. My words of wisdom are - attend this meeting with an open mind because you will learn a lot about the field but also meet not only future mentors but also future colleagues.



### **Michelle Maher, MD**

Duke Neurology Resident, PGY-3. Affiliated with Duke University Hospital

I applied to the CMSC Mentorship Forum when I was still contemplating which specialty to choose. The mentorship forum and CMSC conference strengthened my desire to pursue neuroimmunology and provided an opportunity to learn from leaders in the field. It was an incredibly valuable experience.



### **Heena Manglani, PhD (Member, MS Mentorship Forum Committee)**

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Integrative Medicine, Harvard Medical School and Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital

The Mentorship has enabled me to connect with other allied health researchers and providers throughout the country. Given how small our community is, the mentorship forum has allowed us to convene and share ideas about how we are addressing patient needs and challenges. This discourse is instrumental in ensuring whole person health of people with MS and their loved ones.



### **Luis Manrique, MD**

Assistant Professor at Georgetown University Medical Center

The Forum was specially helpful to figure out what career pathway to take, in this field there are many options but I'm so glad I was able to hear different perspectives. I would say that listing and ranking your priorities during fellowship was the most helpful tip.



### **Elina Melamed, MD**

Staff neurologist and neuroimmunologist at the Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center in Long Beach, CA, MS Centers of Excellence, Regional Program Director at the VA Long Beach Healthcare System, Neurology faculty with the adult neurology residency program at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center in Long Beach, CA; Neurology faculty at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center

The Mentorship Forum helped me form connections as well as forge friendships with individuals I would interact with in my job searches, and throughout the start of my career. The MS world is truly small!!



### **Natalie Moreo, MD**

Assistant Professor, Department of Neurology , Associate Program Director, Multiple Sclerosis Fellowship, University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine

It was at the CMSC Mentorship Forum that I first heard women MS specialists speak about their career journeys, and I knew then that I could take my path in any direction I chose.



### **Annalisa Morgan, MD**

Clinical Fellow, Yale School of Medicine

I think very highly of this program and recommend participation to any residents or fellows interested in the MS field.



### **Stephen Nnodim, Jr., MD**

Multiple Sclerosis/Neuroimmunology Fellow, Keck Medicine of USC

The mentorship forum I attended in 2024 was instrumental in helping me figure out my post-fellowship career path. It was helpful to hear insights from those who pursued: research vs research-clinician vs MS center-clinician tracks. Another good touch was making mentors mix/mingle with the attendees- I feel this definitely helped to facilitate the transfer of information and advice.



### **Daniela Pimentel Maldonado, MD, MSCR**

Assistant Professor of Neurology, John L. Trotter MS Center, Washington University in St. Louis, Neuroimmunologist, Clinical Reviewer at U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Office of New Drugs, Office of Neuroscience, Division of Neurology

This forum helped me plan my career and planted the idea of exploring a non-traditional career pathway, which I ultimately pursued.



### **Noellie Rivera Torres, MD**

Physician Neurologist at VA Caribbean Health System

The Mentorship Forum was a great networking opportunity. Hearing from peers with similar career goals and learning about their approach towards different processes was very helpful. I made sure to ask all the questions I had during the forum and would encourage others to do the same.



### **Zach Rohm, MD**

Assistant Professor of Neurology, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

The MS Mentorship Forum was immensely helpful as I was starting my journey in the fields of MS and neuroimmunology. The Forum's faculty provided practical advice and insider knowledge about a wide range of topics, such as how to secure an MS fellowship and what to consider when interviewing for a job.



### **Samantha Roman, MD**

TidalHealth in Salisbury, MD

My words of wisdom to future attendees would be to network with peers who are there and keep in contact to build connections that can help you reach your future career goals.



### **Lindsay Ross, MD**

Staff neurologist at the Mellen Center for MS at Cleveland Clinic and Assistant Professor of Neurology at Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine

The mentorship forum helped solidify my decision to practice as an MS specialist thanks to the advice and welcoming nature of the MS community.

