

# 2024 Right Heart Symposium Faculty & Agenda

## Course Directors



**Aaron B. Waxman, MD, PhD**

*Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School  
Brigham and Women's Hospital  
Executive Director Center of Pulmonary Heart Diseases,  
Brigham and Women's Hospital*

Aaron Waxman, MD, PhD, is the Executive Director of the Center for Pulmonary Heart Diseases at the Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) Heart and Vascular and Lung Centers. He is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School with appointments in the Divisions of Pulmonary Critical Care Medicine and Cardiovascular Medicine. He directed the Pulmonary Vascular Disease Program at Massachusetts General Hospital until 2009, when he became the Director of the Pulmonary Vascular Disease Program at BWH. His interests have focused on developing a translational center that integrates clinical and basic research and focuses on a better understanding of the pathogenesis of pulmonary vascular remodeling and the physiology of right ventricular adaptation to changes in the pulmonary vascular bed. A direct product of this program is the Dyspnea and Performance Evaluation Center at BWH that is also under Dr. Waxman's leadership. His academic interests include the role of inflammatory mediators in pulmonary vascular remodeling and right ventricular-pulmonary arterial coupling.



**Jane A. Leopold, MD, FACC, FAHA, FSCAI**

*Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School  
Brigham and Women's Hospital  
Director, Women's Interventional Cardiology Health Initiative  
Clinical Interventional Cardiologist*

Dr. Jane Leopold is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, a clinical interventional cardiologist, Director of the Women's Interventional Cardiology Health Initiative, and Director of the Cardiovascular Research Core at Brigham and Women's Hospital. She is an internationally recognized vascular biology researcher with expertise in endothelial and vascular phenotyping. Her clinical research involves using precision medicine approaches to characterize the pathobiological mechanisms underlying complex cardiopulmonary vascular diseases. The longstanding focus of her translational research laboratory has been to elucidate the mechanisms by which vascular structure and

function are regulated under basal conditions and in cardiopulmonary disease states with an eye towards devising novel diagnostics and therapeutics. Her work has been funded by the NIH/NHLBI, the American Heart Association, and the Lerner Foundation, and she was named a Thomas W. Smith MD Scholar. She has co-authored numerous scientific manuscripts and she is the recipient of several research awards. She has served on national and international peer review committees. She is a member of several editorial boards, is a former Associate Editor at *Circulation* and *Circulation: Cardiovascular Interventions* and is currently the Deputy Editor for cardiology at the *New England Journal of Medicine*. In addition, she actively mentors and promotes the work of students, fellows, and early-career faculty in cardiopulmonary vascular research.

## Faculty & Agenda

### 6:05 - 6:25 PM Case 1: Evaluation and Management of the Patient with Sarcoidosis and PH



#### Harrison Farber, MD

*Tufts University School of Medicine*

*Tufts Medical Center*

*Professor of Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine*

*Director, Pulmonary Embolism Response Team (PERT), Tufts Medical Center*

Harrison W. Farber, MD is a pulmonologist in Boston, MA and is affiliated with Tufts Medical Center. He is the Director of the Pulmonary Embolism Response Team (PERT) at Tufts Medical Center. He received his medical degree from George Washington University School of Medicine and has been in practice for more than 20 years. Dr. Farber's clinical focus area is pulmonary hypertension and his research focus area is biomarkers of the pulmonary complications of scleroderma.

### 6:35 - 6:55 PM Case 2: Critical Care Management of the Patient with Advanced PH who Develops Shock and RV Ischemia



#### Bradley M. Wertheim, MD

*Harvard Medical School*

*Brigham and Women's Hospital*

*Instructor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School*

*Associate Physician, Pulmonary Vascular Disease Program, Brigham and Women's Hospital*

Dr. Wertheim is a member of the Pulmonary Vascular Disease Program at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH). He specializes in the care of patients with pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) and complex heart-lung interactions. After studying biochemistry at Lafayette College, Dr. Wertheim received his

Doctorate in Medicine from Harvard Medical School in 2011. At the Massachusetts General Hospital, he completed his residency in Internal Medicine in 2014. Dr. Wertheim then trained in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at BWH and graduated in 2017. During this time, he was the first physician selected for the Burke Advanced Fellowship in Pulmonary Heart Disease, one of the few dedicated pulmonary hypertension training programs in the country. His clinical interests include pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary embolism, critical care medicine, unexplained dyspnea, and cardiopulmonary exercise testing. He founded the Rheumatic Pulmonary Vascular Disease Clinic to promptly diagnose pulmonary hypertension in patients with connective tissue diseases such as systemic sclerosis. In 2021-2022, Dr. Wertheim's patient satisfaction scores ranked in the top 10% of physicians nationwide. He is board certified in pulmonary disease, critical care medicine, and internal medicine. As a scientist, Dr. Wertheim studies the biology of PAH to identify treatment strategies. He earned research awards from the Pulmonary Vascular Research Institute and BWH/Hearst Foundation. He receives funding from the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute/National Institutes of Health. A member of the Harvard Medical School faculty, Dr. Wertheim trains fellows and residents in his clinic and inpatient practice at BWH.

