University of Nebraska Medical Center

Spring 2026

BREAKING NEWS

for the alumni & friends of the University of Nebraska Medical Center
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery & Rehabilitation

The Strength of Our Orthopaedic Department? Surgeons Choose it Twice

The true measure of a residency program is not only the excellence of its orthopaedic surgical training, but why residents choose it and why they stay. Clinical experience and education bring them here. Culture, people, and a shared commitment to one another are what lead them to choose this program twice.

Within our Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, that story continues to unfold in a powerful way. Of our 27 MD faculty, 12 began their journey right here as residents and made the deliberate decision to return and invest in the next generation.

This group spans three decades of training, from Dr. Matt Mormino, who completed residency in 1996, to our newest graduate, Dr. Olivia Thomas, class of 2026. In between, leaders across every subspecialty have followed a similar path: Dr. Ed Fehringer (2000), Dr. Brian Hasley (2004), Dr. Beau Konigsberg (2007), Dr. Curtis Hartman (2008), Dr. Justin Siebler (2009), Dr. Dan Firestone (2011), Dr. Scott Vincent (2016), Dr. Emmett Gannon (2020), Dr. Chris Deans (2021), and Dr. Joshuea Cameron (2021).

Each of these faculty members once stood in the same spaces our current residents occupy today, learning the fundamentals of orthopaedic care, developing surgical skill, and building the professional values that define this department. Their return reflects something deeper than career opportunity. It reflects a shared belief in the culture, the people, and the program's purpose.

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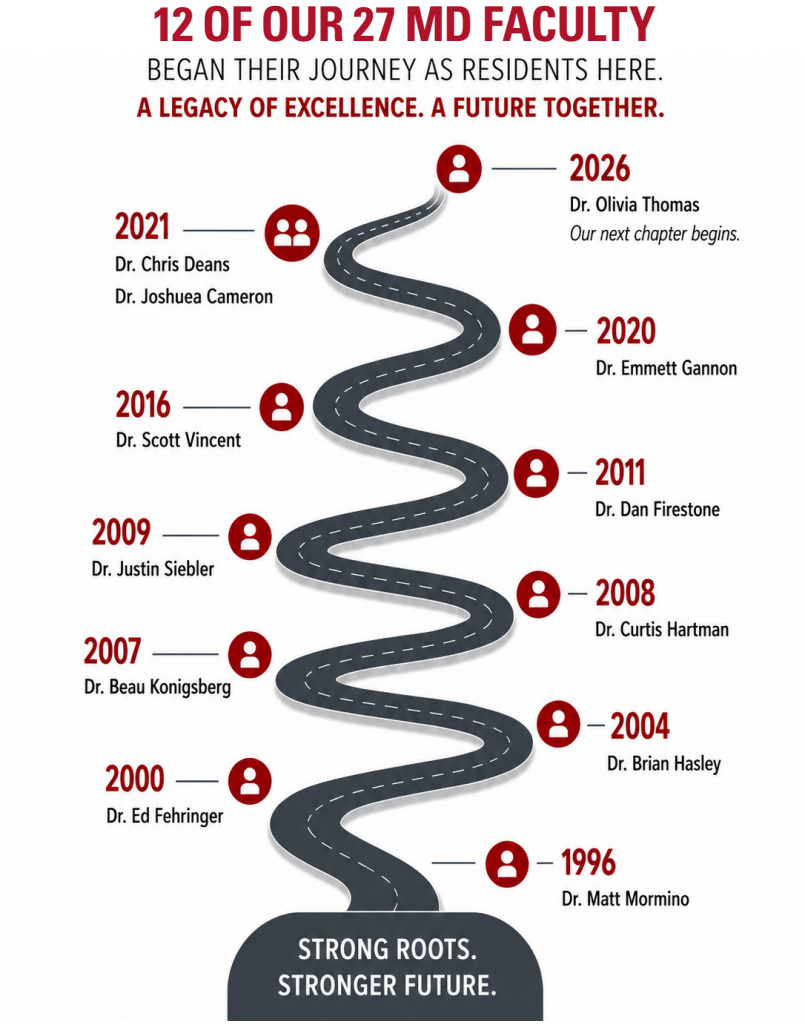

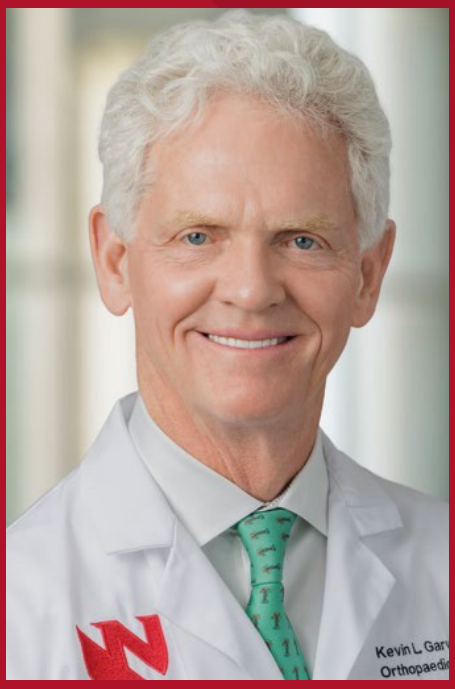

Breaking News Spring 2026

Breaking News is published two times a year for alumni and friends of the UNMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Chair: Kevin L. Garvin, M.D.