## How the Foundation of the CMSC Mentorship Forum Shaped My Professional Journey?



### **Mitra Rouhani, PhD, MS**

Post-doctoral research fellow, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL

The MS Mentorship Forum was a valuable experience. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to interact with faculty mentors, and fellow mentees. My advice to future mentees is to be proactive, ask thoughtful questions, and embrace the opportunity to learn from the diverse perspectives within the program.



### **Shuvro Roy, MD**

Assistant Professor, University of Washington; Adjunct Professor, Johns Hopkins University

The Mentorship Forum was tremendously helpful for me in understand the mindset of division and department heads as they hire new faculty. This allowed me to prep my CV and my job search process accordingly. I have met collaborators at the mentorship forum, and any number of other neuroimmunologists who I can consult on challenging cases I face, and vice versa.



### **Rufaidah Rushdi, MD, MSc, IBCLC, MRCPCH**

Pediatrician, Multiple Sclerosis Researcher

The MS Mentorship Forums were transformative milestones in my career journey.



### **Sarah Salama, MD, PhD**

A lecturer of Neuroimmunology/ MS centre/ Alexandria University, Egypt as well as A research fellow at Dept of Neuroinflammation/ Queen square MS centre/ UCL/London/UK.

My participation provided great opportunities to meet new colleagues in the field, connect with old ones and explore new research ideas. Additionally it fine tuned my practice and emphasised the importance of a multidisciplinary team work in managing MS.



### **Rohini Samudralwar, MD**

Assistant Professor, Associate Program Director, Neurology Residency Co- Director of MS and Related Disorders Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania

This program allowed me to meet with my future colleagues post training. The best part is that now we get to collaborate on projects and support our individual trainees together!



### **Katherine Sawicka, MD, PhD**

Candidate, University of Toronto, The Hospital for Sick Children Research Institute, Child Health Evaluative Sciences

The mentorship forum connected me with senior and junior faculty that have inspired and encouraged me to pursue MS as my field of choice as a clinician and scientists. Most importantly, the mentorship forum introduced me to like-minded trainees who are now colleagues and friends

## Mentorship Forum Alumni



**Solange Saxby, PhD, RDN**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Dartmouth Health

I am very grateful to have been able to participate in the Mentorship Forum. It provided me the access to be able to network with other like-minded individuals, as well as have the opportunity to hear from various panels and presentations and personal experiences navigating through their careers. Thank you for putting on such a wonderful event.



**Suma Shah, MD**  
Associate Professor, Neurology, Duke University

The Mentorship Forum was a tremendous opportunity to learn from leaders in the field and meet other similarly motivated clinicians in training. I remember sitting at the first career panel I attended and being so amazed at the different career paths offered to people who provided care to those living with MS.



**Farnoosh Shemirani, PhD**  
Postdoctoral scholar at the University of Iowa, Department of Internal Medicine

The Mentorship Forum has been incredibly helpful in my professional journey by providing invaluable opportunities to build connections and expand my professional network within the multiple sclerosis (MS) community. The forum has also served as an excellent platform for updating my knowledge on the latest advancements and research in the field of MS. These experiences have significantly contributed to shaping my career and fostering collaborations that continue to enrich my work.



**Manali Sheth, MD**  
Instructor in Neurology, Harvard Medical School, Attending Physician, Brigham and Women's Hospital & South Shore Hospital, Division of Multiple Sclerosis & Neuroimmunology, Department of Neurology

The Mentorship Forum was truly excellent! I had planned to start a local MS Center in the Greater Boston area, and the forum allowed me to get detailed and tangible advice on how best to build up a program from year 1 onwards from others who have paved the way before me. There were many incredibly helpful sessions of how to negotiate contracts, and how to develop and forge a professional career. The forum also allowed me to network with other Neurologists around the country. I wish I could do this forever!



