

VA Portland Health Care System - Operative Care Division General Surgery Team



Karen L. Kwong MD, FACS, Chief of General Surgery

Dr. Kwong has been at the VA since 2002. She is a Professor of Surgery with Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU). Dr. Kwong grew up in the California Bay Area and went to undergrad at Stanford University. She received her medical degree at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, which is also where she met her husband who is also a proud Army Vet and is currently in the reserves. She completed her surgery residency at the University of Washington, (where she also trained with her other surgeon colleague Dr. Cynthia Karsonovich)! Subsequently, Dr. Kwong became an Assistant Professor of surgery at Texas Tech University in El Paso. She then worked at LBJ General Hospital with UT Houston, where she practiced general surgery, trauma, and performed cancer surgeries of the colon, breast, skin, sarcomas, thyroid, and pancreas. She was director of the LBJ Breast Clinic and worked in a multidisciplinary manner with oncologists at MD Anderson. She returned to the West Coast and loves being back in the NW. Currently, at the Portland VA, she has concentrated primarily on breast, some melanoma, and general surgery. She is also a teacher and Associate Program Director for the General Surgery Residency at OHSU and involved with medical school teaching. Dr. Kwong also travels to Haiti twice a year to help provide medical and surgical care and promote education with a public education radio station she made with her counterparts there, and in sponsoring education and health opportunities for this remote region in Haiti. She is also an Adjunct Professor with Barts & London School of Medicine and Queen Mary University in London for a Master's Program. She likes hiking, eating, traveling, reading, and spending time with friends and family. She believes it is a privilege to work with our Vets.

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Robert K. Goldman, MD, FACS

My **Clinical focus** is surgical oncology (POR GS ONC clinic) where I see patients with melanoma, pancreatic tumors, and rare cancers. Often patients have a suspicion of cancer (without a biopsy that confirms cancer) or have uncommon cancers; I can help figure out how to move forward in these situations. I also provide care for common general surgery problems, including gallbladder disease, hernia, benign anal skin conditions (for example, pilonidal cyst, hemorrhoids, and anal fissures), and emergency problems we see on call (for example, acute gallbladder disease, bowel obstruction, and appendicitis).

Contact. For primary care doctors, eConsult, consult, Skype, or encrypted VA email works best (please, avoid additional signer for CPRS and voicemail). For patients, please contact one of our nurse coordinators or use secure email via My Healthy Vet.

Background. I have been at the Portland VA since 1997, after completing my General Surgery Residency at Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU). I was born at Eglin A.F.B., Florida, but a couple months later my family moved back to Chicago area where I grew up. After high school, I went to Carleton College, a small school in Minnesota, and then returned to Chicago for medical school at Northwestern University Medical School. During this time, I took a year off to work developing new instruments for surgical procedures, which is when I discovered surgery. Following medical school, I moved to Portland where I completed residency at OHSU. The early years of my career were focused on trauma, critical care, and general surgery at the Portland VA. Several years ago, I left OHSU and my focus shifted to cancer care at the Portland VA. I have been the Chair of our Portland VA Cancer Committee since 2012. The Cancer Committee helps oversee and support cancer care provided to our Veterans. We are also charged with maintaining our national accreditation for cancer care. Through this work I have also become interested in public health, working with our local American Cancer Society on projects like increasing colorectal cancer screening, as well as working with students. I enjoy spending time with my wife, two children and two dogs as well as my life long hobbies of photography and jogging. While I appreciate working with talented residents, students, colleagues, nurses, etc., it is most meaningful to serve our Veteran family.

Cynthia Karsonovich, MD, FACS

Dr. Cynthia Karsonovich grew up in Florida. She did her General Surgery Residency at the University of Washington. She has considerable experience in education and is and always has been a dedicated career VA General Surgeon. Dr. Karsonovich's practice includes basic general surgery, including laparoscopic and robotic cholecystectomies, and colon cancer surgery. She has participated in a VA landmark study involving open inguinal hernia repairs as well. In her spare time, Dr. Karsonovich likes to spend time with her family and volunteering with her church.

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Mitchell Sally, MD, FACS, Chief of Surgical Critical Care, Assistant Chief of Surgery for Education

Dr. Sally was born in Germany to a U.S. Army Soldier, but spent most of his formative years in North Carolina. After traveling farther north for college at the University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in English Literature, he returned to NC for medical school, graduating in 2004. After medical school, he traveled to Oregon, and has been in Portland ever since that long and cellphone-less journey, when he and his wife used maps and road signs to traverse the country. After completing a general surgery residency in 2011, he worked in the Kaiser system for a year as a general surgeon, but returned for a surgical critical care fellowship in 2012. On completion of the fellowship, he split time between OHSU and the Portland VA, providing trauma and surgical critical care at both facilities. He has two wonderful children and a delightful partner, and spends spare time with them, occasionally trying to get back into shape, and often trying to figure out which of R.E.M's albums after 1986 are the best.

Timothy R. Siegel, MD, FACS

Dr. Siegel is board certified on both Surgery and Hospice and Palliative Medicine. He joined the staff at the Portland VA in 2017 after over 20 years in practice in the Northeast. He attended Dartmouth Medical School in New Hampshire and completed his Surgery residency at the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY. He practiced general surgery in Massachusetts, Upstate New York, New Hampshire, Vermont and Northern Virginia before his move to Portland, which in many ways was a homecoming. He has 3 brothers in Oregon, and had been visiting them and their families for over 30 years.