For questions or comments, call 402.559.4251

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Find us online!
www.unmc.edu/orthosurgery

Message from the Chair

As I reflect on this edition of Breaking News, I am struck by the strength of a program defined not only by what we achieve, but by who chooses to be here. This issue highlights a powerful and meaningful theme for our department. Many of our faculty once trained here and made the deliberate decision to return and invest in the next generation. That choice speaks clearly to the culture we have built together and the future we continue to shape.

At the center of our mission is the commitment to develop not only exceptional orthopaedic surgeons, but leaders, educators, and mentors. Seeing our graduates return as colleagues reinforces the continuity that defines our program and strengthens everything we do across clinical care, education, and research.

This issue also reflects the breadth of our impact. From supporting Nebraska Men's Basketball through comprehensive sports medicine care to advancing musculoskeletal research through new collaborative initiatives, our work continues to extend beyond traditional boundaries. Our faculty, residents, and students are contributing nationally and internationally, demonstrating both the reach and relevance of our efforts across clinical care, research, and education.

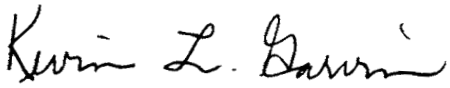
We celebrate the graduation of our chief residents and the success of our trainees as they move into outstanding fellowship programs. We also welcome new residents, fellows, and providers who will help carry our mission forward. Their talent and commitment position our department for continued growth.

Our research enterprise continues to grow in both depth and impact. From national recognition of our trainees to advancements in imaging and collaborative research platforms, we are building the infrastructure and partnerships needed to lead in musculoskeletal innovation. These efforts are made possible through the support of our alumni, donors, and institutional partners, whose investment directly advances discovery, education, and patient care.

Finally, I want to recognize the people who make this work possible every day. The dedication of our nurses, advanced practice providers, faculty, and staff reflects a shared commitment to excellence, compassion, and teamwork. Their contributions define the experience of our patients and the strength of our department.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support. Together, we will continue to lead, innovate, and shape the future of orthopaedic care for the patients and communities we serve.

Warm regards,



Kevin L. Garvin, MD
Chair, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery & Rehabilitation
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Extending Orthopaedic Impact Across the Globe

Over the past year, our department's research has been presented across multiple international forums, reflecting both the relevance and the reach of our work. Faculty, residents, fellows, and students have contributed to meetings throughout Europe, Asia, Australia, and Central America, engaging directly in the exchange of knowledge that shapes orthopaedic care worldwide.

This level of participation signals more than academic activity. It confirms that the work developed within our department is recognized, invited, and valued on an international stage. Our teams are not only contributing to these discussions but are helping define them through presentations, collaborations, and invited participation.

These outcomes represent a strong return on investment. In a time of constrained resources, it is essential that institutional support translates into measurable impact. Each presentation reflects the effective use of funding to generate scholarship, expand partnerships, and elevate the department's national and international presence. Our investigators consistently leverage available resources to maximize both reach and relevance.

Equally important is the role of our trainees. Students, residents, and fellows are actively engaged in this work and are presenting alongside established leaders in the field. This experience strengthens their development and reinforces our responsibility to train the next generation of academic physicians.

The geographic breadth of these presentations highlights the universal applicability of our research. The questions we address and the solutions we develop extend beyond our institution and contribute to improving care globally.

Sustained investment in research remains essential to maintaining this trajectory. The impact achieved over the past year demonstrates that these resources are used deliberately and effectively. Continued support will ensure that our department remains positioned to lead in discovery, education, and patient care.

Global Reach of UNMC Orthopadics | 2025–26

International Conferences with presentatations and leadership positions by faculty, fellow, residents, and multidisciplanary collaborators

Orthopaedic Research Society Honors Drs. Dibbern and Omran

Kevin Dibbern, PhD

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery actively participated in the Orthopaedic Research Society (ORS) Annual Meeting in March 2026 in Charlotte, North Carolina. As one of the most prestigious international gatherings in musculoskeletal research, the meeting brings together leading clinicians, scientists, engineers, and trainees to share cutting-edge discoveries and advance orthopaedic care.

This year marked a highly successful meeting for our team, with three podium presentations and two posters that reflect the strength and impact of our research program and collaborative partnerships across institutions.

Kareem Omran

We are especially proud to recognize Kareem Omran, a researcher at UNMC completing his graduate studies in orthopaedic biomechanics under the guidance of Dr. Kevin Dibbern, alongside faculty members including Drs. Dave Kingston, Sara Putnam, and Hani Haider. Omran received the highly competitive New Investigator Recognition Award at the ORS for his work titled, "Automated 3D Analysis of Bilateral Weight-Bearing CT Data Enables Accurate Detection of Subtle Syndesmotic Injury." Kareem served as presenter for all three podium presentations, with Dr. Kevin Dibbern as the senior author on two projects and national collaborators contributing across institutions, including the University of Iowa, Duke University, and NYU Langone Orthopedics.

