

OECM Fall 2026 Newsletter

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Announcements

Welcome Dr. Samuel Hatfield



Samuel Hatfield, MD, is joining the faculty of OECM in a joint role with the Division of Hospital Medicine at ZSFG (which is his primary Division). Sam completed his residency in Internal Medicine in 2020 and a fellowship in Global Medicine and Health Equity in 2022. During his fellowship, Sam became deeply involved in Global Occupational Health. He worked closely with international collaborators in a rural district in the Eastern Province of Rwanda, managing advanced cases of silica induced lung disease in tin miners. This led to upstream work with local mining companies and NGOs that led to a greater understanding of the risks of silicosis and other medical conditions with underground miners in this region and prompted a deep ongoing interest in the health concerns of workers in informal economies in Africa.

Sam continues to pursue both research and advocacy projects in this space. He also has a keen interest in how occupational and environmental factors influence the presentation of patients to tertiary care facilities such as ZSFG and maintains a Society of Hospital Medicine certificate in Point of Care Ultrasound. In his free time, Sam loves to run, cycle, play tennis, and otherwise maximize his time outdoors (wearing sunscreen, of course!).

UCSF Ballpark and Franciscan Treatment Room



UCSF Occupational and Environmental Clinical Medicine (OECM) is excited about the opportunities ahead for our Ballpark and Franciscan Treatment Room (FTR) locations, two unique clinical sites that extend our occupational health services into the communities surrounding UCSF Health.

Located at 24 Willie Mays Plaza in San Francisco's SoMa neighborhood, the Ballpark site offers an important opportunity to expand access to occupational health services for employees, employer partners, and the broader community. The Franciscan Treatment Room at 1199 Bush Street similarly provides an established point of care and strengthens our ability to deliver accessible occupational health services beyond our traditional clinical settings.

In August, UCSF Health ambulatory leaders Chantel Johnson, PhD, RN, VP/COO Network Ambulatory, and Theodore Abraham, MD, Chief Medical Officer, UCSF Health Care Network, visited the Ballpark and FTR locations to meet the teams and learn more about their services

and potential. The visit highlighted the dedication of the clinical and operational teams, the distinctive service model at these locations, and opportunities to further integrate and grow these programs.

As we work through the next steps, we look forward to building on the strong foundation established by the Occupational Medicine team. Together, these efforts represent an exciting opportunity to broaden OECM's clinical footprint, strengthen partnerships with employers, and bring occupational health services closer to the people and communities we serve.

New Partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife

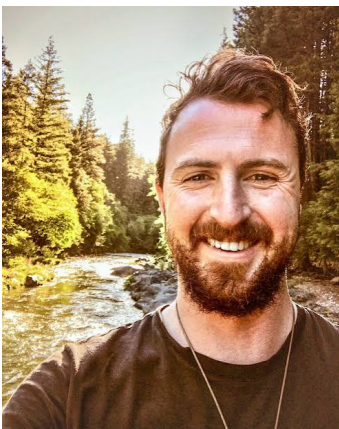


UCSF Occupational and Environmental Medicine has launched a new partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to provide medical monitoring and consultation for officers working in the agency's Cannabis Enforcement Program. These officers may encounter pesticides and other potentially hazardous chemicals while conducting enforcement activities at cannabis cultivation sites throughout California. Our program will provide baseline and ongoing medical surveillance, including laboratory monitoring, as well as expedited clinical evaluation following suspected occupational exposures.

The partnership brings together several areas of expertise within our program, including occupational medicine, medical toxicology, and exposure science. To evaluate potential exposures, our clinicians can use additional tools—including targeted urine pesticide analysis and, when appropriate, silicone wristband exposure monitoring—to help identify and characterize pesticide exposures.

This new partnership should also provide an exceptional learning opportunity for our Occupational and Environmental Medicine residents. Residents will have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of occupational exposures, interpret biomonitoring and environmental exposure data, and work with our faculty to translate exposure information into practical clinical and workplace recommendations. The range of potential exposures encountered at illicit cannabis cultivation sites makes this an especially valuable setting for learning and potential future research. We look forward to working with CDFW to protect the health of its officers while creating a distinctive new educational experience for our trainees.

