

Speakers

2019 Chordoma Community Conference at Northwestern Medicine

James Chandler, MD

Dr. Chandler is the Lavin/Fates Professor of Neurological Surgery at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and the Vice Chair of Affairs for the Department of Neurological Surgery. Dr. Chandler received his medical degree from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. He completed his residency at McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University, followed by fellowships at the Chicago Institute for Neurosurgery and Neuroresearch, George Washington University, and the Institute of Neurological Sciences São Paulo. His research interests include brain tumors, neuro-oncology, spine diseases, and stereotactic radiosurgery.

Amanda Ellis, PT, DPT

Amanda Ellis is a staff physical therapist on the spinal cord unit at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab. Amanda received her Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science at Indiana University and completed her Doctorate in Physical Therapy at Washington University in St. Louis. She is a member of the APTA and IPTA and has recently sat for her Neurology Certified Specialist exam. Amanda has experience in outpatient ortho and inpatient neuro and has been with the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab for the past 4.5 years.

Kristen Forand, MA, CCC-SLP

Kristen Forand is a practicing Speech Language Pathologist at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab. She received her Bachelor of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders at St. Louis University and her Master of Arts in Speech Language Pathology at Northern Illinois University. She started her adult clinical practice working in the area of traumatic brain injury and neurological rehabilitation in the inpatient setting before transitioning to spinal cord injury. Her clinical passions lie in dysphagia, voice production, cognitive communication, and nutrition after spinal cord injury and concomitant traumatic brain injury. Over the past several years, she has been fortunate enough to serve in a variety of roles including clinician, researcher, mentor, trainer and committee lead and has obtained advanced competencies in trachs and vents, tracheal suctioning, fluoroscopic swallow studies (FSS) and endoscopic swallow studies (FEES). She also holds the role of Allied Health Orientation and Training Manager where she leads the new hire mentoring program and trainings for allied health professionals and students at all Shirley Ryan sites of care.

Susan Garbett

A retired kindergarten teacher and author, Susan wrote about her personal experience as a sacral chordoma patient in her latest book *Confronting Chordoma Cancer: An Uncommon Journey*. As a Chordoma Foundation Peer Guide, she is passionate about helping patients and caregivers with the day-to-day challenges they encounter. Susan is also a member of the Chordoma Foundation Community Advisory Board.

Vinai Gondi, MD

Dr. Gondi is a board-certified radiation oncologist at Northwestern Medicine Chicago Proton Center. He is a graduate of Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons and completed his radiation oncology residency at the University of Wisconsin Hospital & Clinics. Dr. Gondi also completed an internship at the St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center. Dr. Gondi is a member of the American Society for Radiation Oncology, Society of Neuro-Oncology, the North American Skull Base Society, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Stephanie Kielb, MD

Dr. Kielb is a board-certified urologist with a subspecialty certification in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery. She is an Associate Professor of urology and the residency program director in the Department of Urology at Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Kielb is recognized as an expert in voiding dysfunction and incontinence. She is a founding member of the American Urological Association Working Group on Congenitalism. Dr. Kielb was awarded research funding to investigate the effects of sacral neuromodulation on urinary and bowel symptoms and pain, and has published numerous peer-reviewed articles in this area.

Misty Kirby-Nolan, APN-CNP

Misty Kirby-Nolan is the lead anesthesia pain service Nurse Practitioner at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. She holds a Master of Science in Nursing and is a Certified Nurse Practitioner and Pain Management Nurse. She has practiced nursing for over two decades and has been a member of the Anesthesia pain service since 2002. Misty provides pain management in a multitude of settings including ICU, PACU, Ambulatory surgery, and Interventional radiology. Her patient populations include orthopedic, thoracic, vascular, oncology, gynecology, general medicine, and general surgery. In addition to her clinical practice, Misty is adjunct faculty at Saint Xavier University in Chicago. She is a member of Sigma Theta Tau and the American Society of Pain Management Nurses (ASPMN). She is President of the Chicago Metropolitan Chapter of ASPMN. She volunteers for national and international medical missions and has a special interest in transcultural pain management.

Edward Les, MD

Ed is a pediatric emergency medicine physician in Alberta, Canada and a clival chordoma survivor. A former CF Board member, Ed now serves as the Medical Liaison on the CF Community Advisory Board (CAB), acting as a link between the CF Medical Advisory Board (MAB) and the CAB. In this role, Ed brings important questions, issues, and concerns of the chordoma patient community to the MAB and helps the staff relay insights and recommendations from the MAB to the patient community.