In addition to the award-winning study, the following research was presented:

- "An Automated Registration Framework for Reducing Alignment Error in Syndesmotic Instability Detection using Weight-bearing CT"
- "Early Achievement of a Distribution-Based MCID Predicts Long-Term Patient-Perceived Success Following Total Knee Arthroplasty"

The NIRA Award is among the most competitive honors presented at the Orthopaedic Research Society and is reserved for top emerging investigators. Finalists are selected from thousands of submissions and invited to present their work in a podium session, where expert reviewers evaluate them. Kareem's selection as a finalist and subsequent recognition as one of only two award recipients in the Models and Imaging category represent significant achievements and highlight the innovation and clinical relevance of his work.

These presentations, as well as prior weight-bearing CT work presented at the American Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Society, are particularly notable because they were conducted in collaboration with external institutions prior to the installation of our own weight-bearing CT technology at UNMC/Nebraska Medicine. With the recent addition of a CurveBeam HiRise weight-bearing CT scanner on the first floor of the Lauritzen Outpatient Center, our department is now positioned to expand both clinical care and research capabilities in this rapidly evolving area.

Understanding how bones and joints function under the forces of daily activity has long been a challenge in orthopaedics. Traditional imaging either captures limited two-dimensional views or requires patients to lie down, removing the very forces that often reveal pathology. Weight-bearing CT addresses this gap by combining three-dimensional imaging with physiologic loading, providing a more accurate representation of how the musculoskeletal system performs in real-world conditions while maintaining a lower radiation dose than conventional CT.

The newly installed system allows patients to be imaged in a standing position, offering high-resolution, three-dimensional insight into joint alignment and function. In foot and ankle care, this technology enhances the evaluation and surgical planning of complex deformities such as flatfoot. Its expanded capability to assess the entire lower extremity also provides valuable information for joint replacement planning, where alignment across the foot, ankle, knee, and hip can significantly influence outcomes. The system also supports imaging of the upper extremities, extending its value across a broad range of orthopaedic conditions.

In pediatric populations, weight-bearing imaging offers new opportunities to understand better how alignment and loading evolve during growth. As part of this effort, Dr. Kevin Dibbern is leading the UNMC site for a multicenter NIH-funded study focused on pediatric flatfoot progression, in collaboration with several national institutions. The addition of this technology strengthens our ability to advance both clinical care and foundational research in musculoskeletal health.

Kareem's achievement, combined with the expansion of advanced imaging capabilities at UNMC, reflects our research strength and our commitment to advancing orthopaedic treatments. Together, these efforts position our department to continue leading in both discovery and patient care.

Advancing Musculoskeletal Care Through Research and Collaboration on Resident Research Day

The Department hosted its annual Resident Research Day/ Musculoskeletal Research Symposium on November 21, 2025, bringing together physicians, researchers, trainees, and collaborators for a focused morning dedicated to advancing patient care through research.

The symposium highlighted how clinically driven questions lead to meaningful improvements in musculoskeletal health. Resident physicians presented original research across pediatric orthopaedics, trauma, spine, sports medicine, infection, and joint replacement. Topics included surgical outcomes for developmental hip disorders, strategies to improve patient engagement and reduce missed appointments, innovations in spine surgery and bone health optimization, and improved diagnostic and treatment approaches for infection, fractures, and joint disease.

Several studies emphasized value-based care and quality improvement, including nonoperative management of frozen shoulder, performance improvement in antibiotic administration for open fractures, and advances in multimodal pain management for total knee arthroplasty. Diagnostic innovation was also highlighted through comparative studies evaluating imaging and testing methods to support clinical decision-making.

A highlight of the symposium was the visiting professorship by Noelle Larson, M.D., of Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, who presented on innovation in pediatric spine surgery and underscored how collaboration and sustained research investment translate into better outcomes for children with complex conditions.

The latter portion of the program showcased collaborative pediatric research, including advanced gait analysis in children with cerebral palsy, new insights into ankle stability and spinal conditions, and long-term outcome studies in children with osteogenesis imperfecta and neuromuscular scoliosis. Faculty also shared perspectives on building sustainable research programs that support patients, learners, and the broader community.

With the support of our donors, alumni, and institutional partners, the Department continues to strengthen research that improves care today and builds better outcomes for the future.

Celebrating the Orthopaedic Class of 2026

The graduation of the Orthopaedic Class of 2026 marks an important milestone for both our residents and our department. These physicians have completed years of rigorous training, demonstrating clinical excellence, technical skill, and a strong commitment to patient care. As they move forward into fellowship training and the next phase of their careers, they carry with them the values and standards that define our program. We are proud of their accomplishments and confident in the impact they will make in the communities and specialties they serve.