James Nolan, MPH receives 2026 UCSF STAR Achievement Award



We are pleased to announce that our very own James Nolan, MPH is the recipient of a 2026 UCSF STAR Achievement Award. James serves as the Associate Director for both the Western States Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (WSPEHSU) and for the Community Engagement Core of the Environmental Research and Translation for Health (EaRTH) Center.

The UCSF STAR Achievement Award Recognizes employees whose sustained outstanding performance and meaningful contributions support the UCSF mission. This well-deserved award highlights James' dedication and impact on our division and UCSF as a whole. Please join us in congratulating James on this wonderful achievement!

Click [here](#) to learn more about James' contributions and the impact of his work at UCSF and WSPEHSU.



August Site Visit: A month of Industrial Hygiene in Action



This August, our UCSF OEM residents and faculty completed a diverse series of site visits across the Bay Area and beyond. We applied foundational industrial hygiene concepts during our visits. This year's sites spanned a range of industries including energy and water treatment, aerospace and advanced transportation, food production, federal research and defense, agriculture, and marine and animal care settings. Our residents also observed public safety operations at Treasure Island through a live-fire demonstration with the San Francisco Fire Department, and toured stone fabrication and radiator facilities to round out the group's exposure to heavy manufacturing and metalworking trades.

Each visit gave residents firsthand experience to observe biological, chemical, physical, ergonomic, and safety hazards. These observations are key to the residency program because it allows the residents to develop the skills to perform real-world occupational health assessments. After each visit, the residents drafted a formal site visit letter to their host employers. The letter summarized their observations and offered practical recommendations for improving worksite safety and health.

Additionally, these visits fostered and strengthened relationships between the OEM program and the employers or their health and safety professionals across varied industries. We were glad to welcome trainees from beyond our own program this year, including a resident from the UCSF General Preventive Medicine residency and a fellow from the Yale Occupational and Environmental Medicine fellowship, who joined us for several visits and enriched the group's discussions.

Thank you to Dr. Max Blumberg (Assistant Program Director), Dr. John Bossalini (UCSF Alum, former Chief Resident), Dr. Rose Dizon (Chief Resident), and second-year residents who helped arrange these site visits. We are also deeply grateful to the many site hosts, faculty, and alumni whose support made this month of learning possible.



Please donate to the UCSF OEM Residency!



Alumni
PROFILE



Rupali Das, MD, MPH, (UCSF OEM 1991)

Where are you now?

I am currently a Medical Director and Senior Vice President at Zenith Insurance, a workers' compensation insurance company headquartered in California, as well as a member of the ACOEM Board of Directors. In my role at Zenith I provide guidance to nursing, claims, and legal staff on best practices for diagnosing and treating work-related illness and injury, communicate with treating physicians, and educate internal staff and diverse external stakeholders on a wide variety of medical and wellness topics.

As a member of the senior leadership team, I participate in internal quality assurance and explore novel approaches, including telehealth and virtual reality. I use the skills and knowledge gained from working in a regulatory agency (I was the Executive Medical Director of the California Division of Workers' Compensation) to remain involved in the regulatory and legislative process.

The priority of our team is to ensure that workers are appropriately cared for. It is incredibly heartwarming to be able to influence medical care that allows a worker recover from severe injuries and return to work. I work closely with our safety and health teams and with employers to explore another priority: preventing illnesses and injuries. Some of the greatest challenges are finding well-trained Occupational Medicine and specialist physicians who care for patients, make informed decisions on work-relatedness, and write clearly documented and understandable reports.

Please list any achievements you would like to share.

At my previous role as the Executive Medical Director of the California Division of Workers' Compensation, I implemented the (at the time ground-breaking) Independent Medical Review (IMR) program that continues to offer an impartial way to resolve medical disputes using independent medical experts.