Having practiced a broad variety of surgery while living in rural areas, including breast cancer and colon and rectal cancer operations, he now limits his surgical practice to outpatient procedures and endoscopy and colonoscopy. He spends most of his time practicing Palliative Medicine, which involves

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helping patients and their families with complicated decision making, as well as working to relieve troublesome symptoms and providing support to patients and their families. He also enjoys teaching the Surgical residents and medical students from OHSU.

In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his two grown children when they are in town, as well as cooking, wine, swimming, running, hiking, skiing and playing his trombone in local community bands.

Donn Spight, MD, FACS, FASMBS

Donn Spight is the Medical Director of *OHSU Simulation*, the umbrella organization linking state of the art health care training on the OHSU Campus. *OHSU Simulation* touches every element of the training continuum and is foundational to the Presidents' Vision 2025 goal of making OHSU the destination for transformational learning. In his role, Dr. Spight guides the vision, mission and policies for curriculum development and implementation across multiple disciplines and professions within VirtuOHSU and the Mark Richardson Interprofessional Simulation Centers. These two facilities, operating within OHSU's Office of the Provost, advance excellence in health care through innovative simulation-based education, training and research; quality and safety improvement; cost efficiency; and community outreach activities.

Dr. Spight is a Surgeon educator. He serves as an associate program director of the General Surgery Residency and has been the primary instructor for teaching laparoscopic surgery skills to residents for the last 12 years. His clinical practice focuses on the use of minimally invasive surgical techniques to treat benign and malignant disorders of the abdomen. He has a special interest in caring for patients seeking surgical options for weight loss. His academic focus centers around educating the current and future generation of health care providers.

Dr. Spight earned his medical degree at Northwestern University, completed his surgery residency at the University of Cincinnati and a fellowship in Minimally Invasive Surgery at OHSU.

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John Stowers, DO, FACOS, FACS

Dr. John Stowers is a board-certified staff general surgeon that started at the Portland VA in 2018. He transitioned from active duty at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas after completing a four-year service commitment with the United States Air Force. Dr. Stowers completed his medical school at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 2009 and his general surgery residency at OhioHealth Doctors Hospital and Grant Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio in 2014. His move to Portland, Oregon was a long-term goal achieved, as his wife grew up here and most of her family still lives in the local area. Dr. Stowers came from a practice with a broad scope of management in surgical disease processes including skin and soft tissue, endocrine, breast, foregut, gastrointestinal, colorectal, biliary, hernia, complex abdominal wall reconstruction, spine exposure, and trauma. He is adept in open, laparoscopic, and robotic techniques. Dr. Stowers has interest in robotic colorectal, hernia, and complex abdominal wall procedures. His hobbies include spending time with his wife, three-year-old daughter, and five-month-old son, exercising, hiking, and traveling. As a combat Veteran from Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom's Sentinel and a patient at the Portland VA, Dr. Stowers feels it is a privilege to care for and provide the most up to date and advanced care to our Veterans.

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Debra Mandelblatt, PA-C

Deb graduated from Hahnemann College School of Allied Health in 1984 with a BS/Physician Assistant degree. She then completed a one-year post-graduate program in surgery for Physician Assistants at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore in 1985. Deb lived in Baltimore for 12 years, working in General Surgery at an inner city community hospital, Neurosurgery and Vascular surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital, while also moon-lighting in the surgical emergency department at Sinai Hospital. She moved to Oregon in 1996 and has worked in General Surgery, Neurosurgery, and Plastic surgery. She has been at the VA since 2007 and enjoys taking care of the Vets. Her father was a proud WWII Veteran. Deb feels it is her responsibility to provide information to each of her patients so that they can make better informed decisions. In her free time, she enjoys reading, hiking, bird watching, dining out, and volunteering at the Oregon Humane Society in their medical center.



Margot Ouimette, PAC

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Margot joined the General Surgery Department at the Portland VA Health Care System in April 2018. She attended Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for Physician Assistant Studies and has worked in several disciplines during her career, including Orthopedics, Dermatology and General Surgery. When she's not busy taking care of surgical patients, she enjoys traveling, biking, cooking and spending time with her dog Monkey.



Wil L. Wesley Reibach, BSN, RN - RN Care Coordinator

Wil attended nursing school at San Jose State University, where he minored in Native American Studies and graduated *summa cum laude* in December 2015. While in school, he completed a VALOR student nurse residency on the med-surg unit at the VA Montana Health Care System, then completed his capstone in inpatient mental health at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. These experiences solidified his love of working with Veterans. Wil moved back to Portland after graduating and started his nursing career at VA Portland in 2016 on 6D, the inpatient medical-oncology floor and a designated education unit for University of Portland. On 6D, he cared for patients with a variety of medical issues, where he was also a charge nurse, pain resource RN, certified to administer chemo, an active member of the Unit-Based Council, and a clinical instructor for UofP. As an RN Care Coordinator for General Surgery, Wil appreciates using advocacy and education to help Veterans navigate their health care in an informed way. He has a special interest in serving communities with significant health disparities, such as LGBTQ and Native populations. Wil enjoys camping, hiking, water aerobics, keeping up with local tribal politics, spending time with his spouse and dog, and visiting family on the coast.

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James Sheley, BSN, MBA, RN – RN Care Coordinator

James re-located from Germany to work with the Portland VA General Surgery team in June 2018. He is a United States Army Veteran, who served as a combat medic with the 2/4 Infantry Regiment in West Germany during the late 1980's and later as a trauma nurse during operation Desert Shield/ Storm. James worked as a critical care nurse at various private facilities in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Texas. During the early to mid – 2000's, he served as a paratrooper and trauma nurse with Army Special Operations Command at Ft. Bragg, NC. James loves to spend time with his children and grandchildren and enjoys hiking and kayaking in Oregon.

Thomas P. Guitar, Facilitator