Chief Resident Fellowships 2026-2027:

Ashley Creager, MD

Fellowships: Trauma, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL (2026-2027)

Musculoskeletal Oncology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL (2027-2028)

Medical School: Medical College of Wisconsin

Undergraduate: University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming

Tyler Kallman, MD

Fellowship: Spine, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

Medical School: University of Nebraska Medical Center

Undergraduate: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska

Robert "John" Pettit, MD

Fellowship: Lower Extremity Adult Reconstruction, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN

Medical School: University of Utah

Undergraduate: Utah State University, Logan, Utah

Olivia Thomas, MD

Fellowship: Hand & Upper Extremity, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

Medical School: Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine - Arizona

Undergraduate: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska

Bradford "Ford" Zitch, MD

Fellowship: Adult Reconstruction, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Medical School: University of Missouri

Undergraduate: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska

Pictured from left to right: Bradford "Ford" Zitsch, MD, Robert "John" Pettit, MD, Ashley Creager, MD, Tyler Kallman, MD, Olivia Thomas, MD

New Fellow

Jacob Hartwig, MD

Medical School: University of Missouri Columbia School of Medicine

Undergraduate: University of Missouri Columbia School of Medicine

Residency: University of Missouri

New Residents

Caleb Fiebig, MD

Medical School:
University of Colorado

Undergraduate:
Colorado School of Mines

Kelly Fowler, MD

Medical School:
University of Arkansas

Undergraduate:
University of Arkansas

Tanner Heaton, MD

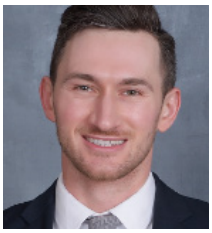
Medical School:
University of Utah

Undergraduate:
Brigham Young University

Andrew Quinn, MD

Medical School:
University of Washington

Undergraduate:
Carroll College



Bradley Siler, MD

Medical School:
John Hopkins University

Undergraduate:
Utah State University

Cole Veliky, MD

Medical School:
Ohio State University

Undergraduate:
University of Pittsburgh

Spotlight on Education:

Surgical Shoulder Lab for Advanced Skills

iEXCEL hosted a hands-on surgical shoulder lab that focused on improving product usage and developing core surgical skills. Orthopaedic residents led by Dr. Richard Amendola practiced both arthroscopic and open techniques using real equipment. This simulation used open retractors and ACL instrumentation to support high-quality, simulated training and practice.

Dr. Sarah Powell Recognized with MAOA Senior Resident Education Grant

Sarah Powell, MD

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery is proud to recognize Dr. Sarah Powell for receiving the Mid-America Orthopaedic Association Senior Resident Education Grant in 2026. This competitive award provides $3,000 in support to attend the MAOA Annual Meeting and reflects a strong commitment to academic excellence, professional development, and leadership in orthopaedics.

The MAOA Senior Resident Education Grant is awarded to residents who demonstrate outstanding achievement and a clear dedication to advancing the field. Recipients are selected based on their academic accomplishments, research engagement, and potential to contribute meaningfully to orthopaedic surgery. Dr. Powell's selection highlights both her individual accomplishments and the department's training environment.

Participation in the MAOA Annual Meeting offers an opportunity to engage with leaders in orthopaedics, explore emerging research, and gain exposure to innovative techniques and best practices. Through this experience, Dr. Powell will further expand her clinical knowledge while building connections that will support her continued growth as a physician and future leader in the field.

This recognition reflects the department's continued commitment to fostering resident development through academic achievement, research, and national engagement. We congratulate Dr. Powell on this well-deserved honor and look forward to her continued contributions to the field of orthopaedic surgery.

Recognizing Excellence in Research

Medical Student Earns National Honor

Smitha E. Mathew, MBBS

The pediatric orthopaedic research team at UNMC, led by Assistant Professor Smitha E. Mathew, MBBS, was recognized at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) Annual Meeting, where their poster received the Top Poster Award in Pediatrics. Medical student Chase Ochs represented the team at the conference, presenting the poster and accepting the award on behalf of the group.

The award-winning study, "Missed Visits and Not ADI Determine the Recurrence Rates in Idiopathic Clubfoot," examined factors influencing recurrence in pediatric patients with idiopathic clubfoot. The findings highlight the importance of consistent follow-up and patient adherence to care, showing that missed clinical visits are a more significant driver of recurrence than socioeconomic measures such as the Area Deprivation Index (ADI). This work provides valuable insight into improving outcomes through continuity of care and patient engagement.

This accomplishment reflects the collaborative efforts of the research team, including medical students Boston Small, BS (Creighton), Anna Blaschko, BS (UNMC), orthopaedic resident Currey Zalman, MD, and statistician Robin High, MA, whose combined contributions in clinical insight, research coordination, and data analysis supported a comprehensive and impactful study.

Recognition at AAOS underscores the depth and quality of academic orthopaedics within our department and highlights the vital role that medical students, trainees, and faculty play in advancing research, education, and patient care. We congratulate the entire research team on this outstanding achievement and look forward to their continued contributions to improving outcomes in pediatric orthopaedics.

Medical student Chase Ochs receiving honor

Resident Publications and Presentations

Publications

Hsu M, **Leonard AK, McGarry S**, Balach T. Listening In: Orthopaedic Oncology Physicians' Perspectives on Implementation of Audio Recording/ Artificial Intelligence Assist in Office Visits. In Journal of Surgical Oncology. 2026 March.

