

2026

RESEARCH & TEACHING AWARDS

PERMANENTE MEDICINE®
The Permanente Medical Group



Morris F. Collen, MD

Pioneer, Clinician,
Researcher, and Teacher

"To be a good physician, you have to keep up with what is new, which means you have to be involved in research and training. Patient care is our first obligation, and to maintain a high quality of care, we must also research and teach. And we do."

The TPMG Research and Teaching Awards were established in 2003 to acknowledge the extraordinary accomplishments of practicing clinicians who also excel in research and teaching.

In 1948, Morris F. Collen, MD, became one of the seven founding physicians of The Permanente Medical Group. As a clinician, researcher and teacher, Dr. Collen made significant contributions to TPMG colleagues and Kaiser Permanente members. Today, he is recognized internationally for his pioneering work in applying computer technology to medicine.

From 1953 to 1961, Dr. Collen served as physician-in-chief at KP San Francisco. He became director of Medical Methods Research (now the KP Division of Research) in 1961, ending his tenure in 1979 when he became director of the Division of Technology Assessment.

Dr. Collen's work in medical computing attracted national attention. He was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Science in 1981 and served as chair of the Library of Medicine's Board of Scientific Counselors from 1985 to 1987. As a scholar-in-residence from 1987 to 1993, he wrote a definitive history of medical applications of the computer. From 1983 onward, Dr. Collen served as a consultant with the KP Division of Research, where he remained an enthusiastic supporter of research and teaching in TPMG.

Dr. Collen passed away in 2014 at age 100.



Vincent Liu, MD, MS

Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine
KP Santa Clara

"No single drop of patient data should be wasted. Every day, every patient is contributing some nugget of learning that we should be capturing in order to improve their care."

Morris F. Collen Research Award for Career Contribution

"Vincent Liu, MD, is a brilliant researcher who is pushing KP and the whole field of health care to be better at predicting what's going to happen in the future, and then doing something about it," says Rakesh Chaudhary, MD, physician-in-chief of KP Santa Clara.

Dr. Liu is board-certified in internal medicine, pulmonary disease, critical care, and clinical informatics, and he earned master's degrees from Stanford University in health services research and biomedical informatics. Since joining TPMG in 2007 and the KP Northern California Division of Research in 2011, he has acted as principal, site, or co-investigator on more than 15 studies and is first author of more than 35 peer-reviewed journal articles and co-author of 175 more.

In partnership with Gabriel Escobar, MD, he deployed predictive analytics to create the Advanced Alert Monitor, which analyzes electronic data, identifies hospital patients at risk of deteriorating, and issues an alert to a team of specially trained nurses. In KP Northern California alone, the alert saves an estimated 500 lives annually.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Liu led teams that developed models for clinical responses to surges and variants of the highly infectious disease. And now as TPMG's first chief data officer, he oversees TPMG's data and analytic workforce.

On the national level, Dr. Liu chaired a National Institutes of Health study section on clinical data management; co-chaired the *JAMA* Summit on AI, which provided thought leadership on the future of AI in health care; and was principal investigator of the KP Augmented Intelligence in Medicine and Healthcare Initiative (KP AIM-HI), which funded randomized controlled trials of AI in real-world settings.

"Dr. Liu is one of those rare physicians whose expertise bridges many domains," says Betty Suh-Burgmann, MD, chair of the KP Northern California Central Research Committee. "He is incredibly energetic and productive, and we are fortunate that he has devoted his career to helping TPMG transform care through the use of technology."



Ying Qian, MD

Ophthalmology
KP East Bay

"For families and children who are afflicted by uveitis, it's often frustrating to hear that we don't know a lot. I wanted to do this research to provide more answers."

Morris F. Collen Research Award for Recent Publication

Uveitis is a rare inflammatory condition involving structures inside the eye, which causes as much as 10% of legal blindness in the United States. In childhood, uveitis can be chronic and aggressive, requiring years of systemic immunosuppressive medications. Contrary to the common medical myth that all uveitis has a cause which must be found before treatment can be initiated – leading many parents to delay treatment – approximately three-quarters of childhood uveitis is idiopathic.

To better understand the condition, Ying Qian, MD, ophthalmologist with KP East Bay and uveitis specialist, undertook one of the largest longitudinal, population-based studies to date of childhood uveitis.

“She wanted to answer these questions not only to help her own practice, but also for the practice of pediatric ophthalmology in general,” says John W. Morehouse, MD, FACEP, physician-in-chief of KP East Bay.