**Sarah Simmons, MD, PhD**  
Assistant Professor at UW Medicine's Multiple Sclerosis Center

Participating in the MS mentorship forum as a resident advanced my understanding of the pathophysiology and clinical care of MS, and led to important introductions to clinicians and researchers in the field. This foray into the field of MS research and care solidified my desire to enter this rewarding field.



**Carlos Sollero, MD**  
Assistant professor of Neurology at the University of Rochester, Rochester, NY

The forum was an excellent way to meet several prominent MS specialists and cement relationships. I cherish friendships with other alumni and mentors, such as Tirisham Gyang and Augusto Miravalle.



**Andrea Stewart, PhD, DPT**  
Duke University Hospital, Adult Inpatient Division

Attending CMSC and the Mentorship Forum has kept me informed of the latest research and best practices in MS care. I've also enjoyed the opportunity to network, make new friends, and reconnect with colleagues and mentors from other institutions. I've been fortunate to attend for several years since being an MS scholar as a graduate student, and I'm continually inspired by the dedication and passion of this community.

## How the Foundation of the CMSC Mentorship Forum Shaped My Professional Journey?



**Elaine Su, MD**

MS Specialist, Southern California Permanente Medical Group

I was grateful to meet so many leaders, mentors, and now colleagues in the Mentorship Forum.



**Meg Sugita, DO**

PGY-4, Duke University

The mentorship forum has connected me with mentors who I look up to and have walked the path that I would like to follow. I have been able to network with leaders in the field who have provided their invaluable perspectives on navigating academic medicine and industry experiences. The workshop and discussions have provided me with a great foundation and framework as I pursue a career in MS.



**Olga Syritsnya, MD**

Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Neurology, NYU Langone Ambulatory Care, East Meadow and Bethpage, NY

The CMSC Mentorship Forum has significantly shaped my career in Multiple Sclerosis care by helping me choose my path. The program equipped me with crucial professional skills, particularly in negotiations, which proved essential for navigating career transitions. The forum introduced me to exceptional physicians who have become role models and inspiring mentors.



**Sophia Tessema, MD, MPH**

PGY4 Neurology Resident at Wayne State University, upcoming MS/Neuroimmunology at the University of Michigan

The 2024 CMSC was a wonderful opportunity for me to connect with likeminded health professionals in our common goal to improve the care of MS patients. It was truly unique to witness a multidisciplinary approach and only further solidified my passion and hope in the field. It felt like a true community.



**Tyler Titcomb (Member, MS Mentorship Forum Committee)**

PhD in nutritional science and registered dietitian nutritionist

The Mentorship Forum has been immensely impactful on my career in MS research.



**Luka Vlahovic, MD, MSCR**

Providence Brain and Spine Institute - Multiple Sclerosis Center, Portland, OR

This forum helped me further develop interest in the field of MS, ultimately completing formal MS/neuroimmunology fellowship. Very grateful that I had this wonderful opportunity during my training.



**Mark Waheed, DO**

Diplomate, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Fellowship in Neuroimmunology and Neuro-infectious disease from University of Utah, Local Director of MS/ neuroimmunology in Sacramento at Kaiser Permanente

The Mentorship Forum stressed upon me the power of connection and collaboration, and has encouraged me to start working on research in my own institution. "Know your worth" was a phrase I took away from mentors to me.



**Rosemarie Walch, DO (Member, MS Mentorship Forum Committee)**

Multiple Sclerosis/Neuroimmunology; Memorial Healthcare, Owosso, MI

Overall attending the Mentorship Forum early in my career helped me learn how to navigate my value as a clinician. Connecting with other clinicians and having a network across the country is always helpful to navigate difficult cases, build research projects and assist patients during any moves.



**Yujie Wang, MD**

Assistant Professor of Neurology, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

The Mentorship Forum was an invaluable experience for me while I was an MS fellow. It allowed me to learn more about MS, network with other residents and fellows, and meet future mentors and collaborators. I have recommended it highly for all residents and fellows interested in pursuing a career in MS care!