Leonard AK, Ayers K, Faokunla L, Samson K, Carter E, Hart T, Wallace M. Assessing Access to Orthopaedic Care for Patients with Osteogenesis Imperfecta. Graduate Medical Education Research Journal. 2025 Dec; 7(2).

Akwuole F, Christenson C, Jacome F, MacLeod J, Shaikh O, Pullen M, Chopra A, Lema O, Lee J, Cho S, **Leonard AK**, Mejia A. Research Productivity Variation in Applicants Who Matched into Home Orthopaedic Surgery Programs. Graduate Medical Education Research Journal. 2025 Dec; 7(2).

Michael F. Shannon, Rahul Ramanathan, Neil Poddar, **Philip Holubeck**, Alex Gavia, John Bonamer, Jacob Weinberg, Christopher Gonzalez Jr, Michelle Zhang, Michael Spitnale, Richard A. Wawrose, Joon Y. Lee, Emmett J. Gannon. Incidental dural tears in minimally invasive spine surgery: a narrative review of incidence, management, and outcomes. **AME Surgical Journal**; 2026 March.

Presentations

Podium

ACGME Annual Education Conference
February 2026. San Diego, CA.

Colucci L*, Daniels G*, **Leonard AK***, Radut B*, Mendoza G*, Schmitt E*. A Case Series: Navigating GME Challenges from the Trainee Perspective.

Mid-American Orthopaedic Association (MAOA) Annual Meeting
April 2026, Point Clear, AL

Sarah Powell, John Hunting, Elizabeth Lieberman, Sara Putnam: Increased Utilization of Assistive Reproductive Technologies Amongst Female Orthopedists.

Abdi Abud, Chauna Weyermuller, Smitha E. Mathew, Robin High: Do Radiographic Diagnostic Criteria Accurately Differentiate CVT and COT? A Validation Study

Atteberry M, **Leonard AK***, **Thomas O**, Garvin KL, Putnam SM. Female Medical Students' Exposure and Perceptions of the Field of Orthopaedics.

Leonard AK, Anderson L*, Lauer S, **McGarry S**. A Quality Improvement Initiative: Retrospective Analysis of Cytogenetics in Orthopaedic Oncologic Diagnosis and Subsequent Management.

UNMC GME Research Symposium
May 2026, Omaha, NE

Leonard AK*, Hsu M, McGarry S, Balach T. Listening In: Orthopaedic Oncology Physicians' Perspectives on Implementation of Audio Recording/ Artificial Intelligence Assist in Office Visits.

Leonard AK*, **Pettit RJ**, Hewlett A, Teusink M. A Rare Case of Haemophilus Influenzae Shoulder Septic Arthritis in an Elderly Patient.

Leonard AK, Anderson L*, Lauer S, McGarry S. A Quality Improvement Initiative: Retrospective Analysis of Cytogenetics in Orthopaedic Oncologic Diagnosis and Subsequent Management.

Philip A. Holubeck, MD, Annemarie Leonard, MD, Jaskaran Batra, MD, Scott Vincent, MD, Chris Cornett, MD, Emmett Gannon, MD, Laura Graeff-Armas, MD, PhD. Perioperative Use of Romosozumab to Improve Spine Surgery Outcomes: A Retrospective Chart Review.

Poster

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Annual Meeting
March 2026, New Orleans, LA

Sarah Powell, John Hunting, Elizabeth Lieberman, Sara Putnam Increased Utilization of Assistive Reproductive Technologies Amongst Female Orthopedists.

Sarah Powell, John Hunting, Elizabeth Lieberman, Sara Putnam. Increased Utilization of Assistive Reproductive Technologies Amongst Female Orthopedists.

Sarah Powell, John Hunting, Aidan Gaertner, Granlee Nguyen, Elizabeth Lyden, Christopher Deans. Albumin and ambulatory status are significant predictors of 5-year mortality after low-energy femoral neck fractures.

American Orthopaedic Association
May 2026. Albuquerque, NM.

Leonard AK, Hsu M, McGarry S, Balach T*. Listening In: Orthopaedic Oncology Physicians' Perspectives on Implementation of Audio Recording/ Artificial Intelligence Assist in Office Visits.

ePoster

Musculoskeletal Tumor Society
December 2025. Mexico City, Mexico.

Hsu M*, **Leonard AK**, McGarry S, Balach T. Listening In: Orthopaedic Oncology Physicians' Perspectives on Implementation of Audio Recording/ Artificial Intelligence Assist in Office Visits.

International Pediatric Orthopaedic Symposium
December 2025, Orlando, FL

Abdi Abud, Chauna Weyermuller, Smitha E. Mathew, Robin High: Do Radiographic Diagnostic Criteria Accurately Differentiate CVT and COT? A Validation Study

New MD Providers

Welcoming Back Dr. Joshuea Cameron

Joshuea Cameron, MD

We are pleased to welcome back Joshuea Cameron, MD, to the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, who will start with us on August 1, 2026. Dr. Cameron's return reflects a strong connection to our institution and a continued commitment to advancing orthopaedic care, education, and research.

Dr. Cameron is a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon specializing in adult reconstructive surgery, with expertise in hip and knee replacement and complex joint reconstruction. He completed his orthopaedic surgery residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, where he was recognized for academic excellence. He went on to complete an orthopaedic adult reconstructive surgery fellowship at UNMC, becoming the department's first fellow in this subspecialty and helping to lay a foundation for the program's continued growth.

