



2018  
**RESEARCH & TEACHING**  
AWARDS

Morris F. Collen  
Research Awards

Teaching Awards  
for Excellence



## MORRIS F. COLLEN, MD

"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 good 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.

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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 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 Division of Research, where he remained an enthusiastic supporter of research and teaching in TPMG.

Dr. Collen passed away in 2014 at age 100.

## MORRIS F. COLLEN RESEARCH AWARD

"I get a lot of pleasure from my clinical practice on a day-to-day basis," Dr. Greenhow says. "But I do research to affect change on a national level—to have a positive impact on the families I don't know."





# Tara Greenhow, MD

Pediatric Infectious Diseases, KP San Francisco

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The incidence of bacteremia among febrile infants and young children prior to the introduction of the conjugated pneumococcal vaccine in 2000 was between 1% to 4%. Today we know the incidence is dramatically lower—approximately 0.2%—thanks to the vaccine, and to recent research conducted by Tara Greenhow, MD.

Dr. Greenhow's study, published in *Pediatrics* in March 2017\*, examined changes in the rates of all bacteremia—not just pneumococcal bacteremia—in children 3 months to 3 years old over a 16-year period. "We wanted to look at the rates of all causes of bacteremia to determine whether and how they changed in proportion to pneumococcal bacteremia," Dr. Greenhow explains.

She and her colleagues analyzed data from over 57,000 blood cultures collected from 1998 to 2014

by leveraging KP Northern California's electronic medical record system, producing several key findings.

The vaccine contributed to a 95% decline in pneumococcal bacteremia. And most children who get bacteremia today in the post-vaccine era are getting it from sources other than pneumococcus bacterium, like *E. coli*, *Salmonella* species, and *S. aureus*.

"In this era of vaccine questioning, it's been really gratifying to see how beneficial this vaccine is," says Betty Suh-Burgmann, MD, chair of KP Northern California's Central Research Committee. "Not only has the vaccine saved thousands of lives, but because of Dr. Greenhow's contribution, we have a much better understanding of the changing epidemiology of bacteremia."

\*"Bacteremia in Children 3 to 36 Months Old After Introduction of Conjugated Pneumococcal Vaccines."

## MORRIS F. COLLEN RESEARCH AWARD

"Most research in emergency medicine is conducted at a single hospital or academic center, which may not be generalizable to other emergency departments. CREST conducts community-based research, so it has the potential for broader implications," says Dr. Vinson, MD, a CREST cofounder.



### CREST Steering Committee:

*(from left to right)* Dustin Ballard, MD, MBE; Uli Chettipally, MD, MPH; Mamata Kene, MD; Dustin Mark, MD; Dana Sax, MD, MPH; David Vinson, MD

# CREST: Clinical Research in Emergency Services and Treatments

Emergency Medicine, KP Northern California

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While most patients visiting the emergency department for chest or abdominal pain do not have a life-threatening condition like a heart attack or appendicitis, determining who is indeed at high risk and in need of urgent management can be a challenging clinical problem for the admitting physician.

To help support such clinical decision-making, a group of TPMG emergency medicine physicians in partnership with the KP Division of Research founded an innovative research network, called CREST, in 2008.

The CREST network comprises 11 clinician researchers who examine disease patterns and treatment outcomes using data from over 1.2 million annual visits to 21 emergency departments across KP Northern California. They then use

their findings to refine care protocols and build technologies that optimize patient management.

One of the major successes of the program has been the development of RISTRA, a risk stratification tool for conditions like pulmonary embolism, pediatric appendicitis, and acute coronary syndrome. For pulmonary embolisms, for example, RISTRA helps determine which patients are low risk and can be treated without admission, which has resulted in a 60% increase in the rate of home discharge, with no increase in morbidity or mortality.

CREST researchers have published more than 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals in less than a decade, with subjects ranging from cardiac arrest and pediatric head trauma to ischemic stroke and atrial fibrillation.

## TEACHING AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE CME

"By the time you become a physician, you've already had a great deal of experience teaching—exchanging knowledge and collaborating with fellow students, residents, and attending physicians," says Dr. Silvestre. "I've always felt very compelled to continue this tradition."





# Victor Silvestre, MD

Internal Medicine, KP Oakland

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When asked to talk about Dr. Victor Silvestre and his skills as an educator and clinician, colleagues are nothing short of effusive. Among descriptions like “brilliant,” “humble,” and “utterly phenomenal,” there’s a subject that comes up almost invariably: “Vic’s pearls.”

Dr. Silvestre leads clinical education sessions at KP Oakland at 7:30 every Thursday morning, where his “pearls” of wisdom are legendary. His sessions are designed to help internal medicine physicians prepare for board recertification exams, but many doctors attend simply for the joy of learning, captivated by his “entertaining approach” and “stunning breadth of knowledge.”

