



Cardiovascular Standing Committee

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Mary George, MD, MSPH, FACS, FAHA

Senior Medical Officer, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention
Decatur, Georgia

Mary George, MD, MSPH, FACS is the senior Medical Officer for the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention at the CDC. She is the Division's lead for quality improvement and represents the Division with several cardiovascular disease clinically related projects and national organizations. Her interests are in quality improvement, and health services research and clinical preventive services for stroke and cardiovascular disease. She has had experience in developing National Quality Forum (NQF)-endorsed clinical quality measures, has served on several quality measure technical expert and advisory panels, and was co-chair of the previous NQF Steering Committee for Cardiovascular performance measures.

Thomas Kottke, MD, MSPH

Medical Director for Population Health, Consulting Cardiologist, HealthPartners
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Thomas E. Kottke, MD, MSPH, Medical Director for Population Health at HealthPartners, is also a clinical cardiologist in HealthPartners Medical Group, an epidemiologist, and a health services researcher at the HealthPartners Institute for Education and Research in Minneapolis. He holds the academic rank of Professor of Medicine at the University of Minnesota. His primary professional goals are to: 1) understand how to help individuals increase well-being, delay the onset of disability, and extend healthy life expectancy by adopting healthy lifestyles; and 2) implement evidence-informed programs that improve the health and well-being of patients, health plan members, and members of the community.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sana Al-Khatib, MD, MHS

Professor of Medicine, Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina

Dr. Sana Al-Khatib is Professor of Medicine, a board-certified clinical electrophysiologist and an experienced clinical researcher in cardiac arrhythmias. Her clinical expertise is in sudden cardiac

death prevention and implantable cardiac devices. Her research expertise is in clinical trials, outcomes research, quality improvement and development of performance measures. She has 100 publications in peer-reviewed journals and is an Associate Editor for the American Heart Journal. She serves on multiple committees including the Heart Rhythm Society's Board of Trustees, Health Policy committee, Legislative subcommittee, and the Measure Development Task Force (as Chair).

Carol Allred, BA

Immediate Past Chair, Board of Directors, WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

Haker Heights, Texas

Carol had a major heart attack in 2003 and attended WomenHeart's Science and Leadership Symposium at the Mayo Clinic. She was elected to the Board of Directors in 2005, and served as Chair from 2008 to 2012. Carol is a spokesperson for the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) "Make the Call, Don't Miss a Beat", Million Hearts and a member of the Texas Cardiovascular and Stroke Partnership Steering Committee. She trained as a patient representative for the United States Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Division on Cardiac Devices. Carol is a CPA and a Magna cum Laude graduate from Southern Methodist University and the University Of Oklahoma School Of Nursing.

Linda Baas, PhD, RN

Heart Failure Nurse Practitioner, University of Cincinnati Physicians
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dr. Linda Baas is an expert in Heart Failure (HF) who has served as a Past President of the American Association of Heart Failure Nurses. She has conducted research in self-care, and quality of life in patients with HF. She is also a frequent speaker at national cardiology meetings. Dr. Baas has also served on national panels related to quality measures including: the American Heart Association Get with the Guidelines HF Scientific Taskforce, The Joint Commission Advanced HF Criteria Taskforce, and a CMS Technical Expert Panel reviewing hypertension and HF measures.

Linda Briggs, DNP

Assistant Professor, George Washington University, School of Nursing
Washington, District of Columbia

Linda Briggs, DNP, received her doctoral degree from the George Washington University in 2010. Her research focuses on cardiovascular disease, particularly among women. She has published on a variety of cardiovascular topics, and received an American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award in 1989. In the care delivery arena, Ms. Briggs has served in a variety of roles, including cardiac surgical program coordinator and nurse practitioner. In her current role, as assistant professor at the George Washington University School of Nursing, she prepares students to become nurse practitioners.

Leslie Cho, MD

Section Head, Preventive Cardiology and Rehabilitation, Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland, Ohio

Leslie Cho is the Section head of Preventive Cardiology and Cardiac Rehabilitation and the Director of the Women's Cardiovascular Center at the Cleveland Clinic. She is uniquely both a Preventive and Interventional cardiologist. She has published numerous articles and co-authored several books in cardiology and is on steering committee of several large randomized control studies. She currently serves on the American Heart Association (AHA) council on Clinical Cardiology Exercise, Cardiac Rehabilitation, and Prevention Committee and has served in the past on American College of Cardiology (ACC) Peripheral Vascular Disease committee. She has also served on NQF Cardiovascular endorsement maintenance committee in the past.