Dr. Cameron was also selected for the Anterior Hip Foundation Traveling Fellowship, during which he trained with national experts across multiple institutions, gaining advanced experience in anterior approach total hip arthroplasty and complex hip reconstruction. This additional training further strengthens his expertise in minimally invasive approaches and innovative surgical techniques.

Since completing his training, Dr. Cameron has served in the United States Air Force at Brooke Army Medical Center, the Department of Defense's only Level I trauma center, and the Air Force's largest orthopaedic surgery residency program. In this role, he has served as the sole adult reconstructive surgeon, Chief of the Adult Reconstruction Service Line, and Associate Program Director for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety. His work has included leading multidisciplinary teams, advancing quality improvement initiatives, and supporting resident education through didactics and clinical training.

Dr. Cameron's clinical and academic interests include complex primary and revision arthroplasty, minimally invasive surgical techniques, and innovations in patient safety and care delivery. His experience reflects a strong commitment to high-quality, patient-centered care and continuous improvement in orthopaedics.

We are excited to welcome Dr. Cameron back to our team and look forward to the impact he will make in advancing clinical care, supporting education, and strengthening the future of orthopaedic surgery within our department.

Welcome Dr. Abbey Kennedy


Abbey Kennedy, MD

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery is pleased to announce that Abbey Kennedy, MD, will be joining our faculty on September 1, 2026, after completing a fellowship in Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgery.

Dr. Kennedy brings more than a decade of clinical experience as a practicing orthopaedic surgeon, with a strong foundation in general orthopaedics and a growing focus on pediatric care. Most recently, she practiced at Bridger Orthopedic and Sports Medicine in Bozeman, Montana, where she cared for a broad range of musculoskeletal conditions. Prior to that, she held positions in Washington and California, building a reputation for thoughtful, patient-centered care across diverse clinical settings.

She earned her medical degree from Saint Louis University School of Medicine and completed her orthopaedic surgery residency at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Kennedy is board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery.

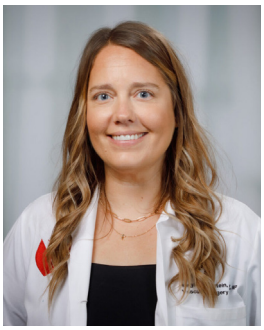
Dr. Kennedy's interest in pediatric orthopaedics is supported by both her clinical work and academic contributions. During her training, she conducted biomechanical research focused on pediatric ACL reconstruction techniques and presented her findings at national meetings. Her work has also been published in peer-reviewed journals, reflecting her commitment to advancing the field.

In addition to her clinical and academic accomplishments, Dr. Kennedy has been recognized for her commitment to excellence and has contributed to hospital committees focused on surgical quality and multidisciplinary care. These efforts reflect her dedication to continuous improvement, collaboration, and the delivery of high-quality patient care.

Through her pediatric orthopedic fellowship at Shriners Hospitals for Children Northern California, affiliated with UC Davis, Dr. Kennedy is further advancing her expertise in caring for children with musculoskeletal conditions. Her extensive experience, combined with her commitment to education and patient-centered care, will be a valuable addition to our department.

New APP Providers

Welcoming Megan Gerstein, PA-C



Megan Gerstein, PA-C

We are pleased to welcome Megan Gerstein, PA-C, to the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in her new role, primarily supporting our team at Bellevue Medical Center. Megan joins us as an internal transfer within Nebraska Medicine, bringing valuable experience, system knowledge, and a strong commitment to high-quality, patient-centered care.

In her role, Megan will provide comprehensive support across all orthopaedic subspecialties, caring for patients in both the inpatient and outpatient settings. Her versatility and collaborative approach position her well to meet the evolving needs of our patients and care teams at Bellevue. Megan is known for her dedication to continuity of care and her ability to build strong relationships with patients while working seamlessly alongside physicians, APPs, and interdisciplinary teams.. We are excited to have her expertise and commitment as part of our team and look forward to the impact she will make in Orthopeadics.

Welcoming Liza Thurman, PA-C

Liza Thurman, PA-C

We are pleased to welcome Liza Thurman, PA-C, to the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Nebraska Medicine. Liza has a particular interest in hand and upper extremity conditions, where even small injuries can have a meaningful impact on a patient's independence, work, and quality of life.

She is drawn to the hands-on, problem-solving nature of orthopaedics and values the opportunity to work closely within a collaborative surgical team. Liza is especially passionate about building relationships with patients and supporting them throughout recovery, recognizing both the functional and emotional aspects of restoring mobility and daily function. We are excited to have Liza as part of our team and look forward to the meaningful impact she will make in the care of our patients.

Celebrating Nurses Week and ITEACH Excellence

During Nebraska Medicine Nurses Week, we proudly recognized the exceptional dedication, compassion, and expertise of our nursing colleagues. The week provided an opportunity to reflect on the meaningful impact nurses have across every aspect of patient care and to celebrate those who consistently went above and beyond in service to our patients and teams.

