Venue Magazine proudly recognizes this year’s Rising Star Medical Leaders. The awards program, sponsored by John D. Dovich & Associates, applauds young professionals in Greater Cincinnati who are the best and brightest in the field.

The healthcare industry is constantly evolving with breakthrough innovation and cutting-edge technology that is changing and expanding the landscape. A medical community that stands on the forefront of these advances, dedicated to quality patient care, is critical to our region.

These respected young physicians are rising to the challenge of providing outstanding care and innovation to the community. In honor of the significant impact they have made, we congratulate these individuals on their professional achievements and thank them for their tireless dedication to our community.
Congratulations to our Rising Star Medical Leaders!

Our firm is proud to once again sponsor Venue Magazine’s RISING STAR MEDICAL LEADERS awards program. We are honored to celebrate the Greater Cincinnati area’s rising star medical leaders and excited for what it means for our Tri-State metropolitan area.

While there continues to be much uncertainty in the health care world, one constant and certain factor is the high quality care we all receive in the Tri-State from our medical practitioners. We are immensely fortunate to have the dedicated and talented healthcare professionals taking care of all of us within the Greater Cincinnati area. And while doctor’s house calls are a thing of the past, the devotion and care medical professionals offer all of us in Greater Cincinnati, every day, all day, is unparalleled.

Our city has a deep tradition in providing game-changing healthcare for its residents. Names like Sabin, Rieveschl and Reid are legendary in our city. How many lives have been saved by Dr. Sabin’s cure for polio? Can you imagine trying to survive an allergy season in our tri-state without Benadryl, invented by UC Professor George Riverschl a few short decades ago? And while there’s no cure for sickle-cell anemia yet, Dr. Clarice Reid, Cincinnati's only African-American pediatrician (male or female) who worked in private practice during 1962-1968 focused much of her career on developing important advances in sickle-cell research and hematology. These are clearly big shoes to fill and our contemporary healthcare practitioners are up to the task.

Much like how we dedicate ourselves to the financial well-being of our clients, our medical professionals’ dedicate their lives to taking care of us, guiding us to make valuable life decisions, and urging us to achieve our goals for a healthy life style. And while the healthcare industry has had some challenges over the past few years with a myriad of issues — whether it’s politically-based challenges or economic ones, one thing is a constant … we appreciate our healthcare professionals!

Congratulations to our 2016 rising star medical leaders! Life is good in our small part of the world and it’s in large part due to dedicated professionals, such as yourselves. Each and every one of you matter, to all of us. Thank you!

Sincerely,

John D. Dovich, CLU, ChFC
President
Heeran Abawi, MD
Weight Management Solutions, Mercy Health, Fairfield

Why did you choose the medical profession? Your inspiration?
I chose to specialize in bariatrics/obesity medicine after several years of practicing primary care—a role in which I realized that obesity is the root cause of almost all other medical conditions including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and even cancer. Moreover, except for smoking, obesity is now the #1 preventable cause of death in the United States. Consequently, I wanted to be able to focus on the prevention of these medical conditions, rather than just on the treatment itself. I was so inspired by my patients that I dedicated my entire practice to the treatment of obesity.

Sanjeev Bhatia, MD
Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, Mercy Health, Blue Ash, Montgomery and Rookwood

What is your proudest achievement in your career?
Instead of one big achievement, I am most proud of the smaller ones I see on a regular basis when my patients do well. The most satisfying aspect of my job is helping patients get back to normal function from complex joint conditions, often when other medical professionals have written them off or told them they need a joint replacement at an early age.

Ndidi Unaka, MD
Associate Director Pediatric Residency Training, Attending Physician, Division of Hospital Medicine Cincinnati Children’s

Why did you choose the medical profession?
I was drawn to pediatrics for the opportunity to be a voice for children and to build strong therapeutic relationships with patients and families. My time as a pediatric resident and faculty member at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center has immensely influenced my career goals. As a pediatric hospitalist, the clinical experience is unmatched and I developed an appreciation for family-centered care and quality improvement. I am inspired daily by the patients that I serve.