Joseph Cleveland, MD

Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery & Surgical Director for Adult Cardiac Transplantation/Mechanical Cardiac Assist Devices, University of Colorado Denver
Aurora, Colorado

Dr. Joseph Cleveland is a Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery and Surgical Director for Adult Cardiac Transplantation/Mechanical Cardiac Assist Devices at the University of Colorado Denver. He is also the former Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgical Services at the Denver Veterans Administration Medical Center. Dr. Cleveland's clinical interests include cardiovascular conditions, off-pump coronary artery surgery, adult heart and lung transplantation, artificial heart, and valve reconstruction/replacement. His research interests concern myocardial responses to cardiopulmonary bypass and obligatory ischemia associated with heart surgery. Dr. Cleveland has authored/co-authored over 120 publications and 15 book chapters. Dr. Cleveland is a member of numerous national professional associations. He serves on a number of STS committees, specifically the Task Force on Quality Measurement, responsible for the development of risk models, and the Task Force on Quality Initiatives, which works to provide quality improvement tools/resources to STS members.

Michael Crouch, MD, MSPH, FAAFP

Research Director and Quality Improvement Program Director, Memorial Family Medicine Residency Program and Associate Clinical Professor of Family Medicine, Texas A & M University School of Medicine
Bryan, Texas

Dr. Crouch has extensive speaking and publishing on hypercholesterolemia and heart disease prevention, weight management, pre-diabetes, and quality improvement. Dr. Crouch's experience includes the Robert Wood Johnson Fellowship in Academic Family Medicine at the University of Missouri, the Clinical Scientist Training Program at Baylor College of Medicine, and serving as the residency program director at Baylor College of Medicine for 18 years.

Elizabeth DeLong, PhD

Professor and Chair, Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina

Dr. DeLong is Professor and Chair, Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, Duke

University Medical Center. Her activities have included: Study Section, Healthcare Technology and Decision Sciences, AHRQ (1999-2003) Steering Committee, Scientific Forum on Assessment of Healthcare Quality in Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke, AHA (1999-2007) Composite Technical Advisory Panel (TAP), NQF, National Voluntary Consensus Standards for Hospital Care: Additional Priorities (2006- 2007), Composite Measure Steering Committee, NQF, (2007 - 2009), ACC/AHA Task Force on Performance Measures (2007 – 2010), The Joint Commission: Development of Risk Adjusted Outcome Measures in the EHR Environment Conference (2012), and NQF Composite Measure Framework Assessment Expert Panel, Co-Chair (2012-2013).

Kumar Dharmarajan, MD, MBA

Chief Scientific Officer, Clover Health
Jersey City, New Jersey

Kumar Dharmarajan, MD, MBA is a board-certified cardiologist and geriatrician, health outcomes researcher, and quality measure developer at the Yale-New Haven Hospital Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CORE). He attended Harvard College, the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, and Columbia Business School. He trained in internal medicine and geriatrics at Massachusetts General Hospital and cardiology at Columbia University Medical Center. His research focuses on health outcomes and healthcare quality for older adults hospitalized with common cardiovascular conditions including heart failure and acute myocardial infarction. He has led outcome measure development for the Centers for Medicare & Medicare Services.

William Downey, MD

Medical Director, Interventional Cardiology Sanger Heart and Vascular Institute, Carolinas HealthCare System
Charlotte, North Carolina

Since arriving at Carolinas HealthCare System (CHS) in 2008, Dr. Downey has served in a number of leadership roles including but not limited to Medical Director of Interventional Cardiology with Sanger Heart and Vascular Institute (SHVI). Dr. Downey completed his medical school training at Duke University followed by residency in Internal Medicine at the Brigham and Women's Hospital with Fellowships in Cardiovascular Medicine and Interventional Cardiology at Massachusetts General Hospital. He also holds a Master's of Science degree from Harvard University in Clinical Epidemiology. In addition to his teaching and research activities, Dr. Downey has pursued leadership development opportunities through the CHS Physician Leadership Institute at Queen's University as well as programming offered via the Center for Creative Leadership.

Brian Forrest, MD

Family Physician and CEO of Access Healthcare Direct
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

A leader of a National Cardiovascular Centers of Excellence, Dr. Forrest is a thought leader in cardiovascular disease with over 200 lectures given. He authored the chapter on hypertension in the textbook "Essentials of Family Medicine". He published research on clinical interventions and quality improvement in cardiovascular disease at the primary care practice level that was evaluated as one of the best practices by the CDC in 2014. A faculty member for the Consortium for Southeastern Hypertension Control, he designed, participated, and facilitated grant funded QI projects at multiple practices resulting in NCQA recognition as centers of excellence.