We were especially honored to have 6 members of our department nominated for Nursing Awards and ITEACH recognition. The Carol M. Wilson Award honored nurses who demonstrated exemplary clinical practice and a deep commitment to patient-centered care. The Spirit of Nursing Award recognized individuals who consistently embodied compassion, professionalism, and the heart of nursing in their daily work. The Nursing Leadership Award highlighted those who led with integrity, inspired others, and drove positive change within their teams and the organization.

The ITEACH awards reflected the core values that guided our work. The department had 24 nominations for the iTEACH awards. Innovation recognized those who brought forward new ideas and creative solutions to improve care and processes. Teamwork celebrated individuals who fostered collaboration and strengthened team-based care. Accountability honored those who took ownership of their work and consistently delivered high-quality outcomes. Courage recognized individuals who spoke up, advocated, and led through challenges. Healing reflected a deep commitment to compassionate, patient-centered care. Excellence highlighted those who consistently exceeded expectations and set a high standard for performance.

We are grateful for the dedication of our nominees and proud to celebrate their contributions to our patients, our teams, and our mission.

Supporting Performance on and off the Court: Orthopaedic Sports Medicine and Husker Basketball

The 2025 to 2026 season marked a defining moment for Nebraska Men's Basketball, as the team advanced to the NCAA Tournament Sweet 16 for the first time and energized the Husker community with a deep postseason run. The excitement across Nebraska reflected not only the team's performance on the national stage but also the preparation, resilience, and support systems that sustained success throughout the season. Behind the scenes, a comprehensive sports medicine approach played a critical role in keeping student-athletes healthy, available, and ready to compete at the highest level.

Dr. Justin Greiner provided on-court orthopaedic sports medicine care for the team through the Nebraska Medicine Sports Medicine team. As a fellowship-trained orthopaedic sports medicine physician and assistant professor, his clinical expertise centers on sports-related injuries of the hip, knee, and shoulder, with an emphasis on minimally invasive and arthroscopic techniques and joint preservation. His background as a former collegiate athlete further informs his understanding of the physical and competitive demands faced by Division I basketball players.

Beyond game-day coverage, Dr. Greiner maintained a consistent presence with the team throughout the season. He routinely attended practices, checked in with players outside of competition, and built relationships that allowed for early identification of concerns and

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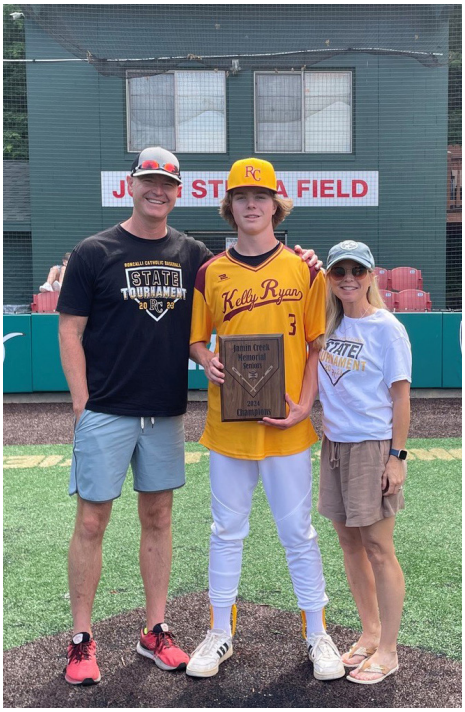
Drs. Justin Greiner and Alex Toomesch at the Sweet 16 tournament during March Madness

Thinking Differently About Overhand Throwing Arm Pain and Injury



Dr. Fehringer, his wife Casey, and their son Charlie

In the March and April 2026 issue of Metro Omaha Medical Society's Physicians Bulletin, Dr. Ed Fehringer highlighted a thoughtful shift in how clinicians approach throwing-related arm pain, particularly in baseball pitchers.

Drawing from clinical experience and insight as a former pitcher and shoulder and elbow surgeon father of a high school pitcher, he emphasizes that arm pain often exists on a continuum rather than as a single, discrete injury. While procedures such as ulnar collateral ligament reconstruction have improved outcomes for specific conditions, shoulder pain in throwing athletes remains less predictable and often multifactorial.

A key turning point in his perspective came from exposure to pitching movement and coaching techniques beyond traditional medical training. By collaborating with coaches and movement specialists, Dr. Fehringer observed that often subtle adjustments in mechanics, workload, and conditioning can significantly reduce pain and improve performance without surgery. And, as much as anything, the greater understanding of the pain and injury continuum as well as the optimized associated emotional states of all parties (player, parent, coach, clinician) seem to improve outcomes more predictably. His son's experience, in which targeted movement changes eliminated persistent pain and continual refinement of a plan over 10 years, reinforced this approach and highlighted the importance of addressing root causes and symptom magnifiers rather than symptoms alone.

Dr. Fehringer advocates a comprehensive, individualized evaluation of throwing athletes, integrating subjective history, physical examination, imaging, and functional assessment. His work underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and patient-centered care, particularly in young athletes, where prevention and long-term function are critical. His philosophical framework, ARM/SENSE®, suggests thinking about throwing arm pain and injury differently. He writes publicly about this with blogs and e-books, all free, at: armsense.substack.com and he also maintains an Instagram account: @armsense.