“Dr. Silvestre’s teaching style is interactive, creative, and even whimsical,” says Peggy Desler, MD, chief of professional education for the East Bay.

“He incorporates comedic or timely editorials to make the material memorable. And he creates a safe place for discussion, for everyone from interns to senior colleagues.”

Dr. Silvestre developed these sessions in 1988 while in private practice, and then brought them to TPMG in 2005. Three years ago, he added a monthly lunchtime session that uses polling technology to accommodate a larger crowd. He also mentors colleagues on practice improvement, teaches residents, and serves as a senior medical consultant for physicians with challenging cases.

“Dr. Silvestre embodies the clinician leader we all strive to be, a physician who shares his wisdom and warmth with patients and colleagues alike,” says Rita Ng, MD, physician-in-chief, KP Oakland.

## TEACHING AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UME/GME

"The best part of teaching is witnessing the longitudinal transformation of bright-eyed medical school graduates into full-fledged physicians," says Dr. Flaxman. "I enjoy witnessing their growth and development."



# Gabriel Flaxman, MD

Family Medicine, KP Vallejo

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Gabriel Flaxman, MD, is one of those rare physicians who does it all. Not only does he practice full-spectrum family medicine, including operative obstetrics, but he's also an outstanding teacher of medical students, residents, fellow faculty, and colleagues.

Dr. Flaxman joined TPMG as a family medicine physician in 2012, just after completing an obstetrics fellowship. In 6 short years, he has had a tremendous impact on:

- Establishing the KP Napa-Solano Family Medicine Residency program
- Developing a family medicine presence in women's health in the Napa-Solano service area
- Expanding women's health into family medicine departments throughout KP Northern California

"He was instrumental in developing the obstetrics and women's health curricula, which are now considered among the strongest elements of our residency program," says Calvin Wheeler, MD, institutional director of undergraduate and graduate medical education for KP Northern California.

"He sees adults and children, rotates in labor and delivery, and provides prenatal and postnatal care. It's unusual for a family medicine physician, particularly in a metropolitan area, to have such a wide range of practice."

"Dr. Flaxman is the kind of person who immediately makes you feel that he's deeply interested in what you have to say—an enthusiasm I've never seen waver," adds Christopher Walker, MD, physician-in-chief, KP Napa-Solano. "And he shares this exuberance with everyone, which makes him stand out, both as a physician and as a human being."

## Previous Award Winners (2017-2013)

Visit [TPMGAWards.com](http://TPMGAWards.com) for complete list.

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### MORRIS F. COLLEN RESEARCH AWARD

- 2017** Robert Lundstrom, MD, **Cardiology**, KP San Francisco  
Jamal Rana, MD, **Cardiology**, KP Oakland
- 2016** Harley Goldberg, DO, **Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation**, KP San Jose  
Walter Kinney, MD, **Gynecologic Oncology**, KP Sacramento
- 2015** Douglas Corley, MD, PhD, **Gastroenterology**, KP San Francisco  
Elizabeth Suh-Burgmann, MD, **Ob-Gyn**, KP Walnut Creek
- 2014** Jean-Luc Szpakowski, MD, **Gastroenterology**, KP Fremont  
Roger Baxter, MD, **Infectious Diseases**, KP Oakland
- 2013** Alexander Flint, MD, PhD, **Neurosurgery**, KP Redwood City  
Stephen Follansbee, MD, **Internal Medicine**, KP San Francisco



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### TEACHING EXCELLENCE IN CME AWARD

- 2017** Cynthia Carmichael, MD, **Family Medicine, KP Pinole**
- 2016** Klaus Kernbach, DPM, **Podiatry, KP Vallejo**
- 2015** Ruma Kumar, MD, **Palliative Care, KP San Jose**
- 2014** Joel Levis, MD, PhD, **Emergency Medicine, KP Santa Clara**
- 2013** Gillian Kuehner, MD, **Surgery, KP Vallejo**

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### TEACHING EXCELLENCE IN UME/GME AWARD

- 2017** Diane Sklar, MD, **Urogynecology, KP San Francisco**
- 2016** Matthew Lando, MD, **Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, San Jose**  
Douglas Holsclaw, MD, **Ophthalmology, KP Redwood City**
- 2015** Laura Minikel, MD, **Ob-Gyn, KP Oakland**  
Elizabeth Suh-Burgmann, MD, **Ob-Gyn, KP Walnut Creek**
- 2014** David Manske, MD, **Orthopedic Surgery, KP South Sacramento**
- 2013** Hillary Campbell, MD, **Internal Medicine, KP Sacramento**



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