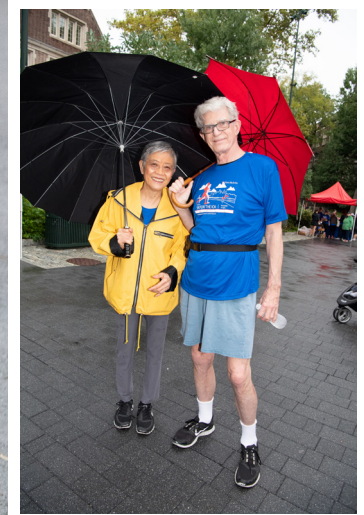


an Institute on Aging publication



Penn Medicine's 7th Annual

## // 5K FOR THE IOA & THE MEMORY MILE WALK

Despite a bit of chilly and wet weather, Penn Medicine hosted their 7<sup>th</sup> annual 5K for the IOA & The Memory Mile Walk on Sunday, September 23, 2018, raising over \$40K for Alzheimer's and aging-related research and care at Penn's Institute on Aging (IOA).

330 runners and walkers braved the rain in the early hours of the morning for their trek through Penn Park and the University of Pennsylvania campus. Joshua Franklin, bib #63, was the first to finish the race with a time of 18:47.68.

PJ Brennan, MD, Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President of the University of Pennsylvania Health System and Professor of Medicine at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, started the event 7 years ago in honor of his late father who battled Alzheimer's disease.

"Watching him be robbed of his memory and robbed of his personality as he went through the throes of this disease was terribly frustrating for him and painful – especially for my

mother, but for all of us," Brennan said in a recent PhillyVoice article on the race.

Since its inception in 2012, the race has raised more than \$260,000 for aging-related research at the IOA. With that in mind, we would like to extend a special thanks to all of the participants, volunteers, sponsors, donors, and race organizers throughout the years!

To view more photos and the full list of race results, visit:  
[www.penninstituteonaging.wordpress.com](http://www.penninstituteonaging.wordpress.com)

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- // *Introducing* Lisa Walke: New Penn Medicine Chief of Geriatrics
- // *Why* Being Older Helps Skin Heal with Less Scarring
- // *and* more!

# MEET LISA M. WALKE, MD, MSHA, AGSF



We are pleased to introduce Lisa M. Walke, MD, MSHA, AGSF, the new Chief of the Division of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine. Prior to joining the Penn Medicine team in July of 2018, Dr. Walke served as the Associate Chief in charge of clinical affairs at Yale Medical School.

Dr. Walke's career in geriatrics developed during her internal medicine residency at Montefiore Medical Center. Her original area of focus was in oncology until a fellow resident suggested that perhaps palliative care may be a better fit based on her interests. As Dr. Walke shifted gears and spent more time in the geriatrics division, she decided that it was indeed the best route for her and provided a great opportunity to take care of individuals with complex and chronic illnesses.

After a successful 15 years working in geriatrics at Yale, Dr. Walke made the move to Penn. "To have the opportunity to come as a division chief and to continue the excellence that Penn geriatrics has in clinical care and education and research was very exciting to me," said Dr. Walke. "I wanted to have the opportunity to continue to be a part of the forefront of how geriatric medicine is taking care of older adults."

One of Dr. Walke's main goals as the new chief of Penn Geriatrics is to strengthen collaborations between the various entities at Penn that are involved in areas that relate to aging -- including but not limited to the Institute on Aging, Penn Memory Center, Penn Nursing, and more -- to "come together and have the collective wisdom of the group to really create something innovative and different for older adults for that complete wraparound in whatever area of care, research or education that they need," she explained.

She also plans on resuming Penn Geriatrics' co-management program with Presbyterian Hospital's trauma surgery service and hopes to open up some opportunities for clinical research collaborations.

"My personal scholarship area is in the care of older surgical patients and improving outcomes for that group," said Dr. Walke.

As more surgeons and post-operative care teams are recognizing that the vast majority of surgical patients are over the age of 65, they are noticing post-operative changes in cognition in older adults. This is among the issues that Dr. Walke would like to continue to see addressed. Surgery often offers the opportunity for instant results and immediate improvement, so Dr. Walke and others want to "make sure we're doing the best for our patients and not creating more harm," she said, "but also to be able to see benefits and results in a shorter time than we see in other areas dealing with older adults."