Through ongoing education and outreach, Dr. Fehringer continues to promote a more nuanced understanding of throwing arm pain. His goal is to help athletes stay active, mitigate pain and injury, and keep more playing.

Extending Orthopaedic Care Beyond Traditional Settings

Pictured right to left are Ross Mathiasen, MD, Justin Greiner, MD, Tyler Sharp, MD, and Bryant Pasho, ATC, in the background

Specialists from the UNMC/Nebraska Medicine team recently partnered with the Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium to provide specialized care for one of its most recognizable residents, an adult male gorilla.

Zoo staff noted that the gorilla had developed decreased use of his right arm following an unwitnessed injury. Given his age, comparable to that of a 50- to 60-year-old human, and the importance of maintaining mobility and comfort, a multidisciplinary team was assembled to evaluate and treat the injury at the zoo's new animal hospital.

The gorilla was safely sedated and transported for a comprehensive assessment. Imaging included X-rays and a CT scan to evaluate for fractures or structural abnormalities—the orthopaedic team, led by Dr. Justin Greiner, sports medicine orthopaedic surgeon, and Dr. Tyler Sharp, orthopaedic surgery resident, performed a detailed examination under anesthesia, assessing the range of motion and identifying areas of tenderness or instability.

Primary care sports medicine physician Dr. Ross Mathiasen, along with Bryant Pasho, ATC, provided additional evaluation using ultrasound to assess the shoulder soft tissues further. During the procedure, fluid was aspirated from the joint, and a corticosteroid injection was administered to reduce inflammation and support recovery.

Care was carefully coordinated across specialties to maximize the opportunity while the gorilla was under anesthesia. At the same time, the UNMC/Nebraska Medicine cardiology team performed a cardiac ultrasound, recognizing that great apes in captivity are at increased risk for heart-related conditions. This coordinated approach allowed for a thorough evaluation while minimizing the need for repeated sedation.

Following the procedure, the team has continued to monitor the gorilla's progress through follow-up evaluations. While he has shown some improvement in comfort and function, recovery has been gradual, and he continues to have some limitations with shoulder use. These findings are not unexpected given his age and the complexity of shoulder injuries, even in human patients. The care team remains engaged with zoo staff to adjust management as needed and support his ongoing quality of life.

This collaboration highlights the strength of multidisciplinary care and the unique opportunities for orthopaedics and sports medicine to extend beyond traditional clinical settings. It also reflects a shared commitment to thoughtful, patient-centered care, whether the patient walks on two or four legs.

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That culture is not something written down or handed off. It is experienced. It shows up in how faculty invest in residents, in the expectations we set for one another, and in the pride people take in the work and in each other. It is a culture where people are challenged, supported, and trusted. Where teaching is intentional, teamwork is expected, and success is shared.

This continuity strengthens everything we do. It creates mentorship rooted in lived experience, teaching that is consistent and meaningful, and a department that continues to evolve without losing what matters most. Our faculty understand firsthand what this program demands and what it gives in return. That perspective drives a deep commitment to preparing residents not only to practice orthopaedics, but to lead within it.

Most importantly, it reinforces our mission. We are not only training excellent surgeons. We are building a community of physicians who choose to stay, to contribute, and to shape the future of orthopaedic care.

People do not return by accident. They come back because they believe in what this place stands for, and they stay because they want to be part of carrying it forward.

When residents become colleagues, and colleagues become mentors, the impact extends far beyond a single training cycle. It becomes a legacy.

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proactive management of injuries. This ongoing engagement supported timely interventions and reinforced trust between the medical team and student-athletes.

Throughout the season, Dr. Greiner worked closely with athletic trainers and Nebraska Medicine Primary Care Sports Medicine provider Alex Tomesch, MD, to assess injuries in real time, determine appropriate next steps, and coordinate follow-up care when needed. This collaboration supports efficient, informed decision-making in fast-paced environments where medical care must balance return-to-play considerations with long-term outcomes.

The demands of Big Ten basketball require a coordinated, multidisciplinary effort across coaching, training, and medical teams. Orthopaedic sports medicine plays a central role in that model by helping student-athletes remain healthy, available, and prepared to compete throughout the season and into postseason play. Dr. Greiner's involvement reflects the broader mission of academic orthopaedics: advancing performance while maintaining a consistent focus on safety, recovery, and long-term outcomes.

University of Nebraska FOUNDATION

Thank you to our alums, residents, fellows, grateful patients, and friends who have committed to supporting the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. Over the years, without your support, we wouldn't have been able to become the Department that we are today that continues to educate, train, and implement a high standard of patient care. Because of you, we can develop new clinical programs and innovative education strategies, send residents to national conferences, and conduct the latest research.

If you would like to learn more about private gifts or opportunities to support the Department through outright gifts or planned gifts, we welcome the opportunity for a conversation. We are very grateful for every donation, as well as each person who is committed to supporting our community. Please get in touch with Emily Tiensvold, Senior Director of Development, at the University of Nebraska Foundation for more information: Emily.tiensvold@nufoudnation.org or 402-502-4107.

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