

Applicant Information

This fellowship is available to physicians who have graduated, or will have graduated, from residency in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation. Ideal candidates are curious, compassionate, and committed.

With any questions about the fellowship, write to Dr. Christopher Standaert, standaertcj@upmc.edu. To apply, please submit the following by email to Dr. Standaert:

- Updated CV
- Cover letter
- Three letters of recommendation



Christopher Standaert, MD
Associate Professor
Fellowship Director

Dr. Standaert cares for patients with spine and musculoskeletal disorders, and he has long worked to change the healthcare system for the better. He believes that physiatrists are uniquely well suited to diagnose and manage spine and musculoskeletal problems, in individuals and across a population. He designed this fellowship to cultivate the skills that he believes are most critical for the next generation of leaders: to provide excellent clinical care, and to collaboratively redesign care systems so that the top priority is patients' long-term health.

For more information contact:

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Value-Based Fellowship in Spine and Musculoskeletal Medicine



University of
Pittsburgh

Department of Physical
Medicine & Rehabilitation

UPMC
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE



OVERVIEW

The goal of this one-year fellowship is to train physiatrists in the advanced management of spine and musculoskeletal conditions and to develop leaders in value-driven care. Clinical expertise is honed through work in novel interdisciplinary PM&R outpatient clinics and rotations with multiple other specialties. The fellow is actively engaged in the growth of alternative payment and care structures and meets regularly with leaders from the UPMC Health Plan to gain a working knowledge of value-based care, payment structures, coverage policy, and health plan operations. Upon graduating, fellows will have a unique capacity to develop and work in value-based structures, collaborating across departments and service lines to help deliver and define optimal care. This type of training is not available anywhere else within the US.



CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

This is a primarily clinical fellowship. Core competencies include diagnosis, prognosis, clinical reasoning, communication skills, interpretation of diagnostic tests, and interpretation of scientific literature.

The core training experiences occur within the Program for Spine Health and the Musculoskeletal (MSK) Home, which are patient-centered, physiatry-led, interdisciplinary clinics designed to help patients with back and joint pain achieve better function and greater autonomy. The team includes expert PTs, a pain psychologist, a nutritionist, and a health coach. The Program for Spine Health is community-based, with multiple locations in greater Pittsburgh. The MSK home is on the campus of UPMC's flagship Presbyterian Hospital. The fellowship also involves direct clinical learning from faculty in other disciplines of spine and musculoskeletal care, including Neuroradiology, MSK Radiology, Neurosurgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Physical Therapy, Rheumatology, Pain Medicine, Addiction Medicine, and Neurology.

Procedural skills are not a primary focus of this fellowship. However, as the fellowship is not ACGME-accredited, there is some flexibility to address individual priorities or skills of interest. Additional training in electrodiagnosis is both available and encouraged.

HEALTH PLAN TRAINING

A unique aspect of this fellowship is payer and provider collaboration within UPMC, a multi-billion-dollar system whose Health Plan offers a full range of products and services to millions of members. Through real-life care models, leaders from the UPMC Health Plan teach the fellow about health systems, payment policy, benchmarking, value-based payments, and health care transformation. The opportunities to work in alternative payment and delivery structures, and to use this knowledge to develop care teams such as the Program for Spine Health, provide one-of-kind training for success in our rapidly evolving health care environment.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING

Structured educational opportunities include weekly journal review with Dr. Standaert, weekly interdisciplinary meetings within the Program for Spine Health, spine-surgery case conferences and didactics, and monthly grand rounds with the University of Pittsburgh's Primary Spine Practitioner program, among others.

The weekly schedule includes 1.5 days of protected non-clinical time. There is encouragement and support to attend national conferences, to publish in the academic literature, and to seek ongoing instruction beyond UPMC.