**Willard Wilson Will, PhD, MSN, MSc, RN, AGCNS-BC, MSCN**

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Every specialty should have a mentorship forum like CMSC's. I am extremely indebted to the faculty and staff for their ongoing commitment to young clinician-researchers and hope to be able to return the favor for others.



**Liliya Yausheva, MD**

Currently Neurology/Neuroimmunology physician at Confluence Health, Wenatchee, WA

The Mentorship Forum inspired me to pursue the field of MS as a practicing physician in a rural community realizing how much can be done for MS patients even in underserved areas.



**Stephen Yeung, DO**

Medical Director at Novartis

The Mentorship Forum made it possible to have a network of colleagues with the same common goal and purpose that I could turn to for clinical support, research collaborations, or unified partnerships to advocate for patients.



**Ghaida Zaid, MD**

Clinical Assistant Professor of Neurology, Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroimmunology specialist at University of Tennessee Medical Center

The forum was very important to ease the transition from fellowship to independent practice, it was helpful to network and build connections which is very helpful.



## How the Foundation of the CMSC Mentorship Forum Shaped My Professional Journey?



**Rachel Zolno, MD**

Attending physician in pediatric neuroimmunology at Mount Sinai Hospital. Assistant Professor of Neurology in the divisions of multiple sclerosis and pediatric neurology.

The Mentorship Forum curriculum and mentors that I met through the forum were immensely helpful in providing me with invaluable guidance as I applied first for an MS fellowship and then for an attending position.



**Mark Zuppichini, PhD**

Postdoctoral scholar at the University of Iowa, Department of Internal Medicine

The mentorship gave me the unique opportunity to network with my peers, share my research, and gain invaluable feedback on my work that I was able to apply to future studies. Further, it provided the necessary funds for me to travel to the conference and present my research to a broader audience.



**Nancy Sicotte, MD, FAAN**

**Chair, MS Mentorship Forum Committee**

Professor and Chair, Department of Neurology, Women's Guild Distinguished Chair in Neurology, Director, Multiple Sclerosis, Cedars-Sinai, Los Angeles, CA

“

I have been honored to be a part of the Mentorship Forum since the first event in 2015 at an airport hotel in Newark, NJ. I heard about the event and was so excited to see a program dedicated to mentorship that I kind of invited myself! It was then that I got to know the indomitable June Halper and her incredible energy and passion for promoting interdisciplinary care for people living with multiple sclerosis.

”



# The hearts she left behind

Testaments to June Halper's Legacy by the  
Mentorship Forum Leadership

“ Upon hearing of my research interests, she encouraged me to participate in the FCMSC medical student programs. Unbeknownst to me, this introduction to the CMSC would prove to be transformative. Her vibrant and pioneering spirit has helped to catapult many careers, including my own.

Heart icon Mima Akinsanya

“ June's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of people with MS was truly inspiring, and she will always be remembered for her remarkable ability to unite people in the shared mission of advancing patient care.

Heart icon Veronica Cipriani

“ June was a giant in the MS Community, and through her extraordinary vision, helped to shape MS education and care. She had a profound influence on me, both personally and professionally. She believed in me, was a mentor to me and challenged me to become a better practitioner and advocate. I am deeply honored and humbled to now lead the CMSC, carrying forward her extraordinary legacy with gratitude and purpose.

Heart icon Kathleen Costello

“ I remember approaching June at CMSC about 5 years ago, feeling isolated and unsure of my place at CMSC as a mental health provider. She not only provided reassurance, but she also boosted me up, underscoring the vital role that mental health providers play at CMSC and in the lives of people with MS. June even connected me with other psychologists to facilitate collaboration and connection across institutions. Her unwavering passion for team-based care was evident as she consistently sought ways to support every professional involved in caring for individuals with MS. I left that conversation feeling valued and inspired to foster multidisciplinary collaborations. June cared deeply about every patient, provider, and person affiliated with MS. And her legacy continues to inspire.