For more on Dr. Walke, including an IOA video interview, visit: [www.penninstituteonaging.wordpress.com](http://www.penninstituteonaging.wordpress.com)

## Penn Medicine's New Chief of Geriatrics

**To have the opportunity to come as a division chief and to continue the excellence that Penn Geriatrics has in clinical care and education and research was very exciting to me.**



*Jerry C. Johnson, MD*

Former Chief of Geriatrics, Jerry C. Johnson, MD, was honored at a retirement celebration hosted by the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine's Division of Geriatrics. This event, attended by colleagues, mentees and friends, acknowledged Dr. Johnson's many contributions to

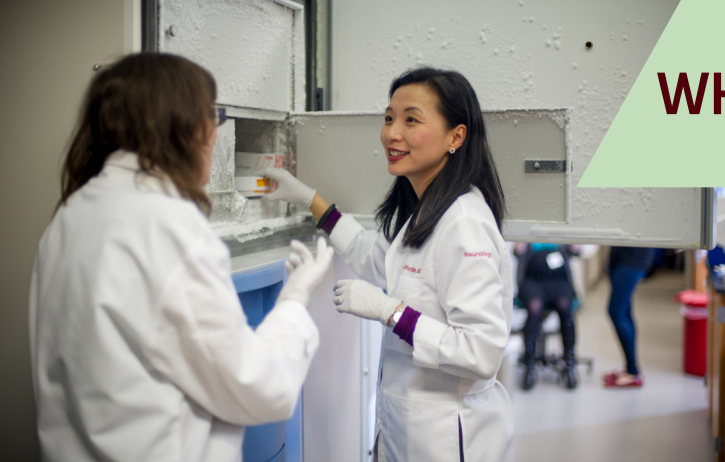
Penn Geriatrics and thanked him for his dedication and hard work throughout the years.

Dr. Johnson is nationally recognized for his expertise and leadership in aging, faculty development, and minority health care. During his role as Chief of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania from 2001-2018, Dr. Johnson led the division to prominence in clinical care, education and research. He mentored over 40 fellows and numerous faculty at Penn Medicine and beyond. Additionally, Dr. Johnson has also served as former Chair of the Clinical Medicine Section of the Gerontological Society of America, former President of the American Geriatrics Society (AGS), and is currently Vice Chair of the Health in Aging Foundation, a public outreach arm of the AGS.

As a practicing physician for 40+ years, Dr. Johnson is recognized by patients and peers for his combination of clinical excellence and compassion.

Of his many accomplishments, Dr. Johnson's most cherished achievement is co-founding the Philadelphia Area Research Community Coalition (PARCC), a community academic coalition dedicated to conducting health research and health education beneficial to the communities of West and Southwest Philadelphia.

# WHAT'S NEW IN AGING RESEARCH?



## The Next Frontier of Precision Medicine: Parkinson's Disease

Penn Medicine is bringing the power of precision medicine to Parkinson's disease with the newly-launched Molecular Integration in Neurological Diagnosis (MIND) Initiative, led by Alice Chen-Plotkin, MD, Associate Professor of Neurology at the University of Pennsylvania.

As described in the Penn Medicine News Release, precision medicine allows physicians to provide the most tailored diagnostic tools and treatments for patients. By knowing the nature of a disease with molecular-level accuracy, doctors can treat that root cause.

**"We have long recognized that no two people with Parkinson's are alike."**

Movement disorders is a large umbrella term for Parkinson's disease, tremor, Huntington's disease, and other neurological conditions that affect the speed, quality, and ease of movement, but there is a wide range of characteristics within each of these groups. For example, within Parkinson's disease, some patients barely progress over a two-year span, where others will have symptoms of Parkinson's that progress more quickly. The MIND Initiative will

bring precision medicine techniques to Parkinson's research to uncover why this happens, in hopes of uncovering better treatment options for patients.

The initiative is a way to bridge the gap between patient care and cutting-edge research that is happening in the laboratory. The goal is to enroll all patients in the Parkinson's Disease Center at Penn in order to identify biomarkers and better categorize the diverse disease, aiming to convene about 2,500 people by 2020. This would be the largest Parkinson's disease research cohort in the world with direct patient contact.