Dr. Qian reviewed the electronic medical records of 1,643 KP Northern California uveitis patients aged 16 and younger, over a 10-year period. Her study, published

in the *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, found that about half of children with newly diagnosed, chronic, noninfectious uveitis were in remission within 5 years. Those diagnosed at the youngest ages were least likely to be in remission within 5 years, and the chances of achieving remission increased with age at diagnosis.

“Dr. Qian’s study is a wonderful example of how we can change the understanding of a disease by studying what happens to patients in community-based settings with long-term follow-up – as in KP – rather than referral-based settings whose populations are often skewed,” says Betty Suh-Burgmann, MD, chair of the KP Northern California Central Research Committee.

“This study provides important clarity for children and families navigating a complex condition that can lead to childhood blindness,” says Rita Ng, MD, FACC, physician-in-chief of KP East Bay. “It gives clinicians and families a better roadmap for treatment decisions and long-term care.”

A portrait of Zachary Mallon, MD, a man with a beard and mustache, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt. The background is a blurred indoor setting with large windows. The image is framed by a dark blue banner across the top and a dark blue circular shape on the right side.

Zachary Mallon, MD
Orthopaedic Trauma Surgery
KP Napa-Solano

"We found that the traditional method of fixing femoral neck fractures had equivalent outcomes to the newer technology. That's important because technology and innovation do not always bring better outcomes for our patients."

Morris F. Collen Research Award for Recent Publication

For the past half-century, the standard method for fixing femoral neck fractures – a common hip injury in the geriatric population – has been to repair the break with three cannulated screws, while the much newer Femoral Neck System inserts a fixed-angle, sliding-screw implant through a relatively smaller incision.

“For our patients who sustain femoral neck fractures, it’s really important to get it right to avoid unnecessary re-surgery, so we’re constantly searching for newer, better ways to treat this problem,” says Zachary Mallon, MD, orthopedic trauma surgeon with KP Napa-Solano. “When a new technology was released, we were excited to give it a try.”

To compare the two technologies, Dr. Mallon identified patients 60 and older in the Kaiser Permanente Hip Fracture Registry whose femoral neck fractures were repaired between 2017 and 2022. His study, published in the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*, concluded that overall rates of 90-day events, surgical revision, and mortality were similar between the two methods.

“As a value-based organization, we are committed to identifying the highest standard of care, whether it is a time-tested approach or the latest innovation,” said Eric Au, MD, FACC, physician-in-chief of KP Napa-Solano. “Dr. Mallon’s study demonstrated that the two systems performed equally well and, perhaps surprisingly, that newer technology is not always better.”

On average, the newer Femoral Neck System takes 10 minutes longer and costs about three times more than using cannulated screws.

“Dr. Mallon’s study is a great example of how we can use patient data to better understand whether these new devices are really worth the additional cost and provide benefit for our patients,” says Betty Suh-Burgmann, MD, chair of the KP Northern California Central Research Committee.



Michael Mason, MD

Geriatric Medicine
KP Napa-Solano

"It's important to assess what a learner needs and flex to that learner's style. Tailoring information to every type of role, whether a nurse, dietician, administrator, or physician ensures we all work as a team."

Teaching Award for Excellence in Continuing Medical Education

Michael Mason, MD, wanted a career in medicine ever since he was a child. When he made his dream come true, he specialized in Geriatric Medicine.

"When we are taking care of older adults, we need to ask ourselves: what if this were my aunt or uncle?" Dr. Mason says.

Dr. Mason's reverence for this population motivated him to help make KP the best place to grow older in America. "We can build systems that default to the best option for seniors," he says. "The first step is teaching others about the complex issues they face."

Teaching became a craft Dr. Mason refined to an impressive degree, through numerous Continuing Medical Education courses and Grand Rounds sessions. He has been an advocate for teaching all levels of learners, including nurses, administrators, residents, and physicians.

Dr. Mason also identified common practice gaps, such as hyper-polypharmacy, fall prevention, and care planning, focusing lessons on these subjects. He also developed a series in support of the TPMG Geriatrics and Continuing Care Strategic Plan.

"Dr. Mason's curriculum is based on the 5M framework (*Mind, Mobility, Medications, Multi-complexity, and What Matters Most*). He distributed these modules across multiple channels to reach more professionals. This exemplifies CME teaching excellence," says Eric Au, MD, FACC, physician-in-chief, KP Napa-Solano.

Dr. Mason has taught in a variety of venues, including small group discussions, regional sessions, nursing homes, clinics, and hospitals. His ability to customize content to different audiences has not only set him apart but also helped Kaiser Permanente achieve national recognition for its geriatric accreditation.