Heart icon Heena Manglani

“ I remember her warmth and incredible advocacy for trainees, allied health professionals, and nurses.

Heart icon Nina Bozinov

“ June is why I am involved in the CMSC: a visionary woman who deeply cared about the future of the workforce, and MS. June inspired me to be a great mentor and mentee. She was there for me during every step of my career in MS. She supported me since I was a resident in neurology, and she was one of the most important people in my life. She has always supported me in being me! Her legacy will stay forever, and her impact on people's lives and careers will never end.

Heart icon Ahmed Obeidat

“ Through June's vision, the Mentorship Forum grew and has nurtured many who are leaders in MS care today. Through the CMSC Foundation, June developed multiple initiatives to support the workforce of the future and created the Professionals in Training interest group. Throughout the years she continued to be actively involved in shaping the Mentorship Forum and focused on bringing trainees of all levels and areas of expertise into the fold. She also brought so much energy and fun to the event that it inspired the rest of us as well. I remember the year she handed out special door prizes to many of the participants. I treasure the beautiful wine glasses I was lucky to receive from June that year. June's passing was a great loss for the Foundation and the Consortium, but her legacy lives on in so many ways and continues to improve the lives of all who live with MS and those of us who care for them.

Heart icon Nancy Sicotte

“ I met June at CMSC 2022. I spoke with her about my hopes of helping other young colleagues learn more about how to build a new MS Center and she was incredibly supportive of my efforts. She connected me to CMSC staff, which subsequently led to my role as a Peer Mentor. She was so inspiring, supportive and encouraging. She made a great impact on my life and I hope to help carry out her legacy moving forward.

Heart icon Amy Laitinen

“ June supported the workforce of the future and wanted to advance MS care for all patients at any stage in their journey.

Heart icon Rosemarie Walch

“ June Halper led the CMSC with majestic power. She was a beautiful force of nature who personally touched my career and gave me opportunities that opened doors and created lifelong friendships. It is not possible to fill her shoes, but we will all walk forward in ours with June Halper in our hearts.

Heart icon Jennifer Graves

“ I had the opportunity to meet June Halper at the Mentorship Forum in Denver (2023), and she wanted to make sure that I was having a good experience. Though my interactions with her were limited, I could tell she was very passionate about MS care and training future professionals in MS. I never saw her idle; she was always moving around the crowd, getting important work done at the meetings. She was a great leader and incredible advocate for the CMSC organization, Mentorship Forum, and MS care. Her presence will be missed!

Heart icon Mysti Harrison

“ As a newcomer to the field of MS, June was really the first giant in the field to make me feel like I belonged. I can't emphasize enough how important this was to me.

Heart icon Tyler Titcomb

“ I am pleased to congratulate ten years of the MS Mentorship Forum, what an amazing milestone! We honor the memory of June Halper whose vision it was to provide mentoring opportunities that facilitate successful advancement in the Scholars' field of MS specialization. A huge thanks to the devoted faculty that continues to have the Scholars' best interest in the forefront each year. Congratulations to the Alumni, faculty and to the many professionals that will join the MS Workforce of the Future!

Heart icon Jeff Wilken



# Echoes of Gratitude

by our Mentorship Forum Alumni

“

I have been consistently amazed and inspired by June Halper's dedication to the field and passion to improve quality of care. I feel truly honored to have been able to meet and be inspired by June Halper.

Her care and dedication for MS trainees was felt by all who attended and we are so grateful for her efforts.

June had an extraordinary ability to light up any room she entered, radiating inspiration. Her legacy continues to remind me of the importance of compassion and commitment.

June was always welcoming, kind and passionate. She will always be remembered for her iconic passion for improving the care of MS patients.

I remember June Halper from the 2019 meeting in Seattle: she was a lovely, warm soul who exuded a caring attitude to the world. Before I even learned of all her accomplishments, I wondered who this amazing woman was! I feel lucky to have met her.