"We have long recognized that no two people with Parkinson's are alike. Patients have big differences in their symptoms, responses to medications, and to the side effects of treatment," said Chen-Plotkin. "This new initiative aims to define groups of patients based on how one's genes or other biomarkers contribute to these differences and to improve the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease and develop better treatments in the future."

## Being Older Helps Skin Heal with Less Scarring, and Now Researchers Know Why

A compound secreted in the bloodstream could be the key factor that causes wounds in older people to heal with less scarring than in younger people. The compound is called stromal cell-derived-factor-1 (SDF1), and Penn Medicine researchers recently showed that blocking it could influence scar formation and tissue regeneration in mouse and human skin, potentially providing a path to scar-less wound healing in humans.

**"This is a rare instance where aging actually improves the body's ability to heal rather than diminishing it."**

"Dermatologists and plastic surgeons have consistently observed that older people's wounds heal with thinner scars than younger patients', but until now, no one has been able to answer the question of why that's the case," said the study's senior author Thomas H. Leung, MD, PhD, an assistant professor of Dermatology at Penn.

Leung says this work has the ability to impact the clinic relatively quickly. SDF1 inhibitors already exist on the market and currently used as a treatment to mobilize stem cells. He and his team plan to study its use in preventing scar formation in humans.



Read the full Penn Medicine News Releases at: [www.pennmedicine.org/news](http://www.pennmedicine.org/news)

### Need More IOA + Aging-related News?

Email [aging@pennmedicine.upenn.edu](mailto:aging@pennmedicine.upenn.edu) to subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter

### Become a Fellow

Learn more about becoming an IOA Fellow or Associate Fellow at: [www.med.upenn.edu/aging/fellows.html](http://www.med.upenn.edu/aging/fellows.html)

### Make a Gift

To support aging-related research and care at the IOA, contact: Elizabeth Yannes, Penn Medicine Development [elyannes@upenn.edu](mailto:elyannes@upenn.edu) | 215-573-4961

Institute on Aging  
3615 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2676

## IOA TEAM

**John Q. Trojanowski, MD, PhD | Director**  
**F. Bradley Johnson, MD, PhD | Associate Director**  
**M. Kathryn Jedrzewski, PhD | Deputy Director**  
**Nicolette Patete Calcavecchia | Digital Media Specialist**  
**Ebony Fenderson | Financial Administrative Coordinator**  
**Elizabeth Yannes | Penn Medicine Development**  
**Hannah Messinger | Penn Medicine Communications**

## IOA EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD (EAB)

Meet our IOA EAB Members at:  
[www.med.upenn.edu/aging/ExternalAdvBoard.html](http://www.med.upenn.edu/aging/ExternalAdvBoard.html)

The mission of the Institute on Aging (IOA) at the University of Pennsylvania is to improve the health of older adults by increasing the quality and quantity of clinical and basic research as well as educational programs focusing on normal aging and aging-related diseases across the entire Penn campus.

[www.med.upenn.edu/aging](http://www.med.upenn.edu/aging)  
215-898-7801  
[aging@pennmedicine.upenn.edu](mailto:aging@pennmedicine.upenn.edu)

## UPCOMING IOA EVENTS

### Wednesday, December 12, 2018

IOA Visiting Scholars Series  
Dr. Alexander Smith, University of California San Francisco  
3:00 – 4:00pm | Biomedical Research Building

### Thursday, December 13, 2018

Joseph A. Pignolo Award in Aging Research  
Dr. Christopher A. Walsh, Harvard Medical School  
Time + Location TBD

### Wednesday, January 9, 2019

Vincent J. Cristofalo Annual Lectureship  
Dr. Nir Barzilai, Albert Einstein College of Medicine  
3:00 – 4:00pm (lecture) | 4:00 – 4:45 (Reception)  
Smilow Center, Arthur H. Rubenstein Auditorium

### Thursday, January 24, 2019

IOA Visiting Scholars Series  
Dr. Bonnie Blomberg, University of Miami  
3:00 – 4:00pm | Biomedical Research Building

### Wednesday, May 1, 2019

IOA Sylvan M. Cohen Annual Retreat and Poster Session  
Wednesday, May 1, 2019  
Theme: Mitochondria and Aging

For more information, visit: [www.med.upenn.edu/aging](http://www.med.upenn.edu/aging)