Naftali Zvi Frankel, MS

Principal, Déclare Consulting
New York, New York

Naftali Zvi Frankel is an experienced consumer and patient advocate whose areas of focus include patient-centered health policy, outcomes data transparency, patient access to new therapeutics and clinical trials, patient privacy and HIT innovation, and health quality improvement. He has assisted patients faced with critical medical decisions, with extensive research and analysis of scientific studies, outcomes data, available treatments, and specialists. He has served as a consumer and patient representative on various national committees, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Circulatory System Devices Advisory Committee, American Heart Association Citizen Scientist Think Tank, and Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)-Aortic Valve Replacement (AVR) Collaborator Team. He has also represented the position of consumers and patients as a peer reviewer for PCORI, Commonwealth Fund Breakthrough Health Care Opportunities Committee member, and Panelist at the National Academy of Sciences workshop on Real-World Evidence Generation and Evaluation of Therapeutics. In 2014, he published a widely read article in JAMA Internal Medicine: "Surgical Aortic Valve Replacement vs Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement: A Consumer's Perspective Regarding Data Education and Transparency of Hospitals," highlighting the patient's need for increased hospital data transparency. He received his MS degree in Regulatory Science from Johns Hopkins University.

Ellen Hillegass, PT, EdD, CCS, FAACVPR, FAPTA

American Physical Therapy Association
Sandy Springs, Georgia

Dr. Ellen Hillegass is a longstanding member of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) with over 20 years of clinical experience with a focus on cardiovascular care, with APTA board certification in cardiovascular and pulmonary clinical specialty. She currently holds position of Adjunct Professor at Mercer University in Atlanta in the Department of Physical Therapy, at Touro University in Las Vegas, Nevada and at Western Carolina, North Carolina. Ellen is also the President and CEO of Cardiopulmonary Specialists, a private consulting firm that provides consulting and education on cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation.

Thomas James, MD

Chief Medical Officer, Baptist Health Plan and Baptist Health Community Care
Louisville, Kentucky

Thomas James, III, MD, is the Chief Medical Officer at Baptist Health Plan and Baptist Health Community Care. In this capacity, he is the population health lead for Baptist Health, a state-wide system of hospitals, home health, long term care, and a health plan. Dr. James has gained experience with Commercial, Medicare and Medicaid health plans through his career. He has served as medical director for such health companies as HealthAmerica, Maxicare, Sentara, Traveler's Health Network, Anthem, and AmeriHealth Caritas Family of Companies. Board certified in internal medicine and pediatrics, Dr. James chaired councils at NQF and AQA. He serves on work groups for the Measurement Application Partnership and AMA-PCPI.

Charles Mahan, PharmD, PhC, RPh

Presbyterian Healthcare Services, Clinical Assistant Professor of Pharmacy, University of New Mexico

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Mahan is a Cardiac Critical Care Pharmacist at Presbyterian Hospital. He received his BSP Pharm/PharmD from the University of New Mexico (UNM). He specializes in antithrombotic therapy and cardiology. He completed a NATF fellowship at McMaster University where he externally validated the IMPACT-ILL VTE model. In 2006, he partnered with NQF/TJC for VTE quality measure testing. He is a Clinical Assistant Professor at UNM and his research interests include reducing VTE and stroke and cardiovascular disease. He has published five book chapters and thirty peer-reviewed articles primarily of original research and delivered 300 lectures nationally and internationally. He continues to be involved in research and teaching.

Joel Marrs, Pharm.D., FCCP, FASHP, FNLA, BCPS-AQ Cardiology, BCACP, CLS

Associate Professor, Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
Aurora, Colorado

Joel C. Marrs, Pharm.D., FCCP, FASHP, FNLA, BCPS-AQ-Cardiology, BCACP, CLS, is Associate Professor in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy at the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, Colorado. He is also a clinical pharmacy specialist with Denver Health Medical Center in an internal medicine clinic, where he focuses on cardiovascular and metabolic pharmacotherapy. He is a board-certified pharmacotherapy specialist with added qualifications in cardiology, board certified ambulatory care pharmacist, and a clinical lipid specialist recognized by the Accreditation Council for Clinical Lipidology. He is a fellow of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, and the National Lipid Association. His ongoing research is in the area of optimizing pharmacotherapy for reducing cardiovascular risk and improving goal attainment rates, with a specific focus in the area of resistant hypertension. His clinical practice and research also focus on the optimization of transition of care from the inpatient to outpatient settings and patient centered outcomes research.