### 7:05 - 7:25 PM Case 3: Atrial Septal Defect and Pulmonary Hypertension: Smoking Gun or Innocent Bystander?



**Ada Stefanescu Schmidt, MD, MSc**

*Harvard Medical School*

*Massachusetts General Hospital*

*Instructor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School*

*Adult Congenital Heart Disease Specialist and Interventional  
Cardiologist at Massachusetts General Hospital*

**Dr. Stefanescu Schmidt** is an Adult Congenital Heart Disease specialist and Interventional Cardiologist. She trained in Internal Medicine, Cardiology, and Coronary Interventions at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, and in the combined Boston Adult Congenital Heart Disease fellowship program. She then completed subspecialty training in congenital and structural interventions at the Toronto General Hospital and University of Toronto. Her clinical practice and research focus on interventions to increase quality of life and longevity of adults with congenital heart disease. She obtained research training through a Master's in Epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health, and has participated and led single and multicenter clinical studies.

### 7:35 - 7:55 PM Case 4: Management Considerations in the Patient Who's Responded to Therapy and Now Feels Short of Breath Without Evidence of PH

**Paul B. Yu, MD, PhD***Harvard Medical School***Massachusetts General Hospital***Sanders Endowed Chair & Associate Professor of Medicine,  
Harvard Medical School**Physician & Director of Cardiovascular Research Center  
(CVRC), Massachusetts General Hospital*

Dr. Paul Yu is the Charles and Elizabeth Sanders Endowed Chair and Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Physician in Cardiovascular Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), and Director of the Cardiovascular Research Center (CVRC) at MGH. Dr. Yu completed his A.B. in Philosophy and a B.S. in Biological Sciences at Stanford University, M.D. and Ph.D. (Immunology) degrees at Duke University, completed Internal Medicine residency at UCSF, clinical and research fellowships in Cardiovascular Disease at MGH, and is board certified in cardiovascular medicine. Following a postdoctoral fellowship in signaling biology, Dr. Yu established his independent laboratory at MGH in 2007, joined a collaborative basic and translational research effort in pulmonary arterial hypertension at BWH in 2011, and returned to MGH in 2022 as director of the CVRC. Dr. Yu's laboratory studies the function of bone morphogenetic protein (BMP) signaling in development, and in the cardiovascular and musculoskeletal system. The main focus of his laboratory's work is to discern how BMP/TGF- $\beta$  signaling achieves spatio-temporal and functional specificity and modulates the tissue-specific consequences of inflammation and injury, and how these signals may contribute to cardiopulmonary, systemic vascular, and musculoskeletal development and disease. His clinical interests include pulmonary vascular disease and cardiovascular rheumatology. pulmonary vascular morphology is that quantifying the structure of the pulmonary vasculature can give insight into disease pathophysiology and can be used as a clinical tool in screening, diagnosis, phenotyping, choosing treatment, and monitoring response.

**8:05 - 8:25 PM Case 5: A New Treatment Option: The Activin Inhibitors and Their Impact****Franz Rischard, DO, MSc***University of Arizona***University of Arizona***Professor of Medicine, University of Arizona**Director, Pulmonary Hypertension Program Division of  
Pulmonary and Critical Care, University of Arizona*

Dr. Franz Rischard is the Director of the Pulmonary Hypertension Program for the Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine at the University of Arizona in Tucson. He is an Associate Member of the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center. He is internationally recognized as a leading expert in precision-based approaches to pulmonary hypertension, exercise physiology, and right ventricular



function. He is a member of prestigious organizations such as the Royal Society of Medicine (London), guideline development in the NHLBI Right Ventricular Function Working group, and on the editorial staff of pulmonary and cardiology journals. He is board certified in pulmonary and critical care medicine. He has conducted NIH, industry-sponsored, and investigator-initiated clinical trials in patients with all types of pulmonary vascular disease and pulmonary embolism.

Dr. Rischard earned his medical degree at the Western University of Health Sciences in California and completed his residency and fellowship at the University of Arizona in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine.