



Fahad Aziz, MD, FASN

## Cultivating the Next Generation of Physician-Scholars

Fahad Aziz, MD, FASN, *WMJ* Editor-in-Chief

Since its founding in 1903 by the Wisconsin Medical Society, the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* (*WMJ*) has served as a vital platform for medical and public health scholarship in Wisconsin. Yet by the late 2010s, the journal's future was uncertain, pressured by financial challenges and a rapidly changing publishing landscape.

A pivotal moment arrived in 2019 when the University of Wisconsin (UW) School of Medicine and Public Health and the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) jointly assumed ownership of the journal. This partnership secured *WMJ's* future also launched a new era of innovation and growth. Submissions surged, special themed issues gained attention, and *WMJ* reaffirmed its role as a forum for meaningful discourse on medicine and health policy in the region.

### A Fellowship Rooted in Purpose

Among the most transformative developments of this new era is the *WMJ* Editorial Fellowship Program—a forward-thinking initiative designed to cultivate the next generation of physician-scholars and editorial leaders.

The *WMJ* Editorial Fellowship was conceived as an immersive experience to provide

medical trainees and early career faculty with structured, mentored engagement in academic publishing. Recognizing that editorial training is rarely a part of formal medical education, *WMJ's* editorial leadership developed a curriculum that introduces fellows to the full editorial

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Encouraged by this success, *WMJ* is committed to continuing and expanding the program. Recruitment is underway for a new

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lifecycle—from peer review and decision-making to editorial writing and ethical considerations. Fellows gain a critical understanding of scientific communication and the skills to lead in academia, policy, and research.

In 2023, *WMJ* welcomed its inaugural cohort of editorial fellows. Over the course they reviewed manuscripts, participated in editorial board meetings, contributed to content strategy, and co-authored an editorial with the Editor-in-Chief. Today, having demonstrated exceptional leadership and scholarly engagement as fellows, David Mallinson, PhD, and Corlin Jewell, MD—both inaugural fellows—serve as members of the *WMJ* editorial board, exemplifying the program's goal of developing future editorial leaders.

In 2024, *WMJ* recruited its second cohort: Raul Rodriguez, MD, and Victoria Ronan, MD, who are expected to complete the program this fall. Their progress further underscores the fel-

lowship's role in nurturing talent and embedding editorial leadership into the early stages of clinical careers. Encouraged by this success, *WMJ* is committed to continuing and expanding the program. Recruitment is underway for a new cohort to begin this fall. The fellowship is open to MDs, DOs, or clinically oriented PhDs who are faculty members or learners at MCW, UW–Madison or one of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health's statewide clinical campuses. By broadening access, *WMJ* aims to foster a more diverse and representative editorial community—one that incorporates the breadth of voices from various regions, specialties, and training levels across Wisconsin.

### New Student Editorial Internship

Building on the success of the fellowship, *WMJ* is proud to announce the development of a new Editorial Internship—an opportunity designed to introduce medical students to the world of academic publishing early in their training. Being led by *WMJ* Publishing Board members Elizabeth Petty, MD, and Jonathan Temte, MD, PhD, both esteemed leaders in academic medicine, the internship will offer medical students

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a structured, hands-on editorial experience through which they will learn about manuscript review, publishing ethics, editorial decision-making, and academic writing.

The program is currently under development and once launched, it will be among the first of its kind, offering students a guided and purposeful entry into academic publishing. This initiative reflects *WMJ*'s strong commitment to cultivating scholarly curiosity, mentorship, and academic excellence from the earliest stages of medical education.

### Why This Work Matters

At a time when many journals face declining reviewer pools and an aging editorial workforce, *WMJ* is investing in a sustainable future by building a culture of mentorship, scholarship, and leadership development. Through the fellowship and upcoming internship, *WMJ* is helping shape a generation of clinicians who understand the value of rigorous peer review, the power of the written word, and the responsibility that comes with shaping medical knowledge.

These initiatives signal that the journal is not merely a passive repository of information,

it is an active, evolving, and inclusive learning community. *WMJ* is becoming a model for how regional journals can thrive—not only through high-quality content but by nurturing the people who create, curate, and communicate it.

### Looking Ahead

As *WMJ* continues to evolve, it remains steadfast in its mission to advance health care in Wisconsin and beyond. These programs reaffirm our commitment to elevating scholarship, expanding opportunity, and empowering the next generation in medicine.

We are deeply grateful to the community that makes this work possible. Our heartfelt thanks go to the authors who share their research and insights, the peer reviewers who uphold our standards with rigor and thoughtfulness, the editorial board members who offer vision and guidance, and the publishing board whose steadfast support sustains our operations and growth. Each plays a critical role in helping *WMJ* fulfill its mission. Together, we are not only publishing a journal—we are building a legacy.



“Blooming Perspectives”

### About the Artist

Toan Vu was born in Vietnam and was raised in Columbia, Missouri. He is currently a medical student at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. With a passion for art, he says he paints to express creativity, reflect on his identity, and capture the world around him.

## *WMJ* names two new deputy editors

The Publishing Board for the *Wisconsin Medical Journal (WMJ)* has named two new deputy editors: Sanjay Bhandari, MD, MS, and Shanthi Narla, MD. They will serve three-year terms, effective immediately.

Dr Bhandari is an associate professor of medicine in the Division of Internal Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He is an academic hospitalist and also serves as director of the hospital medicine fellowship. He has extensive editorial experience, having authored two book chapters, published over 50 peer-reviewed manuscripts, and served as a peer reviewer for 10 academic journals.

Dr Bhandari earned his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) from Kathmandu University in Nepal and completed his residency in internal medicine at Chicago Medical School at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science. He also holds a master's degree in clinical and translational science

from the Medical College of Wisconsin. He is board certified in internal medicine and is a member the Society of Hospital Medicine, and the American College of Physicians.

Dr Narla is an assistant professor of dermatology at the Medical College of Wisconsin, where she also serves as director of dermatology medical student research and director of adult clinical trials in the Department of Dermatology. She has published more than 60 peer-reviewed articles, abstracts, and book chapters, and has also served as a manuscript reviewer.

Dr Narla is a graduate of the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University. She completed an internship in internal medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago and a fellowship in dermatology clinical trials at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, prior to completing her residency in dermatology at St. Luke's University Health System in Easton,

Pennsylvania. She is board certified in dermatology and is a member of the American Academy of Dermatology, Wisconsin Dermatological Society, and Women's Dermatological Society.

“Our previous deputy editor, Robert Treat, was a vital member of our editorial team. When he announced his decision to step down, we knew we had big shoes to fill. Fortunately, we had not one, but two exceptional candidates,” said *WMJ* Editor-in-Chief Fahad Aziz, MD, MBA, CPE, FASN. “We were very impressed with their experience, commitment, and enthusiasm and are excited to welcome both of them to the *WMJ* team.”

Dr Bhandari and Dr Narla succeed Robert Treat, PhD, who stepped down after completing two three-year terms as deputy editor. Dr Treat is an associate professor of emergency medicine and the director of measurement and evaluation in the Office of Academic Affairs at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

advancing the art & science of medicine in the midwest

**WMJ**

*WMJ* (ISSN 2379-3961) is published through a collaboration between The Medical College of Wisconsin and The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. The mission of *WMJ* is to provide an opportunity to publish original research, case reports, review articles, and essays about current medical and public health issues.

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