Kristi Mitchell, MPH

Senior Vice President, Avalere Health, LLC
Washington, District of Columbia

Ms. Mitchell is a Senior Vice President at Avalere Health, overseeing its evidence translation and implementation practice. She leads efforts to support the use of data for strategic decision-making across multiple sectors and to develop strategic partnerships for quality measure development. As the Chief Science Officer for the American College of Cardiology (ACC), she provided methodological and scientific direction for multiple ACC initiatives including the National Cardiovascular Data Registry. She also led the development of quality metrics, performance measures, and participant feedback reports using data from the registry.

Gary Puckrein, PhD

President, National Minority Quality Forum

Washington, District of Columbia

Dr. Puckrein's work biography is about minimizing poor outcomes and improving the probability of long, quality lives by lowering the probability of acute health events such as inpatient stays, emergency room visits, medical errors, disabilities and mortality for all populations. This commitment translates into reducing rates of acute health events that are avoidable through evidence-based medicine. Dr. Puckrein has been a patient advocate for over twenty years, and has published extensively in the area of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases.

Nicholas Ruggiero, MD FACP FACC FSCAI FSVM FCPP

Director of Structural Heart Disease and Non-Coronary Interventions, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Nicholas Ruggiero, MD, serves as Director of Structural Heart Disease and Non-Coronary Interventions at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. He is also the head of the Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR) program and the Jefferson Heart Institute Vascular Laboratory. He has served on hospital and society scientific and quality committees, and has published and presented extensively in the area of interventional cardiology. He is board certified in internal medicine, cardiology, echocardiography, nuclear cardiology and interventional cardiology, and is a fellow of ACP, ACC, SCAI, and SVM.

Jason Spangler, MD, MPH, FACPM

Executive Director, Medical Policy, Amgen, Inc.
Washington, District of Columbia

Dr. Spangler is Executive Director, Medical Policy at Amgen, Inc. He serves as the lead in representing the company on healthcare quality issues and on clinical matters in engagement with Federal payer agencies in the United States. Prior to Amgen, Dr. Spangler was the chief medical officer at Partnership for Prevention-a national, non-profit organization providing medical and public health expertise on program activities and policy development. He is a member of the NQF Population Health Steering Committee and the NCQA Cardiovascular Measurement Advisory Panel, and has been a reviewer for the AHRQ Prevention/Care Management Technical Assistance Center.

Susan Strong

President, Board of Directors, Heart Value Voice
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Susan Strong is an inspirational patient advocate who is passionate about shared decision-making and patient-centered outcomes. She was diagnosed with severe aortic stenosis as a late effect of radiation treatment, where she had a successful TAVR procedure in November 2014. A long-term survivor of Hodgkin's lymphoma diagnosed when she was only 17, she regularly provides support and information to patients across the US who are facing heart valve and other complications. In addition to serving as a Heart Valve Ambassador for the American Heart Association, she participated for two years in the PCORI Heart Valve working group led by Matthew Brennan, MD. She is a contributing patient author on the study

“Transcatheter Versus Surgical Aortic Valve Replacement,” published in the JACC in July 2017. She is the President of the Heart Valve Voice (HVV), a patient advocacy, nonprofit organization, to provide patients with a united voice to improve health for people living with heart valve disease. The mission of HVV is to advocate for early detection, meaningful support, and timely access to appropriate treatment for all people affected by heart valve disease.

Mladen Vidovich, MD

Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chief of Cardiology, Jesse Brown VA Medical Center
Chicago, Illinois

Mladen Vidovich is an Interventional Cardiologist, Associate Professor of Medicine at University of Illinois, and Chief of Cardiology at Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago. His research focus is reduction in bleeding complications, hospitalization and equipment cost with radial angiography and coronary intervention. His other interests are intracoronary imaging and intermediate lesion assessment. He has published numerous journal articles, abstracts and book chapters on topics of Interventional Cardiology. He has developed a dedicated diagnostic cardiology catheter that is in current use. He lectures extensively on national and international conferences.

Daniel Waxman, MD, PhD, FACC

Health Policy Researcher at RAND, Associate Professor, Emergency Medicine at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
Los Angeles, California

Daniel A. Waxman is an Associate Professor in the Division of Emergency Medicine, UCLA, and a Health Policy Researcher at the RAND Corporation. Dr. Waxman is board-certified in Cardiology and Emergency Medicine, and he earned a PhD in Policy Analysis from the Pardee RAND Graduate School. At RAND, he has worked on a number of projects focused on quality measurement, in the realms of measure development, implementation, and evaluation. He has particular interest/expertise considering real-world implementation issues (e.g., gaming and unintended consequences), exploring process/outcome relationships, and on acute-care topics at the nexus of cardiology and emergency medicine.