The IMR program replaced the previous lengthy legal process with medical treatment decisions made by unqualified non-medical personnel. I was a founder of the Western Occupational and Environmental Medicine's (WOEMA's) Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee and remained its chair for five years, bringing a focus to this broad and important topic. As a result of the Committee's work, WOEMA recently entered into a partnership with the Health Education for Latinos Program (HELP), that provides annual scholarships to Latino low-income students, to help them in their education health careers.

Share one memory that you have from the OEM residency program.

I have many wonderful memories from the OEM program. But one memory that stands out is meeting Dr. John Balmes for the first time. I had completed a residency in Internal Medicine, served as an attending in Chicago for a year, and was newly married. All the windows at the SFGH clinic were open and, needless to say, my summer dress, which was perfect in Chicago, was a poor match for foggy San Francisco summers. But the warmth with which John greeted me, made up for the physical cold—I felt welcome and right at home! At that time, the OEM residency program was a fellowship.

What advice do you have for the incoming/current residents?

I have three pieces of advice:

1. Seek a mentor who can guide and support you in your journey in OEM.
2. Don't be afraid to leap into the unknown, whether it's a new type of job, or a new leadership level.
3. Life is a journey—you may not be able to predict where you will end up years from now, but enjoy the ride!

Any updates to share (e.g kids, family, other things you're doing)?

My eldest son was born soon after I completed my MPH and the OEM fellowship. He's now an attorney and just got married! I'm on the Board of Directors at Cal Performances, housed at UC Berkeley. The arts are as important as, and intertwined with, the sciences!

Tell us your news



Remembering Dr. David Rempel, MD, MPH



Dr. David Rempel devoted his career to protecting workers, especially those whose jobs placed them at the greatest risk for injury. His research focused on workers performing highly repetitive, forceful, physically demanding, and fast-paced jobs, such as those in manufacturing, warehouses, food processing, construction, health care, and other occupations, where pain and injury are too often viewed as simply part of the job. Through studies of tendon and nerve mechanics, the large NIOSH Upper Limb Musculoskeletal Disorder Consortium studies, research in specific industry sectors, David worked to understand why workers were being injured and, more importantly, how jobs, tools, production systems, and workplaces could be redesigned to prevent those injuries.

David believed that protecting workers required changing working conditions by redesigning the work. He focused on how excessive force, repetition, awkward postures, production pace, poorly designed tools, and work systems contribute to injury, and on developing practical solutions that address those hazards at their source. Labor organizations frequently turned to David as a trusted scientific expert when investigating workplace health concerns, evaluating the causes of work-related injuries, and developing or advocating for regulations and policies to better protect workers. He brought scientific rigor and independence to these efforts while maintaining a clear focus on workers' experiences, particularly those with the least control over their working conditions and who often faced the greatest risks. His ability to translate complex research into evidence that could inform workplace changes, standards, and public policy greatly extended the impact of his science.

David's influence continues through the many students, scientists, physicians, engineers, and ergonomists he trained, who now work throughout academia, industry, government, labor, and occupational health. They carry forward his commitment to investigating hazardous work, designing safer jobs and tools, advancing protective policies, and advocating for workers whose risks and voices can too easily be overlooked. David's legacy is an important reminder that technological progress must also improve the lives of the people doing the work. His career demonstrated that worker injury is not inevitable: with rigorous science, thoughtful design, strong worker partnerships, and a commitment to those most at risk, work can be redesigned so that people can earn a living without sacrificing their health.

David Rempel's guidance, intellectual rigor, generosity as a mentor, and unyielding commitment to improving work so that all workers can be healthy and free from preventable injury will be deeply missed. Still, his impact will continue to inspire generations to come. David had a wonderful family and a sense of adventure. Dr. Rempel is survived by Gail, Paul, and Jenna; his parents; his brothers—Marc, Tim, and Nick—and their families; and more than 25 first cousins. For donations in his name, please consider the [West Marin Climate Action](#), [ALS Network](#), or [UC Berkeley Foundation - David Rempel Endowed Fellowship Fund \(FW9194000\)](#).

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