Shaking her hand, I remember thinking about how inspiring she was. At her age, she was still so passionate and engaged in her work. It was truly an unforgettable experience.

I received some very encouraging words from the great June Halper, "Never stop fighting for the people who fight every day" and I remember her fondly.

I sat at lunch with June once and recall how down-to-earth and personable she was. She will be sorely missed by the MS community.

June will be in my heart forever. Her smile, welcoming nature and vision has helped so many professionals in MS like me.

I remember her aura and passion for her work filling the room. She truly was a role model and representative of what many providers in the field of MS care are and strive to be.

She was extremely kind and welcoming.

I will always remember her warmth, approachability, and genuine belief in the potential of trainees. She created an environment where junior colleagues felt valued and supported, inspiring us to pursue excellence and carry forward her legacy of compassionate care and innovation in the MS community.

It was rare to not see her smiling, laughing, or talking to other people. She made everyone feel so welcome, and her passion for this organization was demonstrated through everything she did!

I appreciated June's passionate commitment to fostering an interdisciplinary community through CMSC, as she recognized that a full team is needed to provide optimal care for patients with MS.

I was honored to meet June at the inaugural Giants of Multiple Sclerosis reception in 2022. She took my hands in hers and said, nurse to nurse, how delighted she was that I was joining the specialty. The encounter probably lasted fifteen seconds, but her warmth, passion, and optimism in those brief moments forever embedded themselves in my memory and my approach to patient care.

A special thanks to the late June Halper in her work in helping to foster and build a strong community of providers who are able to more readily and efficiently deliver care to our community of MS patients- including those who are most vulnerable.



Very Inspiring!

A cherished memory I hold is how June would always take a moment, even amidst the busiest conferences, to personally connect with attendees - whether sharing a heartfelt story or simply a warm smile that made you feel valued. Her leadership was not just about advancing knowledge; it was about fostering a community of care, understanding, and hope.

She was kind, encouraging, and helpful!

May her soul rest in peace; her legacy continues to inspire us all.

My first encounter with June Halper was unforgettable... I was struck by her extraordinary warmth and positive energy.

Her vision of a multi-disciplinary conference makes this one of my most favorite conferences to attend.

I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to meet June Halper. Her support and respect for the Nursing world are unmeasured. To June Halper, you will be missed and always be part of my MS practice.

She was truly inspirational and someone for us to look up to as a leader and advocate in our field.

I remember June's funny and captivating spirit!





## Mentorship Forum Through The Years









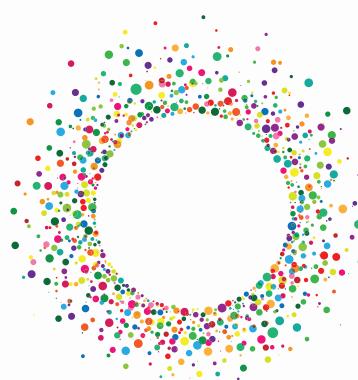


## ONE TEAM, ONE DREAM

This was the mantra of our founder, CEO, friend and guiding star, June Halper. Over the course of a remarkable 50 year career, June's vision and sheer force of will brought together a team dedicated to making the lives of people living with MS better. The MS community and countless patients and their families are forever changed by her compassion, friendship, and vision.

We will continue to deliver the finest care, improve the quality of life for patients and families living with MS, and [ultimately find a cure](#). Please support June's vision by donating to **The June Halper MS Workforce of the Future Fund**. The opportunities to improve patient care through training the next generation of MS care leaders are many and limited only by our resources and our resolve.





FOUNDATION  
of the Consortium of  
Multiple Sclerosis Centers

3 UNIVERSITY PLAZA DRIVE SUITE 116  
HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY 07601

WEBSITE: [WWW.CMSCFOUNDATION.ORG](http://WWW.CMSCFOUNDATION.ORG)  
EMAIL: [INFO@CMSCFOUNDATION.ORG](mailto:INFO@CMSCFOUNDATION.ORG)