Maciej Lesniak, MD

Dr. Lesniak is the Chair and Marchese Professor for the Department of Neurological Surgery at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. He received his medical degree from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where he also completed his internship, fellowship, and residency. His clinical and research interests focus on neurological management of patients with brain and spinal cord tumors.

Kathleen McCortney

Katy McCortney earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Illinois Wesleyan University. She conducted novel research at Illinois Wesleyan before joining the Social Neuroscience Lab at The University of Chicago. In her current role as Lab Manager of the Nervous System Tumor Bank she is involved in coordinating research specimen requests, oversees the administrative work, and works with the biobank team to process, collect, and distribute brain tumor specimens for banking and research. In her free time, she trains for and races in triathlons.

Deric Park, MD

Dr. Park is an Associate Professor of Neurology and the Director of Medical Neuro-Oncology at University of Chicago, where he provides care for patients with brain and spine tumors. In addition to both primary brain and metastatic cancers, he also specializes in rare conditions such as chordoma, meningioma, and hereditary cancer syndromes. He received his medical degree from Loma Linda University School of Medicine. Dr. Park has served as principal investigator of clinical trials for chordoma, and his research aims at developing novel treatments. He is a recipient of the Merit and Career Development Awards from the American Society of Clinical Oncology, and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for the Chordoma Foundation.

Amy Pietro, OTD, OTR/L

Amy Pietro is an Innovation Center Occupational Therapist at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab. Amy specializes in working with individuals with Spinal Cord Injuries and is a Skin Care Champion, working to prevent pressure injuries and wounds. She is passionate about helping individuals maximize their independence and getting back to doing what they enjoy. She received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Iowa and her Doctorate of Occupational Therapy from Creighton University.

Noreen Potempa

Noreen is caregiver to her husband, Michael, a skull base chordoma patient. In 2013 he was treated by Dr. Gary Gallia, a skull base surgeon at Johns Hopkins, and received radiation with Dr. Norbert Liebsch in 2014 at Massachusetts General. Now that Michael is healthy, the Potempas are enjoying retirement while working with the Chordoma Foundation to support fellow patients and families. They now hold annual fundraising events to support clinical trials to test promising new therapies.

Sean Sachdev, MD

Dr. Sachdev is a board-certified radiation oncologist at Northwestern Medicine Chicago Proton Center. He specializes in the treatment of brain and spinal tumors, as well as genitourinary cancers. Dr. Sachdev received his medical degree from Stanford University, completed his internal internship at the University of California Medical Center San Diego, and fulfilled his radiation oncology residency at McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University. He has expertise in the use of Gamma Knife/stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS), spine stereotactic radiotherapy (SABR/SBRT), and image-guided highly conformal radiotherapy.

Josh Sommer

Josh was diagnosed with a skull base chordoma in 2006. Unwilling to accept the limited treatment options available to chordoma patients, he joined the lab of Dr. Michael Kelley at Duke University,

where he spent the next two years studying chordoma. There he experienced the very practical challenges faced by virtually all would-be chordoma researchers — insufficient funding; scarcity of tissue, cell lines, and animal models needed for experiments; and isolation from others studying the disease. To solve these problems and proactively advance the search for a cure, Josh co-founded the Chordoma Foundation in 2007. Under his leadership, the Foundation has united and expanded the chordoma research community and vastly accelerated the pace of chordoma research. As Executive Director, Josh works with the Foundation’s research partners, advisors, and supporters to design, execute, and fund research initiatives focused on developing new treatments for chordoma.

Roger Stupp, MD

Dr. Stupp is the Chief of Neuro-oncology and the Paul C. Bucy Professor of Neurological Surgery at Northwestern Medicine. He received his medical degree from the University of Zurich. His practice focus centers around rare central nervous system tumors, chordoma, spinal cord tumors, medulloblastoma, brain metastases, and central nervous system lymphoma.

Jean-Paul Wolinsky, MD

Dr. Wolinsky is the Vice Chair of Strategy and Operations in the Department of Neurological Surgery and Professor of Neurological and Orthopaedic Surgery at Northwestern Medicine. Dr. Wolinsky received his medical degree from and completed his residency at the Baylor College of Medicine. He is a member of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, Cognitive Neuroscience Society, Cervical Spine Research Society, and the North American Skull Base Society. Dr. Wolinsky’s clinical focus includes spinal cord tumors, primary spine tumors, craniovertebral junction disorders, spinal congenital disease, spine deformity, stereotactic radiosurgery, and vascular malformation.