Vincent DiNapoli, MD
Mayfield Brain and Spine

Why did you choose the medical profession?
I decided to pursue a career in medicine my junior year of college. I had started my undergraduate degree in biochemical engineering, and became interested in neuroscience. I see neuroscience as one of the last frontiers in our understanding of the human body, as much remains to be discovered regarding the intricacies of our nervous system. I would say my greatest role models or personal inspiration has come from my family.

Sanjeev Bhatia, MD
Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, Mercy Health, Blue Ash, Montgomery and Rookwood

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Far Left

Allegra Tenkman, MD
Family Medicine Physician, Mercy Health –
Dent Crossing Family Medicine

Why did you choose the medical profession?
Being a physician combines my two great passions: academics and helping people. I love applying my years of dedicated learning to solve medical puzzles, while helping my patients with their physical and mental health.

Bottom Right

Matthew Hummel, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon Commonwealth Orthopaedics

What was your inspiration for choosing the medical profession?
I became a physician because of personal interaction with wonderful md’s as a younger individual. As an athlete in both high school and college I had several injuries where I had to interact (as a patient) with several physicians. Drs Brueggaman, Bilbo, Jansen, and Bunnell all helped instill in me an extremely positive image of a doc as both an individual and a member of their communities.

Bottom Middle

Michael Greiwe, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon Commonwealth Orthopaedics

What is your proudest achievement in your career?
My proudest achievement (aside from raising a wonderful family) is developing a new technique for shoulder replacement. Although the technique has to be studied more extensively, I’m very proud of being able to think creatively to help patients enjoy a quicker and better recovery following shoulder replacement.

Bottom Left

Jonathan Grainger, MD
Pain Management
St. Elizabeth

What inspired you to become a physician?
Growing up with a father as a physician is probably where the interest started, and only grew from there as I found I had a love of science and helping others. Even in high school I knew the logical choice was the medical field and I have not looked back since.

My proudest achievement is being able to practice in an area where I grew up helping a community where I was raised and providing access and the newest resources in interventional pain management to them.

Above

Jennifer Ernst-Pierson, MD
Internal Medicine, Pediatrics
St. Elizabeth

Why did you choose the medical profession?
I chose to enter the medical profession because I wanted to work with people and I had the desire to critically think about difficult problems and try to solve them. This is ultimately why I ended up in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine as a combined specialty. It allows me to both interact in a very personal way with patients and their families and to take care of medically-complex patients. I can’t imagine doing anything else!
Far Left

Susan Oakley, MD
Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery St. Elizabeth

What was your inspiration that led you to become a physician?
I was exposed to medicine early. My father (Robert Strawn, MD) is an ophthalmologist and I remember going on several house calls with him. Seeing the relationship that he had with his patients and its impact probably drew me to medicine. Later, as an undergraduate at the University of Kentucky, I spent several summers working at the Cincinnati VA with Dr. Thomas Geracioti, where our focus was on the posttraumatic stress disorder. From that experience and from seeing the intense interplay between biological and psychological processes, I was drawn to psychiatry—but didn’t really envision myself becoming a child and adolescent psychiatrist. Then, as a resident, I rotated on the inpatient services at Cincinnati Children’s and fell in love with child and adolescent psychiatry. I decided that I wanted to translate that experience from working with the adults with anxiety disorders to work with children and adolescents.

Above Left

Mohamad Sinno, MD
Co-Director St. Elizabeth Healthcare Atrial Fibrillation Program
St. Elizabeth

What is your proudest professional achievement?
I was honored many awards throughout my residency and fellowship training and my dearest is the "Golden Pacemaker Award” awarded for most achieving clinical cardiac electrophysiology fellow at the University of Michigan in 2013. After joining St. Elizabeth Healthcare, I was appointed the co-director of the atrial fibrillation program and was able to be an essential part of building a successful fully rounded arrhythmia center that offers therapies to our community in Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati that were lacking a few years ago. I was able to bring new technologies to the area and be the first to implant the Leadless pacemaker and Multipoint pacing device and be part of many investigator-initiated and multicenter clinical research trials offering new therapies to the community all in quest for better outcomes.

Right

Aaron Bey, MD
Physician, The Urology Group

Why did you choose the medical profession? Your inspiration?
To make a positive impact in the life of my patients.

What is your proudest achievement in your career?
Helping to build a robotic surgery program from its start.

Far Right

Matthew Fulton, MD
Physician The Urology Group

Why did you choose the medical profession? Your inspiration?
I decided to pursue medicine because I wanted a career that would challenge me mentally, and use my abilities to make people’s lives better. I appreciate the opportunity to help fix people’s ailments, from simple to complex problems. It is amazing what modern medical techniques allow us to accomplish.
Far Left
Daniel Robertshaw, MD
Physician, The Urology Group

Why did you choose the medical profession? Your inspiration?
I decided on urology because it provides opportunity to care for patients of every variety. Men and women. Old and young. We get to care for patients who urgently need our help, and also care for patients who are chronically ill. I think that also speaks to what inspires me: helping people be better. Whether it’s helping my son learn how to read, or helping a patient with their urology issues. The joy that comes from improving someone else’s circumstances is a very powerful motivator for me.

Above Left
Patrick Wirtz, MD
Physician, The Urology Group

Why did you choose the medical profession? Your inspiration?
Urology has a wide variety of procedures/interventions with both endoscopic and robotic approaches. These procedures can make a big difference in a patient’s life with less downtime and can be a very rewarding occupation.

What is your proudest achievement in your career?
There hasn’t been one defining moment in my career. Great moments can happen any day when you’re able to help out a patient and enable them to spend more productive time with his or her family.

Right
Khurram Bari, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine UC Health

Why did you choose the medical profession?
I was initially guided towards the medical profession by my parents who believe that it is the most noble profession. During high school and college my inclination towards medicine grew stronger as I realized that medicine can not only provide me with an opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives by making them feel better but will also keep challenging my intellect and fulfill my passion for new discoveries via novel research.

Far Right
James Bruns, MD
Assistant Professor of Anesthesia UC Health

Why did you choose the medical profession?
Like most people that went into medicine, I went into it to help others. What truly gets me out of bed every morning, is the prospect to try and help each and everyone of my patients. From completely taking away someone’s pain to making them more functional and able to play with their grand-kids, is what is truly rewarding about this specialty and career.
**Luke Pater, MD**  
Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology UC Health

*What is your proudest achievement?*
My proudest achievement has been receiving letters from the families of patients that I have lost. One in particular from the mother of a teenage girl will remain in my possession forever. The fact that she would take the time to thank me for her daughter’s care, in a time of the most painful loss, was more than touching. This sentiment and others like it motivate myself, and the teams that I work with to find ways to improve outcomes for our patients. We hope that today’s medical limitations will have common remedies in the future. We won’t stop until that is a reality.

**Mary Duck Robertshaw, MD**  
Assistant Professor of Medicine UC Health

*What inspired you to become a physician?*
Helping patients and learning their stories is a privilege as a primary care physician. I choose this profession, like many, because of a love of the patients’ story. Family Medicine allows me to be a small part of that story as it evolves. My proudest moments are when learners who are earlier in their careers tell me that I have encouraged them to pursue a career in primary care. Being able to shape the future generation of primary care physicians is a privilege.

**James Fortman, MD**  
Assistant Professor of Anesthesia UC Health

*Why did you choose the medical profession?*
Medicine allowed for me to combine my desire to help people with my enjoyment of science and technology.

*What is your proudest achievement in your career?*
Being selected to lead the UC Health Pain TEAMS tele-mentoring program. This program is designed to empower Cincinnati’s primary care physicians with the tools necessary to aide patients with chronic pain through learning to utilize a multi-disciplinary approach to pain management.
**Far Left**

**Jack Rubinstein, MD**  
*Associate Professor of Medicine UC HEALTH*

**Why did you choose the medical profession?**  
The medical profession actually chose me. Ever since I was little I knew that I was going to be a physician, though initially I wanted to be a pediatrician. I changed my mind early in medical school once I realized that there is nothing better in this world (at least for me) than caring for someone’s heart.

**What is your proudest achievement in your career?**  
Working with incredibly talented folk in Cincinnati we are developing drugs for the treatment of common heart diseases. We are currently in human trial stages, and if proven useful will have a significant positive impact for millions of people around the world suffering from heart disease.

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**Above Left**

**Dana Sall, MD**  
*Internal Medicine Specialist UC Health*

**Why did you choose the medical profession?**  
Medicine has always interested me because it combines my love for science with the ability to meet and help others. My passion for the profession now lies in working at an Academic Medical Center, which allows me to work with an underserved and complex patient population and to be involved in the education of residents and medical students.

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**Right**

**Michael Schoech, MD**  
*Assistant Professor of Medicine Transplant Hepatologist UC Health*

**What is your proudest achievement in my career?**  
I’m exceedingly proud to practice medicine in my hometown of Cincinnati while greatly improving Cincinnati’s access to advanced medical care for liver disease and liver transplant. In addition, I have the privilege to educate the next generation of the future physicians and participate in the forefront of medical research at UC.

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**Far Right**

**Satya Shreenivas, MD**  
*Assistant Professor of Medicine UC Health*

**What inspired you to become a physician?**  
I was inspired to become a physician growing up watching my father and grandfather, who were both cardiologists, care for patients. I saw firsthand the relief and joy they brought people by listening to them and providing therapies for heart disease.  
I am proud of the fact that at such a young age I’ve been able to start and build a successful structural heart program at University of Cincinnati providing patients with TAVRs and Mitraclips with excellent outcomes. The strength of our team is reflected in the fact that most patients are able to go home the next day with improvement in their symptoms, which gives me tremendous fulfillment.
Far Right

Trisha Wise-Draper, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Hematology/Oncology
UC Health

What is your proudest achievement in your career?
My greatest accomplishment thus far is probably being awarded close to 1 million dollars to complete an investigator initiated multi-site phase II clinical trial in head and neck cancer with immunotherapy. Our hope is that this trial will change our standard of care practices for these patients and put us at the forefront of innovative cancer therapy. We are currently studying possible resistance mechanisms to these therapies.

Far Left

Tim Smith, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine UC Health

What inspired you to become a physician?
My choice to enter the diverse and rewarding field of medicine was shaped over the course of many years. My grandmother and grandfather both passed from acute heart attacks. As such my interest in cardiac physiology and function grew from a young age. Although many years transpired from their deaths to my entry into the medical arena, it was ultimately the combination of their deaths, or rather their lives, influence on me; my interest in human engineering and personal satisfaction in problem solving which drove me into my current career.

Left

Jeffrey R. Strawn, MD
FAACAP Associate Professor of Psychiatry, UC Health

What was your inspiration for choosing the medical profession?
I was exposed to medicine early. My father (Robert Strawn, MD) is an ophthalmologist and I remember going on several house calls with him. Seeing the relationship that he had with his patients and its impact probably drew me to medicine. Later, as an undergraduate at the University of Kentucky, I spent several summers working at the Cincinnati VA with Dr. Thomas Geracioti, where our focus was on the posttraumatic stress disorder. From that experience and from seeing the intense interplay between biological and psychological processes, I was drawn to psychiatry—but didn’t really envision myself becoming a child and adolescent psychiatrist. Then, as a resident, I rotated on the inpatient services at Cincinnati Children’s and fell in love with child and adolescent psychiatry. I decided that I wanted to translate that experience from working with the adults with anxiety disorders to work with children and adolescents.

My work, both in the clinic and in my research, focuses on developing better treatments for youth with anxiety disorders and seeks to understand the biology of these conditions. Additionally, through my brain imaging studies, I hope to develop better ways to ultimately predict which patients may respond to particular treatments.

Right

Lauren Wang, MD
Primary Care and Family Medicine Physician UC Health

Why did you choose the medical profession?
I have always had a desire to use my gifts in the service of others. How I planned to do that evolved through my years at the University of Notre Dame where I was involved in service projects with marginalized populations. One recurring theme through my service work was a shortage of good primary care. I hoped to improve access to health care by being a family physician in an underserved area. This vision ultimately led me to my current practice which sees a large percent of Medicare/Medicaid, and a significant number of patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Rising Star Medical Leaders - Following Our Stars

An Update From 4 “Rising Star” Greater Cincinnati Physicians

Photography by Wes Battoclette

From left to right: Sam Koo, Jeff Schlaudecker, Dean Johns, Emily Fisher, Robert Sisk, and John D. Dovich
John Dovich and Dean Johns of John D. Dovich & Associates, LLC, met with four young physicians in Greater Cincinnati to talk about their careers and share their perspectives on patient care within today’s healthcare landscape.

The four are Emily Fisher, M.D. of Mercy Health, Sam Koo, M.D. of Beacon Orthopaedics, Jeff Schlaudecker, M.D. of UC Health and Robert Sisk, M.D. of the Cincinnati Eye Institute. Each doctor was named a “Rising Star Medical Leader of 2015” by Venue Magazine.

**John Dovich:** Why did you choose your career field and specialty?

**Jeff Schlaudecker:** I am fascinated by my patients and their life experiences. I’ve always liked working with families in crisis, which is why geriatric medicine is where I found my niche. I quickly learned it’s the adult kids that are thrown into crises when their parents are hospitalized. Once a parent is no longer independent, the kids may have trouble adjusting to that situation. I soon learned I liked helping family members in their troubled times and realized if I can’t solve the situation for them, maybe I can make things easier for them to handle.

**Emily Fisher:** I specialize in dermatologic surgery with a specific focus on Mohs surgery. Some of these surgeries can last for several hours, and because I use local anesthesia, I am able to enjoy talking to my patients throughout the day and really getting to know them and they me. I think having the opportunity to form that bond makes my specialty very unique. After having the chance to rotate through many specialties in medical school, I found that working with skin cancer patients offers a rare combination of addressing, and typically curing, a complex diagnosis in one visit, while also enabling me to utilize some artistry in ensuring these patients have minimal scarring.

**Sam Koo:** My parents and family emigrated from South Korea when I was 10. I watched my dad work so hard to provide for all of us and that made a deep impression on me. That hard work drew me to the medical field and I soon learned I could help people through my work. I enjoyed surgery the most and found it’s a lot like carpentry. In fact, I really do work with lots of power tools – just like in carpentry. Through surgery, I enjoy helping restore patient’s functions with their hands. People don’t realize how much they miss using their hands until they suffer a hand injury. I like to help people get their lives back, along with their functionality.

**Robert Sisk:** Eye problems affect people of all ages and backgrounds, and retinal changes often accompany systemic diseases. As a retinal surgeon, I enjoy interacting with a variety of patients and practitioners in other specialties to treat very interesting problems. Surgery offers a chance to cure certain diseases while exercising artistry and creativity. It’s important to me that patients work as a team to get the best outcomes. Retinal surgery patients are willing to make sacrifices and lifestyle changes to keep their vision.

**Dean Johns:** In your experience, what are some key challenges within your profession and is there anything you would like to change about healthcare?

**JS:** I would like to see a more holistic approach to geriatric medicine within the healthcare teams. What I’m seeing now is there’s not enough of a team approach to the patient care within my specialty. We have wonderful physicians, but patients also need nurses, social workers, financial counselors and others who … offer them a well-rounded array of services within the healthcare landscape. Right now, it seems as if healthcare services can be a bit siloed. Also with our aging population, we simply don’t have enough geriatric specialists to cope with the demands.

**JD:** We’ve seen a lot of private practices become consolidated within the local hospital systems. How do you think this trend will affect patient care in the coming years?
EF: I think when you go to medical school right out of or soon after college, you are still somewhat naïve about the loan process and interest rates and how much you will be paying each month. But in retrospect, I would not have done anything differently. Being a medical professional thankfully typically pays you enough that you can manage the debt, so I viewed it more as a necessary evil than a real burden. My advice to students is to borrow as little money as you can, but don’t feel too guilty if you splurge now and again during medical school. Once you start earning more money, find a trusted financial advisor to help you develop a plan to pay off your debt as well as to organize other aspects of your finances as soon as possible and you will have less anxiety and pay off your loans more quickly.

JD: Do you have any final advice for our next generation of rising star medical leaders?

RS: I would encourage people to go into medicine because you’re passionate about wanting to help people. Don’t do it for the money – do it for the patients.

SK: Working as a physician is a very respectable career choice and it’s rewarding work. I would advise people to become a doctor because they want to do it for others and to help people and not to go into medicine just for the money.

JD: Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us. After speaking with you, it’s very easy to see why all of you have been named a “Rising Star Medical Leader.” Our region is very fortunate to have such compassionate and smart physicians as yourselves. Thank you for your service.