"Dr. Mason has provided his colleagues with a framework for how to think about geriatrics and how to have difficult conversations with patients," Ted O'Connell, MD, FAAFP, National Medical Director for KP Medical Education says. "He has emphasized the principles of the Triple Aim, introducing practical everyday frameworks delivered in an approachable way. This drives better patient care and a better patient experience."

A portrait of Julie Westberg, MD, a woman with long, straight, light brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved top and a gold chain necklace with three circular pendants. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a green wall and framed pictures. The image is overlaid with a dark blue banner on the right side containing her name and title, and a teal circle in the top right corner.

Julie Westberg, MD

Obstetrics & Gynecology
KP North Valley

"Teaching is very satisfying work. You can expand your focus from caring for a few thousand patients in your practice to influencing a much broader population."

Teaching Award for Excellence in Undergraduate & Graduate Medical Education

Julie Westberg, MD, is best known for using data to take action within Obstetrics & Gynecology. Whether it is resident feedback, survey results, or service exam performance, Dr. Westberg has leveraged information to improve resident education and the quality of care for patients.

After identifying a gap in gynecology residents' perioperative knowledge, Dr. Westberg advocated for adding a novel rotation focused on the skills needed to care for patients undergoing complex surgery. Dr. Westberg also made sure rotations included not only the UC Davis OB/GYN residents, but also KP Family Medicine residents and KP Oakland Urogynecology fellows as well.

Dr. Westberg also built a formal curriculum for new rotations, documenting course objectives, reading goals, and clinical expectations. She continues to maintain, update, and review these documents regularly to ensure they fit the changing needs of the residents.

"Dr. Westberg is an exceptional teacher whose passion for education has expanded opportunities for learners across the Greater Sacramento area. Her leadership in bringing people together around a shared vision has strengthened our training programs," says Roderick Vitangcol, MD, physician-in-chief, KP Sacramento.

Dr. Westberg sees feedback as a critical part of her role as an educator. She has practiced taking it in, allowing herself time to process it, and thinking about how to incorporate it.

"What sets Dr. Westberg apart is her ability to improve both learning and culture. Her leadership has built a more inclusive and collaborative environment, and she exemplifies excellence in medical education," says Richard Florio, MD, FACS, physician-in-chief, KP Roseville.

Most recently, Dr. Westberg has started the process to create a new KP OB/GYN residency program based in the Greater Sacramento Valley. This will allow more residents to experience first-hand the evidence-based, quality care provided by Kaiser Permanente's high-performing teams.

"Dr. Westberg is a highly-regarded mentor who has demonstrated a passion for teaching. Her commitment to developing our new program will help drive our value-based care model," says Ted O'Connell, MD, FAAFP, National Medical Director for KP Medical Education.

Previous Award Recipients

2021-2025

Visit tpmgawards.kp.org
for a complete list of
award recipients.

Morris F. Collen Research Award

2025

Dana Clutter, MD, FIDSA, Infectious Diseases, KP South San Francisco
Ashok Krishnaswami, MD, MAS, FACC, Cardiology, KP Greater San Jose Area
Dustin Mark, MD, Emergency Medicine and Critical Care Medicine, KP East Bay

2024

Gillian Kuehner, MD, Surgery, KP Napa-Solano
Calvin Kuo, MD, Spine Surgery, KP Oakland
Matthew Solomon, MD, PhD, FACC, Cardiology, KP Oakland

2023

Robert W. Chang, MD, Vascular Surgery, KP South San Francisco
Minggui Pan, MD, PhD, Oncology & Hematology, KP Santa Clara

2022

Kern Guppy, MD, PhD, Neurosurgery, KP Sacramento
Keane Lee, MD, Cardiology, KP Santa Clara
Tran Nguyen, MD, Pediatric Hospital-Based Medicine, KP Roseville

2021

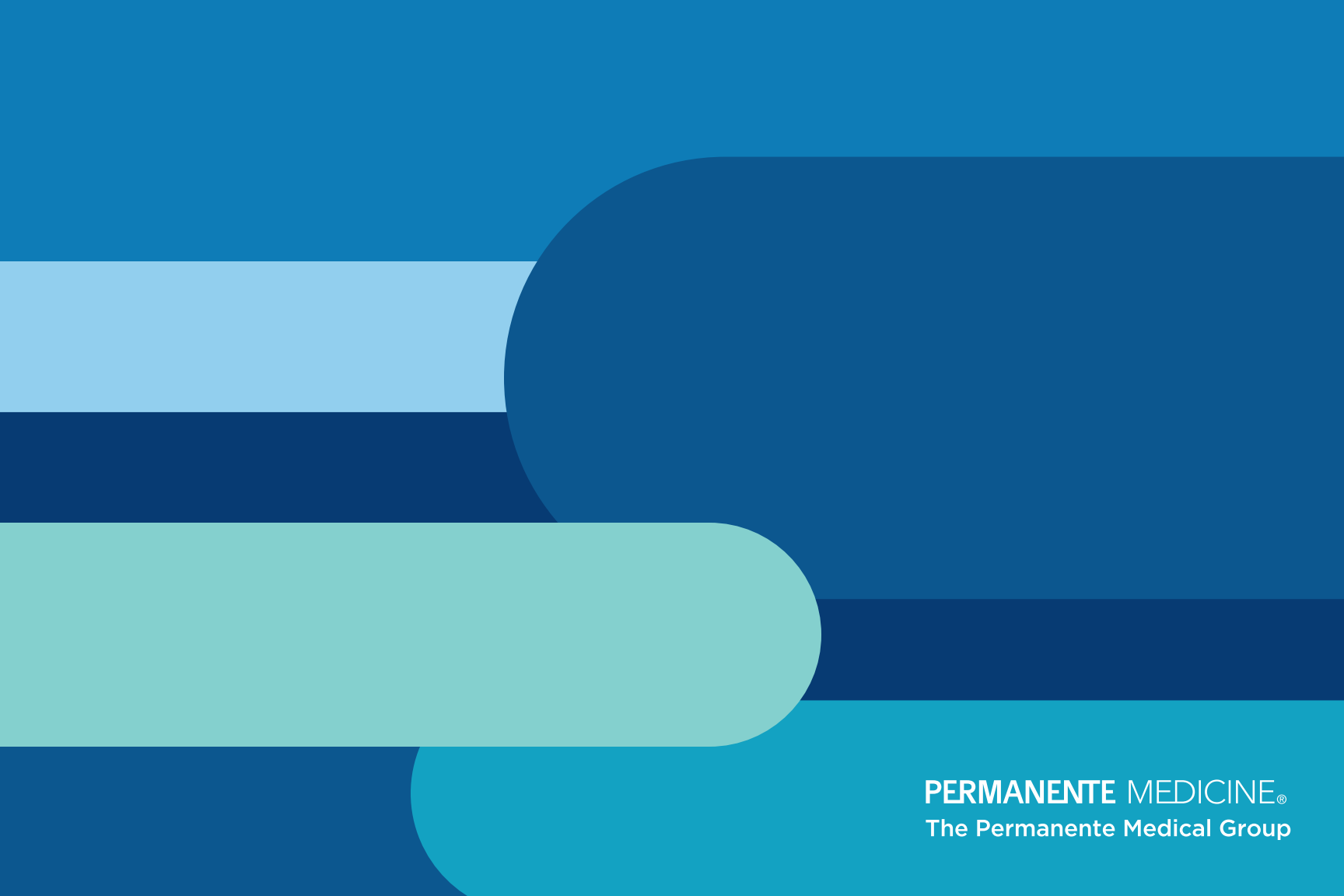
Ronald Melles, MD, Ophthalmology, KP Redwood City
Bethan Powell, MD, Gynecologic Oncology, KP San Francisco
Thomas Urbania, MD, Radiology, KP Oakland

Teaching Award for Excellence in Continuing Medical Education

- 2025** Kevin D. Nguyen, MD, FAAHPM, Palliative Medicine & Life Care Planning, KP East Bay
- 2024** Marcos Siqueiros, MD, Internal Medicine, KP Santa Clara
- 2023** Jennifer Grando Ting, MD, FACC, Cardiology, KP San Francisco
- 2022** Sumanth Rajagopal, MD, Infectious Diseases, KP Oakland
- 2021** Ingrid Lim, MD, Emergency Medicine, KP San Francisco

Teaching Award for Excellence in Undergraduate & Graduate Medical Education

- 2025** Nur-Ain Nadir, MD, MEHP, Emergency Medicine, KP Central Valley
- 2024** Brian Lin, MD, Emergency Medicine, KP San Francisco
- 2023** Christy M. King, DPM, Foot and Ankle Surgery, KP Oakland
- 2022** Kian Mostafavi, MD, Vascular Surgery, KP San Leandro
- 2021** Amanda Williams, MD, MPH, FACOG, Obstetrics and Gynecology, KP Oakland



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